



## In Between Easter and Pentecost

### A New Community

In diverse ways this period of the year allows us to reflect upon how the early church came into being. We have become so used to the church being present as an institution we can miss how surprising its emergence actually was. Those first followers were fearful following the death of Jesus on the cross; their first responses to the empty tomb and rumours of his resurrection were likewise marked by scepticism and the assumption that this 'good news' was an 'idle tale'.

To begin with the early church was like a sect within Judaism as they seemingly met in and around the Temple. In due course there would be a 'parting of the ways'. That was due to three reasons. The first has to do with the tension and conflict that arose from the preaching of Peter and the like. The continued existence of this small group of followers, their conviction that Jesus had risen and the way in which public pronouncements described how he had been put to death through the work of scribes and members of the council provoked would naturally inflame relationships. The situation would not have been helped by the way in which the apostles situated the Jesus story inside the Hebrew traditions of Moses and the prophets: they were effectively claiming this revelatory tradition for the followers of 'the way' – as they were initially called. The second reason for this parting of the ways had to do with the missionary journeys of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, who oversaw the spread of the gospel westwards. This new faith was now Jewish and Gentile (and the faith would spread further eastwards well). It was no longer confined to first century Palestine. The third reason had to do with the destruction of the Temple in the year 70AD by the Romans. The primary institution of the Hebrew faith was destroyed and would effectively be replaced by the synagogue and an emphasis on education: the destruction of the Temple hastened the scattering of the Jews into diaspora.

Through to 4<sup>th</sup> century the church was on the margins of the Roman empire. It was subjected to periodic bouts of persecution. On occasion it had to deal with pandemics, most notably the Antonine Plague and the Plague of Cyprian. It was not until the Emperor Constantine issued the Edict of Milan in 313 that the Christian faith was officially tolerated. Constantine declared the Christian faith to be the religion of the empire in 325,

In those first few centuries there was a lot of work to do. It was during this time that the liturgical patterns of worship were put into place;

there was a need to establish churches – to begin with in households; there was a need to clarify the faith – hence the Apostles' Creed; gradually manuscripts needed to be collated and decisions made on which books should go into the Bible.

All the while the Christian life stood out and served as an example to others. It is true that sometimes unusual ideas emerged and needed to be put to the test: it is true that some of their sophisticated fellow citizens continued to mock the beliefs of the Christians and assume they were deluded. All that is true – as was the moral example set forth by the church in caring for those in pandemics, the care of widows. The willingness to hold fast to faith in the face of persecution as well as having a confident hope in Christ Jesus provided meaning in a world often given to fate and fickle fortune.

The origins of the church are fascinating: our readings over the new few weeks highlight some of the steps taken. They had to make sense of Easter. How was God at work in the life and ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus was not immediately obvious. In order to put into place the beginnings of the church there arose a new worldview that recognized the need for a 'change of jobs'. Peter, a fisherman, is charged by Jesus to 'feed my sheep'; Saul is transformed from a persecutor of the new sect into its most formidable planter of new communities – and along the way would write the most life-changing letters in human history. They needed to develop a way of caring for one another in a way that imitated Christ's care. And they crossed cultures! The coming together of Jew and Gentile led to the Christians being described as a 'new race, a new *ethnos*'. That process would be accelerated through the call of the Macedonian to Paul to 'come over and help us' and establish in the home of Lydia, the first church in mainland Europe.

In the 6 weeks after Easter there are two important festivals or 'holy days of the church'. The first is Ascension Day and the second is Pentecost. Through this period we are in the company of the book of Acts. Its author was the same as the author of Luke's gospel. Both were addressed to 'Dear Theophilus' – the name is Greek and means 'God-lover'.

These days the church often seems to be a bit tired and in difficult straits. It can be rather inspiring in such a time to make a connection one again with the impressive emergence of this worshipping and witnessing community'.

