

KOGARAH UNITING CHURCH

August 30th 2026

Letting Go

The Gathering of the People of God

WELCOME & GREETING

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ
and the love of God
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

And also with you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY:

We acknowledge that this land is God's land, and God's Spirit dwells here. We pay our respects to the elders past, present and emerging of the Bidjegal people of the Eora nation, who have cared for this land in time beyond our dreaming. This land on which we live and move was and always will be Aboriginal Land.

KUC MISSION STATEMENT

**We are a congregation
who welcome people of all cultures and lifestyles,
who create a safe place for the community
and who share the journey of life and faith.**

CALL TO WORSHIP

Be still. This place, this moment—this is holy ground.

Step carefully, move with deep respect; God who calls leads us into life.

Come, let us draw near.

Come, let us worship.

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

God is here

God is always here

God is with us

God is always with us

SING: Will you come and follow me / The Summons ATOK 413

**Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?**

**Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?**

**Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?**

**Will you love the 'you' you hide if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around
through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?**

**Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.
In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.**

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OPENING PRAYER

Holy God, you meet us in ordinary places and make them holy.

You call us by name and invite us into deeper trust.

As we draw near, open our hearts to your presence.

Where we cling to certainly, teach us to release.

Where you call us forward, grant us grace to respond.

Shape us in the way of Christ, that we may say together:

Here we are—in the name of the One who walked the way before us.

Amen.

SING: Make me a channel of your peace TIS 607

**Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred let me bring your love;
where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;
and where there's doubt, true faith in you.**

**O Master, grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.**

**Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope;
where there is darkness, let me bring your light;
and where there's sadness, ever joy.**

**O Master, grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.**

**Make me a channel of your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving of ourselves that we receive,
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.**

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PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We stand on holy ground, yet we confess that our hands are full of things we refuse to let go.

We fear that if we fall that there will be none to catch us; that if we go, there will be none to guide us; that if we give, we will have nothing left.

And yet you invite us to discover life as we release what we cling to, by trusting your loving presence in the vulnerability of human existence.

Forgive us for all the ways this remains so difficult for us.

In this silence, we let go.

Silence is kept.

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

In our letting go, Jesus embraces us fully—this same Jesus who walks the way before us meets us in our vulnerability and assures us we are not alone.

In the losing, we are found.

In the letting go, new life begins.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

PEACE:

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

The Service of the Word

BIBLE READING: Exodus 3:1-15

3Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. **2**There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. **3**Then Moses said, “I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.” **4**When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” **5**Then he said, “Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” **6**He said further, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

7Then the LORD said, “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, **8**and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. **9**The cry of the Israelites has now

come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.”

¹¹But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” ¹²He said, “I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.” ¹³But Moses said to God, “If I come to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” ¹⁴God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” He said further, “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” ¹⁵God also said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you’: This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations.

BIBLE READING: Matthew 16:21-28

²¹From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²²And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.” ²³But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

²⁴Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. ²⁶For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life? ²⁷“For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. ²⁸Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

REFLECTION – Deok Hee

Exodus 3:1–15

As I was preparing for today and thinking about this being my final sharing and reflection with you, a simple question came to my mind. Have you ever been asked the question, "When was the happiest time of your life?" Often, when we are living through a certain moment, we don't realize how precious and happy it actually is. It's usually only after time has passed that we look back and say, "Ah, that was such a wonderful time. That was a truly blessed season." For me, when I look back at my teenager years, back then I didn't think much about it. I was just busy living day by day, going to school, doing homework, and taking exams. But looking back now, I realize how pure and happy those days were—studying with friends, playing together, laughing without any big worries, and receiving so much deep love from my parents. I didn't fully realize it then, but it was truly a sweet and blessed time.

