



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.*

June 16th 2024 at 10am

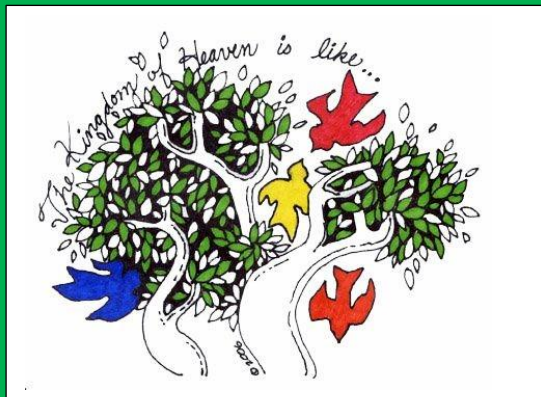
The God Who Loves Small Things
Pentecost + 4

Election of Elders and Church Councillors
Kogarah UC Annual General Meeting

Leader: Dinah

Reflection: Deok Hee

**1 Samuel 15:34—16:13, Psalm 20; 2 Corinthians 5:6—10,
(11—13), 14—17; Mark 4:26—34**



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

Scriptures

1 Samuel 15:34—16:13

God does not see as mortals do. Humans see outward appearances. God sees the heart.

Psalm 20

The faithful take pride not in chariots and horses but in God's name.

2 Corinthians 5:6–10, (11–13), 14–17

New life and confidence emerge from a trusting relationship with Christ.

Mark 4:26–34

God's dream for the world is surprising; little things can be teeming with possibility and potential.

Theme Focus

In seeds of wonder, hope and joy, we meet the God who loves small things.

Word for the Day

4:26-29

In Mark 4, Jesus tells some stories about seeds. In one of his stories, a man scatters seed on the ground (). God's dream for the world is like a small seed working away quietly under the surface, beyond what we can know. We could easily think nothing is happening. We can't see the seed. And then, without us doing anything at all, maybe even while we are sleeping – something makes its way through to the surface. It was there all along – secretly growing, forming underneath the ground. The growing seed surprises us because we had nothing to do with making the seed grow. We buried our seed, and God made it grow. Something beautiful comes from the little we bring to the mix, maybe even despite us. We show up and trust what goes in the ground will be raised up because God is in the business of resurrection.

There are more surprises in store in the following seed story. The tiny seed does indeed grow! It grows into a large shrub where the birds can find rest and shelter (4:30–34). Jesus tells us that there's life found in the most unlikely of places, hope in the smallest things. That was happening in Jesus' presence and activity, even if people didn't get it. But that's the way of the kin-dom. Little things can be teeming with possibility, crammed with potential, despite appearances. That's what we can look for in our lives, in our relationships, in the people we share life with. Despite our seeming insignificance or smallness, we can trust that something special can happen in our lives, neighbourhoods, and communities. It is indeed from little things that big things grow. Every step along the way, we can embrace a revolutionary hope, a revolutionary patience and trust; we're caught up in something carrying divine momentum.

Ideas for Reflection

- In the first seed story, it becomes clear that God is the agent of growth and change. What are the implications for how we practise our faith? What expressions of faith might the kin-dom of God evoke from us? (For example, a posture of humility, reverence, trust.)

- Desmond Tutu once said to Richard Rohr, 'We are only the lightbulbs... our job is just to remain screwed in!' How might this relate to the first story?
- Some commentators note the significance of the mustard bush in contrast to the popular biblical image of the cedar – see Daniel 4:12; Ezekiel 17:23; 31:6; Psalm 104:12. The mustard seed is a wild and pesky weed that threatens to take over its environment, and is a home for various unwanted birds (sinners and tax collectors? Gentiles?). Could there be something subversive or deliberately provocative about the details Jesus draws upon in this parable?
- How do our communities reflect God's dream for the world? Have we formed branches strong enough that the birds can perch in? Do people feel welcome and that they can belong? Do our relationships offer the kind of space that offers people rest and inspiration for the challenges we all face as human beings? What might this look like or require from us?



