

Next Sunday

February 5 2023, @ 10am Epiphany 5 – Greatness of Heart

Leader: Robert
Preacher: Deok Hee

Isaiah 58:1–9a, (9b–12); Psalm 112:1–9, (10);
1 Corinthians 2:1–12, (13–16); Matthew 5:13–20

Church Council

Chair Dinah Roepers
Secretary Richard Goodman
Treasurer John Baglin

Councillors Dorothy Makasa (2023) Robert M°Alpine (2023)
Sue Baglin (2025)

Elders John Baglin (2023) Richard Goodman (2024)
Dinah Roepers (2023)

Safe Church Contact Person Richard Goodman



The one whose walk is blameless,
who does what is righteous,
who speaks the truth
from their heart;
whose tongue utters no slander,
who does no wrong to a neighbor,
and casts no slur on others.

Psalm 15:2-3

DailyVerses.net



The Uniting Church in Australia

KOGARAH UNITING CHURCH

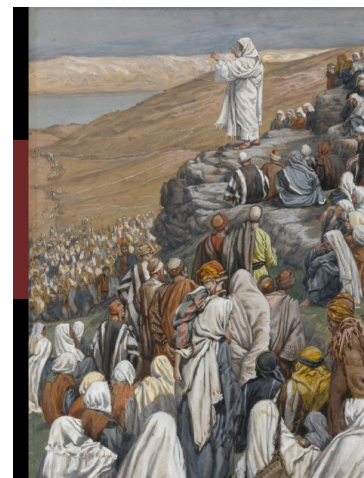
We welcome people of all cultures and lifestyles,
We create a safe place for the community
We share the journey of life and faith.

WELCOME

January 29 2023, @ 10am Epiphany 4 – Beautiful Vision

Leader: Richard
Preacher: Richard (Deok Hee RDO)

Micah 6:1–8; Psalm 15; 1 Corinthians 1:18–31
Matthew 5:1–12



THIS WEEK'S BIBLE STUDY

MATTHEW 5:1-12

The Sermon of the Beatitudes
by James Tissot (1836–1902)

For details and information about our church activities and The Kogarah Storehouse, check out the websites: kogarah.uca.org.au and www.kogarahstorehouse.org.au

For pastoral concerns, please contact the
Rev Deok Hee Cho
on 0401 975 745

Face to face Services Kogarah Uniting Church At 10:00am

Some COVID Conditions have changed

We are in the middle of a new wave

Masks are highly recommended given the vulnerability of some of our members. Please do not come in if you are feeling unwell.

Social distancing is also to be observed.

Watch this space for any changes.

Planning Ahead

1. 14.02.2023 next Church Council meeting 7pm via Zoom
2. 15.02 2023 Storehouse Board of Management meeting

Please pray for ...

The mission and ministry of our congregation and for our Minister, Deok Hee

Worship leaders; helpers, leaders, followers as we prepare for the new year.

The Kogarah Storehouse and its many clients; Lala and staff of the Storehouse.

Dorothy and Godfrey and the work of LACLA.

Nick Hedges and the scripture teaching at JCBTHS and MGHS

The team, parents and children in the Early Learning Centre.

Those who are sick, sad or lonely:

We pray especially today for Brian and Rhonda and their wider family as they grieve for their son Malcolm who died last week.

And for Prema, and others whom we name in our hearts; health care workers in this time of COVID-19, including Richard, Millin and Roseline Goodman and Dorothy Makasa and Elin.

The people who are feeling anxious because of the continuing unseen and rising numbers of new COVID infections and deaths; those who feel lonely and afraid in this time of continuing infections.

Beautiful Vision

O God, you turn things upside down, calling the wise to embrace your folly. Help us to grow in acknowledging our need for you. Open us to the vision of your reign on earth, and strengthen us to do our part. Amen.

Today, we begin a three-week exploration of a collection of Jesus' sayings in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus' radical vision of what God's reign on earth might look like is a vision of wholeness for all people. Paul reminds us that God's wisdom is different from worldly wisdom. Micah and the psalmist describe ways to live this beautiful vision.

