

## Next Sunday

### September 24th, 2023, @ 10am Season of Creation 4 – River

Leader: Young-Dae

Preacher Young-Dae

Holy Communion Young-Dae

Genesis 8:20–22; 9:12–17; Psalm 104:27–33;

Revelation 22:1–5; Matthew 28:1–10

#### Church Council

Chair

Richard Goodman

Secretary

Sue Baglin

Treasurer

John Baglin

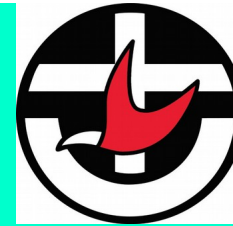
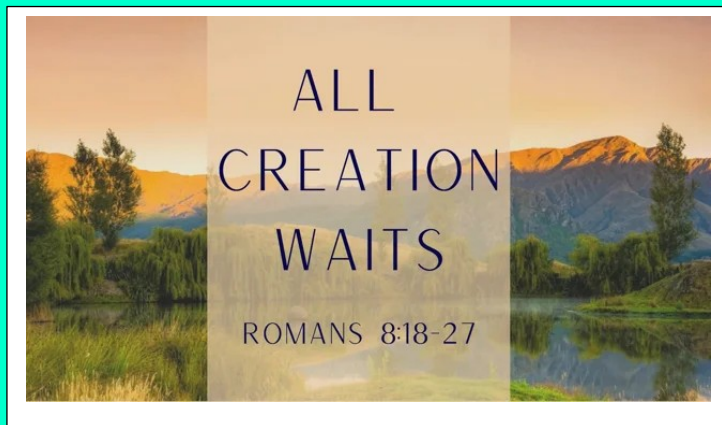
Councillors

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.*

### September 17th, 2023, @ 10am Season of Creation 3 – Wilderness/Outback

Leader: Sue B

Preacher John B

Joel 1:8–10, 17–20; Psalm 18:6–19; Romans 8:18–27

Matthew 3:13–4:2 or Mark 1:9–13



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  
**There are fewer cases at the moment, but  
there is still a need to be careful.**

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<sup>nd</sup> September -11:30 -1:00 - Community Lunch (Ukrainian or Arabic) (Check in case postponed)

Presbytery Events

- 9 December – Christmas Event for whole of Presbytery

Season of Creation

- 24<sup>th</sup> September      4. River (Young-Dae)

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 Matagi Vilitama, Brian and Rhonda , Prema and Priya, Jim and Bobbie, Denis and Dolly, Jim Bird, Naghuia, 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, Morocco.*

*Today, the people from Georges River Presbytery will be Lakemba Uniting Church and their minister Rev Graeme Watkins.*



# Wilderness/Outback

**I am Wilderness. Holy One, my kin and I thank you for the wild, beautiful, eternally changing world that is always beyond our understanding. Help us to find wonder and awe, challenge and invitation, life beyond death with you. Amen.**

The Season of Creation offers intentional time to consider the role of all creation in Bible stories and in our lives and to remember that humans are just one part of the ever-unfolding story of God's creation.

This week's texts call us to reconnect with our special relationship with Wilderness, places at once empty and full in their invitation to relinquish control and find God's presence more deeply. How will we sit with Wilderness and enjoy their company, hear their story, and find ourselves invited into worship of Creator with them?

**Joel 1:8–10, 17–20** notices that the ruins of the fields and cities of Israel mirror the distress of the wild places, where the wild animals thirst and fires rage. In a different lens, Joel's words sound like the lament of a person devastated by drought and wildfire. When comparing these two epochs, one wonders what Wilderness was to Joel. Were they a waste of time and space? Were they harsh, to be avoided by people? Or a being with whom God is found? All of the above? Regardless of what Wilderness meant to him, one thing is clear: the suffering of Wilderness is one with the suffering of people.

