



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.*

22nd December 2024 @ 10am

Advent 4 - Love The Magnificat

Leader Deok Hee

Reflection Deok Hee

Holy Communion Deok Hee

**Micah 5:2–5a; Luke 1:46b–55 or Psalm 80:1–7; Hebrews 10:5–10;
Luke 1:39–45, (46–55)**



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 Deok Hee on
0401 975 745.**

Scriptures

Micah 5:2–5a

The prophet reassures Bethlehem that though they seem insignificant, from this tribe, a messiah will emerge.

Luke 1:46b–55 or Psalm 80:1–7

Mary's song, known as the Magnificat, praises God for looking with favour upon her.

Hebrews 10:5–10

The writer of Hebrews explains that the requirement for burnt sacrifices and offerings has been finished because of Jesus.

Luke 1:39–45, (46–55)

Mary travels to see Elizabeth when they are both pregnant, and Elizabeth blesses Mary through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Theme Focus

Mary, who describes herself as enslaved, rejoices because she has been shown God's favour, inspiring us to rejoice in the joy and justice of God.

Word for the Day

Luke 1:46b–55

⁴⁶ Mary said,

“With all my heart I glorify the Lord!

⁴⁷ In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior.

⁴⁸ He has looked with favor on the low status of his servant.

Look! From now on, everyone will consider me highly favored

⁴⁹ because the mighty one has done great things for me.

Holy is his name.

⁵⁰ He shows mercy to everyone,

from one generation to the next,

who honors him as God.

⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm.

He has scattered those with arrogant thoughts and proud inclinations.

⁵² He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones

and lifted up the lowly.

⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things

and sent the rich away empty-handed.

⁵⁴ He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,

remembering his mercy,

⁵⁵ just as he promised to our ancestors,

to Abraham and to Abraham's descendants forever."

This poem is often titled the Magnificat. The writer of the gospel of Luke places this song on Mary's lips, although the words are pertinent for many different people both then and now. As we step into the Christmas season, this hymn reminds us that Jesus' story fits into the long line of good things God has done. It encourages us to trust that there will be good things in the future.

Ideas for Reflection

- 'Mary's song' describes God as merciful, strong, generous, just, and ancient. How do these characteristics inform our picture of God? What do mercy, generosity and justice look like in today's world?
- How does this poem fit with the idea of a peaceful ruler from the Micah reading? How do the two readings fit together?
- How might we embody these characteristics of generosity, mercy, justice, and strength in our interactions with each other? What does it look like to show 'mercy to everyone' or fill 'the hungry with good things.'
- How might we read these words if they were spoken by someone else? Does knowing that Mary is Jesus' mother change how we hear this?

Christmas Eve – A Service of Readings and Songs

A Child Born to Us

Leader Sue

[Set readings for tonight: Isaiah 9:2–7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11–14; Luke 2:1–14, (15–20)]

Isaiah 9:2–7

The prophet speaks of the joy of restoration for the people of God, which is established and sustained with justice and righteousness.

Psalm 96 encourages all the earth to sing to God and to tell the nations of God's justice.

Titus 2:11–14

The reader is encouraged to lead sensible, ethical and godly lives through the grace of God.

Luke 2:1–14, (15–20)

Jesus is born and laid in a manger, and the angels report the good news to the shepherds.

Theme Focus

We rejoice together, as there is nothing more magical than the birth of a child, and we celebrate the angels among us.



Christmas Day with Holy Communion at 10am

Raise Up a Signal

Leader Deok Hee

Reflection Deok Hee

Holy Communion Deok Hee

Isaiah 62:6–12; Psalm 97; Titus 3:4–7; Luke 2:(1–7), 8–20

Isaiah 62:6–12 reassures the people that their salvation is promised. The writer in Isaiah encourages the Yehudites to prepare the way for the people and raise up a signal of God's redemption. The Yehudites were those people who returned to Judah after the exile and those who stayed on the land throughout. The prophet reassures the people that their salvation is promised.

Psalm 97

The psalmist tells that all the world will praise God's righteousness.

Titus 3:4–7

The kindness and love of God has appeared through God's mercy, not through the righteousness of the people.

Luke 2:(1–7), 8–20

The shepherds are some of the first to hear the good news, visit the baby, and then return home to tell others about their experience.

Theme Focus

After our Advent time of waiting, preparing, watching, and hearing from the prophets, we join together in worship, celebrating that Jesus is born.



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

This activity is designed to help us see the connection between modern writing and ancient biblical texts.

A Christmas poem reading between the lines

All who heard them pondered them and said,
'What then will this child become?' (Luke 1:66)

When the silly season comes to a pause,
and the shops and restaurants close,
the holy day of Christmas begins.

My mind can rush to the next event,
or still and drink in the silence of joy.

Birth is an event of creation -
perhaps God is a midwife? –
which has both pain and delight.

Emperors, CEO's and Generals
downplay it as woman's work,
scared to let a nurturing spirit
weaken their power.

O God within,
Open my eyes to read between the lines,
to seek the hidden gift of love,
and to let the story rewrite my life, Amen.

Planning Ahead

Christmas Services 2024

December 24 Tuesday @ 7.30pm Christmas Eve (A service of Readings and Songs)

December 25 Wednesday @ 10.00am Christmas Day (with Holy Communion)

- **20th January 2025 Storehouse returns; orders for food parcels taken**
- **22nd January 2025 first food parcels distributed**
- **5th February 2025 Worship TG @ 7pm via Zoom**
- **6th February 2025 Kogarah Church Council @ 7pm via Zoom**
- **7th February 2025 Elders**

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 Dennis and Robyn Lyons, Brian and Rhonda, Prema and Priya, Bobbie and the extended family in their time of loss, Denis and Dolly, Naghuia, John and Sue and especially John's mother; Peter and Sue; Dinah; Ern Edwards; Godfrey; Jim Bird; Sue de B; Sylvia. 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. Vanuatu.

Next Sunday

29th December 2024 @ 10am

**Christmas 1
Among Family and Friends**

Leader Richard

Reflection Richard

Samuel 2:18–20, 26; Psalm 148; Colossians 3:12–17; Luke 2:41–52

(Today is Deok Hee's Rostered Sunday Off)



Church Council 2024-2025

Chair

Richard Goodman

Secretary

Sue Baglin

Treasurer

John Baglin

Councillors

Robert M^cAlpine (2026)

Sue Baglin (2025)

Dinah Roepers (2025)

John Baglin (2025)

Bobbie Miller (2025)

Richard Goodman (2027)

Elders

Safe Church Contact Person

Richard Goodman