Clive

## Coming Soon

Over the next few months I would like to offer a number of events and workshops that might help deepen our grasp of the faith. Those being considered have to do with:



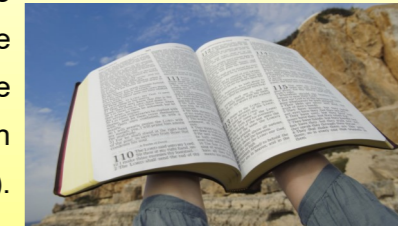
**On liturgy:** Have you considered helping lead worship? Have you never been asked? Or, if you have been asked, were you a bit uncertain as to

how you might manage? This workshop will be a one-off (a couple of hours at most). It will be designed to explain why worship takes the shape it does, what is the role of music, and make suggestions as to how you can write your own prayers for worship (rather than going on-line).

**'Who do you say that I am?'** This question put by Jesus to the disciples has been described as a 'continuing interrogation'. How we answer may change from one period of our life to the next. The purpose of this study (over three weeks) will be to consider how we answer that question for our individual selves; we will then seek to consider how we might negotiate a common congregational understanding (you can still have your own personal response, but it will now be placed within the fold of the congregation as a whole).

Finally we will note that Jesus prefaced that core question with another, 'who do people say that I am?' We will set out to explore how our understanding of Jesus addresses life in our neighbourhood.

**'Believing'.** In days gone by there used to be confirmation classes where people might be given instruction on the core beliefs of the Christian faith. We will come at this a little differently. It will be a chance to chat about what Christians believe and what they find difficult – or hard to believe. We will do this for a couple for weeks.



**How did we get the Bible?** Later in the year we will have a chance to examine the absolutely fascinating

story of how the Bible came into being, how it was translated into vernacular languages (like English) and at what cost, and why have we got so many different versions. Most of the time we simply stand before the lectern and read from the Bible without realizing what its history is. Some parts of this story are X rated due to violence!

Clive



## Congratulations Michael Strong

“So you thought he was a legitimate Aussie ...No! underneath that cool exterior lied a Kiwi! However after much prompting from his sister in law Michael finally 'fronted up' and along with 400 people from the Hills Shire, became an Australian! “

## Presbytery News

The Parramatta-Nepean Presbytery had its first face to face meeting in sometime at the Grantham Heights Uniting Church. The turnout was not huge but it was better than meeting on zoom.

The highlight of the meeting was the presentation done by the Revd. Christine Palmer on her work in south-west Sydney. Christine is serving as a 'community minister' rather than in a conventional placement. There is no church building here; there was no congregation.



Christine has been given the task of developing something new in a way that is inclusive of the local neighbourhood. The program is called suburban seeds and you can check out the website to see the interesting and proactive things she has set out to do. The website address is: <https://www.suburbanseeds.org> Christine is the first to say what is happening here is in certain respects more aspirational than fully realized. The overall intention is to be 'growing life-giving communities that connect people, faith and life'. Christine's vision flows from the call 'to love one's neighbour as oneself'.

What this has meant so far is the setting up of a play in the park group, occasional services in the park, a mentoring program for vulnerable children (in association with Campbelltown Uniting Church) on the basis of 'one child, one mentor, one hour per week) – and participation in the Yellow Hampers Project. Under the umbrella of this project donations of food are collected and delivered to those in need.

## Synod News



One of the conference rooms at the Penrith Panthers club was jampacked with people for the Pasifika-led climate electoral forum. For some time now the Uniting Church has been to the forefront of showing concern for low-lying islands facing sea-level rise. This event was a chance for members of Pasifika congregations (as well as others within our presbytery) to tell some stories and sing some songs – and then ask questions of the political candidates who had been invited. It so turned out that only Chris Bowen, the shadow minister for climate and energy turned up. An empty chair was left to indicate those who had gone 'missing in action' according to the Samoan minister at Lidcombe. The Moderator-Elect, Rev. Mata Hiliau Havea reflected on Paul's image of 'one body' and how if one member suffers, we all do. Several young people spoke about visits to their island country of origins and how, over a period of time, it is far too easy to see the impact of sea-level rise as land, plantation and houses disappear – washed away.

