

..... Lent 2023.....

Lenten

The way in which the supermarkets begin selling hot cross buns (with their many variations for niche markets) might leave you thinking that Lent began on Boxing Day. Of course, that is not right. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday (this year, 22nd February) and runs through to the Thursday before Good Friday—that is, 6th April.

The word Lent is not a particularly religiously word and here in Australia it is a bit out of place. It comes from an Middle English word, *lencten*, meaning 'lengthening' and referred to the days getting longer as winter gave way to spring. That might give the impression that Lent is really more a northern hemisphere event rather than one for us. But the origins of this period of reflection, often accompanied by fasting and prayer, a time of preparation, reaches back well behind the word Lent arrived on the scene.

Baptism

The origins of this season lie back in the early second century. Melito of Sardis records in his *Peri Pascha* (Concerning the Passion) how Christians in the Roman province of Asia had been taught to celebrate the resurrection of Christ annually, coinciding with the feast of the Passover. These churches then set aside a time prior to Easter to make ready. The custom then spread and became known by its Latin name, *Quadragesima* (meaning 40 days). The forty days, of course, reflect Jesus' time in the wilderness and mirrors the forty years the people of Israel experienced wandering in the desert. The practice of fasting in this season is an imitation of Jesus' fasting in his times of temptation.

Quadragesima became a particular time of instruction in the faith that would lead to baptism: the candidates would wade, naked, at dawn on Easter Day into the water and be baptized by the local bishop. The link between baptism and Easter is well captured in Paul's letter to the Romans 6:1-4.

6 What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may increase?² By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it?³ Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?⁴ Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.

A Spring Clean of Our Lives

In the course of time Lent became more closely associated with a season of penance. One early Church Father who emphasized its significance was Athanasius. For him it was like a cleansing of the palate before the feast of Easter. That cleansing happened through fasting, prayer, humility and temperance. Because he looked ahead to the resurrection Athanasius was able to look upon 'Lent' (these forty days) in terms of a 're-ordering' of our lives as we throw off 'the darkness' of 'the world' and allow ourselves to be conformed better to the image of Christ. We might say that, seen in this light, Lent is like a 'spring clean' of our lives. It is like a spiritual exercise, a time to clear away some junk.

In the Lenten Company of John The gospel we are following this year is Matthew. It is one of the three synoptic gospels, meaning that Matthew, Mark and Luke can be placed alongside each other and bear many similarities. John is very different—so much so that 90% of John is only found in this one gospel. It is a gospel that is noted for a series of long, involved narratives in which Jesus engages with that person or event for the sake of a ‘sign’. The first eleven chapters of John are sometimes called ‘the book of signs’—a sign is a ‘miracle’ but only inasmuch as it seeks to bear witness, to provide some testimony as to who Jesus ‘is’.

The gospel is crafted like a big court case between God and the world and the issue at stake is who is Jesus and what does his life, death and resurrection signify for the world. There is a frequent use of words like witness, testimony and judgement. Running through this gospel is a sequence of ‘I am’ sayings which should be read in the light of Moses and the burning bush where the voice proclaims, ‘I am who I am’ or ‘I will be who I will be’.

The particular episodes highlighted through Lent have to do with Nicodemus (and being born from above), the woman at the well, the healing of the man born blind and the raising of Lazarus. This last sign marks the transition towards the passion in John. The raising of Lazarus is like a catalyst. The leaders of the Jews become concerned at how all the crowds may now follow Jesus on account of this sign and thereby become a cause of concern lest the Romans set out to crush the state. It is the raising of Lazarus and these consequences that lead Caiaphas to proclaim that it is better for one man to die for the sake of the nation. The plot against Jesus is then initiated—as well as the intention to have Lazarus killed.

Music for Lent

Ashes	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJvOeipJItA
Beyond the days	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kp3DWyqEN28
Dust we are and shall return	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-9VdTE0hfs
Does your heart break.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4iN5xCG2qQw
Songs for Lent (traditional)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7Wu_Y7qGLM
Alleghri's Mei Miserere	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQmZnXfIUOQ
The Origins and Meaning of Alleghri's Miserere.	https://www.classicfm.com/composers/alleghri/miserere-mei-lyrics-origins/

Seasonal Art

Journey through Lent with art	https://faith.nd.edu/s/1210/faith/interior.aspx?sid=1210&gid=609&pgid=39423
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Children's Videos for Lent

What kid's say about Lent and Easter	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=blfjp1FdKbY
What is Lent? Church of England	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbBpXLk1fS8

Ramadan The Christian season of Lent/Easter often coincides with the Muslim period of Ramadan. This is a major season of the Islamic year that commemorates the first revelation to Muhammad. It is noted for a time of fasting (from sunrise to sunset), prayer/reflection, hospitality/community. The day ends with an Iftar meal. The fast comes to a close with a prayer and a communal meal. It is not uncommon in Sydney for Iftar meals to involve invitations being made to those who belong to another faith – or no faith.



