



st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together

Weekly Newsletter

18 December 2022

Advent 4 Love

Bible Reading

8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm



Isaiah 7: 10-16

Matthew 1: 18-25

Response after Bible Readings

Leader: Hear the word of the Lord

Response: Thanks be to God



Carol Services

8am—Worship

Led by Vivienne Strong
and Clive Pearson

9.30am—Worship

Led by Sharon Underwood
and Clive Pearson

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

6.45pm—Worship

Led by Clive Pearson
and Daniel Gibb

Livestreaming

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

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

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 19 DECEMBER

9am—Sorting & pricing for

Op Shop lower hall

10am-11am—Pest spraying

All church areas

12pm-1pm—Pest spraying Preschool

SATURDAY 24 DECEMBER

Christmas Eve

5pm—Children's Service

11.15pm—Service



TUESDAY 20 DECEMBER

9.30-11am—Christian Meditation

in the Church

WEDNESDAY 21 DECEMBER

10am-12noon—Men's Morning Tea

at McKels Café Bella Vista.

SUNDAY 25 DECEMBER

Christmas Day

9am—Service



THURSDAY 22 DECEMBER

No Scheduled Activities

FRIDAY 23 DECEMBER

No Scheduled activities

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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18 December 4th Sunday in Advent

Joseph dreams....

Christmas Bowl: The Candle of Love

Isaiah 7: 10-16 Matthew 1: 18-25

The Christmas story that Luke tells fastens upon Mary; in the gospel of Matthew 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. There is no trip to Bethlehem courtesy a donkey; there is no census. Matthew's account begins with a genealogy before moving onto a brief account of the birth: that will then be followed by the story of the magi, the star, King Herod, the massacre of the holy innocents and the flight to Egypt. There are no shepherds on hillsides and no heavenly choir in Matthew.

Mary is engaged to Joseph but she is with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph is declared to be a righteous man, a son of David, and is the one who will name Jesus. Apart from this birth narrative Joseph is nowhere else to be seen in the gospel, though there are indirect references elsewhere: Jesus has brothers and sisters – presumably Joseph is the father. There is also a statement from bewildered folk surprised at Jesus' teaching saying but isn't this Joseph, the carpenter's son. That's it!

In the birth narrative Joseph dreams – dreams take the place of songs found in Luke. 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. We have now entered into the ancient world's equivalent of power politics. The Assyrian empire is on the rise and the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah are vulnerable, especially the northern kingdom which is Israel

In the Isaiah text 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).

Online: Music

Mercy me:

Joseph's lullaby

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ehZ5s_icFE

Pauline Ramos

Joseph's lullaby

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

David Haas

Earth child/star of wonder

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KNge5L5_Qv8

Born in the night, Mary's child

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwiZJqiB4KA>

Chris Tomlin

Come, let us adore him

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=br-QL1zVcUc>

Silent Night

Christmas Eve, 1914

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6KH0VBK2EVE>

The story behind the Sainbsurys' Christ ad, 2014 (Christmas Eve 1914)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2s1YvnfcFVs>

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

JNC update - December 2022

Last week, the JNC met and had a conversation with a minister. While this minister has many great qualities and the discussion was positive, the JNC have agreed to not proceed further with this minister. We have provided specific feedback to ACOMP and are hopeful that ACOMP will be able to provide additional profiles after their next meeting in late February. Please continue to pray for both ACOMP and the JNC as we work through this process.

Christmas Day flowers

The ladies who are doing the 2 fresh native arrangements for Christmas in the church are asking if anyone could provide the following from their garden or friends gardens. We are not wanting you to buy the flowers.

- Orange and yellow proteas
- Blue gum leaves
- Gum nuts on the branches
- Banksias
- White or cream native flowers
- Kangaroo paws
- White agapanthus



We will be doing the arrangements on Friday 23rd. Please let Sandra Drayton, Shamali Perera or Katherine Pedersen know BEFORE the 21st December. With thanks.

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.



West Epping
Uniting Church

**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

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.

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

Harry MacWilliam

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

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

18—24 December

P.R. China, Hong Kong, Macau

JANUARY SUNDAY SUMMER WORSHIP SERVICES

at the church

1st January - 9am includes Communion

8th January - 9am & 6.45pm
includes Communion

15th January - 9am & 6.45pm

22nd January - 9am & 6.45pm

29th January - 9am & 6.45pm

Live streaming continues for all services

Fourth Sunday of Advent



Waiting to return home

Many Sri Lankan refugees living in exile in India are finally ready to make the journey home to the country they love. But the current economic crisis and food shortages mean it's not safe for them to return.

Through the Christmas Bowl you are helping our local partner, the Organisation for Eelam Refugees Rehabilitation (OfERR), continue to provide lifesaving medical care for refugees while they wait for Sri Lanka to be safe again. **Please give today.**



Christmas
Bowl



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.



Christmas
Bowl

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



international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. ABN 86 619 970 188

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

***Christmas
Day
25 December 2022***

Theme:

**Christmas day
The naming of Jesus
Christmas now:
Light of the world**

**Sunday 25 December:
9am**

Bible Readings:

**Isaiah 9: 2-7
Matthew 1: 18-25
John 1: 1-14**



The critical part of the Matthew account of Jesus' birth is his name. In the ancient world names mattered a great deal. They carried honour (and shame); they could carry purpose. The importance of the name given to this infant born of Mary is born out by both gospels – Matthew and Luke. In both of them the name is divinely given by an angel: the name Jesus refers to how 'he will save his people from their sins'. Only Matthew refers to Jesus being Emmanuel –that is, God with us. The only other time this name is employed in the Bible is in the book of Isaiah.

The name Emmanuel is seldom used in describing Jesus these days: that is a pity. It is worth recovering. The way in which Matthew makes use of it is very distinctive. At Jesus' birth he is described as 'God with us'; the last line of the gospel speaks about how the risen and ascended Christ will be 'with us' to the close of the age. The intervening chapters—hence his life, death and resurrection—are designed to illustrate how that is so and what it might mean.

By way of comparison the gospel of John has no Christmas story at all. In its place we have a prologue that speaks about the Word becoming flesh and coming into the world, but the world preferred light to

darkness. It sets the scene for that whole gospel. The prologue is concerned with the pre-existence of Christ (as the Word which was with God 'in the beginning') and the Incarnation (the Word becomes flesh). Note first of all that reference to 'in the beginning': the way in which John begins mirrors the creation account in Genesis 1 where 'in the beginning' God creates the world through the word. Notice all that the Word become flesh – that is not the same as becomes human. Flesh refers to material being. -it can include other animals as well as inanimate objects.

It is a gospel that also relies a great deal upon contrasts – the most notable here is light and dark. The gospel of John is constructed almost like a cosmic court case between God and the word: there are frequent references to testimony, witness and judgement. The text taken from Isaiah 9:2-7 likewise depends upon the contrast between light and dark and makes a connection back to the intent of the Matthew birth narrative through reference to a 'child been born for us, a son given to us'. Notice now how this passage concludes with an emphasis upon how the child is 'named' – wonderful, counsellor, might God, everlasting Father, prince of peace.