



## **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.**

**14th December 2025 @ 10am**

**Advent 3 – Joy (Gaudete – Rejoice!)**

**Rediscovering the Joy**

**Leader Deok Hee**

**Reflection Deok Hee**

**Holy Communion Deok Hee**

**Isaiah 35:1–10; Luke 1:46b–55; James 5:7–10.**

**Matthew 11:2–11**



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 from the Revised Common Lectionary**

#### **Isaiah 35:1–10**

The prophet proclaims God's promise of joy and gladness for all creation. The wilderness will blossom, strength will come to the weary, sight will be given to those who cannot see, and everlasting joy will be the gift of those saved by God.

#### **Luke 1:46b–55**

Mary's song, the Magnificat, is a song of praise to God. She calls herself blessed and praises God, who has lifted up the humble and gives food to those who are hungry.

#### **James 5:7–10**

The people are encouraged to be as patient as a farmer who waits for a crop to grow. They are told not to grumble against each other but to remain patient in their suffering.

#### **Matthew 11:2–11**

Jesus responds to the questions of his identity from John the baptiser's messengers, and then speaks to the crowd about John's purpose in preparing the way before him.

#### **Theme Focus**

As Isaiah paints a vision of creation rejoicing and Mary sings her song of joy in the midst of struggle, we are invited to be attentive to the goodness of God around us that overflows in true joy.

## Word for the Day

As we approach the Christmas season with its expectations of peace, love, and joy, it can be tempting to try and create the joy of Christmas rather than discover it in the everyday. We decorate our houses and gardens to evoke the Christmas spirit in some way. We buy gifts that we feel will bring happiness to our loved ones. We prepare lavish meals and purchase a variety of drinks to keep things merry.

The joy of the Christmas story is, however, far deeper and simpler than all of this. The story of God coming among us, Word made flesh, is a story of hope and love. This is the God who sees our ordinary lives—the pain, the struggles, and the laughter—and walks alongside us. Our readings highlight the transformation, justice, and peace that are possible with God.

These things are not so evident in the pretty lights, the well-wrapped gifts or even the lavish food we spread on our tables. The joy we know in God is often found in a smile, a flower, an act of kindness, a chance encounter or a moment of reconciliation. Today's readings call us to be attentive to how God is at work in our lives and in the world around us.

## Ideas for Reflection

- Where have you experienced the joy of God, even amidst life's struggles?
- What small pleasures bring you great joy? How can you be more intentional about bringing this joy to others?
- Joy is far deeper than mere happiness. How does the presence of God in your life help you rediscover joy?

## ADVENT BIBLE STUDY

Join us at the church at 10am on the Fridays in  
Advent for

**Our Advent Bible Study series**

**The final Session (4) is on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December**

### Kogarah Storehouse Dates

#### **17<sup>th</sup> December – Storehouse Christmas Celebration –**

Distribution of Christmas Hampers – food and entertainment. This activity is supported by Westfield (Hurstville), CBA (Hurstville), St George leagues Club, Soul of Chinatown. There will be Bamboo Band music, Ukrainian food and much, much more. **All welcome.**

The Storehouse will be closed from 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2025 till 21<sup>st</sup> January 2026 (first food distribution day)



