

Next Sunday

June 25th, 2023, @ 10am Pentecost +4 – Community that Disrupts

Leader: Deok Hee
Preacher Deok Hee
Holy Communion Deok Hee

Genesis 21:8–21; Psalm 86:1–10, 16–17; Romans 6:1b–11
Matthew 10:24–39

Church Council

Chair Dinah Roepers
Secretary Richard Goodman
Treasurer John Baglin

Councillors 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

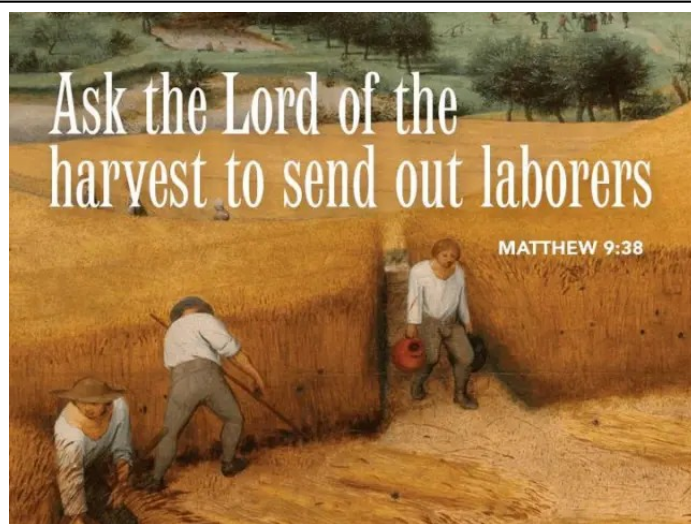
KOGARAH UNITING CHURCH

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

June 18th, 2023, @ 10am Pentecost 3 – Responding in Community Church Council Elections Today

Leader: Robert
Preacher Deok Hee

Genesis 18:1–15, (21:1–7); Psalm 116: 1–2, 12–19 ;
Romans 5:1–8; Matthew 9:35—10:8, (9–23)



For details and information about our church activities and The Kogarah Storehouse, check out the websites: kogarah.uca.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 still 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. 5.07.2023 Church Council Meeting 7pm via Zoom
2. 11.07 2023 Worship Task Group meeting 7pm via Zoom
3. 24.06.2023 *Understanding the Voice* - Rockdale Town Hall

Presbytery Events

- 24 June - Mission Possible 2 – Church Planting
- 25 July - Safe Church Workshop – Kingsgrove UC
- 11 November - Safe Church Workshop – Caringbah UC

- 9 December – Christmas Event for whole of Presbytery

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, Denis and Dolly, Jim Bird. 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, and the newly elected government in NSW.

Today, from our Presbytery Prayer List, we hold Brighton St Andrews in our prayers.

Understanding the Voice

Rockdale Town Hall

Saturday 24th June at 11am

Craig Foster, Linda Burney, Nardi Simpson

See the Notice on our church door for more details.

Responding in Community

God of compassion and mercy, strengthen our resolve to say yes to your call to love as you have loved us. Send us from relationships of care and compassion to all who live in need, following the example of Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Compassion, hope, and hospitality are threads that weave through this week's scripture passages. Where hope seems laughable, God bestows new life. When compassion perceives human need, God's call names us for service. Abraham and Sarah listen to incredulous news delivered by unexpected messengers, and the disciples listen and are sent. The journey for Abraham, Sarah, and disciples may lead through precarious places, but God's presence promises a hope that will not disappoint.

Genesis 18:1–15, (21:1–7) While Abraham hosts unexpected guests, Sarah finds the guest's tale unbelievable and laughable. As the story unfolds and Sarah and Abraham welcome a son (21:1–7), the laughter of cynicism becomes the laughter of joy, hope and fulfillment.

A thankful voice of those who have cried out and been heard by God rings out in **Psalms 116:1–2, 12–19**. It serves as a reminder that those persecuted are those who God stands with and supports. Even though they might meet death, God does not abandon them.

In great compassion, God creates and sustains hope. In **Romans 5:1–8**, Paul asserts that suffering need not end in despair because God's love continues to pour into our hearts.

