



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.*

Sunday 23rd February 2025

Epiphany + 7

A Cosmos Defined by Mercy

Leader Rev Matt Wilson

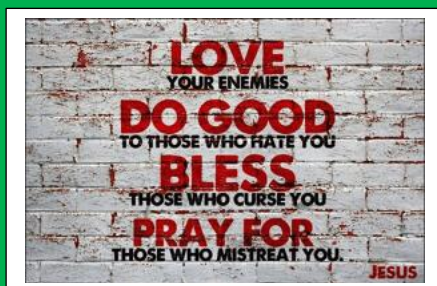
Reflection Rev Matt Wilson

Holy Communion Rev Matt Wilson

We welcome Matt to our service today. Matt is the new GR Presbytery Mission and Leadership Minister

Genesis 45:3–11, 15; Psalm 37:1–11, 39–40;
1 Corinthians 15:35–38, 42–50; Luke 6:27–38

Deok Hee is on annual leave



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 Richard
on 0401 975 745.**

Scriptures for Epiphany + 7

Genesis 45:3–11, 15

Joseph reveals to his brothers the hidden story of God's life-preserving purposes being outworked in their lives.

Psalms 37:1–11, 39–40

God gives human beings the desires of their hearts – surprising desires that allow human beings to live with patience, trust, and receptivity.

1 Corinthians 15:35–38, 42–50

The first Adam was made of the stuff of earth; the second Adam was bursting with heaven. Resurrection means we're crammed with heaven and earth!

Luke 6:27–38

Love and bless others in the way you wish others would love and bless you. That's what God is like.

Theme Focus

As we listen to Jesus' encouragement to embody God's grace by loving our enemies and forgiving others, we ponder how, in living out this divine mercy, we participate in a reality shaped by compassion and generosity and carry the divine DNA into the world.

Word for the Day

A cosmos defined by jubilee

Jesus' teaching in Luke 6:27–38 draws us into the heart of what it is to be a jubilee people. Jesus invites us to choose the risky and confronting path of enemy-love. This challenging path involves: non-retaliation/ nonviolence while standing with dignity and refusing to be dismissed easily (v 29). taking the lead in contributing the good we would want for our own lives (v 31), even in the face of hostility and harm. extending kinship and generosity without expectation of reciprocity (vv 32–35). resisting the instinct to participate in cycles of bitterness and condemnation (vv 37–38)

This is what it looks like to carry the divine DNA into the world, to be God-like. Jesus reveals the way that the cosmos is ultimately defined by mercy and love (v 36), and to participate in these waves of grace is to welcome mercy, forgiveness, and generosity into our own lives (vv 37–38).

Ideas for Reflection

- You are invited to identify the caring and safe people in your lives you can speak to if you, or someone else, are being hurt or bullied.
- Think about about experiences of bullying from your life and what helped.
- Think about what you could say if someone is hurting you or someone else – words that remind us of the big truth of each of our lives, that we all matter and it's not okay to hurt each other.
- How we can be brave and apologise if we realise we've hurt someone and forgotten the big truth about each of our lives.

Poetry as a Contemplative Practice

Instructions

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

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

Seek a lasting love

(see *Psalms 45:2*)

Seek a lasting love, a reservoir of fragrance
knowing when to bend but not to break
and grace is richly poured upon your lips.

Respecting your limits with a touch of irreverence
when to have fun and what to forsake
seek a lasting love, a reservoir of fragrance.

A duet of chords to twine your gifts
holding each other by lifting up straight
and grace is richly poured upon your lips.

An attentive ear with long-suffering patience
open to learn, to give and to take
seeks a lasting love, a reservoir of fragrance.

Nothing stands still in the cosmic mix
Wine is made by fermenting the grape
and grace is richly poured upon your lips.

There are treasures no moon can ever eclipse
The light pervades the depths of the lake.
Seek a lasting love; a reservoir of fragrance
and grace is richly poured upon your lips.

Today we welcome **Rev Matt Wilson**, the new Georges River Presbytery Mission and Leadership Minister replacing Rev Matagi Vilitama. Matt will be working with us in the near future as we review our future at Kogarah.



Pope Francis responds to JD Vance's support of Donald Trump's policy to expel undocumented immigrants (From *Synod Weekly Spotlight*)

Pope Francis has issued a pointed rebuke to Vice President JD Vance over his interpretation of Catholic theology and his defense of former President Donald Trump's controversial immigration policies. In a letter sent to U.S. bishops this week, the pontiff condemned the mass deportations proposed under Trump's administration, warning that such actions would lead to a "major crisis" and could have severe consequences for the nation.

