



st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together

Weekly Newsletter

11 December 2022

Advent 3 Joy

Bible Reading

8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm

Isaiah 35: 1-10

Matthew 11: 2-11

Response after Bible Readings

Leader: Hear the word of the Lord

Response: Thanks be to God



Welcome to St. Matthew's Community Room.
Children are very welcome at St. Matthew's and that means their noise is welcome too. This room is here if you feel the need to step out of the service or would like some more privacy but still want to see and hear what's going on in the service.
OPEN FROM 9.30AM

Livestreaming

at all . 8am
three . 9.30am
worship . 6.45pm
services

8am—Worship

Led by Mary Pearson
And Clive Pearson

9.30am—Worship

Led by Barbara Gibb
and Clive Pearson

KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8

6.45pm—Worship

Includes Communion

Led by Jane Cole
and Clive Pearson

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

What's happening this week at St. Matthew's

MONDAY 12 DECEMBER

9am—Sorting & pricing for
Op Shop lower hall

**7.30pm—Remembrance and
Thanksgiving Service**

TUESDAY 13 DECEMBER

9am-2pm—Op Shop open

9.30-11am—Christian Meditation

in the Church

**10.30am—Advent Studies
with Mike Week 3 FINAL in the
church**

**7.30pm—Thrive Final for the year
meet offsite**

WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER

9am-2pm—Op Shop

10am-12pm—Women's Fellowship
upstairs hall and church

**7.30pm—Advent Studies
with Mike Week 3 FINAL
on ZOOM**

Change to Zoom link. Please contact office
for details.

THURSDAY 15 DECEMBER

9am-2pm—Op Shop **FINAL DAY**

FRIDAY 16 DECEMBER

No Scheduled activities

SATURDAY 17 DECEMBER

2pm-4pm—Church in use

SUNDAY 18 DECEMBER

8am—Worship

9am—Worship at the Willows

9.30am—Worship

KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8

6.45pm—Worship



SUPPLY MINISTER

REV. CLIVE PEARSON 0409 523 024

Email: minister@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

MINISTRY WORKER

DANIEL GIBB *Part Time*

Email: daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

SENIORS PASTORAL CARER

MICHAEL STRONG *Part Time*

Email: 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

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PO Box 321 BAULKHAM HILLS 2153

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11 December 3rd Sunday in Advent
'Who' are we waiting for?

Christmas Bowl: The Candle of Joy

Isaiah 35:1-10 Matthew 11:2-11

The Advent season is a theme of waiting. The reading from Matthew for this week is intriguingly relevant in a contemporary society like ours. The season of Christmas is observed by all and sundry. It is unavoidable given the marketing pressure that now accompanies Christmas. Were those who were living at the time of Jesus' birth now with us, imagine their response to Christmas trees, Santa Claus and assorted reindeer, the way in which supermarkets are decked out. That is surface stuff, in a way. We come to Christmas in a society that is increasingly indifferent to the Jesus story and the claims associated with him. 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another? It becomes an interesting question in today's world of many faiths and no faiths. For Muslims the answer is clear: Jesus (Isa) is held in high regard as is John the Baptist (Yahya ibn Zakariya): nevertheless, Islam was waiting for Muhammad. In our secular society we often find ourselves waiting for a strong leader, in effect a secular messiah. Or we wait to hear what is happening with interest rates and wonder what this will mean for the year ahead?

From the vantage point of faith, of course, we read the gospels retrospectively. We read stories like this one already in the light of the cross and resurrection. Those hearing Matthew's account of the gospel for the first time were also doing the same, but they may have noticed something we do not. Our lectionary excludes verse 1 of the chapter: 'Now when Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and proclaim his message in their cities.' There are five blocks of teaching in Matthew where there is this kind of formula to do with when Jesus had finished teaching. It mirrors the way in which the people of Israel were familiar with the first five books of the Bible, the Torah.

The reply to John the Baptist's messengers mimics (in a way) the reading of Jesus from the scroll of Isaiah in the synagogue in Luke. Is Jesus the messiah (the anointed one / the Christ in Greek). In the Hebrew tradition it is a prophet or a king who is anointed. Unlike Luke Matthew does not establish

a family relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus. It is through the Isaiah text (Isaiah 40) that the two are bound together. The disciples of John are invited to consider what they notice about Jesus' ministry – what do they see and hear; Jesus asks the crowds what did they observe with regards to John: the messianic link to a political and courtly kingship is denied as is the expectation of the messiah being merely a prophet.

