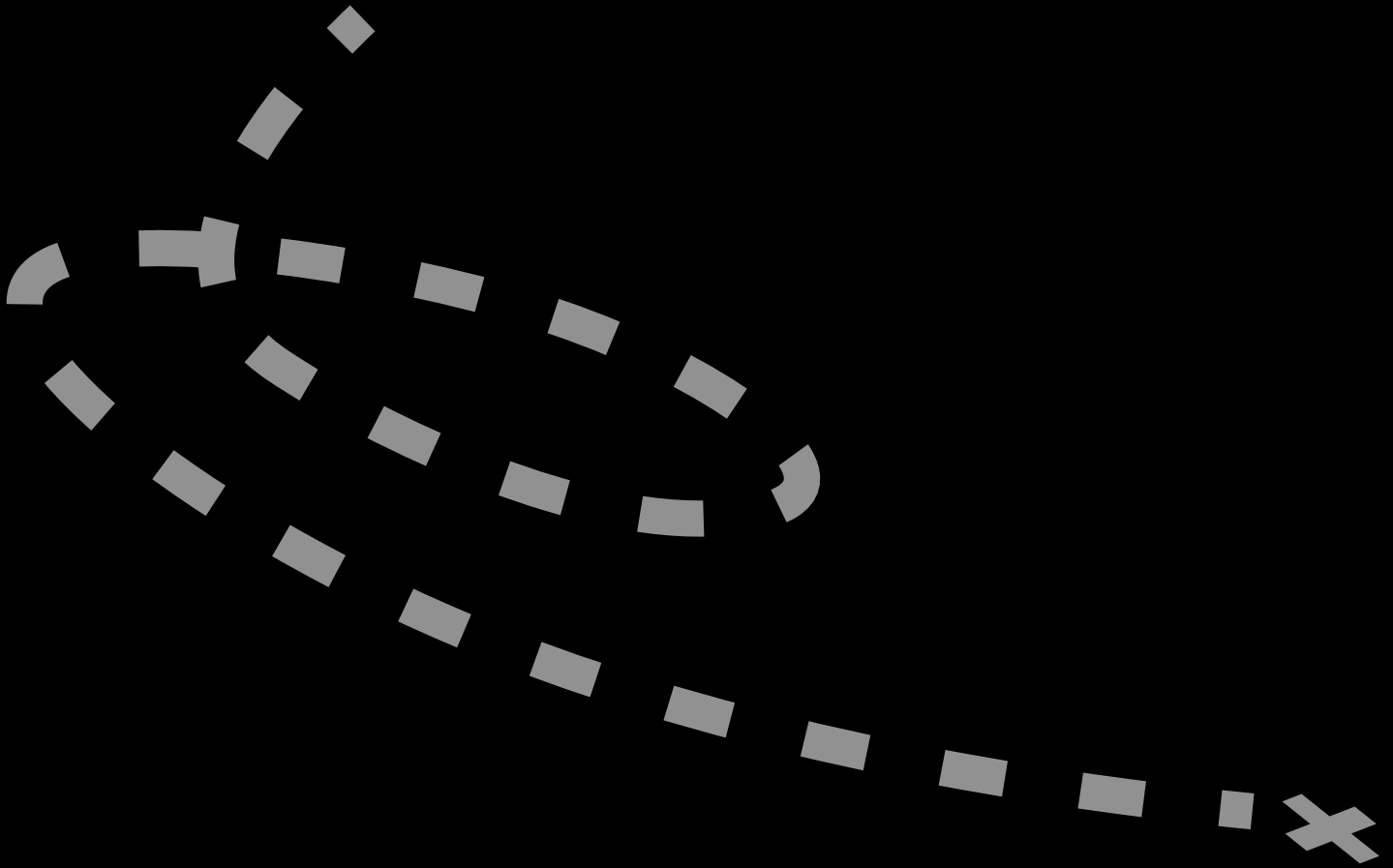


# GARDENS & STORIES

DEVELOPING VISION AND STRENGTH



**A ROADMAP FOR 2022** v.01

# KIA ORA!

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Welcome to 2022!

The new year is upon us. And here we are in RED. Whether you like it or not, it seems that disruption is just part of the story that we're living through right now.

If you're a first-year student, welcome! And if you're a returner & are ready for another round, welcome back.

This little booklet is here to provide a way to think about this year and what shape life might take, for you. It's also about Student Soul as a community, and the shared rhythms that we hope are going to sustain us.

No matter what 2022 brings, whatever disruptions and uncertainties come our way, we are committed to growing, to staying connected, and digging deeper into God & the life of faith.

My hope for the year both for myself and for Student Soul is kind of simple and yet kind of central: that 2022 would be a good year for spiritual growth.

I pray that would be true for you too.

God bless - and pls feel free to shout out & connect.

**Tom Mepham**

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So for the third year running, Covid is a reality we're faced with, and we are continuing to live with the uncertainty of that.

What we do know is that online learning and work, isolation, possible new strains of the virus, vaccines and boosters, protests and social discontent, event cancellations, and limited planning capacities for the future are all part of it.

