



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.**

8th June 2025 @ 10am

Pentecost - A Spirit of Understanding

Leader Deok Hee

Reflection Deok Hee

Holy Communion Deok Hee

**Genesis 11:1–9; Psalm 104:24–34, 35b; Acts 2:1–21, 16–17,
20–21; John 14:8–17, (25–27)**



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

Genesis 11:1–9

The story from Genesis is an origin story explaining why there are so many languages. Like many origin stories, this is not to be taken literally but as a myth explaining why we now have trouble understanding one another. God sees that the people have great power when they all speak the same language and, so, confuses their language and scatters them across the earth.

Psalm 104:24–34, 35b

The psalmist proclaims their awe and wonder at what God has created and sustained in the natural world. This is a song of praise for the new thing God is doing in the world and the hope this gives for the future.

Acts 2:1–21 *is a story of the coming of the Holy Spirit. The noise and the spectacle gather a crowd who find they can understand people speaking in their own languages despite being from far away places. The crowd accuse the disciples of being drunk, but Peter proclaims what is occurring, quoting from the prophet Joel.*

John 14:8–17, (25–27)

Philip asks Jesus to show the disciples the Father. Jesus proclaims that if they have seen him, they have seen the Father. Jesus goes on to promise the gift of the Holy Spirit once he has gone.

Theme Focus

On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit bridges our divides, transforming confusion into understanding and isolation into unity, inviting us to embrace a shared purpose in our daily lives.

Word for the Day

Genesis 11:1–9 and Acts 2:1–21 both talk about different languages. In many ways, the Pentecost story could be viewed as a reversal of the Tower of Babel myth. The theme this week explores how easy it can be to misunderstand each other. The gift of the Holy Spirit, when we allow space for it to breathe among us, can help us to see from a different perspective and transform and change us.

In hearing the Pentecost story from Acts again today, it is important to be reminded of the origins of this festival. Pentecost did not begin as a Christian festival. It originates from the Jewish festival Shavuot, the Festival of Weeks. This was celebrated 50 days after the Passover, and remembered the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. It also marked the wheat harvest in the land of Israel. The festival, at a deeper level, marked the time when Israel became a nation committed to serving God. It is an amazing story of unification, reconciliation and identity.

It is vital that we recognise this Jewish tradition from which our Christian Pentecost has been borrowed. This is the same tradition where the Spirit hovered over the waters, the same tradition where life was breathed into the clay humans, the same tradition in which the Spirit caused the dry bones to grow flesh and live. God's Spirit was certainly alive and well long before Christians named this day Pentecost.

Many have interpreted the story of the coming of the Holy Spirit as the giving of a gift that the faithful community did not yet have, as though the Spirit was not at work before this day. This view of the coming of the Holy Spirit is exclusive, divisive and hurtful. It is the complete opposite of what Pentecost is really about. The story has its origins in a festival that was about celebrating a sense of new community and togetherness. The retention of the same festival in the early Christian church would have certainly occurred because parallels were seen. This is brought to life in the Acts account when people from all over the known world could hear people speaking in their own language. Although different in race, culture and creed, these people were unified by the Spirit. Where the people at the Tower of Babel were scattered and had their languages mixed up, at Pentecost the people were gathered together in common language and understanding. The emphasis is on a new

community of love and justice, where there is no longer enslaved or free, Jew or Greek, Aboriginal or refugee, male or female, gay or straight, Christian or Muslim.

This is a story that our world so desperately needs today. This is a story that our churches so desperately need to hear afresh today. So often, we choose oppression and exclusion instead of love and compassion. We divide people into groups, scatter them by applying labels, identify their language as different to ours and claim not to understand. We claim to know what is right and allow our beliefs and certainties to rule as though we know the heart of God. We have forgotten the community to which we belong. We have forgotten how the Spirit can bring people together in unity, love and compassion. The Holy Spirit is recognised when we can see that God is working in the lives of others, even those who could not be more different to us, and we are truly able to love that person – not just tolerate them. This is when we find the common language of reconciliation, compassion and justice. This is when we discover the new Community of Christ for which we are intended.

Ideas for Reflection

You are invited to reflect on where you feel misunderstood or where you may have misunderstood others. The following poem by John Howell's poem can be used as part of your reflection. What strikes you about the poem? What challenge does it leave you with today?

look in and hear
what your inner voice is saying about you
what is locked away, what is neglected
what sings like a choir

look in and see
as you look yourself in the eye
smile or frown in the mirror
what you like about your face

look out and listen
curious about others
where they hurt, where they feel good
conversing without monologue

look out and notice
where we dump our waste
where birds sing, where viruses breed
what we might do in a drought

balance looking in with looking out
heart pounding
lungs full of fresh breath
stride uphill
wind on our faces

© John Howell*



Many thanks to Deok Hee, Elin and family for their wonderful Bibimbap lunch last Sunday. It certainly enlivened our taste buds.

Kogarah Uniting Church – Notice of Church Council Elections

The elections for KUC CC will be held in conjunction with the KUC Annual Congregational Meeting on July 13

These are the current members of KUC CC and the year when their current term ends.

Church Councillors

Robert McAlpine (2026) Continuing

Susan Baglin (2025)

Dinah Roepers (2025)

Elders

John Baglin (2025)

Richard Goodman (2027) Continuing

Bobbie Miller (2025)

The continuing members of Church Council are Robert McAlpine and Richard Goodman.

The remaining members are due to retire. If you wish them to continue in their roles, you will need to nominate them. They may agree to stand for a 1-, 2- or 3-year term.

Also, feel free to approach other members of the congregation you feel have gifts to offer either as a member of church council or as an elder.

Where applicable

Nomination forms are now available, and may be handed in to Richard at any time until **Sunday June 22.**

Planning Ahead

Schedule for 2025 church council elections

- o June 15 and 22 - Dates for receiving nominations for Church Council**
- o June 29 and July 6 - Dates for advertising nominees for Church Council**
- o July 13 2025 - Date of AGM and Elections**
- o July 20 Possible date for the Commissioning of new Church Council**

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 Dennis and Robyn Lyons, Brian and Rhonda, Prema and Priya, Denis and Dolly, Naghuia, Peter and Sue; Dinah; Ern Edwards; Jim Bird, Cindy, Dorothy, Sue B. 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

Welcome back Yamini and Margaret. It was great to see you again!

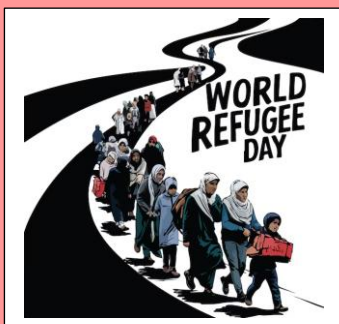
Next Sunday
15th June 2025 @ 10am
Trinity Sunday - Encountering the Divine
Refugee Sunday

Leader Robert

Reflection Deok Hee

Proverbs 8:1–4, 22–31; Psalm 8; Romans 5:1–5;

John 16:12–15



Church Council 2024-2025

Chair
Secretary
Treasurer
Councillors

Elders

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)

Safe Church Contact Person

Richard Goodman