



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.*

March 10th, 2024, @ 10am
Lent

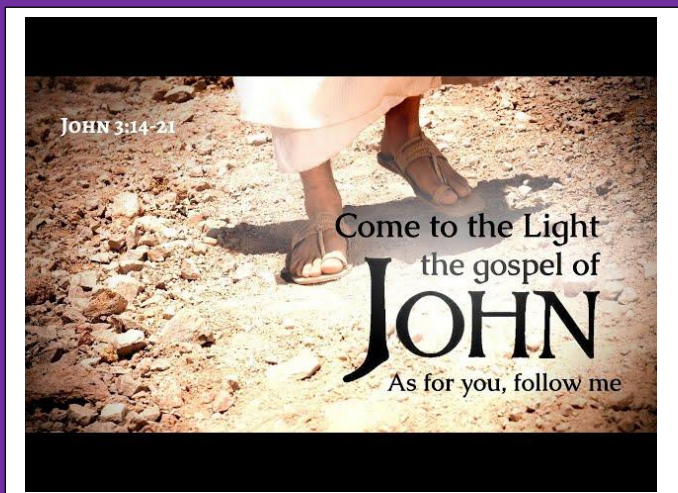
Leader: Deok Hee

Preacher Deok Hee

Holy Communion Deok Hee

Numbers 21:4–9; Psalm 107:1–3, 17–22; Ephesians 2:1–10;

John 3:14–21



**For details and information about our church activities
and The Kogarah Storehouse, check out the websites:
kogarah.uca.org.au and
<https://www.kogarahstorehouse.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 is an increasing number of cases at
the moment, so there is still a need to be
careful. New strains have been detected
recently.**

Word for the Day

The context of the John 3:14–21 is the well-known story of Nicodemus seeking out Jesus by night. In the verses preceding the passage, we read that Nicodemus has expressed wonder or confusion at the idea of being born again from above. Jesus has pointed out that Nicodemus has a teaching role but still does not understand. He says that the one who can teach about God's reign and God's spirit is the Son of Man (sometimes translated as the 'Human One') who has been with God, that is, Jesus. Jesus then draws on the story from Numbers 21 to offer an analogy of the healing that will be possible through setting eyes on this Human One. Just as Moses lifted up the snake, so the Human One will be lifted up (on the cross) and exalted (by God). Central to the reading is the well-known verse of John 3:16. Can we hear this afresh and let it wash over us? Jesus here is saying that just as God provided healing in the wilderness, in the same way, God provides a pathway to full life by sending the Son. Full life does not mean anything goes but involves fronting up to actions, systems, and structures that quash life for others. The healing in the wilderness doesn't remove the people from the wilderness; they still have to make their life in that place. In the same way, seeing God at work in Jesus on the cross does not remove Jesus' followers from the world but gives us eyes to see that it is the world that God loves and works to make whole.

There are discomfiting images in both the John and Numbers passages. How do we feel, for example, about God bringing the poisonous snakes in the Numbers passage in response to the people complaining? Or, do we notice that the John passage includes many binary pairings? These pairs contrast the good life that the writer understands as God's impetus and aim for the world with the real possibility of missing out on this fullness. However, as we read this passage and others like it, it is important to be aware that these binaries have often been weaponised. For example, light versus dark imagery has been used to contribute to racist ideologies including white supremacy.

Ideas for Reflection

- The story from Numbers is strange and harsh. Imagine yourself in the place of the various characters: Moses, God, the Israelites, the snakes. What do you discover from placing yourself in these different positions in the story?
- John 3:16 is arguably the most famous verse of Scripture within popular culture. What does this verse mean for you? How do you explain its meaning?
- What do you think about the idea that in the story with the snakes and for followers of Jesus healing is offered by God, but does not remove the people from their ongoing and everyday situation? What implication does this have for a relationship with God, with each other, and with the whole world?
- Anne Lamott writes that there are three prayers: 'Help. Thanks. Wow.' Do these help you to engage with these passages?



As we marked International Women's Day 2024, Abbey Sim charted a history of women forming community, championing justice and following Jesus.

On March 8, 1917, female textile workers rallied in Petrograd, Russia, for peace, food security and an end to the czarist regime in their country. Within the week, women were granted the right to vote. The early development of International Women's Day is closely connected to these demonstrations. They showcase the power of ordinary people in coming together to bring about change, justice, equality and inclusion.