Our life in the wilderness can be very similar. Right now, as we walk through our everyday lives, we might feel like we are just walking through a rough, tiring, and dry desert. We face struggles, we worry about the future, and we feel exhausted and lonely. This reminds me of a well-known story called "Footprints in the Sand". A person had a dream of walking along a beach with God, looking back at the scenes of their life. Most of the time, there were two sets of footprints in the sand. But during the hardest, saddest, and most painful times of life, there was only one set of footprints. So the person asked God, "Lord, why did you leave me alone when I needed you the most?" And God gently replied, "My precious child, I love you and I would never leave you. During those times of trial and suffering, when you saw only one set of footprints, that was when I was carrying you." When time passes and we look back on our rough wilderness, we realize the very same thing. What felt like a lonely and difficult desert was actually a place filled with his deep grace, because even when we didn't realize it, God was carrying us through every single step.

As I read the story of Moses in Exodus chapter 3 again again this week, two words kept ringing in my heart over and over again: "Wilderness" and "Holy Ground." Moses was an ordinary man living in a quiet, dust-filled desert. He wasn't in a grand temple or a beautiful church building. He was just doing his daily work, taking care of sheep. But right there, in the middle of that hot, dry wilderness, God appeared to him in a burning bush and said, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." Think about that for a moment. A wilderness is usually dirty, dry,

and lonely. There was nothing special or holy about that desert. But the moment God stepped in, that rough wilderness was transformed into holy ground. And that is the exact same grace we have experienced together. Looking back over these past 5 years, we have walked through life together. We walked through seasons of joy, and we also walked through seasons that felt like a dry wilderness. But in all those moments, God was right there with us. We prayed together, we laughed together, and we cried together. I remember visiting your homes, sitting at your dining tables, and sharing meals and laughter when you had good news to celebrate. I also remember meeting so many of you at local cafes, sitting together over a warm cup of coffee, and simply sharing our everyday lives—our hopes, our struggles, and our quiet stories. And I also remember standing beside you in dark hospital rooms, holding your hands in times of pain, praying together when you were sick, and walking with you through the deep heart-break of losing your loved ones. In those small, quiet, and painful moments, God was not far away. He was right there with us in those coffee shops, in those hospital rooms, and in your living rooms. Those places of shared tears, simple conversations, and prayers—that was our holy ground.

Someone once asked me, "Deok Hee, what does the word 'holy' really mean?" We often think 'holy' means something perfect, religious, or separated from the real world. But the story of Moses shows us the true meaning of holy. What was that ground Moses was standing on? It was just ordinary desert dirt, rocks, and dust. It didn't look special or sacred at all. It became holy for one reason only: because the presence of God was there. That is what 'holy' means. Holy is anywhere God is with you. Sometimes we think God is only present in special places, like during our Sunday morning worship, or at a big prayer retreat up on a mountain. But God met Moses on a regular workday, in a regular desert. I want to remind you today that your daily life, right now, is holy ground. Wherever you find yourself this coming week—whether you are cooking in your kitchen, working hard at your workplace, studying at school, caring for your children, or driving home after a long day of work—if God is with you, that very place is holy ground.

After Moses experienced holy ground at the burning bush, his life was never the same. From that moment on, all the way to the very last breath of his life, Moses experienced God's presence and guidance through every step of his journey. And the God who walked with Moses in the desert is still with us today in our holy ground. He was with you in your past, he is with you right now in your present, and he will faithfully walk with you through every single moment of your future. In the days and years ahead, life will bring many different seasons to your personal lives, your families, and to this church. There will be seasons of great joy and celebration, but there may also be seasons of difficulty, sorrow, or heavy burdens. You might face unexpected challenges, or you might feel like you are walking

through a dry, lonely wilderness again. When those moments come, I want you to stop, take a deep breath, and remember this one simple truth: You are standing on holy ground, because God is right there with you. So please do not be afraid of tomorrow. Do not lose heart when life gets tough. Hold onto this faith with all your heart: wherever you go, whatever you do, and whatever you face, God is with you, and the ground on which you stand is holy. I pray that you, your families, and our church will keep walking with confidence, trusting our loving God who is always right beside you every single day.

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. May he bless your homes, your work, your health, and your children today and forever. Amen.

