



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.*

2nd March 2025

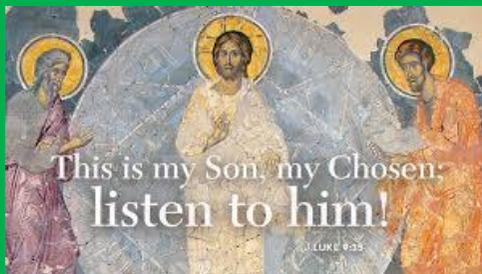
Transfiguration Sunday

**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)**



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 + 8

Exodus 34:29–35

No longer will God's people be wide open to vulnerability or exploitation – God brings care, presence, protection, and leadership to the sheep of God's pasture.

Psalm 99

The God who heals, guides and brings justice and righteousness into the world is worthy of all praise. Holy is God!

2 Corinthians 3:12–4:2

To encounter God's Spirit is to experience liberation. To see God is to be transformed by the Spirit.

Luke 9:28–36, (37–43a)

God's radiance shines on the mountain and heals in the valley.

Theme Focus

As we witness Jesus' transfiguration on the mountain, we are invited to carry the light of his glory into the valleys of our daily lives, bringing hope and transformation to the world around us.

Word for the Day

Only recently, in our lectionary readings we have Jesus going down with his disciples to be with them at a level place (Luke 6:17–26). Jesus takes Peter, John, and James up a mountain to pray. Here, they see Jesus transfigured and keeping company with the greats – Moses and Elijah, representatives of the great traditions of Israel, the law and the prophets.

Luke 9 says something really important about Jesus, but it also says something important about human beings. Peter and his companions wake to these scenes of Jesus with the greats. They're excited. They want to set up tents. They want to make a home on the mountain, here, surrounded by glory. They want the elevated spiritual experiences and direct revelation. Who wouldn't? We are not wrong to long for these things. But we should note that we do not have the same reaction in the level places. No one, hearing Jesus' jubilee vision, said,

'Let us permanently dwell in this costly, risky way of being human that will change the world but only by allowing it to change us first.'

This same Jesus who leads them up the mountain also leads them back down again. The greatness of God is revealed on top of the mountain, but the jubilee parade marches into the rubber-hitting-the-road challenges of life where faith makes it home amongst illness, opposition, failure, confusion, and difficulty. Jesus, after all, is leading a new exodus movement – a costly, enemy-loving, go-the-extra-mile freedom movement that is heading directly to Jerusalem.

Ideas for Reflection

- You are invited to reflect on mountain-top experiences with God. What did you learn about God and yourself in this place?
- You are invited to reflect on valley experiences of God. What did you learn about God and yourself in the midst of illness, opposition, failure, confusion, and difficulty?
- Reflecting on the transfiguration, Henri Nouwen, in *Spiritual Formation: Following the Movements of the Spirit*, speaks of the movement from opaqueness to transparency movements that cleanse the mind and open the heart to receive God's truth, beauty, and wisdom. What practices help you to experience these movements? What practices help unmake illusions and to see more clear!

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.)

Mountain uplift

The mountain dominates all below
holding the sky to the land
pointed precision of a temple pillar

motionless it eyes the scene
peering in a longsighted gaze
at the broad expanse of lines

the shoulders of uplift form
bold shapes unimpeded by detail
gouged by volcanic shrapnel

its shoulders lift me in my climb
heavy legs like temple joists
heavy breath like wisps of cloud

I'm pointing upward gazing outward
rising above grit and ash
a shrine would make me a tourist

© John Howell

Ash Wednesday – A sonnet by Malcolm Guite

Receive this cross of ash upon your brow,
Brought from the burning of Palm Sunday's cross.

The forests of the world are burning now
And you make late repentance for the loss.
But all the trees of God would clap their hands
The very stones themselves would shout and sing
If you could covenant to love these lands
And recognise in Christ their Lord and king.