Based on all this, upon the things we've learned through 2020 and 2021, and ongoing reflection, discernment, and conversation over the summer and recent weeks, here's a sort of "philosophy of ministry" for Student Soul in 2022.

**1. Minimize the hype.** This means not letting too much ride on any one event, program, or activity. While we will continue to plan for meaningfully connective gatherings, the goal is to keep it simple, keep it production light, keep it fun, and be ready to "let things go" when we need to.

**2. Maximise the rhythm.** This means having shared rhythms of life that can work in both online and offline modes, and that focus on the process of discipleship and the flow of life together during the week.

**3. Grow a deep spiritual life.** This means continuing to base our life & lives on Scripture, worship, conversation, prayer, and the life of faith in Jesus.

**4. Grow an adventurous social life.** You know, I think 2022 should be a year for fun. Dunedin is a beautiful city, there are plenty of amazing beaches, mountains, places to go and things to do. So this is driving this right into the core of who we are - when we can, as often as we can, we're planning to get out and get active.

A core part of our life rhythm through which we are weaving these principles is a discipleship process called Gardens & Stories, which we'll explain some more about on the next page.


# PHILOSOPHY




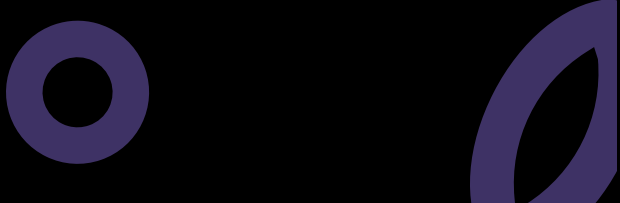


# GARDENS & STORIES

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## WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THE NAME?




A garden is a place of flourishing, life, beauty, and reproduction. A good garden is generative, a place that new life emerges out of.

Where a garden is about **place**, story is about **time**. A story has heroines and villains, struggles, growth, and triumphs. A good story is something that is generative, birthing new subplots, insights, and character development.

Gardens & Stories is how we're thinking about the journey of discipleship in 2022. We hope that the double metaphor might be a helpful way for thinking about our own lives as we explore the way of Jesus. Here's the goal - that we all grow into people of generativity, creative action, beauty, flourishing, and strength.

How it will work in practise is something like this. Each week, we'll have a core Scripture passage. Through various ways of engaging with that, including creative group work, a video/audio message, bible study, personal reflection, and worship, we will give the Holy Spirit space to speak to us. On one hand, it will be as simple as some resources that we'll put out to help you grow. On the other hand, there'll be plenty of space to go a bit deeper, if that's what you're looking for.

As we get on with the year, the goal is that we're all becoming more like Jesus, through this biblically-infused process that puts God at the center of our lives, and which binds us together in something of a shared journey, or quest. That's the idea, so let's see where it goes!



# Scripture

Each week we have a key Bible passage to set the agenda. This will be enhanced by a video/audio message online, with accompanying key questions. Our worship gatherings will be shaped around the big theme of the Scripture passage as we engage the question of what it means for us today and how we should live as a result.

# Small groups

Small groups are a great way to grow friendships and go deeper in the things of faith. They are also good support structures and because of that we see them as a central part of our pastoral care strategy.

We have a very simple concept around which our groups center themselves, and it is the question: "How is the state of your soul?" From this, there is plenty of diverse ways each group can do things, but it basically centers around listening and praying.

# Worship

This year we are mixing it up, and moving our worship gatherings to **THURSDAY NIGHT 7:30pm**. We are not planning far into the year, but we will start off by meeting at **Oaken cafe**, as we have been in '20 & '21.

The goal for these nights is very simple. We are keeping it simple, lo-fi or unplugged worship, no production and minimalist setup (bring a smart phone). We will sing, pray, study Scripture, and have conversation. If we have to, we'll move on line with Gather.town. Easy.

# Expeditions

Each Sunday, we are planning to get out and get active. There are so many great beaches and mountains around this city, so when weather permits, we're going to make the most of it. (And we needn't be afraid of rain either.) So food, adventures, challenges, hangouts... this is what Sunday is going to be. Each week will be different, sometimes, the afternoon, sometimes the evening. Our goal is to have fun. Life is pretty serious and it can get heavy. But Jesus is all about fullness of life, and living that our is our mandate as a community. So let's make it happen.

# RHYTHMS

# END NOTES



**THURSDAYS:** Oaken cafe, 7:30pm

**SUNDAYS:** Meet at Student Soul office

**WEEKDAYS:** Stay connected online @studentsoul

Yes, our events and gatherings this year will require vaccine passports. This will be for outdoor adventures as well. We will be encouraging mask wearing indoors at worship especially during transition times. And social distancing will be maintained where possible. If you are not vaccinated and are looking for a church community, please feel free to reach out and we will connect you with a church community, there are plenty of great options out there, and we are happy to help with this.

Finally, this document is probably imperfect but we will put it out there for now. And you can expect updates as we start to lean into the Gardens & Stories process to come in this kind of format. So until next time, go well!

**STUDENTSOU.LORG.NZ**

@STUDENTSOU / IG & FB