John is 'more than a prophet' and is preparing the 'way': the first Christians would, of course, be known initially as the followers of the way.

The reading from Isaiah 35 establishes a bridge between John the Baptist in the wilderness and his message of repentance with the return of the people to Jerusalem. The desert rejoices, becomes a place of joy and hope made possible by the coming of God.

Online:

Advent reflections:

'Mary'

<https://seeingthesacred.com/2019/12/13/advent-day-13/>

Victoria Emily Jones, 'Pregnant with God'.

<https://artway.eu/artway.php?id=1274&lang=en&action=show&type=imagemeditations>

Music:

Of the Father's love begotten (5th century)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cOF9JLkPis&t=120s>

Alana Levandoski

'First Advent / Pleased to dwell'.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icMlrizsOh8>

Chris Tomlin

'Adore'.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5LQCz7y5Ht0>

Malcolm Gordon,

'Hey Mary'.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PVoGcumJwng>

Freedom is coming, o yes, I know

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIW4RP6okn0>

Yours in Christ,

Clive

Elders

The following people have been elected to Eldership;

8am— Alan Wright, Shamali Perera

6.45pm—Alexander Lawless, Sandra Morell

The Eldership as per the 3 worship services are;

8am—Pamela Leslie, Vivienne Strong, Eulalie Herat, Alan Wright, Shamali Perera

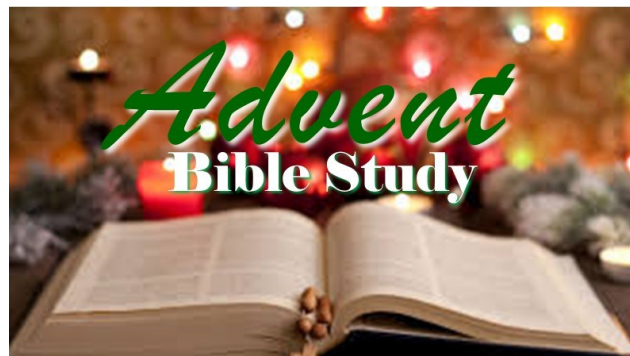
9.30am—Sandra Drayton, Robyn Burn, Helen Olley, Robyn Mathewson, Melissa Gibson Darling

6.45pm— Erin Mathewson, Jane Cole, Alexander Lawless, Sandra Morell

A message to all groups and individuals using the Church property

When using any part of the Church property at any time, please ensure that when you leave, you turn off all lights, fans, air con's and properly lock and alarm the premises if required. This is the responsibility of all groups and individuals, please don't think that someone else will do it for you.

The St. Matthew's Uniting Church weekly Newsletter is available to view at the end of each week for the upcoming Sunday on the St. Matthew's website www.stmatthewsuniting.net.au Click on the metal dove image / publications.



Advent Studies for this year

The coming Season of Advent in the Christian calendar commences on Sunday 27th November. We traverse from a gospel year in Luke into a year featuring Matthew. This means that we move from a year featuring gentiles and the needy to a focus on Jewish people, the chosen people of God as viewed by Matthew.

We will be engaged in Three studies this advent, at weekly intervals.

The first will be led by Clive Pearson who will provide us with much food for thought. He will draw comparisons between the Advent story of Christmas as presented by both Matthew and Luke and provide some clues about what will follow in Matthew as we explore this Gospel in 2023.

Drawing on the information provided by Clive, the following two weeks of the study will be led by Michael Strong and will first involve reflections on the events leading up to the birth of Jesus. The second will consider the entry of Herod and horrid actions he inflicted on male children in Bethlehem and the flight of Jesus and his family to Egypt. This exploration will continue through to the exchanges between John the Baptist and Jesus.

The studies advertised above will be held at the following times:

Onsite at the church at 10.30am

Tuesday — 29 November

Tuesday — 6 & 13 December

Or ZOOM online 7.30pm

Wednesday — 30 November

Wednesday — 7 & 14 December [NewZoomLink](#)

Please contact the Church office for new ZOOM link details and study notes. We will email them to you.

Thank you

Christmas Services At St. Matthew's

Remembrance & Thanksgiving Service

* Monday 12 December 7.30pm

Carol Services

* Sunday 18 December 8am & 9.30am

Children's Christmas Eve Celebration

* 24 December 5pm

Christmas Eve Late Service

* 24 December 11.15pm

Christmas Day Worship

* 25 December 9am



PEOPLE NEWS

ROSEMARY SEXTON
LYN BOOTH
EVELYN MEDCALF

DAVID SIEBER
JOY STEWART
SYLVIA LEADER

Our very best wishes to all the St. Matthew's community
who are celebrating their birthdays this week.

