



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.**

16th August 2026 @ 10am

Pentecost + 12 - Making Room

Leader Robert

Reflection Deok Hee

Genesis 45:1–15; Psalm 133;

Romans 11:1–2a, 29–32; Matthew 15: (10–20), 21–28 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 45:1–15

When Joseph reveals his identity to his brothers, a story shaped by betrayal turns toward reconciliation and providence. Joseph affirms that God has been at work even through human wrongdoing.

Psalms 133 is a short psalm that celebrates the gift of people living together in peace, comparing unity to oil poured in blessing and dew that brings life. It reminds us that community itself can be a place where God's blessing is known.

Romans 11:1–2a, 29–32 Paul argues that God's mercy is wider than human divisions and that God does not abandon those once called. Even disobedience becomes part of a larger story shaped by mercy. What might it mean to trust in mercy that reaches further than our boundaries?

Matthew 15: (10–20), 21–28 This story holds a surprising encounter between Jesus and a woman who refuses to turn away. The woman's persistence unsettles familiar boundaries and reveals a faith that crosses divisions. Where might we find ourselves within this encounter?

Theme Focus

We watch a woman challenge the boundaries between insiders and outsiders, and notice where we become outsiders to each other as we listen for Christ inviting us into new ways of being.

Word for the Day

This is a story with a lot of history. In Deuteronomy 7, God commands Joshua to act with no mercy towards the Canaanites. Here in Matthew's passage, we meet a Canaanite woman who pleads with Jesus (another Joshua) for mercy. What's important for us to consider is that Canaanites no longer existed as an identifiable culture in Jesus' day. Brian McLaren notes that calling this woman a Canaanite would be like calling someone a Viking or an Aztec today. We might consider Matthew's text as an intentional recapitulation of an older story by a new Joshua. We might even read it as a confession. McLaren (2015, pp.48-49) writes:

Our ancestors, led by Moses and Joshua, believed God sent them into the world in conquest, to show no mercy to their enemies, to defeat and kill them. But now, following Christ, we hear God giving us a higher mission. Now we believe God sends us into the world in compassion, to show mercy, to heal, to feed, to nurture and protect life rather than take it.

Jesus, along with the Canaanite woman (who offers a masterclass in creative non-violence, peacemaking, and persistence), gives us a fresh take on the old challenge of what to do when we have become outsiders to each other, a people defined by distance, otherness, and hostility. With enough faith, we can wage peace, extend mercy, and contribute to a wholeness that changes our lives and our communities.

Ideas for Reflection

The gospel story seems to propose a rewriting of history that includes recognition of what has gone before, but it moves us beyond that. The story urges compassion, mercy, and continues with a momentum that involves going out to heal and feed, to nurture and protect life, to embody reconciliation (Matthew 15:29–39).

- What might this story mean for us as the church?
- What are the old stories we might be asked to rewrite?
- In what ways do we need to learn new ways of being so that we can avoid being and becoming outsiders to each other?
- Where can we grow in compassion and empathy?
- What might we learn from the courage and persistence of the Canaanite woman?
- What makes for really positive partnerships as we seek to walk alongside each other?

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From the Wayside Chapel this census week

This week the whole country is being asked a strange kind of question: who are you, and where do you live?

For most of us that's easy enough — a form, a few tick boxes, done before the ads finish on the telly. Thankfully Lisa filled out the forms on our behalf with ease, which is a relief because while I value having a relationship with compliance, we often manage to miss each other, much like Big Bird and Snuffy from Sesame Street.

For a lot of our people, nothing comes easy. This week, census field officers have been turning up across places like Wayside and sitting with people over cups of tea, sometimes over several visits, as they know that a single knock on a door that doesn't exist, was never going to work. It takes time to build connection and trust, which means showing up more than once.

