



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.**

31st August 2025 @ 10am

Pentecost 12 - Proper 17

Living Waters/God's Table for All

Jeremiah 2:4–13; Psalm 81:1, 10–16; Hebrews 13:1–8, 15–16;

Luke 14: 1, 7–14

Leader Robert

(Deok Hee is on his rostered day off)

Reflection Robert

Holy Communion Richard



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

Jeremiah 2:4–13

A prophetic utterance draws on God's presence and provision during the exodus from Egypt to ask why the people do not acknowledge God's presence and provision during Jeremiah's time.

Psalms 81:1, 10–16 also draws on the memory of the exodus. The portion we read this week is a lament written in God's voice, asking why the people do not trust God to provide and care for them.

Hebrews 13:1–8, 15–16 encourages the community to live well together. The characteristics of common life include hospitality to strangers, compassion for those in prison, respectful relationships, and shared resources. The verses skipped over in the lectionary are challenging, asking the community to take seriously their identification with Christ.

Luke 14: 1, 7–14

At dinner with a leader, Jesus sees people trying to claim importance and power for themselves. So, he tells a story and gives advice about honouring others and including the poor, marginalised, and others who are uninvited.

Theme Focus

As we hear God described as a fountain of living water, we are invited to reflect on this image and its meaning for us today. We ask to who is welcome at Christ's Banquet.

Word for the Day

As we continue to focus on the readings from Jeremiah, it's good to remember how prophetic literature works. Steven L. McKenzie (*How to Read the Bible: History, Prophecy, Literature—Why Modern Readers Need to Know the Difference and What It Means for Faith Today*. OUP. 2005) puts it like this: prophecy is 'forthtelling not foretelling.' That is, the prophetic words are speaking into a particular context and situation. To reflect on how these words address us, it helps to think about how the words address their earlier context.

The backdrop for Jeremiah is the rise of Babylon's power and the eventual destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. This is understood within the book as God's judgement upon Judah. Today's reading sets out the case of God against the people. This case is that the people have put God aside despite their shared history, including the liberating exodus from slavery in Egypt.

The Jeremiah passage—like the Psalm—speaks as though in God's voice. Some of the language is harsh and difficult to hear. This includes language of shaming, defilement, and abomination. It may be helpful to consider vulnerability. God laments that the people have forgotten their shared history! We are placed to hear God's sorrow and God's disbelief that this could take place. If we return to think about the context of Jeremiah, these texts were collated together after the destruction of Jerusalem. We can hear the vulnerability of the people also through these stories as they lament and wonder: how could this destruction take place?! How can we make sense of it?! How can we make sure something like this doesn't happen again?

Ideas for Reflection

- Consider how you tell the story of your community's shared history with God.
- How do you respond to the challenging language placed in God's mouth in this passage?
- How do you respond to the idea that God might lament?
- What do you lament over?

The Uniting Church and the Gaza-Israel War

Uniting Church in Australia: statements, articles and resources on Palestine and Israel

Since the horrific attack on Israel by Hamas militants on 7 October 2023, and the devastating military retaliation by Israel in Gaza, the Uniting Church in Australia Assembly has sought to respond to a worsening conflict situation with a commitment to justice and peace.

We have spoken out on the unfolding humanitarian crisis, international law, the release of hostages, our rejection of antisemitism and racism, and the urgent need for a just and lasting peace for all in Palestine and Israel. These actions are grounded in our Christian faith and in our commitments to justice, human rights and human dignity. They build on long-standing official positions on Palestine and Israel going back to 2008.

This page is a record of our discernment and public witness, bringing together the Assembly's public statements, resolutions and articles concerning Palestine and Israel. It is a central and transparent resource for Uniting Church members, partners, media and members of the public who wish to understand our position and our advocacy.

As the Uniting Church in Australia, we call for:

- An immediate ceasefire and the uninhibited flow of humanitarian aid.
- An end to the occupation of Palestine, and the lifting of the unlawful blockade on Gaza.
- The immediate release of all Israeli hostages, and all Palestinians held without charge or trial.
- Accountability, including sanctions, where international law is violated.

