

Next Sunday

March 5, 2023, @ 10am
Lent 2 – Through the Night

Leader: Robert
Preacher Robert

Genesis 12:1–4a; Psalm 121; Romans 4:1–5, 13–17; John 3:1–17
or Matthew 17:1–9

Church Council

Chair
Secretary
Treasurer

Dinah Roepers
Richard Goodman
John Baglin

Councillors

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

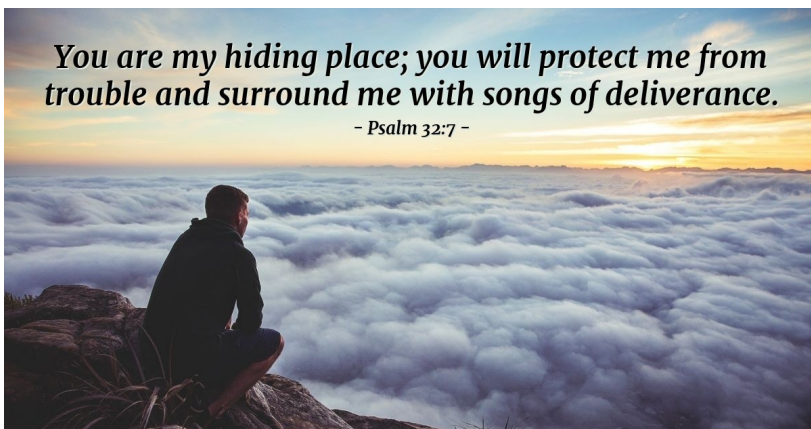
Elders

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

Safe Church Contact Person Richard Goodman

*You are my hiding place; you will protect me from
trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.*

– Psalm 32:7 –



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.

February 26, 2023, @ 10am
Lent 1 – Into the Wilderness

Leader: Matagi Vilitama
Preacher Matagi Vilitama
Holy Communion Matagi Vilitama

Genesis 2:15–17, 3:1–7; Psalm 32; Romans 5:12–19;
Matthew 4:1–11



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 continuing 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. 8.03.2023 Worship Task Group 7pm via Zoom
2. 21.03.2023 Church Council via Zoom @ 7:00pm

The Journey to Easter

Add these dates to your diary. Friends are welcome.
– the Lenten journey has begun.

2.04.2023 Palm/Passion Sunday 10am

6.04.2023 Maundy Thursday 7:30pm

7.04 2023 Good Friday 9am + Hot Cross Buns

9.04.2023 Easter Day 10am

From 24.02 2023 every Friday @ 12noon Lenten Bible Study (6 sessions)

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 continue to grieve for their son Malcolm who recently died.

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.

We continue pray this Sunday for the people of Türkiye and Syria who are suffering after the devastation caused by the earthquake in their region and for the people of Aotearoa New Zealand . May help soon arrive and the people who survived these disasters receive God's comfort.

Presbytery Prayer Roster

Today we hold in our prayers Rev Gaby Kobrossi, Presbytery Secretary.



Into the Wilderness

We venture forward with tentative steps into your wilderness. As we step forward, make our steps curious and bold. Grant us eyes to see new things, and hearts to feel new feelings. May this venturing forward reward us with adventure as we follow Christ. Amen.

Lent is a time of journeying – with Jesus towards Jerusalem and deep within ourselves – to test and strengthen our faith. The wilderness may be a wild desert wasteland or a lush jungle; it may be the depths of the ocean or the ice of the Arctic or Antarctic. We are invited into Lent with a sense of adventure and curiosity as we respond by seeking new insights.

Genesis 2:15–17; 3:1–7 is set in the first wilderness inhabited by people. While it was lush and green, it was also a place of temptation. The self-awareness of Adam and Eve connects with the self-awareness Jesus expresses in Matthew. God has placed boundaries around Adam and Eve in the garden – a task (till the garden) and a prohibition (do not eat). The crafty serpent first questions then contradicts God, enticing Adam and Eve into dangerous knowledge. They tried to be like God but discovered their human limitations.

Psalms 32 explores our relationship with a loving God who is our hiding place. God preserves us, and surrounds us, and protects us. We see echoes of these actions in the gospel lesson for the day.

Matthew 4:1–11 Matthew places this story between Jesus' baptism by John and Jesus' ministry in Galilee. Forty days in the wilderness parallels Israel's forty years in the desert. Before land is entered or ministry proceeds, preparation in the presence of

God opens the way. Three other figures play roles in this passage. The Spirit "leads" Jesus into the wilderness; he does not go alone. Often this text is seen as a time of testing for Jesus – perhaps it is also helpful to look at it through the lens of Jesus being with himself and with God. God, not the tempter, directs the course of action. Matthew variously identifies the second figure as tempter, devil, and Satan. Within this story, the tempter puts a face on the presence of evil in the world by tempting "ends" that overlook the "means" used to achieve them. The tempter's offers to Jesus are for more power, possessions, and so on. This connects with the "more" Adam and Eve wanted in the garden. The third figure(s) are the angels at the story's end. Their "waiting on" Jesus translates a Greek verb (*diakoneo*) that also means "minister" or "serve at table."

In **Romans 5:12–19**, in their commentary in *Preaching the Letters without Dismissing the Law* (Westminster John Knox Press, p. 33), Clark M. Williamson and Ronald J. Allen offer a first-century Jewish perspective on this passage. "Jewish literature, however, does not interpret Adam's transgression in the sense of original sin, which is a distinctively Christian teaching. Rather, God forgave Adam: 'When he sinned, the Lord pronounced a sentence upon him, but when the Sabbath came, the Lord set him free... So the Lord made the attribute of mercy take precedence over the attribute of judgment'... What the law brings to sin Paul earlier characterized as 'recognition' or 'awareness.'"

