



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.**

5th July 2026 @ 10am

Pentecost + 6 - A Place to Say Yes

Leader Robert

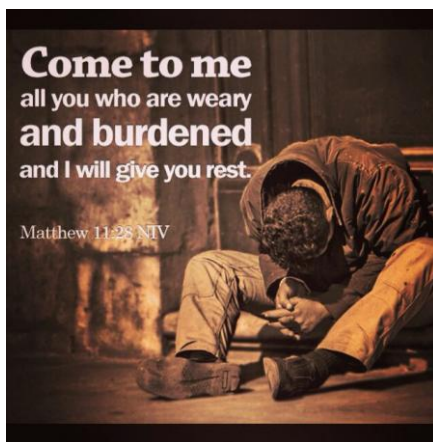
Reflection Deok Hee

Genesis 24:34–38, 42–49, 58–67; Song of Solomon 2:8–13;

Romans 7:15–25a; Matthew 11:16–19, 25–30

Come to me
all you who are weary
and burdened
and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:28 NIV



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/>

New email address for Kogarah Uniting Church: kogarahuc@gmail.com

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

Scriptures

Genesis 24:34–38, 42–49, 58–67 God’s work unfolds through the actions and decisions of ordinary people—a servant, Rebekah, and her family—as God’s promise to Abraham continues. We notice Rebekah’s generosity and her choice to leave all that is familiar and step into a new future within God’s ongoing story.

Psalm 45:10–17 or Song of Solomon 2:8–13

Psalm 45 celebrates a royal wedding filled with beauty, honour, and promise. Words of blessing send the bride forward into a new future. In the vision of future generations, we hear echoes of Rebekah’s story, where the journey continues beyond what is known.

Song of Solomon 2:8–13

This poetic exchange gives voice to longing, invitation, and delight between two lovers. We hear a call to come away and a sense of movement into something new.

Romans 7:15–25a gives voice to the struggle many experience between what we long to do and what we actually do. The passage unfolds in a way that invites careful listening, as this tension is expressed honestly and with vulnerability.

Matthew 11:16–19, 25–30 opens with a parable that reflects the contrary responses of people to the different ministry styles of John and

Jesus. Even where this hospitality is resisted or misunderstood, Jesus continues to reveal God, inviting others into relationship—in words of rest and an image of yoke.

Theme Focus

We meet Rebekah at the well and wonder how we, too, might take our place in God's unfolding story.

Word for the Day

In today's gospel reading, Jesus speaks of a different kind of support, inviting us to come to him, find rest, and walk alongside him, sharing the load.

Like Rebekah, who chose to step into something new, we too are invited into the unfolding story of God—called not alone, but to walk alongside Christ.

Jesus describes this as taking up his yoke. This is not about following a set of rules, but about being in relationship with him—walking together, learning his way, and sharing the weight of what we carry.

This is not a promise of an easy life, but an assurance that we do not carry life alone. As two animals work best when they move together, so we grow in faith as we come to know Christ more deeply and are aligned with his way. The invitation is simple: to come as we are, and to find rest in his presence.

Ideas for Reflection

Jesus speaks of a yoke that is easy and a burden that is light.

- What are some things we carry that feel heavy or tiring?
- What might it mean to lay some of these down and walk alongside Christ?

- Who in our community may be carrying heavy burdens at the moment?
- How might we walk alongside them with care and compassion?

Jesus invites us to come as we are and find rest in his presence.

- Where do you find moments of rest, and how might you open yourself to Christ's presence there?
- When do we give God the chance to speak to us?

Called into God's unfolding story, we are not called alone, but to walk alongside Christ.

- Where do you sense an invitation to step forward at this time?
- Rebekah's decision was shaped through conversation, listening, and trust. How do we listen for and discern God's call in our own lives?

From Insights ...

June was Pride Month, a time of celebration, reflection, and renewed commitment to the dignity and belonging of LGBTQIA+ people everywhere. For the United Church, this month carries particular weight. Our commitment to being a diverse, inclusive community is not a peripheral concern. It sits at the very heart of who we are called to be.

This year, that commitment found fresh expression in a gathering that is already shaping the direction of our work. A few weeks ago, a group of leaders, ministers, and community members came together for what was called the Intersection Gathering, a conversation about what it truly means to create and sustain safe, affirming spaces for LGBTQIA+ people within the church, with particular focus on those whose stories are most often left out of the conversation entirely.

