



**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.**

**6<sup>th</sup> April 2025 @ 10am**

**Lent 5**

**Finding a Way in the Wilderness**

**Leader Robert**

**Reflection Deok Hee**

**Isaiah 43:16–21; Psalm 126; Philippians 3:4b–14;  
John 12:1–8**



**For details and information about our church activities and The Kogarah Storehouse, check out the websites: [kogarah.uca.org.au](http://kogarah.uca.org.au) and <https://www.kogarahstorehouse.org.au/>**

**For pastoral concerns, please contact Deok Hee on  
0401 975 745.**

## **Scriptures for Lent 5**

**Isaiah 43:16–21** has God bringing a hopeful message of a new thing that God is doing. The language used to describe this is a way being made through the sea and a way made through the wilderness.

### **Psalm 126**

People would have sung this song as they made their way to Jerusalem. It is a song of joy for what God has done in the lives of the people.

### **Philippians 3:4b–14**

Paul tells of the change that has happened for him in finding a life in Christ. The loss of worldly things has been all gained in Christ.

### **John 12:1–8**

While Jesus dines with his friends in Bethany, Mary takes expensive perfume and pours it on Jesus' feet. Judas criticises Mary for her extravagant wastefulness. Jesus rebukes his remarks and validates Mary's action.

## **Theme Focus**

As our Lenten journey concludes and Jerusalem comes into view, Isaiah's promise of a path through the wilderness and Mary's act of anointing Jesus' feet invite us to embrace the paradox of hope and sacrifice.

## Word for the Day

The household of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha was quite familiar with a range of smells, according to John's gospel. In the previous chapter, the stench from Lazarus' dead body fills the area. Now we have the more pleasant fragrance of nard or spikenard. It may be difficult for us to comprehend the impact that this had on the people present.

Some of those present may have recalled their wedding day when the bride may have used nard to prepare herself for her husband. Times of intimacy and personal closeness were possibly recalled. Could this possibly be equated with the behaviour of this woman in such a public forum? Others may have been reminded of the consecration of a king. Could Mary have been hinting that Jesus was a king? Why, then, would she anoint his feet instead of his head, which was the acceptable practice? For most of those present, however, the rich fragrance would have been an all too vivid reminder of death. Many had probably used similar perfumes to embalm their own friends and relatives following their death. Surely, Mary did not wish death upon Jesus.

Mary's actions must have seemed so outlandish that those present merely saw them as acts of extravagance. What sort of a woman unties her hair in public? Who in their right mind would pour such a rare and expensive perfume over Jesus' feet? Could she not have sold the perfume and given the money to the needy? Surely, Jesus would agree with their thinking. This woman must be mad.

But Jesus did not agree. In fact, he defended Mary's actions. Mary had demonstrated an understanding of who Jesus was that went beyond the comprehension of those present. The wafting perfume not only told of her close relationship with Jesus but also of his impending death. Her prophetic action should have made it plainly clear who this man was and the depth of her devotion. She sees Jesus as the way she wants to follow; He is the way through the wilderness.

### Ideas for Reflection

- Is there a right time and place to worship God?
- Are there correct procedures that we need to follow?
- Does it happen only in the church on Sunday mornings?

Mary has shown us that worship is a spontaneous and natural overflowing of our life. This could well make us appear foolish and naïve.

- When we come before God in worship, do we come with our hair flowing? Are we vulnerable and true to ourselves? Or do we try to appear holy to those who may be watching, being overly careful with our words and actions?
- So, what of the fragrance that resulted from Mary's worship? The sweet fragrance filled the house. What fragrance does our worship release into the air? What does this perfume stir in the minds of others? If the actions of our lives contradict each other, will not the aroma of our worship be confusing and difficult to identify?
- How does the aroma of our community's worship demonstrate the path that God has made in the wilderness to our society?



Spike  
-nard

## Lenten Bible Studies Fridays @ 10:30am @ Kogarah UC

4. April 11: Eternal Hope (Naomi Wolfe)
5. 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.

## **The Anointing at Bethany**

Come close with Mary, Martha , Lazarus  
So close the candles stir with their soft breath  
And kindle heart and soul to flame within us  
Lit by these mysteries of life and death.  
For beauty now begins the final movement  
In quietness and intimate encounter  
The alabaster jar of precious ointment  
Is broken open for the world's true lover,

The whole room richly fills to feast the senses  
With all the yearning such a fragrance brings,  
The heart is mourning but the spirit dances,  
Here at the very centre of all things,  
Here at the meeting place of love and loss  
We all foresee, and see beyond the cross.

***(Malcolm Guite - April 4, 2012 - 6:35 am)***

Posted by Jamberoo Abbey on their Facebook page March 26 2025

For the darkness of the night  
enveloping the earth,  
enclosing the day's labour,  
thanks be to you, O God. For  
the quiet that surrounds me  
and your promise of peace  
deep within me, for the  
stillness of sleep for my body  
and the hope of healing for  
my soul, thanks be to you.

~ J. Philip Newell, Celtic Benediction



Remembered by Jamberoo Abbey on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Today, we celebrate the feast of **St Oscar Romero**.

Oscar was a man of deep wisdom whose life was steeped in the Word of God and who chose to throw in his lot with the poor and oppressed in his country of El Salvador. He became "God's microphone" and his people's microphone speaking the language of justice, truth, freedom from oppression and love. He gave his life for his people when he was gunned down while celebrating the Eucharist on 24 March 1980.

The beautiful quote from Teilhard de Chardin sums up his life: "Someday, after we have mastered the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness the energies of love. Then, for the second time in the history of the world, humanity will have discovered fire."

# Planning Ahead

- 15<sup>th</sup> May Kogarah UC Church Council @ 7pm via Zoom
- 22<sup>nd</sup> May Worship Task Group @ 7pm via Zoom
- 27<sup>th</sup> April – 4<sup>th</sup> May Life & Witness with Goerges River Presbytery – More details to come

**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.**

**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, Cindy, Sue Baglin. 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.**

**Daylight Saving began today, April 6. Did you put your clocks back one hour?**



## Next Sunday

13th April 2025 @ 10am

### Lent 6 – Palm/Passion Sunday

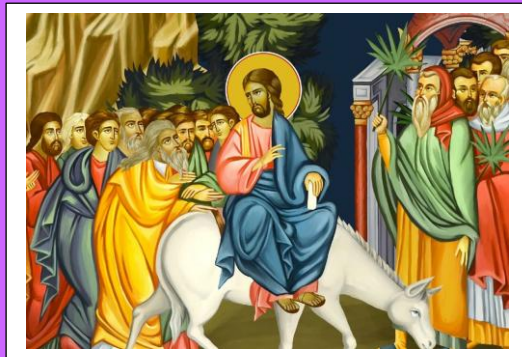
#### Last steps on the journey

Leader Deok Hee

Reflection Deok Hee

Holy Communion Deok Hee

Psalm 118:1–2,19–29; Luke 19:28–40 (Palm Sunday)  
Isaiah 50:4–9a; Psalm 31:9–16; Philippians 2:5–11  
Luke 22:14–23:56 or Luke 23:1–49 (Passion Sunday)



#### 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