While addressing the broader issue of immigration, Pope Francis focused particularly on Vance's recent defense of Trump's immigration policies. In a January social media post, Vance, a Catholic, invoked the Catholic concept of "ordo amoris," or "order of love," to justify prioritizing the needs of non-immigrants over those of immigrants. The Vice President argued that Catholics must first show love and responsibility to their families, communities, and fellow citizens before extending that love to those outside their nation.

Vance's comments were made in response to criticism from some Catholic groups, after he appeared on Fox News, defending Trump's plan to expel millions of immigrants. He explained that his understanding of the "order of love" meant prioritizing local responsibilities before international ones.

However, Pope Francis rejected this interpretation of the concept in his letter, emphasizing that the true “ordo amoris” involves building a fraternity that is inclusive of all people, without exception. The Pope pointed to the parable of the Good Samaritan as the foundation of this approach. According to the Pope, the Samaritan’s act of helping a stranger in need exemplifies the essence of love and care for others, irrespective of their origin or status. “The true ‘ordo amoris’ that must be promoted is that which we discover by meditating constantly on the parable of the Good Samaritan, that is, by meditating on the love that builds a fraternity open to all,” wrote Francis.

The pontiff also addressed the broader implications of mass deportations, which he described as a practice built on force rather than respect for the inherent dignity of all human beings. He cautioned that any policies that disregard the fundamental worth of individuals, especially vulnerable families fleeing dire circumstances, are bound to fail. “What is built on the basis of force, and not on the truth about the equal dignity of every human being, begins badly and will end badly,” he warned.

In his letter, Pope Francis acknowledged that nations have the right to protect their borders and ensure the safety of their citizens. However, he also emphasized that this right must be exercised within the framework of respect for human dignity. Deporting people who have fled their homes due to extreme poverty, insecurity, persecution, or environmental collapse causes immense harm, Francis said. Such actions place these individuals in vulnerable and defenseless positions, exacerbating their suffering and damaging their inherent dignity.

This isn’t the first time Pope Francis has spoken out against U.S. immigration policies under Trump. Even before Trump’s presidency, the Pope condemned the idea of mass deportations, calling it a “disgrace” that “makes the poor wretches who have nothing pay the bill for the imbalance.” His stance has been consistent throughout, reflecting his commitment to the dignity and protection of the marginalized and oppressed. The Pope’s condemnation of mass deportations and his reaffirmation of the Catholic Church’s commitment to the protection of immigrants underscore the ongoing tensions between religious leaders and political figures over the treatment of undocumented immigrants. As the U.S. continues to grapple with its immigration policies, Pope Francis has remained a vocal advocate for compassion, fraternity, and respect for human dignity

Planning Ahead

- 5th March Ash Wednesday service @ 7:30pm
- 13th March Church Council Meeting
- 27th March Worship Task Group meeting @7pm via Zoom

Please pray for ...

The mission and ministry of our congregation and for our Minister, Deok Hee and Wynne Cheng as they make links to the Chinese community.

Worship leaders; helpers, leaders, followers The Kogarah Storehouse and its many clients; Lala and staff of the Storehouse as they begin the new year.

Dorothy and Godfrey and the work of LACLA. Godfrey and Dorothy especially as they travel back to Africa

The team, parents and children in the Early Learning Centre.

Those who are sick, sad or lonely:

We pray especially today for Richard and family, Henry as he recovers from appendicitis, Dennis and Robyn Lyons, Brian and Rhonda, Prema and Priya, Bobbie and the extended family in their time of loss, Denis and Dolly, Naghua, Peter and Sue; Dinah; Ern Edwards; Jim Bird. 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.

Next Sunday

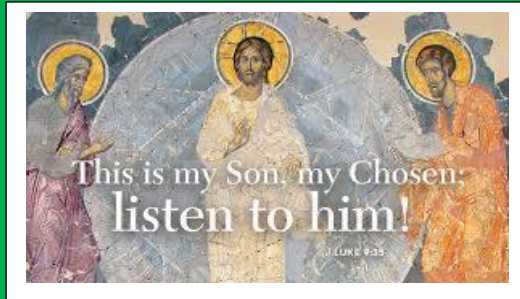
2nd March 2025

**Encountering the God of Mountains and
Valleys**

Leader Sue

Reflection Deok Hee

**Exodus 34:29–35; Psalm 99; 2 Corinthians 3:12–4:2; Luke 9:28–36,
(37–43a)**



Church Council 2024-2025

Chair
Secretary
Treasurer
Councillors

Richard Goodman
Sue Baglin
John Baglin
Robert McAlpine (2026)
Sue Baglin (2025)
Dinah Roepers (2025)
John Baglin (2025)
Bobbie Miller (2025)
Richard Goodman (2027)

Elders

Safe Church Contact Person **Richard Goodman**