The prophet in Micah 6:1–8 begins his proclamation in a manner designed to get the attention of those around him. Making over-the-top public displays of faith and spoken word was standard practice for the religious leaders of the time. While the prophet's words are overly dramatic, they don't bolster the religious elite but instead disrupt the status quo.

For the Israelites, these words reminded them of God's faithfulness and the blessings God bestowed upon them in their unfaithfulness or in their times of need. Verse 8 summarizes: do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God.

Psalm 15 gives a similar response. The psalmist asks who may come before God in the temple. It is those who do what is right, speak the truth, and do no evil to their neighbours.

In 1 Corinthians 1:18–31, Paul contrasts foolishness and wisdom. The people of Corinth seem to judge themselves by the world's standards rather than by God's standards. For the people of Corinth and for us, God's way is reimagining a better reality, a better way of living into the fullness of who we are called to be as disciples of Christ. In Christ, we are strengthened to participate in God's reign of justice and peace.

The vision known as the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:1–12 presented for the Christian community in Matthew's gospel is both beautiful and challenging. Jesus calls a group of disciples. They travel throughout Galilee, sharing the good news that God's realm is breaking into the world. It is a message that the gospel writer's community desperately needs to hear. The gospel of Matthew speaks to a group of new Christians after a disaster. The temple has been destroyed and the people scattered. Jesus is no longer present in the flesh. What laws will govern the community now? What is the good news for those trying to be faithful in a hostile world?

Jesus goes through a litany of statements regarding who are blessed. There is urgency in Jesus' teaching. He uses the present tense in this series of sentences beginning with the word blessed, or happy in some translations. Blessing is God's gift, a sign of covenant relationship with God. Jesus teaches that the blessed ones are those who are humble of heart ("poor in spirit"), who are gentle, who show mercy, who hunger and thirst for God's ways. Those who mourn will be comforted; those who make peace will be called God's children. Those persecuted in the cause of justice will find themselves part of God's transforming reality. In Jesus' coming, God's love is revealed and made manifest. This teaching is directed to the disciples, to the Twelve and the larger group of men and women who accompany Jesus. The Beatitudes describe the way of life for those who commit themselves to follow. For the community of the gospel of Matthew, this beautiful vision is what life should be like.

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Our experience today is in many ways like that of the community of Matthew's gospel. We may not be persecuted for our faith, but the ways of faith often seem foolish compared with the values of society. How do the gospel values challenge contemporary views and turn them upside down? What challenges do you find in trying to live according to the standards expressed in today's readings?

Connecting with life

"Throughout human history, visions of change have been passionately offered and responded to. One example is the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's dream of a nation wherein his

children would be judged by the content of character, not by the colour of their skin.

Another is Nelson Mandela's vision of a South Africa beyond the inhumanity of apartheid and an angry retaliation. And in Australia an apology to the Stolen Generations (indigenous children forcibly taken from their parents under a cultural assumption that this was for their good) with telling words of vision and hope" (Sean Gilbert).

Such apologies have been offered in Canada for the culture of residential schools, and in the United States of America for the treatment of African American slaves.

In his apology, offered on behalf of the nation, Kevin Rudd, a former Australian prime minister, spoke of taking the first step to a future that embraced all. "A future based on mutual resolve and mutual responsibility."

(National Sorry Day is May 26)

Q What is your response to a re-imagined future such as this? What does it inspire in you?



Reflecting on Australia Day

(Alternative words to the Australian Anthem)

Australians let us stand as one, upon this sacred land
A new day dawns, we're moving on to trust and understand.
Combine our ancient history and cultures everywhere,
To bond together for all time, advance Australia fair.
With joyful hearts then let us sing, advance Australia fair.

Australians let us all be one, with peace and harmony.
Our precious water, soil and sun, grant life for you and me.
Our land abounds in nature's gifts to love, respect and share,
And honouring the Dreaming, advance Australia fair.
With joyful hearts then let us sing, advance Australia fair.

Australians let us strive as one, to work with willing hands.
Our Southern Cross will guide us on, as friends with other lands.
While we embrace tomorrow's world with courage, truth and care,
And all our actions prove the words, advance Australia fair,
With joyful hearts then let us sing, advance Australia fair.