On March 8, 1919, my great-grandmother, Jean Kingston, was born on Yuin Country in the NSW town of Candelo. With no local high school, she repeated Year 6 three times to continue her schooling until she was old enough to be employed. Nanna Jean's faith in God sustained her throughout her life, ultimately introducing me to the Methodist, and later Uniting, church traditions where I, too, have developed my discipleship.

On March 8, 2020, I attended the Melbourne Cricket Ground amongst a crowd of 86,174 spectators for the final of the Women's T20 Cricket World Cup between Australia and India. Over recent decades, the growth of women's sport has resulted in increased visibility for female athletes and more opportunities for girls to get active. This culminated in the FIFA Women's World Cup, played in Australia and New Zealand in 2023.

During Prayers for the People offered by my congregation at Leichhardt Uniting Church, parishioners expressed their thanks and prayers for the Matildas. Not for one team or the other to win, but because they were grateful for the displays of community and inclusion which were integral to the tournament, especially for women of colour and people from migrant backgrounds. For women passionate about sport, justice and even theology, the experience is sadly often not inclusion, but isolation. Thankfully, this is changing, but it relies upon all of us to continue inspiring young girls to exercise their beautiful bodies and minds to express the gifts God has blessed them with – especially for those who colour outside the lines of what our culture deems to be feminine.

On March 8, 2021, plans were afoot for the Women's March for Justice. The following week, 110,000 Australians rallied to express their horror at the allegations of sexual violence within Parliament House and to call for women across the world to be able to experience physical, emotional and spiritual safety within their homes, workplaces and the public sphere.

On March 8, 2024, we will once again mark International Women's Day. Three years have passed since the March for Justice, 107 years since Russian textile workers protested the economic injustice they experienced, and thousands of years since the apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians that there is no male and female, as all are one in Christ Jesus.

To inspire the inclusion of women requires listening to and platforming the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, Pasifika women, women seeking asylum, and women with disability. It requires our churches to be informed by the deep love and wisdom of mothers as well as childfree women, women who have experienced infertility as well as single women; for churches to be spaces of refuge and safety where women who have experienced domestic violence are listened to and supported in seeking safety, justice and healing.

In so doing, we walk in the footsteps of our compassionate Saviour, Jesus, who spoke with women (Matthew 9:22), was financed by women (Luke 8:3) and facilitated the first preaching of his resurrection to be uttered by the faithful women (Matthew 28:10), who stayed with their Messiah to the cross, the tomb and beyond.

Prayer

God of abundant love,

Help us this International Women's Day to inspire inclusion, to foster safety and respect within our churches, which upholds the dignity of women and affirms their gifts. Amen

Planning Ahead

- 2nd April Worship Task Group 7pm via Zoom
- 11th (?) April Church Council Meeting 7pm via Zoom
- 17th March Concert for Refugees at Miranda UC 3 -4:30pm

Want to know what the Storehouse is doing? Here is a link. Type it into your search engine

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1pZl6yzaFvx9q4t3gxOfMieJCh69BDSSH0y4o8-QB-wc/edit?usp=sharing>

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, Brian and Rhonda , Prema and Priya, Jim and Bobbie, Denis and Dolly, Jim Bird, Naghuia, John and Sue and especially John's mother and father; Peter and Sue; Dinah; Robyn; health care workers at this time, including Richard, Millin and Roseline Goodman and Dorothy Makasa and Elin.

Especially today continue to keep Craig and his family in your prayers.

For others whom we name in our hearts.

Pray for the people of Türkiye, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Ukraine, Russia, Israel and Palestine, especially the people of Gaza, Yemen.

Next Sunday

March 17th, 2024, @ 10am
Lent

Leader: Dinah
Preacher Deok Hee

Jeremiah 31:31–34; Psalm 119:9–16; Hebrews 5:5–10;
John 12:20–33



Church Council

Chair

Richard Goodman

Secretary

Sue Baglin

Treasurer

John Baglin

Councillors

Robert M^cAlpine (2024)

Sue Baglin (2025)

John Baglin (2025) Richard

Elders

Goodman (2024)

Dinah Roepers (2024)

Safe Church Contact Person

Richard Goodman