Poetry as a contemplative practice

Instructions

1. Try to let your mind drop into your heart as you quietly read or listen to the poem. You might like to start by centring on your breath.
2. Read or listen to the poem through more than one time.
3. Notice what arises in you each time.

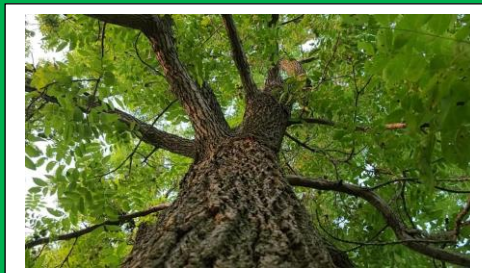
This activity is a way of entering into the scriptural themes in a contemplative way – not unlike how one might engage in a *lectio divina* process.

The Tale of the Walnut Tree

Passing by his old home,
his heart sank,
wept tears of grief.

His children grew up here,
playing in the shade of the giant walnut tree,
nurturing lettuces,
watering tomatoes,
sunflowers, roses,
relishing the green hedge,
residence of colour to birds and insects,
friends for the two-storey home.

When the house was sold, the new owner
cut them down and laid concrete.



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Refugee Week, coming up on 16 - 22 June,

is a unique opportunity to take time to learn about the experiences of people who have sought refuge and asylum, to celebrate the valuable contributions made by refugees to the world and our communities, and consider how we can take action together for justice.

This year's theme is **'Finding Freedom: Family'**, and recognises the profound journey of resilience, strength, and unity that defines the refugee experience, with a focus on the importance of family in providing solace, support, and a sense of belonging on the journey towards finding freedom.

In 2024 Refugee Week is falling at a time of great grief and uncertainty around escalating global conflicts, including the heartbreaking crisis in Gaza.

We continue to [call and pray for peace](#). Ongoing and new conflicts, political oppression and insecurity, has led to the world facing the worst displacement of people crisis in history, with more than 100 million people across the planet having been forced to flee their homes because they are in fear of being persecuted.

We have been thankful to see Australia take action by increasing our humanitarian intake and offering a pathway to resettlement for thousands of people seeking asylum in Australia who faced an uncertain future. **However, in the face of an escalating global crisis' we know that there is far more our nation can and should do to express our values of justice, generosity and compassion.**



Common Grace

Photo from

World Vision

Planning Ahead

- **20th June Church Council meeting via Zoom @ 7pm - major topic: proposal for a Chinese worker to promote our congregation among the Chinese community**

Preparing for our AGM and Election of Church Councillors and Elders

- o Date of Elections and AGM: **June 16**
- o Date of Commissioning of new Church Council: **June 23**

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, Craig, Denis and Dolly, Jim Bird, Naghuia, John and Sue and especially John's mother and father; Peter and Sue; Dinah; Ern Edwards; Pat Nankivell and her family; health care workers at this time, including Richard, Millin and Roseline Goodman and Dorothy Makasa and Elin. For others whom we name in our hearts.

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

Next Sunday

June 23rd 2024 at 10am

**The God Who Enters Our Fears
Pentecost + 5**

**Commissioning of Elders and Church
Councillors**

Leader: Deok Hee

Reflection: Deok Hee

Holy Communion: Deok Hee

1 Samuel 17:(1a, 4–11, 19–23), 32–49; Psalm 9:9–20;

2 Corinthians 6:1–13; Mark 4:35–41



Church Council

Chair

Richard Goodman

Secretary

Sue Baglin

Treasurer

John Baglin

Councillors

Robert M^cAlpine (2024)

Sue Baglin (2025)

John Baglin (2025)

Elders

Richard Goodman (2024)

Dinah Roepers (2024)

Safe Church Contact Person

Richard Goodman