Among those present were the Moderator Rev. Faaimata Havea Hiliau, Jo Drayton - Pulse Team Leader, James Baker - Pulse Ex - Young Adult

Ministry Facilitator, Milise (Ofa) Foiakau - Pulse Youth Ministry Facilitator, Rev Dr Seforosa Carroll - Acting Principal United Theological College, Rev Dr Cliff Bird - Mission Consultant, Greer Hudson - Minister at Adamstown Uniting Church, Tash Holmes - Mission Catalyst, Uniting Creative, Rev. Myung Hwa Park Ex-Moderator and Minister at Leura Uniting Church, Rev. Seung Jae Yeon - Minister at Eastwood Uniting Church and Rev Hee Won Chang - Minister at Hope Uniting Church, a group whose collective experience and leadership lent the gathering both depth and direction.

What emerged from the room was honest, courageous, and at times difficult to sit with. There was grief over spaces that once felt safe and no longer do, over communities that have fragmented, over young people who remain hidden rather than celebrated. But there was also something unmistakably hopeful. A sense, as one participant put it, that it is simply time for the church to move forward together.

One of the most significant threads running through the gathering was the question of intersectionality, and how rarely it is taken seriously in practice. The words "inclusive," "open," and "affirming" are used often in church circles. But inclusion means very little if it only extends to people whose experience fits a familiar mould. In many Pacific and non-Western communities represented within our church, queerness is still treated as sinful or unspoken, something that exists but is not acknowledged, let alone embraced. Young queer people in these communities carry an invisible weight, navigating faith and identity in spaces that were never designed with them in mind.

The gathering made clear that the Uniting Church cannot speak about LGBTQIA+ inclusion and treat it as separate from cultural inclusion. These conversations must happen together. Queer people already exist within our First Nations communities, our Pacific communities, our multicultural congregations. The question is not whether they belong, they do, but whether we are actively creating the conditions for them to know it.

This is the work. Not just policy statements or symbolic gestures during Pride Month, but the harder, longer work of equipping ministers and leaders, developing accessible theological resources, and building communities where a person does not have to keep coming out in every new space they enter.

The Intersection Gathering outlined several priority areas that will guide the work ahead: developing theological resources that engage honestly with biblical interpretations often used to exclude queer people; creating practical tools including bible studies, training materials, and congregational guides that meet communities at different stages of readiness; and strengthening networks that ensure representation across theology, chaplaincy, young people, and cultural communities.

None of this is simple. The gathering itself acknowledged that the church can still be an unsafe or painful place for LGBTQIA+ people, and that those leading this work often find themselves doing so reluctantly, carrying the weight of a broader institutional transformation that moves slowly. Leaders and space-holders have a particular responsibility here. Inclusion does not happen by default. It is shaped, intentionally, by the people who hold the room.

What gives cause for genuine hope is that the conversation is happening at all, and that it is happening with this level of seriousness, tenderness, and theological honesty. The Intersection Gathering was not a one-off event. It is the beginning of an ongoing and expanding collaboration, with further planning already underway.

As we mark Pride Month, the Uniting Church NSW and ACT stands with LGBTQIA+ people, in celebration and also in commitment. Commitment to doing the theological work. Commitment to equipping our leaders. Commitment to the young person in a Pacific congregation who has never heard the church say, clearly and without qualification, that they are seen, they are loved, and they belong here.

That is the work. And it is time. (Aditee Vora)



Newly commissioned Elder and Church Councillors.

The Socceroos, 'Monoculture' and the God Who Gathers (From *Common Grace*)

Over recent weeks, multiculturalism has again become a significant part of our national conversation.

Pauline Hanson has [called for Australia to reject multiculturalism](#) and become a 'monoculture'. When Opposition Leader Angus Taylor was asked about this, he chose [not to distance himself from her comments](#).

I was born in Australia to a Malaysian-Indian family. My wife is Australian of Chinese and Anglo heritage. Our children are a joyful melting pot of cultures, histories and stories. They are unmistakably Australian, yet they carry with them the gifts of generations that have come from elsewhere. Admittedly, at this stage of their lives, those gifts are mostly recognised as dumplings and curry - but still, objectively pretty good gifts.

On the nights that we sit down to say grace, I'm reminded that our family is formed by such an amazing breadth of traditions and are held together by love, belonging, and most deeply for us, by Christ.

Those stories and traditions, I feel as a gift. It is also a gift that I see reflected in the story of Australia.

That is why the recent public conversation has felt so troubling, and a bit strange.

In the same week Senator Hanson was [addressing the National Press Club](#), Australia was celebrating [Refugee Week](#), and the settlement of the one millionth refugee on our shores. An amazing feat of welcome, that has enriched us all.

