

Next Sunday

May 14th, 2023, @ 10am

Easter 6

To See is to Love

Leader: Deok Hee
Preacher Deok Hee
Holy Communion Deok Hee

Acts 17:22–31; Psalm 66:8–20 ; 1 Peter 3:13–22
John 14:15–21

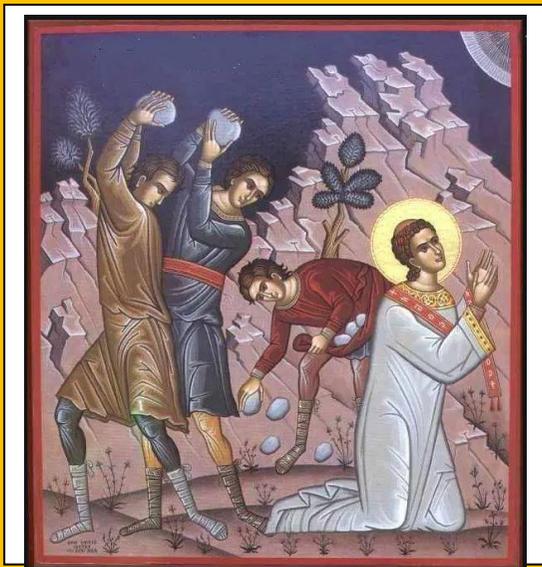
Church Council

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 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.

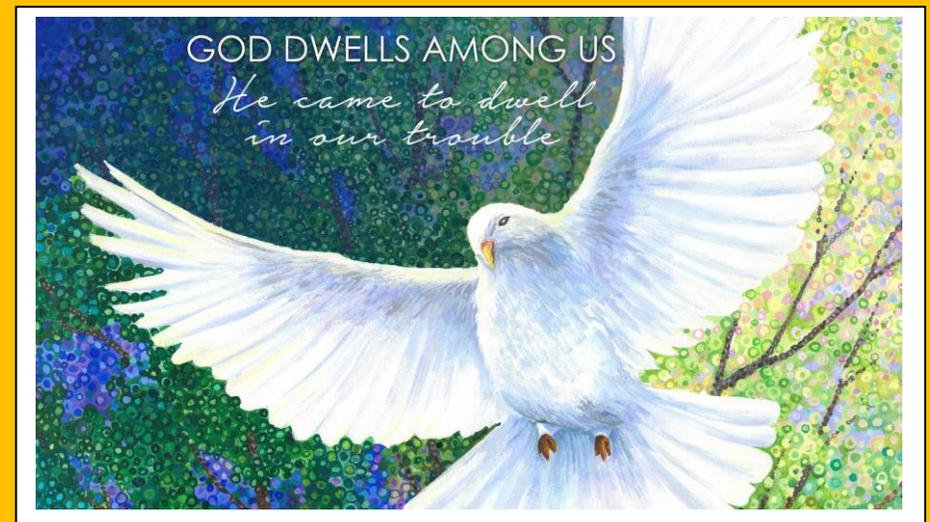
May 7th, 2023, @ 10am

Easter 5

Emboldened to Proclaim

Leader: Richard
Preacher Deok Hee

Acts 7:55–60; Psalm 31:1–5, 15–16; 1 Peter 2:2–10
John 14:1–14



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. 23.05.2023 Storehouse Management Committee 7:00pm
2. 25.05.2023 Worship Committee 7pm via ZOOM
3. 28.05.2023 Pentecost
4. 4.06.2023 Storehouse Sunday 10am
5. 6.06.2023 Bayview Morning Tea at Kogarah RSL @ 10:30am
6. 7.06.2023 Kogarah UC Church Council via Zoom 7pm
7. 17.06.2023 Bayview Service @ Kogarah from 2pm
8. 18.06.2023 Church Council/Elders elections in service

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 , Prema, Jim and Bobbie, 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, and the newly elected government in NSW.

Today, from our Presbytery Prayer List, we hold the General Secretary of UCA Assembly, Ms Colleen Geyer, in our prayers.



Emboldened to Proclaim

Open us, loving God. When we want to close our hearts, minds, and even our ears from the cries of others, from pleas for help and proclamations of justice, open us. Remove every stumbling block and enliven us with your spirit. Open us, we pray. Amen.