Maina Talia from Tuvalu did not speak at this gathering but he was in attendance. He is currently doing his PhD on the theme of 'Am I Not Your Neighbour?'. Maina has been the co-chair of the NN based Global Indigenous Forum on Climate Change; he has addressed the German parliament (at their invitation) and has attended every COP conference since Paris 2015. He would like there to have been a question about the legal provision for climate displaced persons (refugees) once islands become uninhabitable.

"Come, all who labour and are heavy burdened and I will give you rest."

Care and Prayer  
10am, every first Saturday  
in the lower Church.  
This month: 7 May

Women's Fellowship  
Wednesday 11 May  
@ 10am

Please join us

Enquiries: Dulcie Duncum



Happy mothers day to all our mum's and grandma's

We also remember all the mum's that are no longer with us. May you feel the gentle touch of God's blessing on your heart today and always.



## CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

You are invited to come along to the church on  
**Tuesdays at 9.30am—10.30am**  
All are welcome

" The important aim in Christian meditation is to allow God's mysterious and silent presence within us to become more and more not only a reality but the reality which gives meaning, shape and purpose to everything we do, everything we are"

John Main.

[www.WCCM.org](http://www.WCCM.org) [www.christianmeditationaustralia.org](http://www.christianmeditationaustralia.org)  
The World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM)

Katherine Pedersen. Facilitator of the Tuesday 9.30am sessions and for information.  
[kathped56@gmail.com](mailto:kathped56@gmail.com)



It was great to see so many faces at the launch of the 2022 Coffee & Discovery season.

Our next meeting Thursday 5th May

Our speaker will be **George Harrington**  
 "Life behind the Camera—  
 Reminiscences of 30 years in the film industry"



Just a reminder we will be continuing on the 1st Thursday of each month and will run from March to December. 10am until 12 noon

These informal morning gatherings include devotions, morning tea and guest speakers which cover a large range of interesting and informative topics.

\*\*\*\*\* ALL WELCOME \*\*\*\*\*



The Hills Mens Shed Inc  
 Eric Mobbs Reserve Ferguson Ave Castle hill 2154

First Saturday Of The Month  
 May – September 8:30 – 12:30

Men's Shed Products At Great Prices COVID SAFE  
 MARKET WITH EFTPOS AVAILABLE PHONE STANDS | HAND CRAFTED PENS | CHILDREN'S WOODEN TOYS AND PUZZLES

CRAFT AND CAKE STALL | SLICES | JAMS | SPREADS Knitted  
 Beanies and Scarves

ALL PRICED TO SELL  
 ADULT & CHILDREN'S BOOKS  
 SUCCULENT BOXES &  
 GARDEN ACCESSORIES

MONTHLY ACTIVITIES and REGULAR GROUPS

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP.....

Second Wednesday of this month  
 Next event: 11 May at 10am



Enquiries: Dulcie Duncum  
 Meet in the upstairs hall and church

MEN'S MORNING TEA.....

Meet 3rd Wednesday of each month.  
 Next Event: 18 May at 10am



Contact: Alan Wright  
 Mckel's Café, Shop 14, Circa Boulevard Bella Vista. We are allocated external seating to ensure compliance with current Covid restrictions.

CARE & PRAYER.....

Meet on the 1st Saturday of each month in the lower hall @ 10am All welcome  
 This Month: 1 May

Contact: Rosemary Sexton

CHRISTIAN MEDITATION.....

Tuesdays in the Church  
 9.30am-10.30am



All welcome.

For more information or to express your interest in attending please contact Katherine Pedersen 043 777 2011.

OP-SHOP.....

Open Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 9am-2pm and 1st Saturday of the month 9-12pm  
 Pre-loved clothes & accessories, Books, Haberdashery, Bric-a-brac.

YOUNG FAMILIES

KUCA.....  
 @ 9.30am service during term for Preschool, Years K-2, and Years 3-8

YOUTH and YOUNG ADULTS

Fusion Youth Group.....  
 Years 3 to 8. Meet Friday evenings at the church during term time. 7pm—9pm  
 Contact Daniel Gibb [daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au](mailto:daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au)

Alive Youth Group.....

