



**Uniting Church**  
Kiama Jamberoo

**1 July 23**  
**Kiama-Jamberoo retreat**

## **Winter**



*Gum Trees In The Sydney Winter Fog  
by Alex Proimos from Sydney, Australia*

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## **Gathering**

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**Gathering and Acknowledgment**

**Introduction**

**Prayer**

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## Listening for God's Voice

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### **Lectio Divina - contemplative reading of Scripture**

*Make sure you are sitting comfortably.*

*Breathe slowly and deeply.*

*Ask God to speak to you through the passage that you are about to read.*

First reading of the passage: Listen

*As you read the passage listen for a word or phrase that attracts you. Allow it to arise from the passage as if it is God's word for you today. Sit in silence repeating the word or phrase in your head.*

*Then say the word or phrase aloud.*

Second reading of the passage: Ponder

*As you read the passage again ask how this word or phrase speaks to your life and why it has connected with you. Ponder it carefully.*

*Don't worry if you get distracted – it may be part of your response to offer it to God. Sit in silence and then frame a single sentence that begins to say aloud what this word or phrase says to you.*

*"Where does this word/phrase touch my life today?"*

Third reading of the passage: Pray

*As you read the passage for the last time ask what Christ is calling from you. What is it that you need to do or consider or relinquish or take on as a result of what God is saying to you in this word or phrase?*

*"From what I've heard and shared, what do I believe God wants me to do or be? Is God inviting me to change in any way?"*

In the silence that follows the reading pray for the grace of the Spirit to plant this word in your heart.

If you are in a group talk for a few minutes and pray with each other.

If you are on your own speak your prayer to God either aloud or in the silence of your heart.

If there is time, you may even want to read the passage a fourth time, and then end with the same silence before God with which you began.

### **Ecclesiastes 3:1-14**

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

<sup>2</sup> a time to be born, and a time to die;

a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

<sup>3</sup> a time to kill, and a time to heal;

a time to break down, and a time to build up;

<sup>4</sup> a time to weep, and a time to laugh;

a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

<sup>5</sup> a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;

a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

<sup>6</sup> a time to seek, and a time to lose;

a time to keep, and a time to throw away;

<sup>7</sup> a time to tear, and a time to sew;

a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

<sup>8</sup> a time to love, and a time to hate;

a time for war, and a time for peace.

<sup>9</sup> What gain have the workers from their toil? <sup>10</sup>I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. <sup>11</sup>He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover, he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. <sup>12</sup>I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; <sup>13</sup>moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil. <sup>14</sup>I know that whatever God does endures for ever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it; God has done this, so that all should stand in awe before him. <sup>15</sup>That which is, already has been; that which is to be, already is; and God seeks out what has gone by.

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## Responding

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If you have a Bible with you, you might want to read the passage again from a different translation.

Is there something from the Bible reading you want to think more about?  
*Walk, pray, draw, ponder, reflect*

Winter is often a time when we are tempted to hunker down - staying in the comfort of our homes or offices where we can be warm and snug. It is sometimes hard to be motivated to go out into the cold, especially in the evening.

That's not a bad thing!

Nature slows down in winter - many plants seem to stop growing, many animals hibernate through the coldest season. However, while they might seem dormant, they are not completely inactive - there is growth going on underneath the surface, preparations for a new season, a strengthening of the root system, or a replenishing of health and energy. There are also plants and animals that thrive in the winter environment - polar bears, snow leopards, even wattle begins to bloom while the days are short and the weather cool.

What is your favourite part of winter time?

What is your least favourite part?

In the depths of winter, how can you continue to grow in your love for God and your discipleship as a follower of Jesus?

Is there something you want to learn?

Is there something God is trying to teach you?

How will you spend long winter evenings?

Is there something coming in the spring that you need to be preparing for?

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## Re-engaging with the World

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**Sharing Time**

**Closing**