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Wilderness is any place not affected by human involvement. In the wilderness, we often feel the temptation to long for more. We feel that we do not have enough food, time, possessions,

wealth, power. When we follow the Spirit into the wilderness, we find that what may feel like a lonely venturing is accompanied by God. We can note that often we see the wilderness as a place of struggle, but the Spirit never leaves us; instead it travels with us into the unknown. We begin the adventure of Lent in the wilderness of a lush garden and the wilderness of the desert, seeking new insights from God.

Special Days Commentary

March 1 – St. David

David was a sixth-century bishop known for an ascetic, spiritual life. David was also highly regarded for a ministry to people struggling in poverty and compassionate work with those who were sick. Since the 12th century, David has been considered the patron saint of Wales.

March 3 – World Day of Prayer

An ecumenical movement initiated and carried out by women in more than 180 countries, World Day of Prayer promotes the spirit of church unity. The international prayer services, planned by women in a different country each year, usually focus on mutual understanding between people and the promotion of world peace. The yearly service of prayer is translated into more than 100 languages.

World Day of Prayer in our area will be celebrated at St Mary MacKillop in Walz Street, Rockdale @ 10am. All welcome.

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AN IMPORTANT DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

A SPECIAL LUNCHTIME MEETING

SUNDAY APRIL 16TH 2023

Last year, as a result of two workshops, those involved put together a Mission Plan for KUC.

Church Council has reviewed that plan; there are some objectives which have already been achieved or are in the pipeline. However, the objectives outlined in the Mission Plan are not the sole responsibility of Church Council but of the members of our congregation.

Church Council has determined which objectives are a priority and achievable but we need your help.

With this in view, we plan to meet over lunch after worship on SUNDAY, APRIL 16 – bring your own sandwich. Please plan to be there; your input is most important.



This Season of Lent begins in the wilderness, a place that feels both familiar and dreaded after the recent pandemic. While we might emphasize the loneliness and desolation of the wilderness, wilderness times are not just empty and barren. Just as a wilderness can be teeming with life, our wilderness times can also surprise us with the life they hold.

Our lives can also feel clarifying and renewed as we find within ourselves new awareness. We begin in the familiar landscape of the wilderness with the tempter's questions to Jesus. That growing awareness shifts from Jesus to Nicodemus' assurance of God's deep care and self-giving love in the winds of change and new birth. We continue to find a new awareness of ourselves in the questions asked of and by the Samaritan woman and by the one born blind in the gospel of John. If we didn't notice it before, we begin to notice that there are companions in the wilderness who encourage our survival.

Just before we enter Jerusalem on a road paved with branches and cloaks, we find ourselves in the wilderness of grief, asking harrowing questions of God and ourselves. At that tomb, we hear a call to unbind each other. No one asks these questions alone, but we share in the dream of what new life will be after all that has happened. It is vision and hope that we join the chorus of voices that cry for justice on Palm/Passion Sunday. Here, we realize how much we have changed and continue the transformation into the great 50 days of Easter.

Easter arrives dressed in white and gold and a flurry of Alleluias. It is a feast for our senses when Mary becomes the first witness to the resurrection of Jesus. Thomas uses his hands to proclaim his faith, and two see the risen Christ when bread is broken and shared. We come into our senses as we consider life that continues beyond the tomb, beyond doubt, beyond trials. In stories from the Acts of the Apostles and the early Christian church, we reflect on what brings life, what it means to live in community and the cost and risk of proclaiming the truth of God. We find new meaning in what it is that we believe

and find strength in the prayer of Jesus for all disciples as we continue the Christ-life. The great 50 days culminate in celebration as we experience, with the first followers, the life-giving work of the Spirit. (Alleluia by Jen Norton. <https://www.jennortonartstudio.com/>. Used with permission.)



Three Sonnets on the Temptations of Christ

Malcolm Guite

Source: Sounding the Seasons: Seventy Sonnets for the Christian Year, Canterbury Press, 2012.

The First Temptation: Stones Into Bread

The Fountain thirsts, the Bread is hungry here
The Light is dark, the Word without a voice.
When darkness speaks it seems so light and clear.
Now He must dare, with us, to make a choice.
In a distended belly's cruel curve
He feels the famine of the ones who lose
He starves for those whom we have forced to starve
He chooses now for those who cannot choose.
He is the staff and sustenance of life
He lives for all from one Sustaining Word
His love still breaks and pierces like a knife
The stony ground of hearts that never shared,
God gives through Him what Satan never could;
The broken bread that is our only food.

The Second Temptation: All the Kingdoms of the World

'So here's the deal and this is what you get:
The penthouse suite with world-commanding views,
The banker's bonus and the private jet
Control and ownership of all the news

An 'in' to that exclusive one percent,
Who know the score, who really run the show
With interest on every penny lent
And sweeteners for cronies in the know.
A straight arrangement between me and you
No hell below or heaven high above
You just admit it, and give me my due
And wake up from this foolish dream of love...'
But Jesus laughed, 'You are not what you seem.
Love is the waking life, you are the dream.'

The Third Temptation: On the Pinnacle

'Temples and Spires are good for looking down from;
You stand above the world on holy heights,
Here on the pinnacle, above the maelstrom,
Among the few, the true, unearthly lights.
Here you can breathe the thin air of perfection
And feel your kinship with the lonely star,
Above the shadow and the pale reflection,
Here you can know for certain who you are.
The world is stalled below, but you could move it
If they could know you as you are up here,
Of course they'll doubt,
but here's your chance to prove it
Angels will bear you up, so have no fear....'
'I was not sent to look down from above
It's fear that sets these tests and proofs, not Love.'