We cannot know the actual sounds of the Resurrection, but we know some of the sounds that followed soon after that event: a stone rolling; women speaking in shock and disbelief; the good news being shared; disciples doubting; Jesus entering a locked room; footsteps on the Emmaus road; a community worshipping and sharing. Through these sounds, we hear the voice of God.

Acts 7:55–60 When we last read about the early Christian community, they enjoyed the “goodwill of all” (Acts 2:47). This regard was short-lived. In Acts 4, we learn that Jewish leaders came to Peter and John “annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming that in Jesus there is the resurrection of the dead” (Acts 4:2). The leaders ordered Peter and John to cease their witness. Peter and John did not stop, and the number of Jews who believed Jesus was God’s Messiah continued to grow. Again, in Acts 5:17–42, there is an account of the growing tension between these two groups within the Jewish community. As the Body of Christ grew, the disciples appointed elders – individuals to care for the physical needs of the members. One such individual was Stephen.

In Acts 6:8–12, we learn that Stephen “did great wonders and signs” and spoke with “wisdom and the Spirit.” The temple leaders charged Stephen with blasphemy – showing contempt or a lack of respect for God. According to Leviticus 24:13–16, this charge was

punishable by death. Stephen stands trial and defends his witness in a fiery sermon, recorded in the first part of Acts 7. As we enter this week’s reading from the Acts of the Apostles, Stephen has stopped speaking, and the stage is set for the sentence for the charge of blasphemy.

In Acts 7:55–56, we learn that as Stephen faced his executioners, he “gazed into heaven” and “saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.” This is the Easter message embodied: Christ reigns in glory. Those who heard this covered their ears to block out what were, to them, words of blasphemy.

Note the parallel between Stephen’s dying words in verses 59–60 and Jesus’ dying words. Stephen entrusts his spirit to the resurrected Christ. Like Jesus, Stephen prays that his executioners’ sins not be held against them. (See Luke 23:34, 46.)

One wonders what effect these words of forgiveness may have had upon those who took up the stones to kill and upon the young man who held their coats, Saul (verse 58). We shall meet Saul again in Acts 9, first in avid persecution, then in awestruck conversion, and eventually in faithful witness.

The story of Stephen is part of the enduring witness of the early followers of Jesus. The story seems to end in Acts 8:1 with the scattering of the Jerusalem church. But very soon, those who are scattered begin to preach, and the gospel message disperses.

As the psalmist in **Psalms 31:1–5, 15–16** proclaims, God’s love and protection endure. Strong verbs in this song of praise witness to God’s presence and protection: deliver, rescue, save.

1 Peter 2:2–10 presents an intriguing contrast to the Acts story. People used stones to put Stephen to death; the author of 1 Peter, however, declares that we are to be living stones. Yet maybe there is a connection – rather than give in to the violence and hostility of our world, we are called to transform it.

In the part of Jesus' farewell discourse reported in **John 14:1-14**, Jesus witnesses to the richness of God's love, speaking of his death as the opportunity to prepare a place for his followers in God's eternal realm: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."

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In a world hardened by fear and mistrust, the stories of Stephen and other martyrs throughout history challenge us not to hold back but to proclaim the truth of God: that all are loved. What prevents us from proclaiming this truth? How can we embolden ourselves to proclaim it all the more?

Congregational Elections Elders and Church Councillors

Elders – 2 required. Richard Goodman is continuing. Dinah Roepers and John Baglin are coming to the end of their current term.

Councillors - 2 required - Sue Baglin continuing. Robert McAlpine, Dorothy Makasa are coming to the end of their current term.

Elections will be held on **June 18**, with nominees advertised during the service on June 4 and 11.

Nomination forms will be available in May. and will be due to Sue Baglin by the last Sunday in May.



We are your people,
Spirit of grace,
 you dare to make us
 to all our neighbors
Christ's living voice, hands and face.

Joined in community,
treasured and fed,
 may we discover
 gifts in each other,
willing to lead and be led.

Rich in diversity,
help us to live
 closer than neighbors,
 open to strangers,
able to clash and forgive.

Glad of tradition,
help us to see
 in all life's changing
 where you are leading,
where our best efforts should be.

Give, as we venture
justice and care
 (peaceful, resisting,
 waiting or risking)
wisdom to know when and where.

Spirit, unite us;
make us, by grace,
 willing and ready,
 Christ's living body,
loving the whole human race.
(Brian Wren)

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