



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.*

5th January 2025 @ 10am

Christmas 2

**We Celebrate Epiphany
Gathered by Light, Guided by Hope**

Leader Robert

Reflection Deok Hee

**Jeremiah 31:7–14 or Sirach 24:1–12 ; Psalm 147:12–20 or Wisdom of
Solomon 10:15–21; Ephesians 1:3–14; John 1:(1–9), 10–18**

Readings for Epiphany Year C

Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12



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 for Christmas 2

Jeremiah 31:7–14 or Sirach 24:1–12

The writer of Jeremiah says that ‘at that time’ God’s people will be gathered again.

Psalms 147:12–20 or Wisdom of Solomon 10:15–21

The psalmist describes a range of items that God enacts as a reason to praise.

Ephesians 1:3–14

Paul reminds the Ephesians that God has a plan for their lives.

John 1:(1–9), 10–18

Jesus is described as both the light of the world and the Word.

Theme Focus

As we hear Jesus described as both light and word, and Jeremiah speaks of God’s enduring faithfulness amid uncertainty and exile, we are reminded that God’s word of hope is always near and ponder how God’s word of hope is embodied in our lives today.

Word for the Day

Sometimes, at this time of year, in this part of the world, it feels like everyone else has gone away, and only the ‘remaining few’ are still

around. Of course, we know that by the end of summer, everyone will have gathered back in time to pick up everyday life.

The author of Jeremiah, however, is speaking to a people who have been spread far and wide by the Babylonian conquest. People have been removed from their land, family members are missing or perhaps killed, and social systems have been destroyed. And when everyone is drawn back to Judah, there are deep divisions between groups and vastly different understandings of what the future community should look like.

Ideas for Reflection

- How does it feel to be one of the remaining few? Does it make you feel special? Or does it make you feel like you are missing out?
- What are the times in this community when people were drawn back together after a break (such as COVID), and it felt like everything had changed? People changed, rules changed, lives changed. How do we negotiate the feelings this provokes? How do we know the new expectations? How do we navigate through the differences of opinion?
- Around the world, some people are grappling with displacement and disconnection because of various wars. Some will never be able to return to their homeland. Some will return and have to face the fact that so many people they have known are gone. How might we respond to their trauma, hurts and needs? What can we do to help?
- Jeremiah 31:7–14 tells that when the rescue comes, there will be dancing and laughter and shouts for joy. When and why do we want to dance and laugh and shout for joy in this place? What hinders 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 Feast of the Epiphany, which celebrates the arrival of the three wise men at the manger in Bethlehem has a special mystery and joy to it. Until now the story of the coming Messiah has been confined to Israel, the covenant people, but here suddenly, mysteriously, are three Gentiles who have intuited that his birth is good news for them too. Here is an Epiphany, a revelation, that the birth of Christ is not one small step for a local religion but a great leap for all mankind. I love the way that traditionally the three wise men (or kings) are shown as representing the different races and cultures and languages of the world. I love the combination in their character of diligence and joy. They 'seek diligently', but they 'rejoice with exceeding great joy'! I love the way they loved and followed a star, but didn't stop at the star, but rather let the star lead them to something beyond itself. Surely that is a pattern for all wise contemplation of nature whether in art or science.

One can return constantly to the mystery of the Epiphany and always find more but here is a little sonnet which particularly focuses on the way their arrival on the scene suddenly includes us as Gentiles into what has been, up to this point an exclusively Jewish story. The last line of this poem is a little nod in the direction of Tennyson's great poem Ulysses. Malcolm Guite]

Epiphany

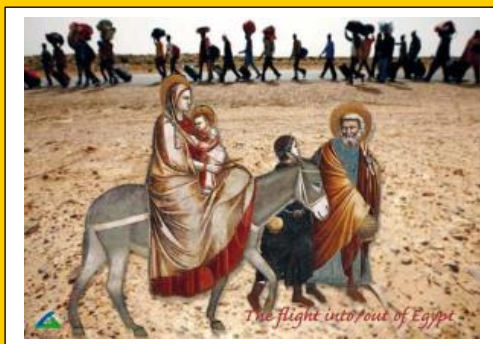
It might have been just someone else's story,
Some chosen people get a special king.
We leave them to their own peculiar glory,
We don't belong, it doesn't mean a thing.
But when these three arrive they bring us with them,
Gentiles like us, their wisdom might be ours;
A steady step that finds an inner rhythm,
A pilgrim's eye that sees beyond the stars.
They did not know his name but still they sought him,
They came from elsewhere but still they found;
In temples they found those who sold and bought him,
But in the filthy stable, hallowed ground.
Their courage gives our questing hearts a voice
To seek, to find, to worship, to rejoice.

And another from Malcolm Guite on the plight of Christ the refugee.

The artwork below shows the fresco 'Flight into Egypt' (Giotto di Bondone, 1266–1337) and refugees in North Africa. From Franciscans International.
<http://www.franciscansinternational.org>

Refugee

We think of him as safe beneath the steeple,
Or cosy in a crib beside the font,
But he is with a million displaced people
On the long road of weariness and want.
For even as we sing our final carol
His family is up and on that road,
Fleeing the wrath of someone else's quarrel,
Glancing behind and shouldering their load.
Whilst Herod rages still from his dark tower
Christ clings to Mary, fingers tightly curled,
The lambs are slaughtered by the men of power,
And death squads spread their curse across the world.
But every Herod dies, and comes alone
To stand before the Lamb upon the throne.



The Moderator's Christmas Message 2024

As we prepare to celebrate Christmas, a season for all, for families, for communities, and for the world, Micah offers a timeless and transformative call:

"What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

This resonates deeply with the true meaning of Christmas and invites all of us into a profound reflection on how we live out our faith in our families, communities, and the world.

At Christmas, we celebrate the birth of Jesus, God's radical, transformative act of coming into the world as a vulnerable child, born into poverty and uncertainty. For those families managing the rising cost of living, communities coming together against division and violence, and the world battling injustices of war and a changing climate, it calls us to reimagine Christmas not as a season of excess but as a moment to recommit to justice, kindness, and humility.

Christmas challenges us to transform our world, set aside pride, greed, and self-interest, and instead live together with one another, seeking peace and reconciliation for all people. This season we honour the birth of Christ, the good news for all people, to bring justice, kindness, and humility for your families, for your community and for our world. Have a blessed Christmas.

**Rev. Faaimata Havea Hiliau
*Moderator - Uniting Church Synod of NSW & ACT***

Planning Ahead

- 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 Deok Hee, 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.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

**MAY YOU HAVE A
BLESSED 2025**

Photo: Channel 9



Next Sunday

12th January 2025 @ 10am

Epiphany 1/Baptism of Christ

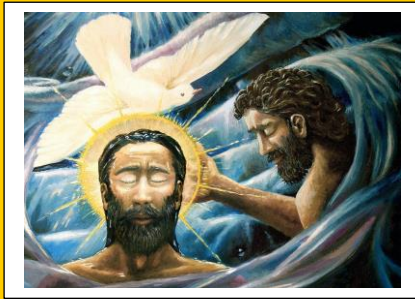
Filled with Expectation

Leader Deok Hee

Reflection Deok Hee

Holy Communion Deok Hee

Isaiah 43:1–7; Psalm 29; Acts 8:14–17; Luke 3:15–17, 21–22



Church Council 2024-2025

Chair
Secretary
Treasurer
Councillors

Richard Goodman
Sue Baglin
John Baglin
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**