The days, location and times are:

Tuesday in the church at 11:00am

Thursday on line (ZOOM) at 7:30pm

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3602745736>

Please contact church office for study notes

Sunday in church during the 6:45pm service

The dates are:

Tuesdays 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th

Thursdays 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th

Sundays 12th, 19th, 26th and 2nd April

The Passion of St Matthew

Our Lenten study this year will take place throughout March. This is an important season in the church's life as we make ready for Easter. There will be three different times in which you can participate.

The studies will be led by Clive Pearson and Mike Strong: they will include works of art as well as musical references.

We will be following through on Matthew's account of the passion and resurrection.

1. Setting the Stage (Matthew 26:1-46)
2. Trials and denials (Matthew 26:47-27:31)
3. Crucified (Matthew 27:32-66)
4. Risen (Matthew 28:1-20)

A Guide to St Matthew's Passion (Bach)

James Gilchrist

King's College Choir

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=591fCQvRjmo&t=112s>

Katherine Pedersen Open Garden

Bundaleer is an Aboriginal word meaning Among the Trees which describes this secluded sanctuary situated at the beginning of a creek which runs into Bidjigal Reserve.

The ST. MATTHEW'S COMMUNITY are invited to visit this medium sized property where large gums, turpentines and angophoras shade rainforest plants, Japanese maples, camellias and bromeliads among other mainly shade loving plants.

You are invited to spend a couple of hours exploring the garden and having

refreshments at one of several seating spots around the garden where you will hear and see the wildlife and running water.

The garden will open at various times throughout this year as plants reveal their particular beauty.



Dates for March 2023

Thursdays from 10am-12noon.
16th, 23rd, & 30th

Saturdays from 2pm - 5pm.
18th, 25th, & 1st of April

\$10 adults 18 years and over includes drink and sweet or savoury offering of the day.

\$5 school children to 18 years includes drink and sweet or savoury offering of the day.

For bookings and enquiries, please contact the owners, Gary and Katherine Pedersen, kathped56@gmail.com

This initiative is a fundraiser to assist with the cost of replacing the St. Matthew's roofing.



WANTED!!!

Mr. and Mrs. Help Needed!

For some time now a mysterious couple have often been on the duty roster. They are an unusual couple: they are rather shy and a little hesitant about putting their name forward: sometimes they end up hiding behind someone else's more well-known name and face. They do not appear to have a fixed address and sometimes they seem to inhabit the 'cloud' as we seek to track them down.

This couple are now beginning to get known as 'Mr and Mrs Help Needed'. They are an important part of this congregation and its understanding of being 'the body of Christ'. It is not always clear which member they are of that body but they appreciate how much the life of the whole is enriched by their assistance.

There are various tasks with which Mr and Mrs Help Needed turn their attention. Sometimes it is on multimedia, sometimes liturgy, sometimes they like to welcome people, and sometimes they like to pray for others.

Mr and Mrs Help Needed are looking for a few more friends: if you can assist them, please let Clive or the office know. If you would like to 'help' out with prayers and liturgy, Clive is willing to spend some time with you in order to come to terms with what needs to be done.



**WORLD DAY
of Prayer 2023**

Taiwan

**7.30pm
Friday
3rd March**

**Wesley
Uniting Church
Showground Road
Castle Hill**

Mini

MART

**Saturday
4th March
9am-12pm**

Pre-loved
Household Items,
Electrical, Toys & Books
(Fiction, Non-fiction & Children's Books)

St. Matthew's Lower Hall

ST. MATTHEW'S
BALLEWATTIN PHILIP'S UNITING CHURCH
growing together

THE IONA COMMUNITY



Many people around the world know of the Iona through the worship songs, many of them written by John Bell and Graham Maule. We have sung a few of them at St. Matthew's. They are able to address contemporary issues in a worshipful way. This concern for finding ways to connect life and worship, to find the sacred in the midst of life lies at the heart of the Iona Community and was what brought it into being.

In 1930s, George MacLeod was a young Church of Scotland minister working in Govan, a very poor area of Glasgow. It was the middle of the Depression. The shipyards had closed and there was extremely high unemployment. He found it impossible to visit people and pray with them and leave the problems of their everyday life unaddressed. He had long had a vision of rebuilding the ruined monastic buildings on the tiny island of Iona, off the west coast of Scotland. The Benedictine Abbey church had been rebuilt on the 19th century by the then landlord, the Duke of Argyll who had specified that it should be an ecumenical place.