SING: Immortal invisible God only wise TIS 143

**Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, your great name we praise.**

**Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, but ruling in might;
your justice like mountains high soaring above,
your clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.**

**You give life to all, Lord, to both great and small,
in all life now living, the true life of all;
we blossom and flourish as leaves on a tree,
then wither: but ever unchanged you will be.**

**Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
your angels adore you, all veiling their sight;
of all your rich graces this grace, Lord, impart –
take the veil from our faces, the veil from our heart.**

**All praise we would render: reveal to our sight
what hides you is only the splendour of light;
and so let your glory, Almighty, impart,
through Christ in the story, your Christ to the heart.**

OFFERING & OFFERING PRAYER

Let us bring our gifts now as a way of sharing in God's generous love.

Bless what we offer, O God.

May these gifts become part of your work of love, healing, and new life in the world.

Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

Loving God, you hear the cries of your people.

We join with you now to pray for those in our midst, struggling with illness or difficult circumstances.

Bring healing and restoration, love and hope.

Short silence

Lord, in your mercy,

Help us stand with them.

We remember those harmed by unjust systems, those living in the shadow of violence, and those whose dignity has been stripped away.

Short silence

Lord, in your mercy,

Help us stand with them.

We pray for our neighbours, and those in our community.

Show us how to make space in our lives so that we might meaningfully walk with others.

Short silence

Lord, in your mercy,

Help us stand with them.

May your resurrection hope and love come to all our lives.

Amen.

THE LORDS PRAYER

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us in the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

**A Service to Mark the Conclusion of Ministry for Rev Deok Hee Cho
at Kogarah Uniting Church**

THE LETTING GO OF THE PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP

Steve says

Since the church lives by the power of the Word, it is assured that God has never failed to provide a witness to that Word.

The Presbytery of Georges River inducted Rev Deok Hee Cho to be a Minister of the Word among you from 1 November 2021.

We witnessed your promises to take part in the public worship of God, to contribute to the work of God, and to make a Christian witness in the community by word and action.

Deok Hee has now received a call to the Moss Vale congregation.

The time has come to mark the end of his particular responsibilities in this congregation,
and to send him with God's blessing to this new ministry.

Deok Hee says

Brothers and sisters in Christ, you called me to minister with you, and charged me to preach the Word, preside at the sacraments and to oversee the pastoral life of the congregation.

You will call another minister in my place and I must lay down the tasks you committed to me.

I, therefore, hand this pastoral list to you with the names of the people for whom I have cared, and ask you to continue to care for these people, and in due time, to share it with my successor.

The secretary of the church council receives the list.

Steve says:

And now, on behalf of the Presbytery of Georges River, we thank you for your ministry of God's grace in this congregation.

We release you from this ministry, and will continue offer you pastoral care in the new Southern Presbytery.

As you take up the new placement at Moss Vale we will pray for God's blessing on your continuing ministry.

Be strong and of good courage, do not be afraid: for it is the Lord who goes with you.

Your God will not fail you or forsake you.

The chairperson of the congregation may briefly farewell the minister.

The minister may reply.

FINAL PRAYER

Steve says:

Let us pray.

(Together)

O God, be with those who leave, and with those who stay; and grant that all of us, by drawing nearer to you, may always be close to each other in the communion of saints; through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord. Amen.

SING: Take my life and let it be TIS 599

**Take my life, and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to thee.**

**Take my moments and my days,
let them flow in ceaseless praise.**

**Take my hands, and let them move
at the impulse of thy love.**

**Take my feet, and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee.**

**Take my voice, and let me sing
always, only for my King.**

**Take my lips, and let them be
filled with messages from thee.**

**Take my silver and my gold,
nothing, Lord, would I withhold.**

**Take my intellect and use
every power as thou shalt choose.**

**Take my will and make it thine,
it shall be no longer mine.**

**Take my heart, it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne.**

**Take my love: my Lord, I pour
at thy feet its treasure-store.**

**Take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for thee.**

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BLESSING: - Steve

God the Father make you holy in his love.

God the Son enrich you with his grace.

God the Holy Spirit strengthen you with joy.

The Lord bless and keep you in eternal life. **Amen**