



st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together

Weekly Newsletter

25 December 2022

Christmas Day

Bible Reading

9am

Isaiah 9:2-7

Matthew 1: 18-25

John 1:1-14

Response after Bible Readings

Leader: Hear the word of the Lord

Response: Thanks be to God



**Livestreaming
Worship Service
. 9am**

9am—Worship
Led by Pamela Leslie
and Clive Pearson

KUCA in recess

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 9AM



Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 26 DECEMBER

Church Office Closed

TUESDAY 27 DECEMBER

Church Office Closed

WEDNESDAY 28 DECEMBER

Church Office Closed

THURSDAY 29 DECEMBER

Church Office Closed

FRIDAY 30 DECEMBER

Church Office Closed

SATURDAY 31 DECEMBER

No Scheduled activities

SUNDAY 1 JANUARY

**9am-Summer Worship
Service**

**No evening worship
today**



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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SONALI WANIGESEKERA

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**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.

25 December Christmas Day

The naming of Jesus

Christmas Presence

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.

Christmas message / worship services

Angela Tilby BBC Thought for the Day

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0dqg9lp>

St Martin's-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London.
Community carols

<https://stmartins.digital/community-carols-12-12/>

Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York
Children's Christmas Pageant

<https://www.fapc.org/sermon/fourth-sunday-of-advent-childrens-christmas-pageant>

Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York
Blue Christmas

<https://www.fapc.org/sermon/blue-christmas-2022>

Carols:

'Silent night' in the shopping mall (piano/cello / up-beat)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2S8vwgYwT2I>

BBC Young Chorister of the Year, 2021 'O Holy Night'.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1ybgnJh1yE>

The Priests, 'O Holy Night'. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OX8NkTERktI>

Chris Tomlin, 'It's Christmas',
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H0iFgc5GjwA>

Film Clip:

Christmas Eve Truce / Silent Night, 1914. From the film, Joyeux Noel

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

Yours in Christ,
Clive



PEOPLE NEWS

Daniel Gibb
Val Whitmore

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

Merry Christmas from Sylvia Leader



After the 9am Christmas Day service please feel free to take a bunch of Christmas bush (collected from Sylvia's garden) as a Christmas gift to the St. Matthew's congregation. Bunches will be at the St Matthew's Lane exit.

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle 25—31 December

Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan

Christmas Day

THE CHRISTMAS BOWL
SINCE 1949



Merry Christmas!

Mugisha*, along with her sister and two young children are just some of the millions of families living as refugees around the world. Mugisha fled to Kenya after conflict broke out in her home country of Congo. Since arriving, she has faced many challenges to meet the basic needs for her family. Through the Christmas Bowl, our local partners around the world can continue to share God's love with refugees like Mugisha by providing food, care and lifesaving support. **Please give today.**

*Mugisha's name has been changed for safety reasons.



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.



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 1 New Year's Day

1 January 2023

**Theme:
New Year Resolutions
(according to Matthew)**

**Sunday 1 January:
9am**

Bible Readings:

***Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
Matthew 25:31-46***

The new year begins with one of the key texts from the gospel of Matthew. In some ways it is strange place to begin the new year. It is the last piece of Jesus' teaching before the 'chief priests and elders of the people gathered in the courtyard of the high priest .. to arrest [him] by stealth and kill him. It thus completes the fifth block of teaching in this gospel. Its placement lends it to being a climax. In some lectionaries it is the last reading for the year, not the first.

It feels like we are beginning the new year with the lead up, then, to Easter. In our consumer-driven society that is not a surprising twist, given the way in which Hot Cross buns appear on the shelves immediately after Christmas Day. Those who have composed the lectionary, though, are not trying to cash in on that marketing ploy. There is a very real sense in which this parable provides us with a chance to get our bearings for the New Year. In terms of the reading from Ecclesiastes we might even say it is the right 'time' for this reading.

The parable is imagining the coming again of Christ. Here he is referred to as the son of man (which can simply mean a human being or it can carry, as it does here, a more apocalyptic mood of the one who will be revealed at the end of time). The

parable is cosmic in scope. Throughout the Hebrew Bible there had been frequent references to how the purposes of God would be for all people: that is a strong theme in Isaiah. It is there again in Simeon's words in Luke when he proclaims that Jesus will be a light to the Gentiles.

Even though the language is that of the son of man the text bears the marks of glory and majesty. There are thrones. The people of Israel were expecting a messiah that would demonstrate the marks of kingship and power. We may well imagine that the expectation that those who would be rewarded for their service were those who displayed military courage, conspicuous resistance to the invader, and heroic acts of great valour. But in this kingdom that is not so.

There is no parable of the good Samaritan in Matthew. It could be argued that this parable at the close of Matthew's ministry of Jesus comes closest. What is especially intriguing about its message is how it imagines the anonymous presence of Christ – 'as you did to the least of these, you did it to me'. These deeds of kindness, mercy, were seemingly unnoticed by those who performed them. They happen within the ordinary unfolding of time, when it is a time for this, and a time for that.

Sympathy to the family and friends of Sue Massey who passed away on Wednesday 21 December 2022.

*The Ministry team
and office staff
wish you and
your family
a safe and
Holy Christmas
and a Happy
New Year.*

**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.