And when this special land of ours is in our children's care,
From shore to shore forever more, advance Australia fair.
With joyful hearts then let us sing, advance . . Australia . . fair.

*Lyrics from "The Australian Cities Suite" Words by Judith Durham
Additional Words by Kutcha Edwards, Lou Bennett, Camilla Chance and
Bill Hauritz*

*Based on words by P.D. McCormick (1878)
Music by Peter Dodds McCormick*

Acknowledgement of land

(This prayer by Dorothy McRae-McMahon could precede an acknowledgement of land.)

*Sometimes we think we are small gods, God of all creation.
We think we own this land
and can tame its eternal energies.
But it teaches us who we are in the cosmos, O God.
Its endless changing rhythms
of flood and dryness,
fire and fertility
invite us, age by age,
to simply take our place as your humble children
thankfully receiving small and larger gifts,
invited to cherish a mysterious landscape of your making.....*

*.....We acknowledge that we are on the land of Eora Nation and that the Spirit was in the land revealing God to them through law, custom and ceremony. The same love and grace that was finally and fully revealed in Jesus Christ sustained the Eora people and gave them particular insights into God's ways. Therefore, we honour the wisdom of the Eora Elders and their continuing culture, and pray that we might all work together for reconciliation and justice in this nation.
(Using words from the Preamble to the Uniting Church constitution)*

Benediction

**May the road stretch endlessly before us.
May blue skies and the sun smile upon us.
May gentle rain refresh us.
May we find rest in the shade of gum trees.
May good friends accompany us along the way. (Helen Warmingham)
May you know the presence of God as you journey.
May Christ be your companion**

And may the Spirit lift up your life. Amen.

(These resources come from the Uniting Church)

Our Local Hero – Lala Noronha OAM

Our Lala, manager of the Kogarah Storehouse, was awarded an OAM in the Australia Day honours list. Lala's life has been amazing. During the war in what is now Timor Leste when gangs roamed the streets of Dili, Lana established an orphanage and when the war really got hot, with the help of a Malaysian military officer, she was able to get 13 girls out to Malaysia where she has supported them to restore their health and achieve degrees at the local university. Recently (two weeks ago) she returned to Timor Leste to catch up with some of the orphans whom she had to leave behind. They were delighted to see her. She was accompanied by a crew from Chanel 7 who are making a documentary about her life.

We are very proud and honoured to have Lala working at the Storehouse. Take the time to congratulate her on her well-deserved award and ask her about her wonderful life, The above story is only part of it. There were many trials and tribulations along the way.

Congratulations Lala!

Lala is interviewed by SBS News. (See picture below) Her story was mentioned as an “Unsung Hero” in a review of recipients of the Order of Australia on the SBS news on Thursday evening. You may be able to catch it on **SBS on Demand**.

Lala reacts to her honour on Facebook ...

I am deeply honoured to receive this award “the medal of the Order of Australia/ OAM.”

For you who nominated me, I thank you for honouring my achievements.

However there must be many people in our community who go above and beyond and have positive impact at a local, national and international level.

For me to receive this medal is such a big achievement. I have to thank my family, my rocks, Johann, Marcel, Jennifer, Kimberley who sacrifice their lives for me and always support me.

They had to share their Mum with 30 other children for many years whilst I was in East Timor and still now at The Kogarah Storehouse they are always there for me when ever I need help to pick up, pack or distribute food.

Thank you for always sticking by me.

I dedicated this medal to my dearest family. 🙏🍀💕

To my dearest friend Yanti who was always there for my kids while I was away from home.

Thank you for always filling the gap.

As a migrant with Indonesian-Chinese background, also as a widow with small children back then, there has been many challenges through my life journey that I had to overcome, and that has helped me to be an empowered, strong and resilient woman today.

To all those many people who have been there for me, supported and helped me in so many different ways in Australia, Indonesia, Timor Leste, in Malaysia and whether it's donating financially, doctors for caring for very sick children, Peace Keeping Forces digging wells and providing accommodation for the orphanage, working & volunteering at the Kogarah Storehouse or in just supporting my course and ideas, thank you so much for believing in me and thank you for trusting me.

Lala Noronha OAM 🙏🍀💕