Also, our Socceroos had just begun their World Cup campaign – leaving me and many others loudly yelling at our TV screens at 5am.

The Socceroos tell a beautiful story of modern Australia. Players whose families have come from Malaysia, Sudan, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Turkey, Greece, Croatia, England and many other places now wear the green and gold together. Of the 26 man squad, 18 have immigrant backgrounds and four have refugee backgrounds. Together, they represent the country so many of us know and love.

Today, [more than half of Australians](#) were either born overseas or have at least one parent who was. Ours is one of the most multicultural nations on earth.

Layered into this story is the extraordinary reality that the First Peoples of these lands carry the oldest continuing cultures anywhere on the planet: cultures that are not one flat or uniform thing, but many, held in the particularity of Country, language, law, kinship, story and responsibility.

So Australia has never been a monoculture. And I'm convinced that it is in honouring this ancient and living inheritance, alongside the richness brought by newer communities, that we become more truthful about who we are, and more hopeful about the Australia we might yet become.

Aboriginal leader [Noel Pearson](#) has spoken powerfully about Australia needing to bring together its three great stories: the ancient Indigenous heritage of these lands, the British institutions that helped shape our modern democracy, and the gift of multicultural migration.

It strikes me as a truly wonderful vision. A country that tells the truth about its ancient past, honours and celebrates its First Peoples, cherishes what is good in our shared institutions, and welcomes the gifts of people from every corner of the world (beyond just the curry and the dumplings).

I see, in this vision, something of the world God is moving us towards.

The Scriptures tell us that in Christ, God is creating “one new humanity” and breaking down “the dividing wall of hostility” between peoples (Ephesians 2:14-16). At Pentecost, the Spirit gathers people across language and culture, age and class into the community of believers (Acts 2). And in Revelation, the great vision of worship is of people from “every nation, tribe and language” (Revelation 7:9).

This is the community Jesus is forming: a multi-ethnic, many-cultured family where strangers become neighbours, enemies are reconciled, and there is a vision of shared flourishing.

I find myself longing for such a vision to take hold. But friends, I’m also increasingly worried that too many in the Church are being shaped by ideas and voices that shrink our sense of neighbour and teach us to respond to the world with fear rather than love.

Together, we are bearing witness to a more generous gospel and a more beautiful vision of Australia: reconciled, welcoming and just..

Gershon Nimbalker

Common Grace National Director

Venezuelan Earthquake

A massive double earthquake in Venezuela has caused widespread devastation as the death toll continues to rise. (Image: Lutheran World Federatio. (Donations can be made through Act for Peace (Christmas Bowl))



Planning Ahead

- **July 9, 2026 next Church Council meeting at 7.00 pm on ZOOM.**
- **August 6 – Worship Task Group meeting @ 7pm via Zoom**
- **September 18 Chinese Community Health Seminar 10:30-12**

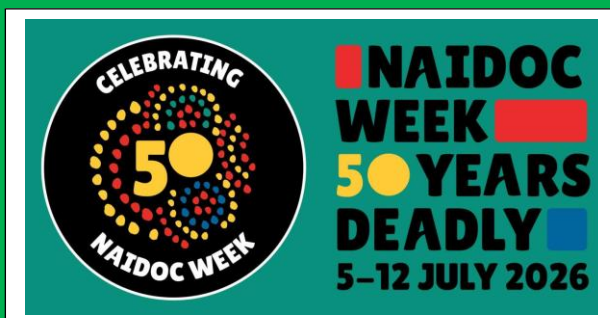
Please pray for ...

The mission and ministry of our congregation at this time of great need and uncertainty, 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, Nives, Mike, Mei Mei - 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. Venezuela.



Next Sunday

12th July 2026 @ 10am

Pentecost + 7 - What Shapes Our Choices

Leader Deok Hee

Reflection Deok Hee

Holy Communion Deok Hee

**Genesis 25:19–34; Psalm 119:105–112;
Romans 8:1–11; Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23**



Church Council 2025-2026

**(New elections will be held at our next meeting to appoint the chair,
Secretary and treasurer.)**

Chair

Richard Goodman

Secretary

Sue Baglin

Treasurer

Councillors

Robert McAlpine (2027)

Sue Baglin (2027)

Joshua Chang (2027)

Elders

Bobbie Miller (2028)

Richard Goodman (2027)

Dorothy Makasa (2027)

Culture of Safety Contact Person

Richard Goodman