

## Next Sunday

### October 8<sup>th</sup> , 2023, @ 10am Pentecost + 19 - Covenant and Community

Leader: Deok Hee  
Preacher Deok Hee  
Holy Communion Deok Hee

(We hope to welcome Deok Hee back today from his sick leave.)

Exodus 20:1–4, 7–9, 12–20; Psalm 19; Philippians 3:4b–14

Matthew 21:33–46

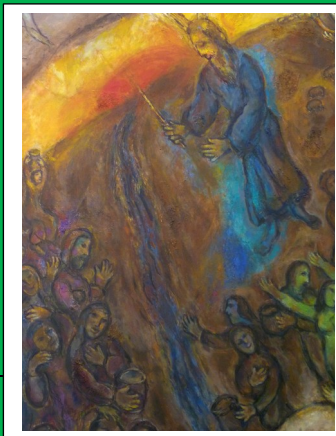
Church Council

Chair Richard Goodman  
Secretary Sue Baglin  
Treasurer John Baglin

Councillors Robert M<sup>c</sup>Alpine (2024) Sue Baglin (2025)

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

Safe Church Contact Person Richard Goodman



Moses striking the  
rock – Marc  
Chagall



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.*

### October 1st, 2023, @ 10am Pentecost + 18 Questions & Quarrels

Leader: Rev Steve Aynsley  
Preacher Rev Steve Aynsley

Exodus 17:1–7; Psalm 78:1–4, 12–16  
Philippians 2:1–13; Matthew 21:23–32



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. A new strain  
was detected last week.**

Masks are highly recommended given the vulnerability of  
some of our members. Please do not come in if you are feeling  
unwell.

**Watch this space for any changes.**

• **Planning Ahead**

1. 19<sup>th</sup> October Kogarah UC Church Council @ 7pm via Zoom
2. 1<sup>st</sup> November Kogarah Storehouse Board of Management AGM (Time TBA)

3. Presbytery Events

- 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*

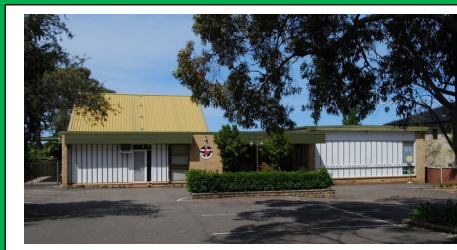
*The team, parents and children in the Early Learning Centre.*

*Those who are sick, sad or lonely:*

*We pray especially today for 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. Libya*

*Today, the people from Georges River Presbytery will be praying for Lugarno-Peakhurst UC and their minister Rev Il-Woong Kim.*



# Questions and Quarrels

**Holy One, Wilderness is our companion still. Even as we face the challenges, may we learn from Wilderness the gift of not being in control. Amen.**

We are with Wilderness again. With a lack of control. With questions, questions, questions. Remember, God is here. God receives our questions, even when we pose them through a pout or with a temper. God invites us to enter into the wrestling and resolving of the questions, and not expect easy answers!

**Exodus 17:1–7** The people of Israel are wandering in the wilderness, led by Moses and Aaron. Since leaving Egypt, this is the third time there have been mumblings from the crowd. First, the people complained that the water of Marah was bitter (15:24–24). They grumbled and complained again when they found themselves hungry (16:2–15). Now, the people are camped at Rephidim and cannot find water. We might wonder whether there was no water or they did not know how to look for it in this new place.

The people lash out at Moses. How could they be sure that God is still with them? Despite their deliverance from Egypt and the experience of daily food provisions, their reliance on God's sustaining presence falters again, and they accuse Moses of intending to kill them.

Moses, in turn, cries out to God. "What shall I do with this people?" We might wonder if Moses is (but for God) alone in his leadership role, for Aaron is conspicuous in his absence.

When Moses strikes the rock, water rushes forth. The springs found there are named Massah and Meribah, Hebrew words that recall the Israelites' quarrelling and testing. Is this a reminder not to raise complaints to God? Or might such naming recall for the people the quarrelling and testing *and* the response of God's presence with them in the wilderness? Is it always rude to complain? What if the intent is to inform and comes across as a complaint? What if asking questions is how we find deeper understanding?