In 1937 George took a group of unemployed craftsmen and a group of student ministers to Iona for the summer to begin restoring the monastic buildings. They formed a community that revolved around a pattern of morning and evening worship and physical labour during the day. So began a project that continued for 3 decades. The outbreak of war caused particular problems but the work didn't halt. Indeed, it gave rise to some modern miracles. The refectory walls were completed but there was no timber for the roof. One night there was a severe storm. A cargo ship from Norway had been heading down the Sound between Iona and the neighbouring island of Mull. It was carrying a deck-load of timber which washed off and onto the beach opposite Iona, above the high tide line – so common property. It was collected and not only was there enough wood but it was all the right length.

Over the years, the Iona Community grew beyond the physical rebuilding. It embraced people, originally just men, who wanted to commit themselves to a Christian life, based on the 5 rules that George MacLeod put in place from the beginning: peace and justice making, prayer and bible /sacred reading, economic accountability (originally a tithe), meeting as a whole community and as local Family Groups, and accounting for the use of time. From early days there were also Associate members who wanted to be connected to the ethos of the Community but were not able to become full members. They also committed to the devotional discipline. Over the course of a month, members pray for each other using a daily prayer diary that includes associates on a 3 monthly basis.

The life of the Community is grounded in Celtic Spirituality whose ancient tradition closely links the sacred and the secular. Now, the Community's spiritual home is Iona and its daily routine of morning and evening worship. The morning office ends without a blessing and people go off to the work of the day. The blessing comes at the end of the evening service, a blessing on all that the day has held.

The Iona Community has always been dispersed, originally mainly throughout Scotland and England, but has grown in numbers and spread. There are now members all around the world, meeting made possible by Zoom. People work out their commitment according to where they are – it could be Kenya, Cuba, Alaska, Australia (where I am 1 of 3 full members), many throughout Europe and the USA.

We can be part of Common Concern Networks on areas such as the environment, refugees, racism, inter-faith relationships, poverty and inequality, peace, to name but some.

Iona itself remains an important part of the Community's life. The Abbey hosts groups of people from March to October. They come to form their own community for that week as they have programs that connect to current concerns and embrace all kinds of creativity, tasks, much singing and music, prayer and worship. People come from all around the world. The Community supports as best it can those from disadvantaged backgrounds. On the Isle of Mull, in a row of old cottages that used to be a salmon fishing station, a mile from the singles track road, the Community runs an outdoor adventure centre focused on youth who again experience a supportive community that has a life of worship that relates to their everyday experiences.

At times, for some, the Community has become something of an alternative church, but the great majority of members are involved in their local churches. The Community encourages, supports and inspires members who are required to renew their commitment every year. There is a mix of lay and ordained people, and while several are older, there is a strong youth presence, who, as with all members, are drawn by a desire to live a committed life that engages with some of the fundamental problems of the world.

Mary Pearson



Welcome to Coffee & Discovery for 2023

10am until 12 noon

Our first meeting for the year
will be held on
Thursday **2 March.**
with

Guest Speaker

Clive Pearson

'Ballyhooing in public'

Late last year Clive presented an address to the Global Network of Public Theology in Curitiba, Brazil. Its theme was faith, climate change and cities, with particular reference to Sydney. That journey to Brazil began more than thirty years before in a congregational weekend camp in Hanmer Springs, 2 hours north-west of Christchurch. With Dean Drayton and William Emilsen Clive initiated a degree in public theology – that is, how do we draw upon the resources of the Christian faith to address contemporary concerns for the sake of the common good. In response to that call he has visited and worried about the future prospects of low-lying islands like Tuvalu, wondered how local churches might prepare for increases in heat and wondered about how the churches might have responded to public events like the Cronulla race riots. The title comes from a newspaper column by Peter FitzSimons who argued that Christian should not 'ballyhoo' their faith in public, but, rather 'go tell it on the mountain with the volume turned down'.

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

***** ALL WELCOME *****

Jesus said,
"Come to me,
all you who are
weary and
burdened,
and I will
give you rest."

Care and Prayer

All Welcome

3pm

**on the first Monday
of each month
at St. Matthew's**

February to November

Next Date: 6 March

A small, quiet group
are here to pray for
your needs.

Whatever your faith,
you are truly welcome.



MEN'S MORNING TEA

Wednesday 15th March

10am to 12noon

**Mckel's Café, Shop 14, Circa
Boulevard Bella Vista.**

**We are allocated external seating to
ensure compliance with the recommended
Covid situation.**

Every third Wednesday of the month

Enquiries
Alan
Wright



CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

You are invited to come along to the
church on

Tuesdays at 9.30am—11am

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

www.christianmeditationaustralia.org

The World Community for Christian
Meditation (WCCM)

Women's Fellowship Wednesday 8th March @ 10am

The Women's Fellowship meeting on Wednesday

Guest Speaker: Mary Pearson
***Mary will be sharing some of her life
experiences***

All ladies are welcome to join with us in a
relaxed and friendly time together.