**Wildflowers in WA desert**

# **TODAY!**

**Kogarah Uniting Church**

**高嘉華聯合教會**

**Merry Christmas!**

**聖誕快樂**

**Chinese Christmas Celebration**

**華人聖誕聯歡會**

**Date: 14 December 2025 日期: 12 月 14 日 星  
期日**

**Time: 4pm-7pm**

**時間：下午四至七時**

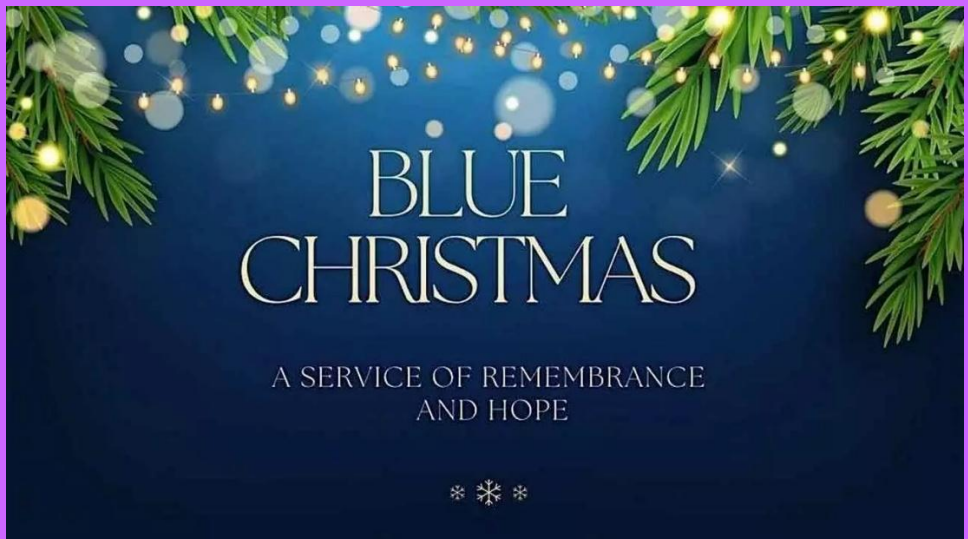
**Bring a dish to share 每人帶一味菜**

## Blue Christmas

We will be holding a special service on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2025 @ 7:30pm for people who find that Christmas celebrations can be overwhelming, especially if they are missing someone who has died or who is absent, or who feels lonely and in need of space to contemplate the deeper meaning of this Christmas time.

The service will offer a time to remember those who are absent in a quiet mood of contemplation and respect.

If you know someone who might benefit from such a service, please invite them to come. They will be most welcome.



Again a devotional from Common Grace where Rev Tim Costello reminds us of God's constant presence, even in the midst of despair.

## Hope in Hopeless Times

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But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

### Matthew 24:36-44

Have things ever been this bad?

In the latest *National Church Life Survey*, only 19% of Australians said they felt hopeful about the future of the world. Around four in ten (44%) reported being low in hope. The main reasons given were war and conflict (66%), followed by economic insecurity (52%), climate change (41%) and finally political instability (39%). It sounds very grim. But the reality is that, yes - things have often been this bad.

When I was young, complaining to my father about doing my paper round on early mornings in cold Melbourne winters for very little money, he said "Son, at not much older than you I

was dodging Japanese bullets fighting in New Guinea for two shillings and sixpence a day. Don't you complain!"

Our teaching today from Jesus is a reminder that things were very bad in his time too - and his call is to keep hope alive. As Tom Wright has shown, this text, which appears with other eschatological texts in Matthew 24 and Luke, is referring to the future destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple in the 66-70 CE war with the Romans. As Luke puts it, "Where the corpses are, there the (Roman) eagles will gather."

It was the devastating destruction of the centre of Jewish national identity. As Luke writes "When you see the armies surrounding Jerusalem..." In our current times, we can see echoes of this in places like El Fashir in Darfur, where masses of civilians are being killed. I was in Darfur in 2004 and saw the horrific rape and pillage by the Janjaweed - Arabs killing African black people. The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) who have killed so many innocent civilians recently are the sons of those same Janjaweed, repeating the same violence again in Darfur.

Many at the time when Jesus said these words foresaw the fate of Jerusalem once Roman General Vespasian (who later became Emperor) had amassed his legions in Palestine. I think both Jesus and Paul foresaw this in some way, a generation before 66CE. Jesus knew all this was going to happen so in this text is vindicated.

The events we call Advent occurred when Israel was occupied and oppressed by an Empire. It was - and is - hope in hopeless times. We locate our hope in this assurance that God is with us: "Unto us a child is given" - Immanuel, God with us.

Jesus was crucified by the imperial occupiers but was vindicated and raised up by God. In the resurrection, a new creation begins - a new age, eternal life - which is the power of



the age to come breaking into the present. And it inaugurates a new community, gathered from East and West, who follow the Way through all manner of catastrophic upheavals.

As a young Christian, I first encountered this text as lyrics to Larry Norman's classic '*I Wish We Had All Been Ready*.' One man and woman taken, and the others left. Our hope was in the Parousia - the Second Coming of Christ - when Christians would escape from catastrophic end times. But Larry's interpretation, I believe, was wrong. Jesus is speaking of one being taken by the Roman oppressors, and another left.

Matthew's Great Commission does not repeat this hope only in the Parousia. Instead, Jesus says "Remember, I am with you always, to the end of this age". He does not say *until* my Parousia. Love breaking through, even in the face of trial and tribulation, is the ongoing promise that begins in Advent - the promise of God's presence with us.

It is this presence that gives us hope. Not hope grounded in an apocalyptic intervention, but in the sure knowledge that God is with us through it all.



