

Next Sunday

**April 2nd, 2023, @ 10am
Palm/Passion Sunday Lent 6
Among Palms and Betrayals**

Leader: Richard
Preacher Deok Hee

Isaiah 50:4–9a; Psalm 31:9–16; Psalm 118:1–2, 19–29;
Philippians 2:5–11; Matthew 26:14—27:66/ Matthew 27:11–54

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



The Uniting Church in Australia

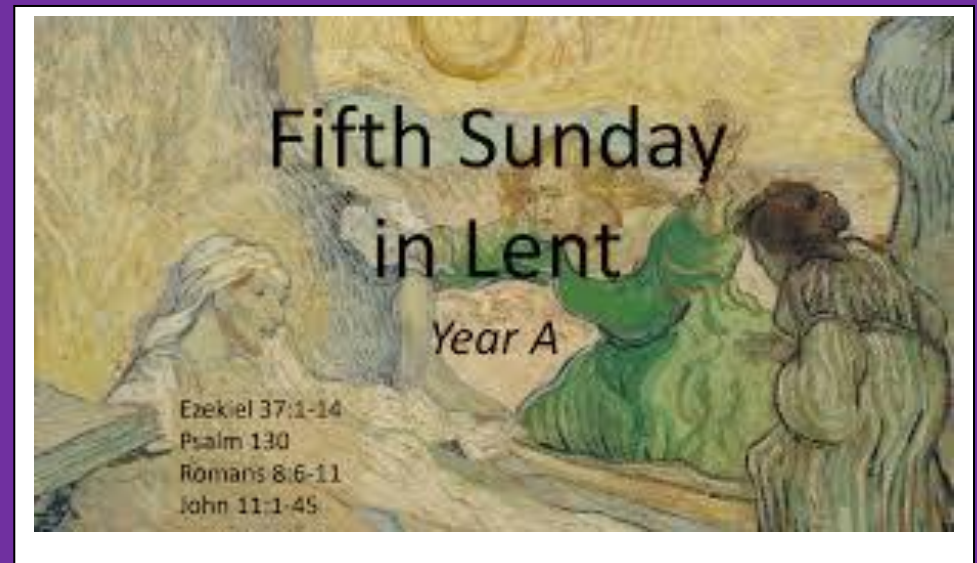
KOGARAH UNITING CHURCH

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 26, 2023, @ 10am
Lent 5 – Our of the Depths**

Leader: Deok Hee
Preacher Deok Hee
Holy Communion Deok Hee

Ezekiel 37:1–14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6–11; John 11:1–45



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. 29.03.2023 Church Council via Zoom @ 7:00pm
2. 16.04.2023 Special Church meeting after church – bring lunch
3. 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.

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.

Pray for Türkiye, Syria, Ukraine, Russia, New Zealand, Northern Queensland

Presbytery Prayer Roster

Today we hold in our prayers Kevin Fyfe, Chair of the Property Committee of the Georges River Presbytery '

Can You Help?

On Friday 31st March

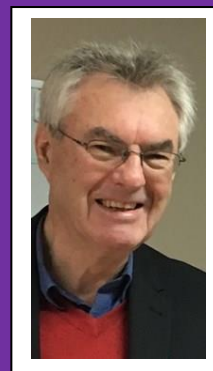
From 12 noon till 1pm

The Storehouse will be holding a community lunch, cooked by the Ukrainian Women's Group.

We need members of our Congregation to help serve the meal and mix with those attending.

Bible Study will be moved forward to 10:30am to allow people to help with/attend the lunch.

Let Deok Hee, Richard or Robert know if you can help out.



Out of the Depths

When we are overwhelmed or in despair, we turn again to you, O God, for you feel our anguish and will lift us up. Breathe your spirit into us and give us new life so that we may walk in hope.
Amen.

Hope is not about what we expect. It is an embrace of the essential unknowability of the world, of the breaks with the present, the surprises. Or perhaps studying the record more carefully leads us to expect miracles – not when and where we expect them, but to expect to be astonished, to expect that we don't know. And this is grounds to act," writes Rebecca Solnit in *Hope in the Dark: The Untold History of People Power*. Ezekiel, the psalmist, and John defy our expectations. They astonish us and leave us wondering how best to respond.

Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones in **Ezekiel 37:1–14** reveals God's promise to restore the house of Israel against all the apparent evidence. The community that is dried up and lifeless in exile will experience the life-giving breath of God again and be restored. To those in Ezekiel's time who grieved the separation of exile in Babylon, does the image in this account serve as a metaphor for their own struggle to find hope?

Even in the depths of wretchedness, the writer of **Psalm 130** is aware of the loving forgiveness of God and eagerly awaits redemption, knowing that God's steadfast love would never abandon God's people. The psalmist waits and hopes for God, and urges the people of Israel to do the same, trusting in God's steadfast love, even when it seems far away. The psalmist waits

for God as one waits for the morning; the wait can seem long and gloomy, but there is hope in the dawn of a new day.

In **John 11:1–45**, what might seem to be a disjointed conversation between Jesus and the disciples contains complex layers of imagery and allusions to Jesus' coming anointing, death, and resurrection. The act of raising Lazarus happens right at the end of the narrative, followed by the observation that some people "believed in him."

Jewish understanding was that it took three days for a soul to leave the body completely; thus, Lazarus had been dead long enough to have nothing left other than a body decaying rapidly in the desert heat. This fact doesn't quite explain Jesus' delay. When Jesus does decide to return to Judea, the disciples are concerned for his safety, but the need to "work while it is still light" drives Jesus on. Thomas expresses loyalty and fear but also foreshadows Jesus' self-sacrifice.

Burial took place immediately after death in the hot climate of the Middle East, and ritual mourning followed. Family, especially the women, sat in the home and were visited by friends. However, when Jesus approaches, Martha defies custom and goes to meet him. Was she impatient for his arrival, or was she protecting Jesus from a potentially hostile gathering? Her statement, perhaps, reveals Martha's grief. She understands the Jewish teaching of resurrection at the last days but finds something hopeful in what Jesus says. She puts her faith entirely in him.

Mary's plea to Jesus is similar to Martha's, and the pathos of the situation disturbs Jesus greatly. Martha, Mary, and the assembled mourners all ask the same question – why didn't Jesus come and heal Lazarus? Jesus' prayer sums up the

purpose of this final sign. God's glory will indeed be revealed, but at enormous pain and cost to both Jesus and his friends. Jesus then issues three commands. Everyone has a task to do. Jesus calls Lazarus back to life, but it is the community that rolls away the stone and unbinds Lazarus from the trappings of death and releases him.

In **Romans 8:6–11**, Paul writes that to live in Christ is not to live in denial of death but to live with hope in the face of death. We are safe in the hands of God, who breathes into us the same Spirit that breathed life into dry bones. Daily, we are raised to new life. In that hope are our life and peace.



Hope can feel impossible in a world overpowered by racism, xenophobia, terrorism, war, and death. And yet it is precisely in the face of these challenges that God invites us to read the stories of new life and new hope. How can we give in, when God is so loudly proclaiming life in the midst of chaos? How can we share with others the hope that oozes from passages like these?

Personal reflection

Find a quiet moment this week and light a candle. Held in this light's warmth, remember those you have loved and lost. Give thanks for their memories, that they might be a blessing to you, now and always.



The Anointing at Bethany

Come close with Mary, Martha, Lazarus
So close the candles stir with their soft breath
And kindle heart and soul to flame within us
Lit by these mysteries of life and death.
For beauty now begins the final movement
In quietness and intimate encounter
The alabaster jar of precious ointment
Is broken open for the world's true lover,

The whole room richly fills to feast the senses
With all the yearning such a fragrance brings,
The heart is mourning but the spirit dances,
Here at the very centre of all things,
Here at the meeting place of love and loss
We all foresee, and see beyond the cross.

Malcolm Guite This sonnet is drawn from my collection Sounding the Seasons, published by Canterbury Press