

## Next Sunday

### October 29th, 2023, @ 10am Pentecost + 22 – God's Story, Our Stories

Leader: Richard  
Preacher: Richard

Deuteronomy 34:1–12; Psalm 90:1–6, 13–17  
1 Thessalonians 2:1–8; Matthew 22:34–46

#### 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



My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.



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 22nd, 2023, @ 10am Pentecost + 21 – Hearts in Holy Rhythm

Leader: Deok Hee  
Preacher: Deok Hee  
Holy Communion: Deok Hee

Exodus 33:12–23; Psalm 99; 1 Thessalonians 1:1–10  
Matthew 22:15–22

Render to Caesar  
the things that are Caesar's,



Matthew 22:21

And to God  
the things that are God's.

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,  
please contact Rev Deok Hee Cho  
on 0401 975 745

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. Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October Storehouse Community Lunch 11:30-1:30
2. 1<sup>st</sup> November Kogarah Storehouse Board of Management AGM (Time TBA)
3. 16<sup>th</sup> December Possible Storehouse/Church Christmas celebration

#### 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 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, health care workers in this time of COVID-19, including Richard, Millin and Roseline Goodman and Dorothy Makasa and Elin.*

*For others whom we name in our hearts.*

*Pray for the people of Türkiye, Syria, Ukraine, Russia, Niger, Sudan, Morocco. Libya. Israel and Palestine*

*We give thanks for Deok Hee, Ellin, Christopher and their family and their safe return to us, and especially Deok Hee who has made such an improvement after his sick leave.*

*Today, the people from Georges River Presbytery will be praying for Padstow-Panania (Grace) UC and their pastor Becky Douglass.*



# Hearts in Holy Rhythm

**With trust broken, we feel alienated from you, O God. Remember your promise, we pray. May we remember our right, loyal response to you. Amen.**

We do not align ourselves with God and God's holy way once, and it remains so forever. Our spiritual disciplines renew our alignment with God's holy way, again and again, a constant returning after each time we turn away.

**Exodus 33:12–23** It was one thing for the people of Israel to be freed from bondage; it was another thing to live as free people. The experience of captivity to an imperial system of domination was never far from their hearts and minds. It would take time for them to learn a new way of being and living together in community. Captivity in Egypt taught them there was little or no mercy in systems designed to keep people under control and maintain power for those with authority and privilege. Nor was there much of anything representing goodness in these systems. Now, having so quickly failed God, Moses, and each other by breaking their covenantal relationship, the people have every reason to expect retribution.

In contrast to these imperial norms, Moses seeks reassurance from God that the people, once freed from slavery, will no longer need to live by these old patterns. In seeking reassurance, Moses is unwilling to relinquish the hope and belief that broken relationships can be mended, and covenant can be restored. Yet, at the same time, Moses never minimizes or glosses over the harm done when trust is broken. Repair work is needed.

The verses preceding this week's text make clear that the violation of trust has created distance between God and the people. God intends to

keep that distance. Fortunately for the people, Moses never makes light of the broken trust but instead calls upon God to show this newly forming community what it means to live as a liberated people of faith. Moses asks God to reveal God's glory, made visible and evident in God's goodness and mercy.

**Psalm 99** is a song of celebration and worship for the one who is revealed as a lover of justice, who establishes equity, and executes justice and righteousness. This is the one who guided the people of Israel out of slavery and into an identity as a free people. The people were far from perfect, at times failing the guidance they were offered, but the resulting brokenness was never ignored and was ultimately healed through the forgiveness of the one who set them free.

Paul expresses this relationship with God in **1 Thessalonians 1:1–10**, where he affirms and gives thanks for the faith of his friends, stating that the good news, God's convincing word, came through the Holy Spirit – another example of the power of the presence of God.

In contrast, **Matthew 22:15–22** tells the story of discerning taxes, where the image of Caesar on the coinage settles the question – “Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's and unto God the things that are God's” (v. 21). While this can be seen as an example of the separation of church and state it also harkens back to the wilderness experiences of discerning and following God's guiding presence.

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*We are reminded this week of the importance of being our whole selves in our relationships. Moses attempts to experience God as he understands the Creator, but God is bigger than we can perceive. And yet, God still attempts to be in relationship with us. Relationships are important, and a relationship with God is paramount. What does it mean to be on a journey of friendship with the One who desires to be in a loving relationship with us? Perhaps the transparency of Moses' relationship with God can help to model the relationships we attempt to build with each other.*

### *How some aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders reacted to the Voice referendum outcome.*

On Yuggera and Yugambeh Country the warming sun has risen, birds are singing outside the window.

But it feels so hard for us to lift our heads to sing.