Enquiries:
Dulcie Duncum



Calendar of Events for March 2023

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

		1	2	3	4	5
		<p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>10am-12pm In Stitches  upstairs hall</p> <p>7.30pm Elders Meeting in the church</p>	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>10am-12pm Coffee & Discovery  Speaker Clive Pearson 'Ballyhooin in public' in the church & upstairs hall</p>	<p>5pm-7pm FUSION Youth Group upstairs hall</p>	<p>9am-12pm Op Shop </p> <p>9am-12pm Mini Mart  lower hall</p>	<p>8am Worship includes Communion</p> <p>9.30am—Worship includes Communion</p> <p>KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship includes Communion</p>
<p>6</p> <p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop  lower hall</p> <p>3pm Care and Prayer  Meet in the Church</p>	<p>7</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>9.30–11am Christian Meditation  in the Church</p> <p>11am Lenten Bible Study Week 1  at the church</p>	<p>8</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>10am-12noon Women's Fellowship  Guest speaker Mary Pearson in the upstairs hall & church</p>	<p>9</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>7.30pm Lenten Bible Study Week 1 on ZOOM </p>	<p>10</p> <p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>11</p> <p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>12</p> <p>8am Worship </p> <p>9am—Worship @ the Willow's</p> <p>9.30am—Worship KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship includes Lenten Bible Study Week 1 </p>
<p>13</p> <p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop  lower hall</p>	<p>14</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>9.30–11am Christian Meditation  in the Church</p> <p>7.30pm Lenten Bible Study Week 2  at the church</p>	<p>15</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>10am-12noon Men's Morning Tea  McKels Café Bella Vista. See back page for details</p> <p>10am-12pm In Stitches  upstairs hall</p>	<p>16</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>7.30pm Lenten Bible Study Week 2 on ZOOM </p>	<p>17</p> <p>5pm-7pm FUSION Youth Group upstairs hall</p>	<p>18</p> <p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>19</p> <p>8am Worship </p> <p>9.30am—Worship KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8</p> <p>5pm—Shine</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship includes Lenten Bible Study Week 2 </p>
<p>20</p> <p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop  lower hall</p>	<p>21</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>9.30–11am Christian Meditation  in the Church</p> <p>7.30pm Lenten Bible Study Week 3  at the church</p>	<p>22</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p>	<p>23</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>7.30pm Lenten Bible Study Week 3 on ZOOM </p>	<p>24</p> <p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>25</p> <p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>26</p> <p>8am Worship </p> <p>9.30am—Worship KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship includes Lenten Bible Study Week 3 </p>
<p>27</p> <p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop  lower hall</p>	<p>28</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>9.30–11am Christian Meditation  in the Church</p> <p>7.30pm Lenten Bible Study Final  at the church</p>	<p>29</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>10am-12pm In Stitches  upstairs hall</p>	<p>30</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>7.30pm Lenten Bible Study Final on ZOOM </p>	<p>31</p> <p>5pm-7pm FUSION Youth Group upstairs hall</p>	<p>st. matthew's UNITING CHURCH BAULKHAM HILLS growing together </p>	

MONTHLY ACTIVITIES and REGULAR GROUPS

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP.....

Second Wednesday of the month
Next event: **8th March at 10am**

Enquiries: Dulcie Duncum
Meet in the upstairs hall and church



MEN'S MORNING TEA.....

Meet 3rd Wednesday
of each month.
Next Event: **15th March
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 Monday of each month
in church and Community room @ 3pm
All welcome
This Month: **6th March**

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. 5pm—7pm
Contact Daniel Gibb
daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

THRIVE BIBLE STUDY.....
year 11 up to the age of 25.
Fortnightly
Contact Daniel Gibb
daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

SHINE.....
is a special needs social group for all ages from
high school up.
Meets Sundays Monthly for dinner & fun.
We are *still collecting in 2023* 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.

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

UPCOMING EVENTS & DATES

MARK YOUR DIARIES

Palm Sunday Services
2 April
@ 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm

**Maundy Thursday
Service**
6 April @ 7.30pm

Good Friday Service
7 April @ 9am

Easter Sunday Services
8 April
@ 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm

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
Weekly newsletter available on website

EMAIL: office@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

FACEBOOK:

@stmatthewsunitingchurchbaulkhamhills

PRE-SCHOOL DIRECTOR 9639 8570

SONALI WANIGESEKERA
PO Box 321 BAULKHAM HILLS 2153

EMAIL: 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 Com-
munity.
To assist with this, we have set up the following
account with Uniting Financial Services:

Account Name: Baulkham Hills Uniting
Church

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!

☆ To include your activity in the ☆
☆ APRIL ☆
☆ In Focus ☆
☆ St. Matthew's ☆
☆ Monthly Newsletter ☆
☆ please send details to Robyn and Lynn in ☆
☆ the Church Office by 15 March ☆
☆ Thank you ☆

**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