JANUARY SUNDAY SUMMER WORSHIP SERVICES at the church

1st January - 9am & 6.45pm
includes Communion

8th January - 9am & 6.45pm

15th January - 9am & 6.45pm

22nd January - 9am & 6.45pm

29th January - 9am & 6.45pm

Live streaming continues for all services

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle 11—17 December

Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam

Third Sunday of Advent



Sharing God's love this Christmas

Zimbabwe is suffering from critically low food reserves, as climate change brings harsher and more frequent drought. Families already living in poverty and hunger are now being plunged further into crisis.

Through your gift this Christmas Bowl, you can support Act for Peace's local partner, Christian Care, to provide training in the latest climate-resilient farming techniques so families can be more food secure. **Please give today.**



CALL: 1800 025 101 VISIT: actforpeace.org.au/christmasbowl



The Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. ABN 86 619 970 188

Give Hope



Share God's love with a refugee
going hungry this Christmas

Please give today. 1800 025 101
www.actforpeace.org.au/christmasbowl

Christmas Bowl envelopes are available as you enter
and leave the services from Sunday 27 November.



1. Go to the website and donate directly.
2. If you want to give by cheque or credit card, please fill in the details in the envelope and **PUT IT IN THE POST.**
3. Cash to Christmas Bowl person at the back of the church. (if you want a receipt – put the cash in the envelope, fill out the form inside and hand it to the Christmas Bowl person so that a receipt can be mailed to you).

VISIT: actforpeace.org.au/christmasbowl



The Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. ABN 86 619 970 188

**Being prepared
for next week's
worship:**



18 December 2022

Advent 4 Love

Theme:

Joseph dreams....

Christmas Bowl Theme:

Candle of Love

Sunday 18 December:

8am, 9:30am &

6:45pm

Bible Readings:

Isaiah 7: 1-16

Matthew 1: 18-25

The Christmas story that Luke fastens upon Mary; in the gospel of Mark Joseph is the character who stands out and does so in a way that he does not do so in Luke. There is no visitation, no visit to Elizabeth, no Magnificat. Mary is engaged to Joseph but she is with child through the Holy Spirit. On the other hand Joseph is declared to be a righteous man, a son of David, and is the one who will name Jesus.

And Joseph dreams. One of the features of Matthew's gospel is how he tells the story of Jesus for a community that is apparently more Jewish in background. Luke's was more Gentile, 'non-Jewish'. It is a feature of this gospel to make comparisons between the life of Jesus and incidents in the prior history of the Hebrew people. The familiar refrain is to 'fulfil what was said by the prophet'. These references to Joseph and his dreams remind us of the saga of Joseph in *Genesis* who gained favour in the Egyptian court through his ability to interpret dreams. In this case it is through a dream that Joseph does not divorce

Mary and is told what to name him. In the 'normal' course of events the son would probably have been named after the 'father' – that is, Joseph.

The reference to Immanuel at Isaiah 7:14 is the first time this name is used in the Bible. Here, the Lord speaks through Isaiah the prophet to Ahaz, king of Judah. At this time in Israel's history, the land was divided between the northern and southern kingdoms (the northern kingdom was often designated "Israel" and the southern "Judah"). Ahaz was afraid because the northern kingdom had joined forces with the neighbouring land of Syria, and he believed they would seek to destroy him and his people. But God tells him, "It shall not stand, and it shall not come to pass" (7:7). Ahaz does not believe him, and so God gives him a sign that this will be so through this popular Christmas Bible verse: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).



**WEST EPPING
UNITING CHURCH
LEISURE MINISTRY**

Bookings are now open for a Coach Trip on
Tuesday 17th January 2023.

Total Cost of \$60 includes comfortable coach
travel, Morning tea and admission to
Alison Homestead Museum and Central
Coast Zoo and Amazement Farm & Fun Park.

Departure time at West Epping Uniting
Church 8.30am. BYO lunch

Bookings - M. & J. Ross 9873 3713

**Volunteers needed to help with gardening
and trimming the hedges on the lower side of the church**
in January or February 2023.

Also if anyone has a mulcher that we can borrow for that
time. Please contact George Haines, Bruce Court or
Katherine Pedersen if you can help or loan us a mulcher.

Calling all plant lovers

If you enjoy propagating plants and
would like to have some fun as an
individual or group of people creating
potted plants to sell in the Op Shop,
please speak with Pamela Leslie,
Katherine Pedersen or
call the office on T: 9686 3003.