**Psalms 18:6–19** shows how Wilderness mirrors human life and provides signs of God's work in our lives. Here we experience all creation in a relationship with God. The imagery depicts a world of grandeur and grace. The testament that creation provides is convincing and compelling. In their grandeur, it seems almost as if Wilderness is a kind of temple to God.

The theme of the oneness of creation comes back in sharp relief in **Romans 8:18–27**. Paul writes a personal message to the community of Jesus' followers in Rome knowing that life may seem hopeless to the Christ followers living under the rule of imperial Rome. This sense of being in a wilderness is compounded by dissension within the Christian community. Paul will deal with it all when he gets to Rome (1:10–13); in the meantime, this is his letter of encouragement.

Paul writes as a faithful Jew, shaped by traditional Hebrew narratives such as the expulsion of the human ones from the Garden of Eden. The third chapter of Genesis tells of the curse on the land resulting in human suffering, including a woman's pain in childbirth and a man's toil on the land. Paul links the future of humankind with the future of creation itself; the suffering of the oppressed community is like the suffering of creation. It follows for Paul that all creation waits for release from this imposed bondage, just as much as humankind in particular longs for it.

What does prayer sound like in such a time? Two of Paul's words are key: groaning and sighing. Paul hears the groaning of his community and of creation. And Paul lives buoyed in hope by his conviction that the will of God, through Spirit, is at work in all of creation "with sighs too deep for words" (v. 26). That is as close to describing the essence of Wilderness, both real and metaphoric, as we may ever come.

Perhaps it is those sighs Jesus hears when he walks into the wilderness of Jordan, insisting on receiving John's baptism, as told in **Matthew 3:13–4:2** and in **Mark 1:9–13**. Later, Jesus tells his followers that the experience was like "a voice from heaven" (v. 17). No sooner has Jesus been immersed in water than he is thrust into *midbar* (wilderness or outback). Why was Jesus "led up by the Spirit" (4:1) into Jordan's wilderness rather than the Garden of Eden? This was a time to receive the gift of *midbar* – unwavering clarity of purpose, held in a deep relationship with Spirit.

• • • • •

In this Season of Creation, take time to hear creation's voice. What is the voice of Wilderness/Outback? What does Wilderness have to say about God's good things? Imagine being in a place of wilderness for the sole purpose of hearing the groaning of creation resonating with your own groaning concerns for God's world. Imagine being there to receive the sighing promise of Spirit.

# Hope

Today is the day of creation.  
Any day that you choose to act,  
choose to hope,  
is the day of creation –  
a day when anything is possible.  
The future is dark,  
but it is in darkness that babies are conceived,  
that seeds sprout,  
that death turns into life.  
Celebrate the darkness,  
because in it may be hidden  
new opportunities,  
and new life.  
Celebrate life.  
Celebrate your victories.  
And may the God of hope,  
the God of second chances,  
the God of resurrection  
bless you with strength and courage  
today, and all the days of your life.  
Amen.

*Used by permission.*

*by Kellyann Wolfe*

*Copyright © Kellyann Falkenberg Wolfe.*

## ***Lake Mungo National Park***

***Senator Jane Stewart writes:***

***I want to tell you a story about my country.***

***Lake Mungo is a vast and dry and landscape in southwest NSW, 700 kilometres north of Melbourne and a couple of hours north of my hometown, Swan Hill.***

***42 000 years ago - the lake was actually a lake – filled with water and part of the Willandra lakes system. Mungo woman and Mungo man lived and died on these shores. When their remains were unearthed in the 1960's and 70's as some of the earliest modern remains found in the world. Lake Mungo became a site of international attention and a source of national pride.***

***I am a proud Mutthi Mutthi and Wamba Wamba woman with links to land all along the Murray River. Mungo Man and Mungo Lady are my ancestors.***

***This is our country and Mungo Man and Mungo Lady are part of our history.***

***But our constitution doesn't recognise Australia's Traditional Owners. It doesn't mention our nations long history or the oldest living continuous culture in the entire world.***

***It's time to change that.***



***Lake Mungo looking towards the Walls of China***