



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.*

6th October 2024 @ 10am

(Daylight Savings began today)

Job's Wife Replies

Leader Robert

Reflection Robert

Job 1:1, 2:1–10; Psalm 26; Hebrews 1:1–4, 2:5–12; Mark 10:2–16



Safe Church Contact Person Richard Goodman

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/>

Deok Hee is on holiday today. For pastoral concerns, please contact Richard Goodman on 0434 127 340

Scriptures

Job 1:1, 2:1–10

In the introduction to Job, we are told that God bargains with the Adversary (the Satan) and makes a bet that Job will cling to his faith no matter what happens. When they have lost everything, including health, Job's wife says to him, 'Curse God and die.' However, as with many ancient texts, these words are obscure, and scholars suggest they could also be translated as 'Bless God and Die!' How do we hear her words differently when we read them as bless or curse? And why is she telling her husband to die?

Psalm 26

The psalmist asks Yahweh for justice and mercy because they have walked with integrity and trusted without wavering.

Hebrews 1:1–4, 2:5–12

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews explains that God has spoken through the prophets throughout history, and sometimes, within this history, there is suffering both for Jesus and humans.

Mark 10:2–16

The religious leaders question Jesus about divorce, and Jesus says that it is allowed because of the people's unyielding hearts.

Theme Focus

The book of Job helps us to have conversations about suffering.

Word for the Day

The book of Job, like many others in the Bible, is written from the perspective of a man. We hear the conversation between Yahweh and the Adversary. We hear long explanations from Job's friends. But we hear only twelve words from the perspective of Mrs Job (six in Hebrew). And Mr Job's response is to call her foolish.

How often do we dismiss people's pain, and when they cry out, silence them by accusing them of being foolish? How, instead, might we learn to sit with not just Mr Job as he laments, but Mrs Job, too.

Ideas for Reflection

Women's reactions and emotions are often policed in a way that men's are not. The historical notion of 'hysteria' is based on the idea that a woman's womb travels around the body and disturbs rational thought. Rational thought, in our society and in our world, is often considered the better way of dealing with issues. However, much research has suggested that what is considered 'rational' is really a reflection of white, cis-masculine privilege that is also very subjective.

- How might we become more comfortable with big emotions?
- How might we challenge notions of rationality and whiteness?
- How might we become more open to the subjectivities that inform all our lives?

Scholars have long suggested that the phrase uttered by Mrs Job might also be rendered 'bless God and die!'

- How might we hear this exclamation differently if we read it as an encouragement to bless God?
- What is the connection between blessing and cursing? What is the disconnection?

In contemporary contexts, cursing is often equated with swear words.

- How might we hear these words differently when we keep this blessing/cursing connection in mind?

In this week's reading from Mark 10:2–16, Jesus faces an adversary in the religious leaders who challenge Jesus about divorce. The religious leaders use the laws of Moses to challenge Jesus' understanding. In the text from Job, The Adversary uses knowledge of human nature to challenge Yahweh.

- When might knowledge and laws be used against people today?

- Who are the people more likely to be targeted by our justice system?

Yahweh seems to have all the power in this scenario. Yahweh is approached by the 'sons of God' among whom is The Adversary.

- Why does Yahweh not use their power to protect Job?
- How might we respond when God seems to inflict or ignore pain? (This is called theodicy and has provoked a range of responses in the literature).

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.

Let not your hearts be troubled (Malcolm Guite)

Always there comes this parting of the ways
 The best is wrested from us, borne away,
 No one is with us always, nothing stays,
 Night swallows even the most perfect day.
 Time makes a tragedy of human love,
 We cleave forever to the one we choose
 Only to find 'forever' in the grave.
 We have just time enough to love and lose.

You know too well this trouble in our hearts
 Your heart is troubled for us, feels it too,
 You share with us in time that shears and parts
 To draw us out of time and into you.

I go that you might come to where I am

Your word comes home to us and brings us home.

How do we in the cluster of islands now known as Australia, if we are serious about being part of the “Pacific family” (a popular assertion by the Australian federal government), respond to this call? And how do we in the Uniting Church take this call as a catalyst/inspiration?

A *catalyst* is something—an energy or a body—that sparks a change. The change could be for bad, like bacteria causing illness, or for good – like yeast causing dough to rise (with which someone bakes something to share). Some catalysts (including bacteria and yeast) have both good and bad effects.

In church speak, “inspiration” applies to what a catalyst does, and “transformation” applies to the change that an inspiration sparks. Every day, we live around catalysts/inspirations: a story, a text, a teaching, a person, a memory, a spirit, a dreaming, an ancestor, a trauma, a struggle, etcetera. Those can spark change, for good and for bad – depending on how we engage them.

In the recent past, we heard debates on the *causes* and *effects* of climate change. What and who is responsible? How do we mitigate? Who should foot the bill? What do we leave for our kids and grandkids?

YES, the *effects* of climate change are devastating and evolving, and traumatic. But climate change is also a *catalyst*. It causes change; and it can inspire us to think and do things – differently.

At the 2024 Pacific Islands Forum held in Tonga, UN Secretary-General António Guterres identified the way humanity “treated [the sea] like a sewer” as part of the problem. He called on “big emitters” to “step up and lead, by phasing out the production and consumption of fossil fuels and stopping their expansion immediately.”

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In October, I will join Uniting Mission and Education (UME) in the role of “Mission Catalyst: Stewardship of the Earth.” In this role, I will encourage the NSW-ACT Synod to be church, and to do church, under the influence of *climate is catalyst*. I accordingly plan to resource the Synod in three areas: worship (using the Lectionary as catalyst for climate justice), conviction

(through *talanoa*: conversations, workshops), and education (through *fono*: seminars, publications).

But first, why Mission? Simply, in solidarity with indigenous bodies and minds that suffer(ed) “the mission” that Church and State built, maintained, and masked. Mission also because we have much to learn from indigenous wisdom on being inspired and transformed by, because they come from ancestors who knew that, *climate is catalyst*?

Watch this space. (10 September 2024 by Rev. Dr Jione Havea – Uniting Church Synod of NSW/ACT)



Planning Ahead

- 9.10 – Thai Group - Aboriginal History and Culture
- 21.10 – Cantonese Group – Aboriginal History and Culture
- 24th October 2024 Kogarah Church Council via Zoom @ 7pm
- 7th November 2024 Worship Task Group via Zoom @ 7pm

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 Hades 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 Dennis and Robyn Lyons, Brian and Rhonda, Prema and Priya, Jim and Bobbie, Denis and Dolly, Naghuia, John and Sue and especially John's mother and father; Peter and Sue; Dinah; Ern Edwards; Godfrey; Jim Bird; Sue de B; 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 and Lebanon. The USA. Sudan

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Next Sunday

13th October 2024 @ 10am

**Complaining, Lamenting, Arguing with
God**

Leader Richard

Reflection Richard

Holy Communion Richard

Job 23:1–9, 16–17; Psalm 22:1–15; Hebrews 4:12–16; Mark 10:17–31



Job 23:1-9; 16-17

Church Council 2024-2025

Chair
Secretary
Treasurer
Councillors

Elders

Richard Goodman
Sue Baglin
John Baglin
Robert M^oAlpine (2026)
Sue Baglin (2025)
Dinah Roepers (2025)
John Baglin (2025)
Bobbie Miller (2025)
Richard Goodman (2027)