Matthew's gospel draws attention to Jesus' life and ministry as it sits within the tradition of the Hebrew scriptures. **Matthew 9:35 —10:8, (9–23)** is this example. The report that Jesus saw the crowds and had compassion for them because they are "like sheep without a shepherd" echoes Moses' thoughts regarding the people of Israel just before his death (Numbers

27:15–19). Moses commissions Joshua to carry on the work; similarly, Jesus, seeing the "shepherd-less," sends out his disciples to carry on his ministry.

With urgency, Jesus speaks of the "harvest," the coming of God's reign. Having seen how many are in need of the liberating compassion of God, all other work seems superfluous to that of proclaiming the good news to "the lost sheep of Israel." Twelve disciples (recalling the twelve tribes of Israel, whose foundation we recall later in the season) are named as apostles and are sent. Still, it is important to note they weren't the only disciples and followers of Jesus, and we are invited to add our own names as those whom Jesus calls and sends.

The extension of compassion to others was considered a serious flaw in one's character in the Greco-Roman world. Greek culture thought compassion to be an unenlightened human weakness. The Romans believed it destroyed one's dignity, so Jesus' revelation that God's realm is one of generosity and grace was dangerous on many levels. The apostles entrusted to this task are asked to risk their safety and minister boldly. They must depend entirely on God for all their needs. Many whom the disciples encounter will be unreceptive, and Jesus' instructions regarding these people seem harsh. However, this was seen as urgent work and the disciples were urged to go where the likelihood of acceptance was greatest.

Being a disciple does not insulate people and communities of faith from hard times, and the gospel writer reassures the reader that God is a guiding and sustaining presence even in those times.

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God calls the church to carry on Jesus' work of bringing God's love into the world, looking on all people with compassion and care. We may encounter suffering as we follow God's leading, but we are assured that we can trust in God to sustain us on the way. God keeps God's promises, sometimes in wildly unexpected and unknowable ways.

Use Storytelling to Ask Questions

Bruno Bettelheim's introduction to *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* includes a story about a young child whose mother reads a "Jack and the Beanstalk" story at bedtime. As she tucks the child into bed, the child asks, "Mommy, are there really giants?" The mother, wanting to help her child feel safe, is just about to answer reassuringly, "Of course not, Sweetie. You're safe; no giants will bother you tonight," but there is just enough of a pause before she speaks to allow the child to continue, "Because sometimes I feel small, like I am surrounded by giants." Had the mother not waited for the rest of her child's question or had quickly pronounced a reassuring answer, the conversation that actually followed – which began with her invitation "Tell me why and when you feel small ..." – would not have happened. The door to that teachable moment would have been closed, a missed opportunity for a meaningful interaction.

Object lessons are closer to what could have happened in that conversation between mother and child – a closed door that comes with a defined answer, and often, a concluding moral. "On the other hand, stories are closer to what did happen that night, with an open invitation to follow-up questions, which can be asked in the moment, or later. Why did a certain character do or say that? What happened next? How do I feel? What if? What's next? In short, *listening and asking* are more valuable tools in education than *declaring*. The approach

to storytelling and story-writing put forward in this book fosters questions and questioning.

The Power of Storytelling in Worship and Education: a Practical Guide by Jed Griswold. Copyright © 2022 Jed Griswold, Wood Lake Publishing Inc. Used by permission.

For reflection

As Christ invites us into discipleship, then and now, we are challenged with big questions of what it means to be faithful in this moment. In the weeks ahead, we will be pushed to understand the nature of peace, who is really welcome in our community, especially women and minorities. In this tip on storytelling, Jed Griswold urges us to consider:

Q How do we tell our most important stories?

Q How do we listen well to the smaller stories?

Q What defences prevent us from listening to the story?

Q Why do we feel compelled to argue or question a storyteller? How do we argue lovingly and faithfully?

Q When has the community been so fractured that someone's story has gone unheard?

Q What changed when there was space to listen to this important story?

Q Where do we find pauses in our storytelling and listening?