

## Next Sunday

**August 27th, 2023, @ 10am**  
**Pentecost +13 – Act**

Leader: Young Dae  
Preacher Young Dae  
Holy Communion Young Dae

Exodus 1:8—2:10; Psalm 124; Romans 12:1–8  
Matthew 16:13–20

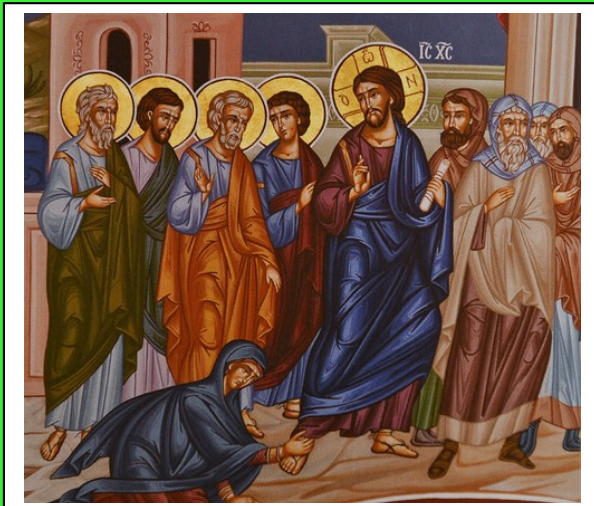
### Church Council

Chair Richard Goodman  
Secretary Sue Baglin  
Treasurer John Baglin

Councillors Robert M°Alpine (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 20th, 2023, @ 10am**  
**Pentecost +12 – Reach**

Leader: Richard  
Preacher Richard

Genesis 45:1–15 ; Psalm 133; Romans 11:1–2a, 29–32  
Matthew 15: (10–20), 21–28



For details and information about our church activities and The Kogarah Storehouse, check out the websites:  
[kogarah.uca.org.au](http://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. 22.08 Worship Task Group meeting @ 7pm via Zoom
2. 25.08 Community Lunch (Indonesian cuisine) + Service NSW booth, from 11:30
3. 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 work together in Deok Hee's absence. For Young Dae Lee as he guides us during 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 and Priya, Jim and Bobbie, Denis and Dolly, Jim Bird, 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 the people of Türkiye, Syria, Ukraine, Russia, Niger, Sudan. Today, from our Presbytery Prayer List, we hold Hurstville City UC in our prayers.*



# Reach

**Wise and loving God, when relationships are fractured, journey with us in the life-giving process of reconciliation. Fill us with patience and unconditional love so that we might forgive as we have been forgiven. In Christ. Amen.**

In God's presence, there is potential for forgiveness and restoration of community. Today's readings affirm this wisdom as Joseph and his brothers reach toward reconciliation, and the psalmist proclaims the goodness of family harmony. Paul extends the reach to include Jews and Gentiles, as does the woman who argues for her daughter's healing.

**Genesis 45:1–15** When we left Joseph last week, he was carried to Egypt as an enslaved person. His older brothers "hated him and could not speak peaceably to him" (Genesis 37:4). In today's focus, the saga moves to a place where "his brothers talked with him" (Genesis 45:15).

Joseph's reunion with his brothers is dramatic. People are sent away. The brothers move closer. Joseph sends his brothers to Jacob. Jacob is instructed to come to Goshen. Tender emotion fills the movement toward reconciliation. Joseph speaks to his brothers in Hebrew to reveal his identity, weeping. Joseph asks the brother to move "closer," crossing the boundary of space customarily kept around a ruler. Joseph tells of his life in the intervening years, moves

to embrace Benjamin, and then kisses all the brothers. The kiss was an important sign of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Curiously, Egyptian records of the time are not aware of Joseph. It is helpful to recall that the people of Israel are retelling their history. The stories of these ancient leaders in Genesis were written down when many of Jacob's ancestors lived in exile in Babylonia around 586–536 BCE. Joseph's story likely encouraged them and reassured them of God's continuing care for them. God would bring about their liberation and provide for their return to Judah. They would have a future as a nation.

God acts through Joseph and the events of that time to secure Israel's future. The covenant made with Abraham (Genesis 12:1–3; 15:5) will be maintained.

The story contrasts the reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers with his brothers' animosity. The brothers' short-term plan got rid of the dreamer Joseph. Joseph's long-term plan secured the brothers' future well-being.

The brothers' previous actions raise justice issues. They are accountable for their behaviour, but justice is found in Joseph's compassion and forgiveness – grounded in his relationship with God. There is no place for vengeance. Joseph's compassion and generosity model God's grace for the people of Israel. God's providence will be vindicated. God's grace secures the future.

The storyteller skilfully shifts the focus from Joseph's leadership to God's provision for the benefit of Jacob's family. Joseph provides food, safe passage, a family reunion, and land, securing a positive future for generations to come.

God calls and “ordains” individuals to specific purposes. They become catalysts for God’s redemptive acts.

God’s people are to live in just relationships. This way, they will maintain the integrity of their covenant relationship with God. **Psalm 133** rejoices in the blessings of sacred unity among many people.

Paul, in **Romans 11:1–2a, 29–32**, proclaims that God has not rejected the ancestors of Jacob, the people of Israel. God’s promises are irrevocable. Christ seeks the reconciliation of all people.

In **Matthew 15:(10–20), 21–28**, Jesus encourages disciples to grow in understanding and faith by turning away from the practices of those whose heart intentions are evil. When his harsh words put a barrier between him and the woman seeking help for her daughter, Jesus models this growth as he reconsiders his response and recognizes that she, too, is included in the grace of God.

