

Next Sunday

March 19, 2023, @ 10am
Lent 4 – After Vision Shifts

Leader: Dinah
Preacher Deok Hee

1 Samuel 16:1–13; Psalm 23; Ephesians 5:8–14; John 9:1–41

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

(Living Water)



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.

March 12, 2023, @ 10am
Lent 3 – With Thirst for New Life

Leader: Deok Hee
Preacher Deok Hee
Holy Communion Deok Hee

Exodus 17:1–7; Psalm 95; Romans 5:1–11; John 4:5–42



THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL LESSON

JOHN 4:5-42

Samaritan Woman at the Well
by He Qi

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. 21.03.2023 Church Council via Zoom @ 7:00pm
2. 18.04.2023 Worship Task Group @ 7:00pm via Zoom

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 17.03 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 who is on holiday.

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 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 to 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 . as well as the people of Ukraine and Russia that they might somehow find a way to peace.

Presbytery Prayer Roster

Today we hold in our prayers Mrs Ruth Fyfe, Chair of the Pastoral Relations Committee. Ruth is well known to us at Kogarah where she has been on hand to help us in our deliberations at Church Council and before.



With Thirst for New Life

God of all life, sometimes we think our voices don't matter. We have important things to say and wonder if anyone will listen. We offer a different perspective from the world and it is rejected. Give us big voices, Holy One. Give us voices that are loud enough to claim that you are the one who provided water in the desert, living water at a well, and that in you we find resurrection and claim it for ourselves. Amen.

This week's readings centre on God's faithfulness as the source of life, and on our human need to trust that God provides. As we listen to quarrels with God by thirsty travellers in the wilderness and to the big questions asked at the well, we find the courage to use our voice to say what matters most and to claim resurrection for ourselves. The theme of life-giving water runs through three of these readings, while the reading from Romans speaks of God's grace as the source of life.

Exodus 17:1–7 The Israelites are in the desert and angry because they cannot see how Moses can provide them with the essential water they need. They quarrel with Moses and ask the big question, "Why did you bring us here anyway?" Moses turns to God, asks God for help, and God gives directions for Moses to strike the rock at Horeb. God's immediate response acts out the relationship of trust and faithfulness that the Israelites lacked.

Psalms 95 encourages us to use our voices to praise God. This could be a psalm of resurrection as we pivot from the grumbling of Exodus to the joy of worship. Yet even in this joy, there are big questions. Verse 10 may cause us to wonder if God loathes this generation and to ask what the consequences may be if so.

In **Romans 5:1–11**, Paul explains what it means to be justified by faith: we are restored to a right relationship with God through Christ. This brings us peace. Even our suffering can teach us endurance, build character, and lead to hope. Christ's life leads us into life with God.

John 4:5–42 This long reading is dominated by the conversation between Jesus and a Samaritan woman he meets at the well. The comparison with last week's gospel story is striking. Both readings depict a character struggling to understand Jesus' talk about spiritual things. But this woman is everything Nicodemus was not – a woman with no voice or standing, a despised Samaritan, morally suspect, and isolated from her community. Why else would she be alone at a well at the hottest time of the day? This is a story about how her voice changed a community. Yet her community has shunned her. She is alone rather than with the safety of others, seeking water in the most dangerous part of the day. She is in the wilderness even though she is familiar with the terrain.

Jesus broke Jewish custom to engage her in conversation. The woman was interested, initially confused and defensive, but, unlike Nicodemus, she felt she had nothing to lose by engaging with Jesus. Perhaps it was this fact that allowed her finally to "see" past her physical needs to the spiritual truths that Jesus was teaching her. While the woman needs physical water for her body, it is the spiritual water, the living water of Jesus, that gives her a voice others will hear.

In verse 49, the woman asks a bold question of her community, "He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" She testifies to her community that "he told me everything I have ever done" and uses her voice to tell the truth about her encounter. There is a realization that her voice can effect change. The candour with which this woman had an open and honest conversation with Jesus leads to change. We may imagine her ostracized and invisible as she approaches the well alone. Her assertions in verse 29 led her community to believe her about Jesus, enough that they dropped what they were doing to go find him. Her voice was the impetus for their invitation for Jesus to stay in town and reach more people. The woman asked big and hard questions and spoke about what mattered most, and it made a difference in her community.

