

Next Sunday

August 13th, 2023, @ 10am
Pentecost +11 – Dream

Leader: Rev Young Dae Lee
Preacher: Rev Young Dae Lee
Holy Communion: Rev Young Dae Lee

Genesis 37:1–4, 12–28; Psalm 105:1–6, 16–22, 45b ;
Romans 10:5–15; Matthew 14:22–33

Church Council

Chair Richard Goodman
Secretary Sue Baglin
Treasurer John Baglin

Councillors Robert McAlpine (2024) Sue Baglin (2025)

Elders John Baglin (2025) Richard Goodman (2024)
Dinah Roepers (2024)

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

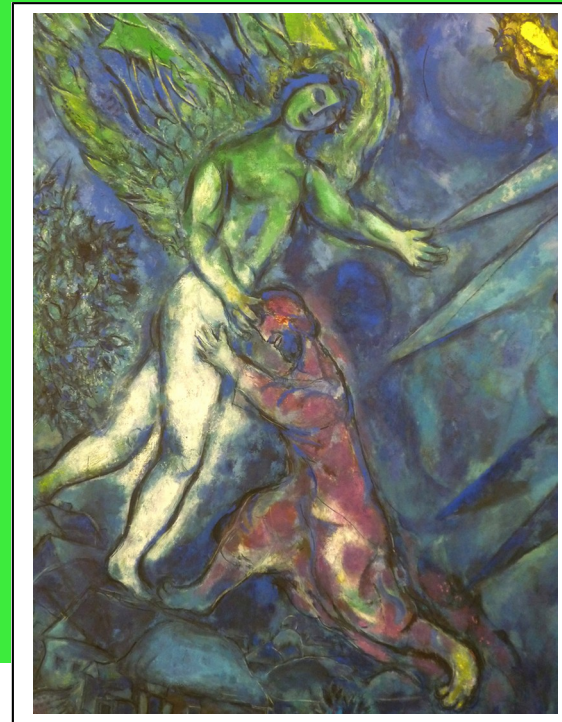
We share the journey of life and faith.

August 6th, 2023, @ 10am
Pentecost +10 – Strive

Leader: Dinah
Preacher: Dinah

Genesis 32:22–31; Psalm 17:1–7, 15; Romans 9:1–5;

Matthew 14:13–21



Wrestling with
God –
Marc Chagall

For details and information about our church activities and The Kogarah Storehouse, check out the websites:
kogarah.uca.org.au

For pastoral concerns, while Deok Hee is away,
please contact Dinah Roepers
on 0407 104 858

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. 8th August Church Council via Zoom @ 7pm
2. 22.08 Worship Task Group meeting @ 7pm via Zoom
3. 25.08 Community Lunch (Indonesian cuisine) + Service NSW booth, from 11:30
4. 31.08 Employment Expo + Oz Harvest lunch

Presbytery Events

- 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 Deok Hee's absence. 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. Russell Foxe, Deok Hee Cho 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. (Deok Hee will be on extended leave until early October.)

Pray for Türkiye, Syria, Ukraine, Russia.

Today, from our Presbytery Prayer List, we hold Greenacre Uniting Church in our prayers. Greenacre is linked to the Bankstown District Uniting Church.



Strive

Steadfast God, hold us through every struggle. Strengthen us to reach for your compassion so that we might find your blessing again. Amen.

An old hymn joyously tells us to “count our blessings, name them one by one.” This is easy to do during “good times,” but there are moments in our lives when it is hard to see where and how God is at work. Sometimes, it is too hard even to name a blessing, let alone count them! In the scripture readings this week, we are given an opportunity to wrestle with the concept of blessings and how they affect our lives and ministry.

Genesis 32:22–31 Jacob, the heel-snatcher, always gets what he wants. He wanted his brother Esau’s birthright, his father Isaac’s blessing, and Rachel’s hand in marriage. All came at a cost. The cost of tricking Esau out of his birthright and blessing was having to flee to another country. To marry Rachel, Jacob had to work for 14 years and marry Rachel’s sister, Leah. After upsetting his uncle and father-in-law, God prompts Jacob to return to his ancestral land.