Years 9 to 12  
 Meet Friday evenings at the church during term time. 7pm—9pm  
 Contact Daniel Gibb [daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au](mailto:daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au)

THRIVE BIBLE STUDY.....

year 11 up to the age of 25.  
 Fortnightly  
 Contact Daniel Gibb [daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au](mailto:daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au)

THRIVE SOCIAL GROUP.....

Contact Daniel Gibb [daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au](mailto:daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au)

SHINE.....

is a special needs social group for all ages from high school up. Meets Sundays fortnightly for dinner & fun.  
 We are still collecting in 2022 for their shoebox appeal supporting a school in the Philippines.  
 Donations of small educational items, soaps & combs are greatly appreciated. Please place donations in the box provided at the top of the stairs in the church foyer.

UPCOMING EVENTS & DATES

If you are interested in any of the above groups or activities please contact the church office.

MINISTERS - EVERYONE

SUPPLY MINISTER  
 REV. CLIVE PEARSON 0409 523 024  
 Email: [minister@stmatthewsuniting.net.au](mailto:minister@stmatthewsuniting.net.au)

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS  
 MINISTRY WORKER  
 DANIEL GIBB Part Time  
 Email: [daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au](mailto:daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au)

SENIORS PASTORAL CARER  
 MICHAEL STRONG Part Time  
 Email: [mike@stmatthewsuniting.net.au](mailto:mike@stmatthewsuniting.net.au)

CHURCH OFFICE SECRETARIES:  
 ROBYN MORRALL AND LYNN SAMUEL  
 CHURCH OFFICE HOURS 9AM-3PM MON-FRI  
 OFFICE : 9686 3003

LOCATION:  
 CNR CHARLES & EDGAR STREETS  
 BAULKHAM HILLS

POSTAL ADDRESS:  
 BAULKHAM HILLS UNITING CHURCH  
 PO Box 773 BAULKHAM HILLS 1755

WEB SITE: [www.stmatthewsuniting.net.au](http://www.stmatthewsuniting.net.au)  
 Weekly newsletter available on website

EMAIL: [office@stmatthewsuniting.net.au](mailto:office@stmatthewsuniting.net.au)

FACEBOOK:  
[@stmatthewsunitingchurchbaulkhamhills](https://www.facebook.com/stmatthewsunitingchurchbaulkhamhills)

PRE-SCHOOL DIRECTOR 9639 8570  
 SONALI WANIGESEKERA  
 PO Box 321 BAULKHAM HILLS 2153  
 EMAIL: [director@stmatthewsps.net.au](mailto:director@stmatthewsps.net.au)

**Giving** From time to time, we receive questions on how someone can make donations to St. Matthew's Uniting Church Baulkham Hills, to further support God's work through the Ministry team and congregation, in the wider Community. To assist with this, we have set up the following account with Uniting Financial Services:

Account Name: Baulkham Hills Uniting Church – Giving Direct  
 BSB: 634634  
 Account Number: 100025924

If required a Direct Debit Request Form is available in the foyer or speak with Barry Gregory.

For your support of God's work here at St. Matthew's, a big thank you!

If you wish to find out more, please contact the Church Office.

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 To include your activity in the  
**JUNE In FOCUS**  
**St. Matthew's Monthly Newsletter**  
 please send details to Robyn and Lynn in the Church Office by 15 MAY.  
 Thank you  
 Please check St. Matthew's weekly Newsletter for details of Worship on Sunday and last minute changes to scheduled activities.  
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Maintaining contact with you and your family is very important to us.  
 We would be grateful if you change your address, phone/mobile or email details that you let us know by phoning and leaving a message on 9686 3003 or by email: [office@stmatthewsuniting.net.au](mailto:office@stmatthewsuniting.net.au)