REV TIM COSTELLO

*Rev Tim Costello is a respected Australian community leader and advocate on social justice, leadership, and ethics. He is Executive Director of Micah Australia, Chair of the Community Council for Australia, Director of Ethical Voice and holds several advisory and advocacy roles, including spokesperson for the*

**Alliance for Gambling Reform. Previously CEO of World Vision Australia, former Mayor of St Kilda, and a Baptist minister, Tim studied law, education, and theology, bringing a unique blend of experience to his work.**

**Below is a Latin hymn sung at this time of rejoicing. It was written in the 1400's. It gives us the Latin name for this Sunday. You can listen to it here:**

**[https://youtu.be/e9HXB\\_4PPhk?si=uPw74tD7O2M8-tLS](https://youtu.be/e9HXB_4PPhk?si=uPw74tD7O2M8-tLS)**

Latin	English	Source Wikipedia
<i>Gaudēte, gaudēte! Chrīstus est nātus Ex Mariā virgine, gaudēte!</i>	Rejoice, rejoice! <sup>[a]</sup> <a href="#">Christ</a> is born Of the <a href="#">Virgin Mary</a> – Rejoice!	
<i>Tempus adest grātia Hoc quod optābāmus, Carmina laetitiae Dēvotē reddāmus.</i>	The time of <a href="#">grace</a> has come— What we have wished for; Songs of joy Let us give back faithfully.	
<i>Deus homō factus est Nātūrā mirante, Mundus renovātus est Ā Chrīsto regnante.</i>	God has become man, With nature marvelling, The world has been renewed By the reigning Christ.	
<i>Ezechiēlis porta Clausa pertrānsitur, Unde lūx est orta Salūs invenitur.</i>	The closed gate of <a href="#">Ezekiel</a> Is passed through, Whence the light is risen; <a href="#">Salvation</a> has been found.	
<i>Ergō nostra cōntiō Psallat iam in lūstrō; Benedīcat Dominō: Salūs Regī nostrō.</i>	Therefore, let our assembly Now sing in brightness Let it bless the Lord: Greetings to our King.	

## Planning Ahead

- **December 14<sup>th</sup> Advent 3 Joy**
- **December 14<sup>th</sup> @ 4pm Chinese Christmas Deok Hee + Wynne**
- **December 21<sup>st</sup> Advent 4 Love**
- **12, 19 December Advent Bible Study: Fridays @ 10am**
- **December 18<sup>th</sup> Blue Christmas at 7.30 pm**
- **December 25<sup>th</sup> Christmas Day @ 10am (Thursday) (There will be no Christmas Eve service this year.)**
- **January 8<sup>th</sup> 2026 Kogarah Church Council @ 4pm face to face @ Kogarah UC**

### **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.

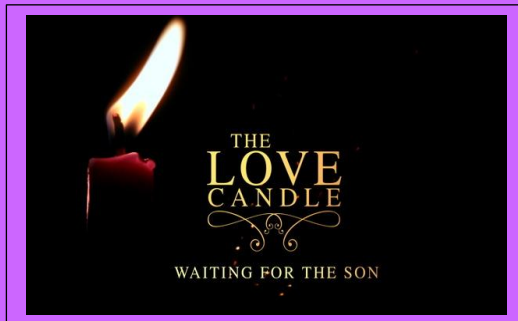
Those who are sick, sad or lonely: We pray especially today for Dennis and Robyn Lyons, Rhonda Chamberlain and family; Prema and Priya, Denis and Dolly, Ngahuia, Peter and Sue; Dinah; Ern Edwards; Jim Bird, Cindy, Dorothy and Godfrey, - For others whom we name in our hearts.

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. The people of South-East Asia, especially Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia plus Sri Lanka in this time of devastating floods. Those recovering from the catastrophic apartment fires in Hong Kong.

**Next Sunday**  
**21st December 2025 @ 10am**  
**Advent 4 – Love**  
**Immanuel: Difficult to Conceive**

**Leader Robert**  
**Reflection Deok Hee**

**Isaiah 7:10–16; Psalm 80:1–7, 17–19; Romans 1:1–7.**  
**Matthew 1:18–25**



**Church Council 2025-2026**

***Chair***  
***Secretary***  
***Treasurer***  
***Councillors***

**Richard Goodman**  
**Sue Baglin**  
**John Baglin (2027)**  
**Robert McAlpine (2026)**  
**Sue Baglin (2026)**  
**Joshua Chang (2026)**

***Elders***

**John Baglin (2026)**  
**Bobbie Miller (2028)**  
**Richard Goodman (2027)**  
**Dorothy Makasa (2026)**

***Culture of Safety Contact Person***

**Richard Goodman**