The question "Is God among us or not?" is a question that people of faith have wrestled with throughout the ages. Likewise, this will not be the last time that the people of Israel grow anxious and fearful on their journey to a new land. Still, as is often the case for them, this time of crisis leads them to deepen their trust in God's presence.

Trust that God is among us is evident in **Psalms 78:1–4, 12–16**. God's provision is celebrated with joy. The lectionary skips over verses 5–11, the memory of the people's rebellion against God. As a remedy against this happening again, the psalmist calls the people to remember and recite accounts of God's powerful works.

In **Philippians 2:1–13**, Paul declares, "God is with us," and to live in God's name is to serve all. When Paul implores the community to "work out your salvation" (v. 12), he is not saying salvation is earned but that the community must take the steps necessary to reach and express their complete wholeness. God calls; humans respond.

**Matthew 21:23–32** How does the tone of the questions affect how we hear this story? We might hear the question posed to Jesus as an attack, "Who do you think you are?" Jesus' response may follow as a defence or counter-attack. We may see a mischievous attempt by Jesus to trip up the chief priests and elders. But what if the chief priests and elders are genuinely interested in the source of Jesus' authority because they find it

intriguing, inviting, and unsettling? What if Jesus is inviting the priests and elders to give voice to what they suspect is true but will shift the ground beneath their feet dramatically? What if...?

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Questions in the stories from Exodus and Matthew are not wrong, not for being questions or even critiques or challenges. But how we understand the way these questions are posed matters; it permits us to express frustration or shuts us down; it permits us to doubt, enquire, explore, or shuts us down.

How we approach God matters. Respect does not necessarily mean “handle with care” as if the stories, or God, might break if we push back, ask questions, get mad, or name our confusion or frustration.

## Special Days Commentary

### October 1 – World(wide) Communion Sunday

This day is observed in many parts of the world, although not by all churches. Some denominations produce special worship and learning resources for this day, and some ecumenical agencies encourage churches to acknowledge that on this day, perhaps more than any other, Christians around the world are – symbolically – gathered at a common table.

### October 4 – St. Francis of Assisi

Generally known as a lover of birds, animals, and creation, statues of St. Francis frequently appear in gardens – Francis of Assisi was also a strong champion of the poor and outcast of his time and society. The son of a wealthy Italian cloth

merchant, Francis underwent a deep spiritual transformation. He lived a humble, peaceful life, rebuilding the ruins of church buildings as places of worship and refuge.



### Feast of St Vincent de Paul (27<sup>th</sup> September)



"You will find out that charity is a heavy burden to carry, heavier than the kettle of soup and the full basket. But you will keep your gentleness and your smile. It is not enough to give soup and bread. This the rich can do. You are the servant of the poor, always smiling and good-humoured. They are your masters, terribly sensitive and exacting master you will see. And the uglier and the dirtier they will be, the more unjust and insulting, the more love you must give them. It is only for your love alone that the poor will forgive you the bread you give to them."

~ Vincent de Paul

Let us give thanks today for this humble man and the members of the society named in his honour who live out his message day after day. May they and all to whom they minister receive grace upon grace this day. Amen.

(From Jamberoo Abbey NSW)

### ***St Vincent de Paul***

***And a prayer for the end of the Season of Creation (also from Jamberoo Abbey) by Stephanie Dowrick***

#### *Closing Prayer (from Stephanie Dowrick)*

May we use the earth's treasures modestly and gratefully

**May we plant thoughtfully, tend, harvest and give thanks**

May we swim in the oceans and rivers with wonder

**May we regard the sky's stars with awe**

May we honour the light of the moon

**May we be warmed by the sun.**

May we protect ourselves and each other from what is harsh

**May we stay open to what is tender and renewing**

May we touch and be touched by the life force that we share

**And, most humbly, may we know Spirit in it all**

May all with whom we share this earth live in peace.

**Blessed be.**





**Young Dae farewelled  
by the Kogarah  
Storehouse**



**Jessica, our NILS person,  
(2<sup>nd</sup> from the left) is  
farewelled by  
Storehouse staff.**