



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.**

20th September 2026 @ 10am

Season of Creation 3

When the Earth Groans– Wilderness/Outback Sunday

Leader Robert

Reflection Saltbush

Joel 1:8–10, 17–20; Psalm 18:6–19;

Romans 8:18–27;

Matthew 3:13— 4:1-11 (and Mark 1:9–13)



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
Richard Goodman on 0434 127 340**

Scriptures

Joel 1:8–10, 17–20

The prophet reveals that creation itself laments. Ecological grief is not a lack of faith and scripture makes space for mourning what is being lost.

Psalms 18:6–19

The psalm remembers a God who hears cries from places of distress and responds with rescue and spaciousness. Wilderness is not abandonment but often the place where God's presence becomes clearest.

Romans 8:18–27

Creation groans as though in childbirth. Paul does not promise escape from suffering but insists that suffering, like the pain of childbirth, is not the end of the story.

Matthew 3:13— 4:2 and Mark 1:9–13

Jesus enters both water and wilderness. The Spirit leads not away from hard places but into them where God remains present.

Theme Focus

To recognise how God weeps with us for the earth and how weeping can lead to love and care.

Word for the Day

Wilderness and outback landscapes bring to mind images of beauty and harshness. Survival is often difficult even when humans are prepared. Many seek out such places to encounter rugged, uncultivated scenes and some wish to experience the challenge of survival itself.

The wilderness and outback can shape us not despite but because of the harshness. How might the realities they present speak into scripture and our discipleship in this season?

Joel gives us permission to grieve what is being destroyed and disappearing. We can express our feelings honestly to God.

Romans reminds us that grief is not the opposite of hope but often its beginning. The process of birth and grief sound remarkably similar. Both involve waiting, pain, uncertainty, and trust that something new is trying to emerge.

The wilderness is a place of formation for Jesus. It is where he encounters challenges after his baptism. How he responds to temptation and hunger are part of his preparation for ministry.

The church's task is not to explain suffering and life's harsh realities away but to accompany one another through it. We are asked to stay with the suffering of earth long enough to hear what is being asked of us. What fresh callings to grieve, love and care do we sense from God?

Ideas for Reflection

- What lament for earth would you like to express to God?
- How has life's harshness shaped who you are?
- Where do you see life emerging through the pain for you?
- How might the church be a community where hard feelings can be named and where we companion each other during every season?



Living Water

Season of Creation 2026

Immersion in Living Water
EZEKIEL 47:9, 12

Theme: Living Waters: How do our waters provide life and sustenance?

Scripture: *"Then he led me back along the bank of the river. As I came back, I saw on the bank of the river a great many trees on the one side and on the other. He said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, and when it enters the sea, the sea of stagnant waters, the water will become fresh. Wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish once these waters reach there. It will become fresh, and everything will live where the river goes. " Ezekiel 47:6b-9*

Reflection:

The passage in the book of Ezekiel 47:5-9 offers a powerful picture of the "Living Waters" as a source of life and sustenance. In this vision, the prophet Ezekiel sees a river that gushes out of the sanctuary and becomes deeper and deeper, impossible to cross. This water is not like a simple river: it is the symbol of a life that comes from God, abundant and inexhaustible. The text explains that wherever this river goes, everything comes back to life. The waters even transform the Dead Sea into healthy water, the fish become numerous, and the banks are covered with trees whose fruits nourish and whose leaves heal. In other words, where these waters arrive, death recedes and life sets in.

How do these waters bring us life and sustenance?

First of all, they represent: a spiritual source. As water is indispensable to the body, the presence of God is indispensable to the soul. It refreshes, restores and gives meaning to life. Secondly, they symbolize: abundance and provision. The river nourishes the land, makes trees

grow and multiplies resources. It evokes a life where basic needs are met, not in lack, but in generosity. Finally, by these waters bring: healing, and transformation. Where there was sterility or death, they produce fertility. This can apply to our lives: difficult situations, tired hearts, or broken environments can be renewed by this "living water."

In short, Ezekiel's living waters are not just a natural image: they speak of a divine life that nourishes, heals, and makes prosperous everything it touches.

Concerning the waters of the Pacific.

In the context of the Pacific, this image takes on a very concrete dimension. First of all, the waters give us the most direct life. The ocean is an essential source of food, fish, crustaceans, shellfish. As in Ezekiel's vision of "many fishes," the lagoons and reefs of the Pacific are among the richest in the world. They feed families, support communities and perpetuate ancestral knowledge. Secondly, these waters provide subsistence. Fishing, whether artisanal or larger, provides a living for many people. They also structure trade, the local economy, and even cultural identity.

The ocean is not just a resource: it is a life partner. But there is also a spiritual and symbolic dimension. In many Pacific cultures, the sea is linked to life, to ancestors, to respect for creation. Like the river in Ezekiel's vision that transforms salt water into living water, it reminds us that water can be both fragile and renewing. If it is respected, it continues to give, if it is neglected, it can lose its ability to feed. Finally, this passage invites responsibility. The river brings life wherever it goes, but today, our oceans face challenges: pollution, overfishing, warming. The question then becomes: how can we preserve these "living waters" so that they continue to provide a living for future generations? In the Pacific, as in Ezekiel's vision, water is the source of life, food, work, and hope. It reminds us of both our dependence and our duty to protect, in gratitude to God's grace. Amen *Pasteur PADOME Paul President of the Protestant Church of Kanaky New Caledonia*

Planning Ahead

- **20th September SoC 3 – Outback/Wilderness (When the Earth groans)**
- **27th September SoC 4 – River (Where the river flows)**

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. Nepal and China

Next Sunday

27th September 2026 @ 10am

Season of Creation 4

Where the River Flows– River Sunday

Leader Richard

Reflection Saltbush

Holy Communion Richard

Genesis 8:20–22; 9:12–17; Psalm 104:27–33;

Psalm 104:27–33; Matthew 28:1–10



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