



14 AUGUST 2022

Welcome to worship

Welcome to church this morning, we hope you enjoy worshipping with us.

Thank you to everyone who was able to share in Gail's Induction service yesterday, it was a great chance to welcome her to our church family.

Lectionary Readings

This week August 14, 2022

Isaiah 5:1-7
Psalm 80:1-2, 8-19
Hebrews 11:29 - 12:2
Luke 12:49-56

Next week August 21, 2022

Jeremiah 1:4-10
Psalm 71:1-6
Hebrews 12:18-29
Luke 13:10-17

Ladies Bible Study

The next Ladies' Bible study is on Tuesday 16th August at 3pm in the Chapel area. The study is number 10: "Honour and Obey" Ephesians 6: 1-9.

Community Prayer Dinner

Gail has a spare ticket to the Community Prayer Dinner on Tuesday 30th August at 7pm at Merrylands RSL, please see Gail if you are interested in attending the dinner with her.

Fathers' Days Breakfast

Our Child Care Centre is hosting a breakfast for Fathers' Day on Wednesday 31st August, from 7.00am and we are providing the food and cooking it for them.

We invite the men of our congregation to come along and get to know the fathers and grandfathers from the child care centre.

Through you
I will bring light
to the
nations.
Isaiah 42:6



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Message from Gail

Over the next three Sundays I will be presenting a sermon series based on my last subject for my Bachelor of Theology degree. I chose to do an independent research topic and my paper was entitled *Words of Hope for Aging and Declining Congregations*.

During the week a reader of the UCA's Insights magazine reached out to me after reading the article in which myself and my fellow exit colleagues were interviewed. Keen to know more about my research paper and its findings he called me on the phone and asked, "So, have you got the answer". I laughed and said, "if only it were that easy".

In researching the way both society and the church has changed over the last fifty or so years I think I discovered more questions than answers, however I have developed a passion for seeing congregations grow in spiritual maturity and in the understanding and practice of missional outreach and evangelism. If we grow in both these areas will the number of people attending church on a Sunday morning also grow? Again I am not sure it is that simple.

As I think about ways to journey with you all towards spiritual maturity and missional growth I have two competing trains of thought. At times they intersect but one is far more important than the other.

One train is destined for growth in numbers so that the church can go on after we have gone. It sees decline as failure and it wants everything to stay the same. It keeps circling back to the "good old days" when the Sunday School was overflowing and the church full to the brim.

The other train is focused on the church being the body of Christ, it doesn't let numbers, whether they be age or church attendance slow it down or derail it.

It understands that the Church's call is "to be a fellowship of reconciliation, a body within which the diverse gifts of its members are used for the building of the whole, an instrument through which Christ may work and bear witness to himself" (Basis of Union: paragraph 3).

Which train of thought will you board?