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We can use our voices to quarrel with God, to ask big questions, and to speak the truth. We can use our voices to change our communities and praise God. As we thirst for new life, we

find refreshment in the water offered by God in the desert places.

Special Day Commentary

March 17 – St. Patrick

Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, was born in 390 CE in England. At the age of 16, he was enslaved and taken to Ireland. Six years later, he escaped and returned to England. He studied theology in France and was ordained a priest. Patrick later returned to Ireland as a bishop, preaching the gospel throughout the island.

Legends claim that Patrick taught the people about the Trinity by using a three-leafed shamrock and that he drove the snakes out of Ireland. Patrick died on March 17, 460 CE, and this day is observed in Irish communities in many parts of the world with parades and merrymaking. In Ireland, however, the day is more solemn, and many people attend worship services.



(From *Insights*)

The Uniting Church in Australia Assembly and the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) welcome the launch of the campaign to vote Yes in the Referendum which seeks the support of the Australian people for a constitutionally enshrined First Nations Voice.

“We support the Yes vote for the Voice as a pivotal step toward the full implementation of the Uluru Statement, so that as a nation we can finally confront the truth of our past and present and make way for justice.”

Together Uniting Church President Rev Sharon Hollis and UAICC Interim National Chair Rev Mark Kickett affirmed their strong support for a Voice to Parliament as a critical step toward honouring the sovereignty of First Nations Australians in this land and furthering the work of truth-telling and treaty.

“This is an historic opportunity for Australia to acknowledge and honour First Nations people and their deep spiritual ties to this land and to walk together as a nation toward a better future,” said Rev Hollis.

“We support the Yes vote for the Voice as a pivotal step toward the full implementation of the Uluru Statement, so that as a nation we can finally confront the truth of our past and present and make way for justice.”

Rev Kickett said now was the time for Australians to unite in support of justice for First Peoples.

“The Uluru Statement is an invitation given by First Nations people to the people of Australia,” said Rev Kickett. “A constitutionally enshrined Voice will shape and guide the relationship between First and Second peoples in this country by enabling our people to have a say in the decisions that impact our communities.”

“In the same way the 1967 Referendum brought Australians together, this is an opportunity for all of us to unite in a big way as we seek to restore justice and promote healing for First Nations people in this land,” said Rev Kickett.

Rev Hollis said the Voice to Parliament was a moral and theological issue, not a political one.

“In the Uniting Church we believe we share a common destiny with our UAICC siblings, and First Nations people. This is an opportunity for us to honour that commitment.”

“As Second Peoples and as Christians in this land, we are called to confront the oppression, dispossession and racism faced by First Nations people.”

Rev Kickett said the Covenant in the Uniting Church tied First and Second Peoples together in a binding way so that together we may contribute to a more just Church and nation.

“Now is the time for us to hear the call of God to seek justice by doing what is right for our nation,” said Rev Kickett.

“Like Jesus, we are called to be bearers of justice, not just in our words, but in our actions and by changing systems which continue to deny the place and rights of the first Australians.”

As the campaign begins, Rev Hollis and Rev Kickett encourage Uniting Church people and communities to inform themselves about the Uluru Statement and what it asks of our nation and to create respectful spaces for yarning about the impact a First Nations Voice will make.



“SAD BUT NOT SURPRISING”: PITT STREET REPAINTS RAINBOW STEPS AFTER VANDALISM

- Jonathan Foye Tue, 28th February 2023 (Insights)

Pitt Street Uniting Church’s rainbow steps were vandalised by a group of unidentified men on Saturday, 25 February. Within days, however, the steps were restored to their prior colour.

Pitt Street Uniting Church’s Rev. Dr Josephine Inkpin told *Insights* the vandalism did not come as a surprise to the congregation.

“Such an attack is sad but not surprising and part of a range of harassments Pitt Street Uniting Church and fellow affirming Christians are enduring,” she said.

“Pitt Street Uniting Church has met such opposition for years on our stand for various aspects of justice and the quick renewal of the rainbow is part of our strength and determination.”

“We pray however that others may now see the need for more active affirmation in both church and world.”