- The protection and affirmation of Palestinian rights and freedoms.
- Justice through the International Criminal Court and International Court of Justice.
- An end to any remaining weapons exports to Israel and greater transparency over Australia's weapon exports.
- A renewed international commitment to a just and lasting peace.

A Call to End Apartheid, Occupation and Impunity: Uniting Church Adopts WCC Statement on Palestine

A statement from Rev Charissa Suli, President of the Uniting Church in Australia

As President of the Uniting Church in Australia, I am deeply grieved by the worsening humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. Alongside our global ecumenical partners, I believe this is a moment when the Church must speak with clarity, act with courage, and pray with compassion.

At its July 2025 meeting, the Assembly Standing Committee adopted the recent statement of the World Council of Churches (WCC) Central Committee on Palestine and Israel as the official position of the Uniting Church Assembly.

This powerful and prophetic statement, *A Call to End Apartheid, Occupation and Impunity in Palestine and Israel*, was released at the WCC Central Committee meeting in Johannesburg in June 2025. It reflects two years of consultation with churches in the Middle East including with Palestinian Christian communities. It offers a clear moral witness at a time of unbearable suffering.

"In adopting the WCC statement, we reaffirm our deep solidarity with the people of Palestine, and all who long for a just peace in the Holy Land. We stand ready to listen to the cries of the oppressed, to centre the voices of our ecumenical and interfaith partners, and to act with moral courage and compassion as followers of Jesus."

With deep lament and righteous anger, the statement names the devastation in Gaza, the escalating violence in the West Bank and Jerusalem, and calls the global Church to action grounded in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and international law.

It affirms the dignity of both Palestinians and Israelis and draws an essential distinction between our Jewish siblings and the policies of the Israeli Government. It unequivocally rejects all forms of racism, including antisemitism, anti-Arab racism and Islamophobia.

Assembly Standing Committee resolution on the Holy Land

President Rev Sharon Hollis has written to the Australian government and representatives in the Holy Land to share the Uniting Church's deep concerns about the Israel-Palestine war

The Uniting Church in Australia Assembly has this week sought to highlight and communicate its deep concerns about the escalating conflict in Israel-Palestine and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Following a resolution of the Assembly Standing Committee (ASC) at its March meeting, President Rev Sharon Hollis has written to several members of the Australian government and other representatives in the Holy Land to share the Church's concerns, express support for measures taken and call for further action.

In particular, the ASC resolution:

- **Commits the Uniting Church to support the Middle East Council of Churches in their advocacy.**
- **Condemns all atrocities and acts of brutality which make peace efforts impossible.**
- **Welcomes measures taken by the Australian Government to offer humanitarian assistance and advocate for an end to the conflict.**
- **Calls on the Australian Government to do all it can to facilitate a just peace in the Holy Land including supporting the International Court of Justice in its measures to prevent genocide, supporting peace-making organisations and imposing targeted sanctions.**
- **Calls on the Israeli Government to end extrajudicial killings and impunity for members of the Israeli security forces and settlers that murder Palestinians and to abolish the practice of detaining Palestinians without charge.**

The resolution was communicated to the Australian Prime Minister, the Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Australian Greens, the General Secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches, the Israeli Ambassador to Australia and the Head of the General Delegation of Palestine to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.

The letters express a deep concern for the catastrophic situation in Gaza, noting in particular the suffering of innocent civilians and the suffering of the Christian church in Gaza as they seek to offer ministry and care to the region.

The latest advocacy on Gaza is grounded in the Uniting Church's long-standing commitment to being a peacemaking church. This has included a commitment to supporting the right of both Israel and Palestine to exist in peace.

The resolution also called on Uniting Church congregations to offer support to those in the Australian community living with grief and fear due to the conflict and rising racial and religious hatred.

Congregations are encouraged to pray for and listen to those who are suffering, to participate in events and actions in support of a just peace, and to consider donating to the Act For Peace Gaza Emergency Appeal and Palestinian Christians in Australia accommodation drive.

We give thanks for the many UCA members and communities who are already active in supporting a just peace in the Holy Land.



