



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.*

9th March 2025

Lent 1

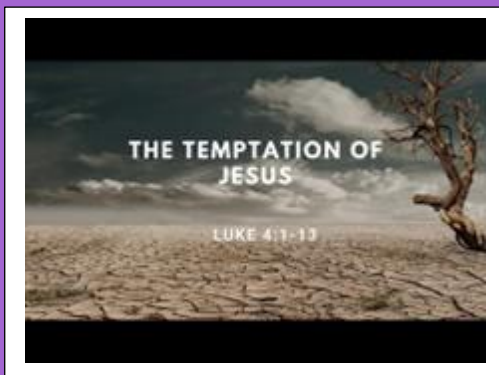
Finding Clarity in the Wilderness

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**



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 Lent 1

Deuteronomy 26:1–11 provides a clear description of the rituals involved with the Feast of Weeks celebration. It highlights the importance of ritual in remembering the past in order to be clear about our identity in the present.

Psalm 91:1–2, 9–16

The central theme of this psalm is that God is our refuge. The psalm demonstrates an intimate relationship between the writer and God that ensures the writer's protection and God's presence in times of trouble.

Romans 10:8b–13

This inclusive passage emphasises that everyone who believes in Jesus in their heart will be saved. It is the same Lord that is Lord of all people.

Luke 4:1–13

Jesus is led into the wilderness by the Spirit. During the forty days and nights in the wilderness, Jesus is tempted to turn stones into bread to ease his hunger, to have authority and power over many in exchange for worshipping the devil, and to test God's power by throwing himself from a high place.

Theme Focus

Being in the wilderness is a common theme during the Season of Lent. As we recall the story of Jesus being led by the Spirit in the wilderness where he is tempted, we explore the place of wilderness spaces in our own lives as places to discern and find clarity.

Word for the Day

Often, the temptation of Jesus is viewed as a reminder for us not to be tempted in our own lives but to turn to God. This is certainly one way of looking at and learning from this story. The Godly Play statement, 'You only go there if you have to', helps us to wonder about the purpose of Jesus' forty days in the wilderness. Some of us may have taken the time to go on a retreat. Although, this cannot be compared with Jesus' experience, as we usually have food to eat and a bed to sleep in, there may be a similar purpose. When we are so busy and our lives are so full rushing from one thing to another, there is not the space to stop and take stock of our lives. What are the things we should be saying 'no' to? What are the things we should be saying 'yes' to? Taking some 'wilderness' time allows us to spend time with God and be confronted by our own lives.

Busyness is a great distraction from the inner work of being a follower of Jesus. We can get caught up in doing good things and forget to listen to God's call on our lives. Wilderness times are not comfortable and may be extremely challenging as we come face to face with ourselves and God. Wilderness times also give us space to discern and find clarity.

Ideas for Reflection

When was the last time you carved out some wilderness time in your life?

What does that (or might that) look like for you?

Do you have stories of finding clarity in the desert?

How do you discern and listen for the voice of God in your life?

How do you silence the noisy voices that clamour for your attention?

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.)

It's tempting

Luke 4:1–13

***Deus ex machina* is tempting**

to solve the climate crisis by technology

sort out terrorism with bombs

remove crime with prisons

achieve effective organisations with cost cutting

seek happiness with money

It's tempting to ask God to intervene

without me taking my hands out of my pockets.

Lenten Bible Studies

Lenten Bible studies began last Friday (Session 1 – Persevering Hope) and will be held every Friday leading up to Palm Sunday. We will meet in the church at 10:30am and the study will last about an hour. We will be using materials developed by Common Grace. The Theme for the series is “Surprising Hope”.

2. March 14: Hope in the Just Messiah (Jarrod McKenna)
3. March 21: Hope amid the Chaos (Belinda Groves)
4. March 28: Confident Hope (Safina Stewart)
5. April 4: Hope in Suffering (Rev Jason Forbes)
6. April 11: Eternal Hope (Naomi Wolfe)
7. April 18: (Good Friday) (No study)

Each study is separate, so come when you can. If you miss a study go to this website : <https://www.commongrace.org.au/lent> and you can catch up.



Planning Ahead

- 13th March Church Council Meeting
- 17th March Harmony Day
- 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.

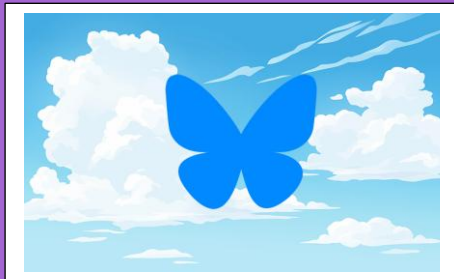
Dorothy and Godfrey and the work of LACLA. Godfrey and Dorothy especially as they travel back to Africa

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 and the countries of Europe. Sudan.



BlueSky

Where to find the Uniting Church on the web ...

In May 2024 when X's (formerly Twitter) content policy changed to permit users to share consensually produced and distributed adult content, the Synod of NSW and ACT Communications team announced its decision to discontinue its presence on the platform.

For almost a year, the Communications team has been considering how it will use BlueSky and has this week announced that the Uniting Church Synod of NSW and ACT's flagship publication *Insights* will be taking up residence on the BlueSky platform. *Insights* joins a number of Christian magazine outlets such as *Sojourners* and *Christianity Today*.

“As part of my job, we are tasked with understanding where best to communicate the amazing work that our Uniting Church Missions, Congregations and our service arm, Uniting, are doing in the public space,” says Adrian Drayton, Head of Communications and Marketing. “We felt that moving to BlueSky with other Christian media partners and allies is the right fit.”

Further reasons to move from X included relaxed content moderation and an uptick in hate speech and misinformation. The move aligns with the Uniting Church's commitment to fostering a safe online environment, particularly for children and vulnerable individuals.

In sharing this decision to move away from X, we acknowledge, like the Uniting Church National Assembly, that if our members remain on X we encourage them to be light and grace in this space.

“We're focusing our efforts on BlueSky, Instagram, Facebook — places where our audience has congregated and where people find information and a community of like-minded people,” says Mr Drayton. “None of these platforms are flawless, and some raise complex ethical concerns. However, for now, we believe they are the most effective social media options for our work.”

By stepping away from X, the Synod of NSW and ACT Communications team hopes to set an example for other religious and community organisations, encouraging them to prioritise safe and ethical digital engagement.

Next Sunday
16th March 2025

Lent 2

Fear in the Wilderness

Leader Robert

Reflection Deok Hee

**Genesis 15: 1–12, 17–18; Psalm 27; Philippians 3:17—4:1;
Luke 13:31–35**



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**