Here's something people don't always know about us: for a good number of our community, Wayside is their address. It's where the Centrelink letters go. It's where a daughter can send a birthday card and know it'll find her father. It's the one fixed point in an otherwise unfixed life, a place to still be reached, and to still reach out. Every morning our

front desk vollies scour the mail to deliver to eagerly awaiting faces, though we are having to start to draw the line at packages being delivered from online websites!

There's an old idea that counting people is a strange business — that a headcount can just as easily flatten someone into a number as it can honour them. In the ancient Hebrew texts, the census in the wilderness is described not merely as counting people, but as *naso et rosh* - “lifting the head” - of each person. The intention, to acknowledge the importance of individual dignity. Somebody still has to look up. Somebody still has to be seen doing the looking.

There is someone who every time we meet, we make sure we lock eyes and say hello. All week he has been holding a single flower, nearly the same length as him. I asked him what he is doing with it, and he leapt up and ran over to me, only narrowly being missed by a delivery truck hurtling down the road, and he thrust the flower at me. He is sadly lost in a wilderness.

That word "wilderness" is where a whole ancient generation existed between two identities, between slavery and freedom, camped in a kind of no-man's-land where, for a while, nobody's old rank meant much. It's an odd thing to admit, but I reckon a fair bit of what happens at Wayside lives in that same in-between. People arrive mid-transition constantly — between the street and something steadier, between one chapter and whatever comes next — and we're not always in a hurry to move them through it. Sometimes the most honest thing we can offer is to sit in the wilderness with someone. ‘I’d rather be lost with you, than saved without you’ is one of my regular pastoral epitaphs.

The census will tell the country how many people are doing it tough this week. It's a necessary number, and I hope it's a true one. Let's remember that the number was never really the point. The point is always the lifted head. I'd like to think that somewhere in all this, Snuffy finally got counted because someone kept showing up to look for him.

Other places might be better than us at compliance, but I reckon
Wayside has got the finding people bit down pat.

Thank you for being part of the Inner Circle,

Jon

Rev. Jon Owen

CEO & Pastor

Wayside Chapel

(Submitted by Jim B)

Planning Ahead

- **30th August– Closure of Ministry service for Deok Hee (organised with Presbytery)**
- **12th August TKS Board of Management meeting 4pm Kogarah**
- **2nd September Worship Task Group via Zoom @ 7pm**
- **3rd or 10th September KUC Church Council via Zoom @ 7pm**
- **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; Prema and Priya, Denis and Dolly, Ngahuia, Peter and Sue; Dinah; Ern Edwards; Jim Bird, Cindy, Dorothy and Godfrey, Nives, Mike, Mei Mei;

Deok Hee and his family as they prepare to move to Moss Vale to take up ministry there.

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

23rd August 2026 @ 10am

Pentecost + 13 - Standing on the Rock

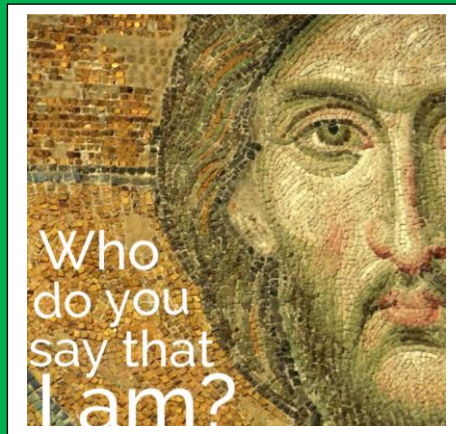
Leader Deok Hee

Reflection Deok Hee

Holy Communion Deok Hee

Exodus 1:8–2:10; Psalm 124;

Romans 12:1–8; Matthew 16:13–20



Church Council 2025-2026

Chair

Richard Goodman

Secretary

Sue Baglin

Treasurer

Joshua Chang

Councillors

Robert M'Alpine (2027)

Sue Baglin (2027)

Joshua Chang (2027)

Elders

Bobbie Miller (2028)

Richard Goodman (2027)

Dorothy Makasa (2027)

Culture of Safety Contact Person

Richard Goodman