# Calendar of Events for MAY 2022

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<p><b>30</b></p> <p>9am—Sorting &amp; Pricing for Op Shop lower hall</p>	<p><b>31</b></p> <p>9am-2pm—Op Shop open </p> <p>9.30-11am—Christian Meditation in the Church</p> 	<p>st. matthew's <b>UNITING CHURCH</b> <b>BAULKHAM HILLS</b></p>  <p>growing together</p>				<p><b>Easter 3</b> <b>1</b></p> <p>8am—Worship includes Communion</p> <p>9.30am—Worship includes Communion KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 &amp; Years 3-8</p> <p>5pm—Shine</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship includes Communion</p>
<p><b>2</b></p> <p>9am—Sorting &amp; Pricing for Op Shop lower hall</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>9am-2pm—Op Shop open </p> <p>9.30-11am—Christian Meditation in the Church</p>  <p>7.30pm—Thrive in lower hall</p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>9am-2pm—Op Shop open </p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>9am-2pm—Op Shop open </p> <p>7.30pm—Children's, youth &amp; young adults Focus group meeting in lower hall</p>  <p>10am-12pm—Coffee &amp; Discovery</p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p>7pm-9pm—Youth Group <b>ALIVE</b></p> 	<p><b>7</b></p> <p>9am-12pm—Op Shop </p> <p>10am—Care and Prayer Meet in lower church</p> <p>10am-3pm—St. Matt's Endurance Series contact Brad Turner meet in the upstairs hall</p>	<p><b>Easter 4</b> <b>8</b></p> <p>8am—Worship</p> <p>9am—Worship @ the Willow's</p> <p>9.30am—Worship KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 &amp; Years 3-8</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship</p>
<p><b>9</b></p> <p>9am—Sorting &amp; Pricing for Op Shop lower hall</p>	<p><b>10</b></p> <p>9am-2pm—Op Shop open </p> <p>9.30-11am—Christian Meditation in the Church </p>	<p><b>11</b></p> <p>9am-2pm—Op Shop open </p> <p>10am-12noon—Women's Fellowship in the upstairs hall and church</p> 	<p><b>12</b></p> <p>9am-2pm—Op Shop open </p>	<p><b>13</b></p> <p>7pm-9pm—Youth Group <b>FUSION</b> upstairs</p> <p><b>Friday 13 May Games Night</b></p> 	<p><b>14</b></p> <p>KUCA Campout </p>	<p><b>Easter 5</b> <b>15</b></p> <p>8am—Worship</p> <p>9.30am—Worship No KUCA</p> <p>5pm—Shine</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship</p>  <p>KUCA Campout</p>
<p><b>16</b></p> <p>9am—Sorting &amp; Pricing for Op Shop lower hall</p>	<p><b>17</b></p> <p>9am-2pm—Op Shop open </p> <p>9.30-11am—Christian Meditation in the Church </p> <p>7.30pm—Thrive in lower hall</p>	<p><b>18</b></p> <p>9am-2pm—Op Shop open </p> <p>10am-12noon—Men's Morning Tea at McKels Café Bella Vista. See back page for details</p> 	<p><b>19</b></p> <p>9am-2pm—Op Shop open </p>	<p><b>20</b></p> <p>7pm-9pm—Youth Group <b>ALIVE</b></p> 	<p><b>21</b></p> <p>No scheduled events</p>	<p><b>Easter 6</b> <b>22</b></p> <p>8am—Worship</p> <p>9.30am—Worship KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 &amp; Years 3-8</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship</p>
<p><b>23</b></p> <p>9am—Sorting &amp; Pricing for Op Shop lower hall</p>	<p><b>24</b></p> <p>9am-2pm—Op Shop open </p> <p>9.30-11am—Christian Meditation in the Church </p>	<p><b>25</b></p> <p>9am-2pm—Op Shop open </p>	<p><b>26</b></p> <p>9am-2pm—Op Shop open </p>	<p><b>27</b></p> <p>7pm-9pm—Youth Group <b>FUSION</b> upstairs</p> <p><b>DISNEY NIGHT</b></p> 	<p><b>28</b></p> <p>No scheduled events</p>	<p><b>Easter 7</b> <b>29</b></p> <p>8am—Worship</p> <p>9.30am—Worship KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 &amp; Years 3-8</p> <p>5pm—Shine</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship</p>