This is not a joyous homecoming. Afraid his brother will attack, Jacob divides his wealth of livestock and servants before sending peace offerings to Esau with gifts and words of peace. The night before he is to re-enter his homeland and a reunion with Esau, Jacob sends his family across the river and settles, alone, in the camping place beside the river Jabbok.

Genesis 32:24 tells that “a man wrestled with him until daybreak.” It is significant that this struggle takes place at a river, a symbol of crossing. The description of the person with whom Jacob wrestles is vague. Perhaps this hints that the important part of the story is not who or what the “man” is but that Jacob wrestles.

Scholars have wrestled with the nature of “the man” in this account. What we do know is that Jacob, at some point, became convinced that whomever he was wrestling with could provide a blessing. Jacob wanted to receive this blessing regardless of the physical cost. Why did Jacob want a

blessing so badly? Perhaps Jacob strives for a blessing of healing and reconciliation. Perhaps he no longer wishes to be the “heel-snatcher” and is looking for a fresh start. Eventually, a blessing is granted – represented by his new name, Israel. It is the same name as the nation formed from Abraham’s and Jacob’s descendants. The traditional meaning of the name Israel is “God strives.” It is also understood as “may God rule” or “one who wrestles with God.”

Psalm 17:1–7, 15 reflects the persistence seen in Jacob. The psalmist steadfastly prays for deliverance from enemies and, like Jacob, will not give up seeking the blessing of God’s steadfast love. For the writer, encountering the face of God means turning away from the deceit and violence required by systems of domination and, instead, holding fast to the path of steadfast love.

Paul is willing to sacrifice his very being to extend the blessings of Christ to others. In **Romans 9:1–5**, Paul recounts his rich religious heritage as one of the children of Israel and the “great sorrow and unceasing anguish” (v. 2) he feels when considering some of these brothers and sisters in faith.

Matthew 14:13–21 contrasts the scarcity values of empire with the abundance values of God’s realm. The former leads the disciples and us to what seems like practical decisions, sending people off to fend for themselves. The realm-of-God values proclaimed by Jesus are ones of compassionate assurance that there is enough for all through the abundance of God.

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Some blessings, like Jacob’s mysterious wrestle, come from striving for something, perhaps something we don’t even know we are struggling to find. Blessings, like the feeding of the 5000, meet us on the other side of struggle so that we are only fully aware of the hunger and frustration and remain oblivious to the ways God is always working in our lives. How might we name the blessing we strive to claim?

Special Day Commentary

August 6 – Anniversary of the Bombing of Hiroshima

This day is the anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima, an event that reveals the terrifying power humankind has amassed, the extent to which we have used that power, and the critical discernment required by those in power who are asked to exercise authority like this.

A Prayer for Communion on Hiroshima Day

Hiroshima Day (August 6)

Called by name and known
within the very heart of God;
we gather in hope and respond with gladness.
Called to live without fear or favour daringly;
we gather in hope and respond with gladness.
God, who, in our limited understanding,
we call all powerful and mistakenly attribute
the atrocities of history to your hand,
come to us in this moment
of embodied vulnerability and weakness;
symbols of Christ's brokenness and conscious sacrifice –
our hands and spirit open
to new ways of love and being.
**Before it is too late, convince us of other ways
beyond self-protection and wanton violence,
even in the name of justice and a so-called peace.**
Teach us again the converting ways of Jesus,
wherein weakness is strength
and foolishness is wisdom.

**Wherein we are taken to places of powerlessness,
for the sake of a renewed and vital compassion.**

And so around this table,
held by a vision where all are welcome and free,
we eat and drink in hope;
a hope that engages us in the now,
giving voice to protest,
giving courage to resistance,
and giving enduring love to our actions.

**We eat and drink in communion with Christ
and with all who have suffered
or continue to suffer because of war.**

**May there be healing,
and may there be reconciliation born of forgiveness,
understanding, and mutual respect.**

In the name of Christ, we pray.

Amen.

