



**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.**

**26<sup>th</sup> April 2026 @ 10am**

**Easter 4 – Good Shepherd Sunday**

**Opening to life**

**Leader Deok Hee**

**Reflection Deok Hee**

**Holy Communion Deok Hee**

**Acts 2:42–47; Psalm 23; 1 Peter 2:19–25;**

**John 10:1–10**



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  
Rev Deok Hee Cho on 0401 975 745.**

### **Scriptures**

**Acts 2:42–47** paints a rich and affirming picture of the early church community, living out, in an inclusive way, the generosity and abundant life brought by Jesus.

**Psalm 23** invites us to trust in a God whose care is like that of a shepherd. The shepherd image was basic to Middle Eastern society in biblical times and familiar as a picture used by the prophets of God's relationship with the Hebrew people.

**1 Peter 2:19–25** points us to Jesus. It offers a reason and suggests a response to his suffering, and extends the shepherd image to Jesus as the protector of his people.

#### **John 10:1–10**

The gospel writer continues the well-known shepherd theme to explain how Jesus opens the way to life in contrast to those who destroy. His hearers fail to grasp his message, so Jesus reiterates his offer of abundant life.

### **Theme Focus**

**On Good Shepherd Sunday**, we are drawn by the voice that opens us to abundance, rest with the early believers who shared life with open hands, and wonder how such generosity might unfold in us and around us.

## Word for the Day

The song 'A World of Our Own,' written by Tom Springfield and made famous by The Seekers, describes the creation of a private, peaceful world with someone you love—a place where the two can retreat from troubles, pressures, and the negativity of the outside world.

In a one-on-one romantic relationship, it is important for a couple to spend time alone getting to know each other. However, all people need, in varying degrees, to be part of a wider community to thrive and even to survive. Some groups with particular shared ideals form communities, but they can often implode or become abusive and cultish.

It is hard to know how accurate this picture of the early church described in Acts was, or for how long. It is possible to see the life of this fledgling community as a response to the expectation that Jesus would return at any time. Maybe it was a bit like a honeymoon!

In the long term, this lifestyle was unsustainable. Those with wealth would not have owned unlimited land or possessions worth selling, and many early Christians would not have been property owners or lived much above the poverty line. Beyond these issues are the questions: how much time did they have to meet together for worship, prayer, and meals? When did they work? Where did they meet? Who prepared the food? How did these first followers of Jesus build a community that was growing with new people every day?

While the generosity and openness of the early church may have made them attractive, we know from the following chapters in Acts and from historical details that they faced opposition from Jewish leaders and the Roman occupation. Did the success of Jesus' message depend on popularity and growth or on faithfulness and courage to follow his way?

Two contemporary parallels to the early church community come to mind.

The first parallel can be seen in aid agencies that reliably and promptly respond to needs and disasters. Who bears the cost of these? Qualified professionals, especially medical staff, logistics experts and field workers who devote time and energy in dangerous and desperate situations; members of the public who donate time and money; some governments who allocate earmarked funding to relief efforts. Even in first-world countries, we are experiencing disasters that require support from both outside and within our communities.

The second parallel can be seen in Planet Earth, which generously and seemingly endlessly provides for our needs. We are increasingly aware of the cost and know that our growing demands cannot be met by nature's resources, which do indeed have limits.

### **Ideas for Reflection**

- Which communities are we part of that give generously to others?
- From which community groups do we receive?
- What could we share more generously?
- How can we be part of a community or neighbourhood that becomes like family to those who are lonely, or struggling, or on the margins?
- What do we want to praise God for today?

Shared from .... (courtesy of Jim Bird)



Dear Inner Circle,

There is a particular kind of courage that doesn't announce itself. It stands in a line, arms around its people, and simply moves quietly.

Last month, several members of the Iranian women's national football team sought asylum in Australia after facing threats of persecution for refusing to sing their national anthem. Seven women, in a country not their own, asking for protection because they chose to stand in silence. Most later withdrew their claims and went home — not because they felt safe, but because their families back in Iran became the argument. That is how it works. You don't always come for the person. You come for the people around them.

I found myself thinking about courage and its cost. About what it means to take a stand in public, knowing the consequences will be private, personal, and visited upon people who never stood anywhere. Those women knew that. They stood anyway and then, for love of family, some went back into the thing they'd fled. I don't know how to hold that. I just know it should be held carefully.

It sent me back to the year 2000. The Olympics were on in Sydney, but all the way over in Springvale, Victoria, I engaged in what can only be described as the least athletic performance of my life — and that is saying something. We had taken in some athletes seeking asylum. Word had gotten around about what we were doing and sure enough, a

federal surveillance car sat parked out front ready to detain the men, steady as a bad conscience. Something had to be done.

So I geared up. Tracksuit, runners, full commitment. I headed out the front door like a man with a training plan, the car pulled away to follow me, and the moment they turned the corner, the fellows inside were quietly moved to another place. I am not a fast runner. I am not a convincing athlete, but it bought enough time. It took nearly another decade, but all of those men, all with real cases for protection, had their claims found in their favour and have gone on to lead beautiful lives in their new country.

Sadly, twenty-five years on, we are still doing the same dance. People flee. We watch from cars. Families get used as leverage. Somewhere in the middle, ordinary people in tracksuits and caring hosts try to buy a little time. Wayside has always believed that love doesn't wait for the right policy environment. It just moves people between places when it has to.

I managed to steal a few moments in the café this week, one of the not-so-quiet joys of my life. Someone approached asking for something to eat. I've been deeply worried lately seeing instances of rapid weight loss in our community as meagre incomes simply can no longer cover food bills. Before I could respond, someone at my table interjected: *"This is the Rev — he doesn't do the practical stuff. He does, you know, the other stuff."*

Twenty-five years of tracksuits and decoy runs, and apparently I still haven't convinced anyone.

Thank you for being part of the Inner Circle,  
Jon

Rev. Jon Owen  
CEO & Pastor  
Wayside Chapel

## Planning Ahead

- **May 6 Kogarah Storehouse Board Meeting @ 4pm Kogarah**
- **May 7 Worship Task Group meeting @ 7pm via Zoom**
- **May 8 Book discussion @ Bobbie's @ 11:30am**
- **May 14 Kogarah Church Council via Zoom @ 7pm**

### **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, Ngahua, Peter and Sue; Dinah; Ern Edwards; Jim Bird, Cindy, Dorothy and Godfrey, Nives, Jo, Terry - For others whom we name in our hearts.

Pray for the people of Syria, Iraq, Iran, Jordan and other Middle Eastern Countries involved in the current war; Ukraine, Russia, Israel and Palestine, especially the people of Gaza and Lebanon. The USA and the countries of Europe. Sudan.

**Next Sunday**

**3<sup>rd</sup> May 2026 @ 10am**

**Easter 5**

**Living Stones**

**Leader Robert**

**Reflection Deok Hee**

**Acts 7:55–60; Psalm 31:1–5, 15–16; 1 Peter 2:2–10;**

**John 14:1–14**



**Church Council 2025-2026**

***Chair***

**Richard Goodman**

***Secretary***

**Sue Baglin**

***Treasurer***

**John Baglin (2027)**

***Councillors***

**Robert M<sup>c</sup>Alpine (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**