He sees the slow destruction of those trees,
He weeps to see the ancient places burn,
And still you make what purchases you please,
And still to dust and ashes you return.
But Hope could rise from ashes even now
Beginning with this sign upon your brow.

A Message and Prayer written by our President Rev. Charissa Suli for His Holiness Pope Francis and the Catholic Church. (Prayer in the Please pray for... section)

“As people of faith, we recognise the deep significance of Christian unity and the call to bear one another’s burdens in prayer and love. Today, we stand in solidarity with our Catholic siblings as we lift up His Holiness Pope Francis in our prayers. His leadership, wisdom, and deep compassion have been a blessing not only to the Catholic Church but to the wider Christian community and the world. In times of illness and vulnerability, we are reminded of our shared dependence on God’s grace and healing power. We pray that God will strengthen Pope Francis, restore his health, and surround him with peace. May the Catholic Church find comfort in the knowledge that they are upheld in prayer by many across the body of Christ.

Wednesday 5th March 2025 @ 7:30pm

Ash Wednesday

Broken Open and Real



Leaders: - Deok Hee & Richard

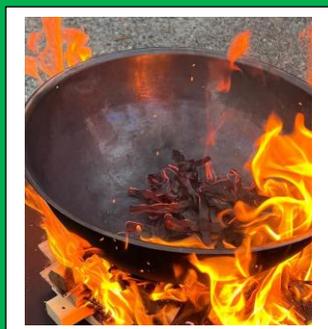
Joel 2:1–2, 12–17 or Isaiah 58:1–12; Psalm 51:1–17; 2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10; Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21

The tradition of Ash Wednesday dates back to Old Testament times when people would burn offerings as an act of repentance and pour the ash on their heads. They would wear sackcloth and be in a state of mourning at this time. Oil was used in biblical times for healing of physical and spiritual wounds.

Burning Palm Crosses

This activity is a more traditional Ash Wednesday ritual. In churches where palm crosses are made on Palm Sunday; the crosses from the previous year are brought together to burn and create the ashes. We have used this ritual at Kogarah over many years. In a similar way to the Burning our confessions practice, this activity invites people into a time of personal confession. The symbolic burning of the palm crosses creates the ashes to be applied in the form of a cross to the participant's foreheads or hands.

Please join us. Bring your own palm crosses made last Palm Sunday or we have plenty if you don't have one.



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, Naghuia, 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.

A Prayer for Pope Francis from UCA President Rev Charissa Suli

Loving and merciful God, We bring before You His Holiness Pope Francis, asking for Your healing touch upon him. Grant him strength in body, peace in spirit, and wisdom for those caring for him. We pray for the Catholic Church, that they may be encouraged and upheld in faith as they journey through this time. May Your presence be felt among all who lift their voices in prayer, and may Your love continue to unite us in Christ

E Otua fanongoa homau lotu (Lord hear our prayer) In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

Next Sunday

9th March 2025

Lent 1

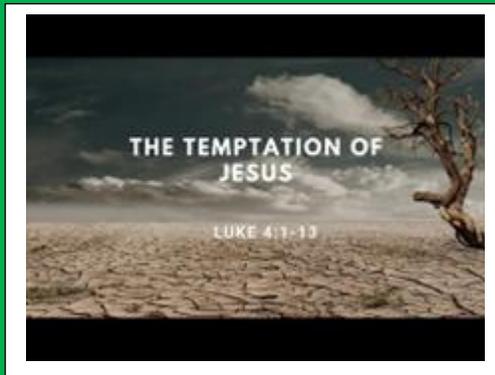
Finding Clarity in the Wilderness

Leader Deok Hee

Reflection Deok Hee

Holy Communion Deok Hee

**Deuteronomy 26:1–11; Psalm 91:1–2, 9–16; Romans 10:8b–13;
Luke 4:1–13**



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Secretary
Treasurer
Councillors

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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**