On Bunurong Country, the rain falls in unison with our tears of lament.

After an enormous year of advocacy and prayer, the result of the referendum has taken the air out of our lungs. We are left with questions...

What do I do with this grief and all the emotion?

How do I hold the weight of this?

What do we say to our beautiful movement that is Common Grace?

It is with weighty tears that we first say thank you. It has been a long journey of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples calling for justice and change that led us to this momentous moment in our nation's history. For all those who have been a part of the 'Listen to the Heart: Christians for Voice and Justice' campaign and those who have been in the generations before us faithfully fighting for justice, truth-telling, and the flourishing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples - we thank you.

Although we are heavy with pain and grief, we are aware that now is not the time to rush ahead. Wisdom tells us that we must be present to and listen to the pain, distress, and exasperation rising in waves within and around us. For us as Aboriginal Christian women, this means taking the time to sit in the sadness, taking time to rest and connect to Country, and bringing our groans of distress to God through prayer. In doing so, we honour the gravity of our lament for the setback this result brings to the

decades of faithful work of our Aboriginal people and allies towards reconciliation and justice in these lands.

We are proud that the movement of Common Grace was present at this moment. You were with us. In solidarity with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. We are proud that we took the time to deeply listen to and be led by our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Christian Leaders; of centering the past and present calls for love and justice; of having countless conversations and praying faithfully.

Even as we lament, we draw solace and comfort from this: that we still stand united, and that there are so many of us willing to act together for change and for justice.

Common Grace, of course, will respond. Our journey of seeking Jesus and justice will continue, and we will provide the next steps on this journey as a movement. But those next steps are not for today. Today we feel, we grieve, we pray, we hold.

We know that hope will come.

But today we will stop to feel the sadness.

And then we'll be back.

We yearn for God's kingdom to come.

We have been incredibly blessed by the Common Grace movement's passion to pray for voice and justice, and we humbly ask for continued prayers for:

- Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community who are in dismay
- Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders who have been so faithful and strong
- Our Elders and old people
- Our children
- The seeds that have been sown to continue to grow and take root



- Continued momentum to build from the movement, the conversations, and the exposure of the reality of racism
- Love and Hope

With sadness and heavy hearts, we thank you again.

In solidarity,

Bianca, Safina and the Common Grace team

[This is a slightly edited version of a letter sent out by the Common Grace team in response to the referendum vote.]



#### A Prayer for Israel and Palestine

**God of Comfort,**

send your Spirit to encompass all those whose lives

are torn apart by violence and death in Israel and Palestine.

You are the Advocate of the oppressed

and the One whose eye is on the sparrow.

Let arms reach out in healing, rather than aggression.

Let hearts mourn rather than militarize.

**God of Justice,**

give strength to those whose long work for a just peace

might seem fruitless now. Strengthen their resolve.

Do not let them feel alone. Show us how to support their work

and bolster their courage. Guide religious leaders to model

unity and reconciliation across lines of division.

Guide political leaders to listen with their hearts as they seek peace and pursue it.

Help all people choose the rigorous path of just peace and disavow violence.

**God of Love,**

we lift up Palestine and Israel — its people, its land, its creatures.

War is a monster that consumes everything in its path.

Peace is a gift shared at meals of memory with Christians, Muslims, and Jews.

Let us burn incense, not children. Let us break bread, not bodies.

Let us plant olive groves, not cemeteries.

We beg for love and compassion to prevail

on all your holy mountains.

**God of Hope,**

we lift up the cities of the region: Gaza City and Tel Aviv,

Ramallah and Ashkelon, Deir El Balah and Sderot,

so long divided, yet so filled with life and creativity.

Come again to breathe peace on your peoples

that all may recognize you.

**God of Mercy,**

even now work on the hearts of combatants

to choose life over death, reconciliation over retaliation,

restoration over destruction. Help us resist antisemitism in all its forms,

especially in our own churches. All people, Israelis and Palestinians,

deserve to live in peace and unafraid, with a right to determine their future together.

**God of the Nations,**

let not one more child or elder be sacrificed on altars of political expediency.

Keep safe all people from unjust leaders who would exploit

vulnerability for their own distorted ends.

Give wise discernment to those making decisions to pursue peace.

Provide them insight into fostering well-being, freedom, and thriving for all.

Teach all of us to resolve injustices with righteousness, not rockets.

Guard our hearts against retaliation, and give us hearts for love alone.

**Strengthen our faith in you, O God of All Flesh,**

even when we don't have clear answers,

so that we may still offer ourselves non-violently

for the cause of peace.

Amen. © Rose Marie Berger Sojourners October 9, 2023