**Stop the occupation!
Free the hostages!
Peace & justice for all**

Authorised by the Uniting Church in Australia Assembly, Level 4, 262 Pitt St, Sydney, NSW, 2000

A song about the living waters of God

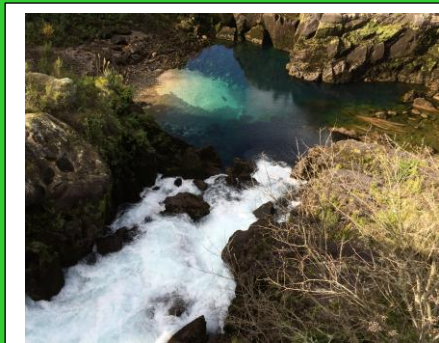
**Like a tree beside the waters,
nurtured by your loving care,
we, O God, your sons and daughters,
your enduring witness bear.**

**In each passing generation
may your voice of love be heard.**

**Bless, we pray, this congregation
with you holy, living Word.**

Like a tree beside the river,
drawing life from holy streams,
fill us with your love forever;
recreate our hopes and dreams.
Through the storms of life sustain us
by the wisdom of your grace.

May the changing of the seasons
find us in your warm embrace.
We, beside the living waters,
drink from your eternal life.
Give to all, your sons and daughters,
faith that rises over strife.
O Living God, most glorious,
strengthen us for life today.
By the hope of timeless promise
guide you church upon the Way.



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The Season of Creation is coming ...

This is an edited version of an email from Gershon Nimbalker

National Director *Common Grace*

When was the last time you paused to ponder the wisdom woven through Creation? Through the rhythm and flow of the seasons, the earth reminds us of deep truths: about ourselves, about our world, about our God.

When we think about climate justice — and it's deeply important that we do — it's easy to start from a place of concern, or anxiety, even desperation.

But what if instead, we first grounded ourselves in **wonder**?

The Season of Creation is a time to marvel in God's incredible tapestry of life on earth. It's also a time we remind ourselves of our sacred calling to care for and nurture this common home of ours. This calling transcends any single time of the year. And it's not just for some of us with particular interests or professional roles.

It's part of what it means to be human. **In every season.** No matter our age, life stage, or how we use our free time.

We're all called to care for, indeed to *love*, Creation. The word calling can sound like a duty. A burden. Something we 'have to'. But, when I sit on my deck and listen to the warble and chatter of the native birds or when I sink my toes in the sand of the Awabakal coastline, where I'm grateful to live, it doesn't feel like a burden at all.

What if wonder is the true fuel of lasting climate advocacy?

I was thinking about this when I spent some time reflecting on the words of Uncle Pastor Ray Minniecon and Dr. Felicity McCormack — two people I'm deeply grateful are part of our Common Grace movement. An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elder who carries the deep wisdom of this land through his bloodline, as part of the oldest surviving cultures on the planet. And a climate scientist, who has spent years studying and understanding Antarctica, and the way that icy landscape down south is connected to *everywhere else* on this planet.

The earth speaks in every crashing wave and shifting tide. She sings in birdsong and breeze, groans in the movement of sand and sea, and cries out. An invitation to listen, to love, to take our place as caretakers of creation.

Together, will we listen?



Planning Ahead

- **August 17 – August 31 – Deok Hee on holiday**
- **August 31 (after church) Congregational meeting to consider the 2025-2026 budget and receive the report on our Life and Mission.**
- **September 7 till September 28 – Season of Creation**

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 and volunteers at the Storehouse. 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, Rhonda Chamberlain and family; Prema and Priya, Denis and Dolly, Ngahuia, Peter and Sue; Dinah; Ern Edwards; Jim Bird, Cindy, Dorothy and Godfrey, 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, Thailand, Cambodia

Next Sunday

7th September 2025 @ 10am

Pentecost 13 - Proper 18

Season of Creation 1 - Ocean

Job 38:1–18; Psalm 104:1–9, 24–26; Ephesians 1:3–10;

Luke 5:1–11

Leader Richard

Reflection Deok Hee



Church Council 2025-2026

Chair

Richard Goodman

Secretary

Sue Baglin

Treasurer

John Baglin (2027)

Councillors

Robert McAlpine (2026)

Sue Baglin (2026)

Joshua Chang (2026)

Elders

John Baglin (2026)

Bobbie Miller (2028)

Richard Goodman (2027)

Dorothy Makasa (2026)

Safe Church Contact Person

Richard Goodman