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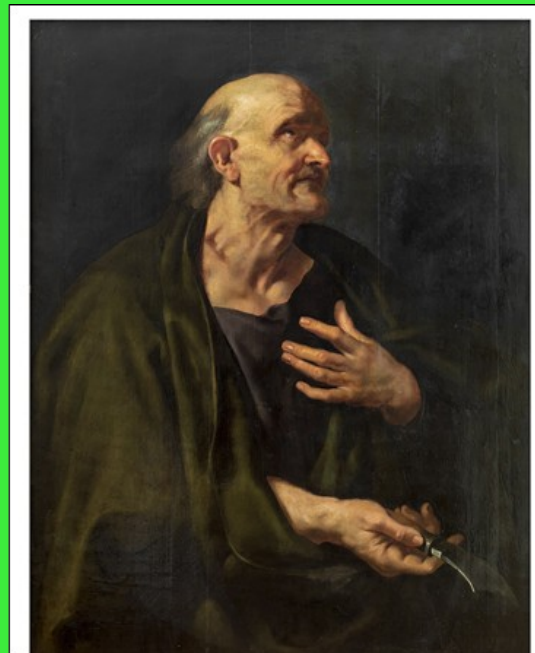
*Human relationships are often tricky, and events might conspire against healthy and fulfilling life together. God empowers us to restore fractured relationships. God’s presence in reconciliation brings a new, sacred unity to community. How do you embrace opportunities for reconciliation and forgiveness as individuals and as a church?*

## **Special Day Commentary**

**August 24 – St. Bartholomew the Apostle**

While appearing in all of the lists of the twelve disciples, Bartholomew’s name does not appear anywhere else in the New Testament, and very little is known about him. Some scholars

believe that he may be the same person as Nathanael, called along with Philip at the beginning of John’s gospel.



## ***In the Moment of Forgiveness***

***In the moment of forgiveness, change and transformation can happen in an encounter with others. While the word forgiveness is not used in the story of Joseph and his brothers, and Joseph never speaks the words “I forgive,” his display of emotions and his actions express it. The moment of forgiveness changes lives. The act of forgiveness is a choice born out of past hurt and a belief in a future of reconciliation and peace.***



### ***Moment #1***

***Ian Morrison is a retired minister and past-Associate Secretary for Canada Ministries responsible for Native Ministries, with The Presbyterian Church in Canada. He has served as the Church's representative at the hearings in the Independent Assessment Process for residential school survivors when individual claims of abuse are assessed. He describe this role as his "most difficult and rewarding responsibility."***

The claimant, their lawyer, the adjudicator, a government representative, a health worker if the claimant desires, and a church representative (if the claimant agrees) attend. The adjudicator invites the claimant to tell their story – often a difficult task (sometimes this is the first time the person has told anyone of the abuse suffered). A skilful adjudicator elicits the information required to assess the abuse level and decide the compensation. After the claimant's lawyer and the government representative speak, the church representative addresses the claimant. I speak of how I became involved with the PCC, how I learned only of the good things that happened at the schools, and how shocked I was to learn that my church was no different from the others. Then I speak of my healing journey and the church's struggle to adopt a confession to God and Aboriginal peoples. I usually read aloud The Confession's Sections 5–7 and say the church asked me to share this confession, to apologize for any hurt that the claimant has

experienced through the neglect of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and to ask for the claimant's forgiveness.

At one hearing after I spoke, the claimant stood up opposite me, walked around the table, passed his lawyer and the health worker until he reached me. He reached out and gave me a firm handshake and hug, saying that the church was forgiven. He returned to his seat and stated, with tears in his eyes, "this is the happiest day of my life" because the church admitted what it did was wrong... It is a reminder that healing and reconciliation cannot take place without personal contact.

### ***Moment #2***

***Immaculée Ilibagiza was the 2007 Mahatma Gandhi International Award for Peace and Reconciliation recipient. She survived the terrifying Rwanda genocide, but all her family died (except one brother who was out of the country): her mother, father, two brothers, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. I was told that one of our former Hutu neighbours was the leader of a gang that had killed my mother and my brother. When I heard that he was being held in a local prison, I decided to go see him. I didn't know what I would do when I saw him face to face. When a guard brought the man from his cell, I hardly recognized this former neighbour, the father of children I had known as I was growing up. His hair was***

*dishevelled, and bits of food clung to his unshaven face. He stared at me defiantly. Then when I quietly but sincerely said three short words: "I forgive you," peace swept over my soul. I wanted to be free of hatred because I had seen what the hatred of this man and other Hutus had done. His defiant look melted away, and he bowed his head. I'm sure it was in shame for what he had done. As I walked out of the prison, the Tutsi man who ran the prison turned to me in anger. "How could you forgive him?" he said. The man had lost his children during the genocide. A year later, I met him again, and he told me I had changed his life. He had been so full of hate and anger that he was miserable. When he saw that I could forgive and move on with my life after all I had been through and lost, he knew this was also what he wanted to do.*

**"Forgiveness is...**

**the step we need to take to be free of the ongoing negative effects of past injustice. It has transformative qualities not found elsewhere. To decide to forgive is to create a different future from one controlled by events from the past... It means remembering the past in a different way, leaving one free to develop the future... The person forgiven may or may not appreciate what has happened or may not benefit from the action. But the one who does the forgiving will always be**

**rewarded with a greater degree of empowerment and personal growth in love and self-esteem."**

*Jim Consedine, prison chaplain and coordinator of Restorative Justice Network, New Zealand.*