



Bible Reading
9am and 6.45pm 

Genesis 2: 15-17, 3: 1-7
Matthew 4: 1-11

Response after Bible Readings
Leader: *Hear the word of the Lord*



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 worship services
8am, 9.30am and 6.45pm

8am—Worship
Led by Judy Mann and Mary Pearson

9.30am—Worship
Led by Hugh Darling and Mary Pearson

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

5pm—Shine

6.45pm—Worship
Led by Abbey Sim and Clive Pearson

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 27 FEBRUARY
9am—Sorting and Pricing for Op Shop lower hall
10.30am—Funeral Service

TUESDAY 28 FEBRUARY
9am-2pm—Op Shop
9.30-11am—Christian Meditation in the Church
7.30pm—Community Engagement Focus Group Meeting upstairs hall

WEDNESDAY 1 MARCH
9am-2pm—Op Shop
10am-12pm—In Stitches upstairs hall
7.30pm—Elders Meeting in the Church

THURSDAY 2 MARCH
9am-2pm—Op Shop
12pm—Coffee & Discovery
Guest Speaker: Clive Pearson upstairs hall and church

FRIDAY 3 MARCH
5pm-7pm—Fusion upstairs hall

SATURDAY 4 MARCH
9am-12pm—Op Shop
9am-12pm—Mini Mart in lower hall

SUNDAY 5 MARCH
8am—Worship includes Communion
9am—Worship@ the Willows

9.30am—Worship includes Communion
KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8

6.45pm—Worship includes Communion



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

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1st Sunday in Lent

Testing the People of God!

Genesis 2: 15-17, 3: 1-7 Matthew 4: 1-11

Adam and Eve:

Don't go looking for apples! Don't blame Eve and overlook Adam's 'yes' to temptation. Let go of any problems you might have with talking serpents. The Genesis story of the eating of forbidden fruit of the tree is a 'myth'. It is a particular kind of myth which goes by a technical name – aetiological: it is a narrative that is seeking to explain how things have come to be. It is a story designed to explain our human situation of not living in a perfect world, in the garden of Eden, but find ourselves subject to the possibilities and struggles of our current existence. It is not a scientific story of our origins – so don't expect to find fossils and dinosaurs!

It is a story that needs to be handled with great care: it has been seriously misused throughout Christian history. Eve's handing on of the fruit has led to a history of women being deemed to be responsible for the fall (a word which is never mentioned in the narrative) and (for most of Christian history) having an inferior status. There have been times in the Christian past where women were looked upon as 'defective males' and the Eve story played into that nonsense.

The purpose of the 'myth' was never designed to determine the relative power and status of men and women. Eve's name means 'the living one'; Adam's name is taken from the word *Adamah* which has to do with the earth, the dust, soil. We are 'earthlings'. It sets the scene for the gospel reading through its addressing what it means for us to be human in relation to God.

Jesus in the wilderness:

Through to this point in the gospel Matthew has been addressing the question of Jesus' identity: that has been done so through the genealogy, the birth narrative (and especially the naming) and then his baptism. He has been declared to be the beloved Son who will save his people from their sins and through him God is with us. Now he is subject to three tests or temptations in the wilderness at the hands of 'the devil'.

The temptations that unfold are not simply those Jesus faces: they are not unique to Jesus and his messianic role. They are similar to the testings Israel has faced and indeed are, in variations, ours as well. The sequence is not unlike what Israel experienced in the wilderness: the first has to do with hunger, followed by putting God to the test, and the third fastens upon false worship. The first readers of Matthew's gospel – his 'church' which is mainly made up of Jewish members – would recognize this parallel. These kinds of temptation are those that are faced by any community that is seeking to be God's faithful people in the world – including the church. They are not really tests about what we would really like to do but know we should not; Thomas Long writes: 'they are temptations to *be* someone other than who God calls us to be, to deny that we are God's children'.

Each of the temptations is presented by way of a formula: 'the devil' / the adversary represents all that is opposed to the will of God. The devil begins each one with 'If you are the son of God': it is an attack on Jesus identity and designed, we might say, to cast some self-doubt as to who he is and what is his

calling. The first temptation would have Jesus overcome his hunger, his being famished, after a long fast. At face value it is designed to meet an immediate bodily need but it represents something more: were Jesus to succumb to this temptation he would have converted his messianic vocation of meeting a private need rather serving the purposes of God for all.

The second temptation signifies the possibility of a lack of trust in God. That may seem odd. Jesus is invited to jump of the Temple to see if God is trustworthy and will save him through the intervention of 'angels'. It looks plausible – like any good temptation should. But - this temptation arises out of doubt and is designed to see whether God's promises really work. It presumes that we can determine how, when and where God will fulfill the promises that have been made by God.

The third temptation revolves around the lure of false worship. 'If' Jesus was to accept this temptation whereby 'all the kingdoms of the world will be given to him; then he would need to serve Satan who represents a very different order of power. The contemporary world knew enough about military power, occupation, tyranny and excessive taxation. There would be no need for Jesus to journey to the cross. This temptation is one that does not require suffering and the need for disciples to learn what is required of them. It is seeking to fast-track the kingdom of God. With respect to the church it represents the pathway of a quick solution rather than a way of sacrificial love and costly grace.

Music for Lent:

Beyond the days

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kp3DWyqEN28>

Jacob Orbrecht 'Parce domine',
(Spare O Lord, spare thy people, for Thou art gracious and merciful. Hear us for ever, O Lord).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3hrOGpa8Xzs>

Thomas Tallis

'Out from the deep' (Psalm 130)
(Interrupted Silence)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LaRg6-FYCas>

Thomas Tallis

'Spem in Alium' (Hope in everything).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ReOa-gffwS8>

John Michael Talbot

'Only in God is my rest'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DCVC80EZKi0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6oN-NX9Nps>

Lenten Reflections:

Rowan Williams

<http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/pages/lent-video.html>

In Conversation with Christian Thinkers;

Miroslav Volf on the human heart and desire.

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

Miroslav Volf

On forgiveness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8fbjzQcTws>

Marilynne Robinson

'On the bathe between good and evil'.

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

Yours in Christ,

Clive



PEOPLE NEWS

Merilyn Philip

Margaret Benoit

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

Sympathy to the family and friends of Manfred Mayr who passed away last Friday 17th February 2023. A funeral service for Manfred will be held at St. Matthew's on Monday 27 February at 10.30am.

MARCH SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES
at the church

5 March - 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm
includes Communion

12 March - 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm

19 March - 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm

26 March - 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm

Live streaming continues for all services

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

26 February — 4 March

Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands



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 BAULDRHAM HILLS UNITING CHURCH
97 Winesap Drive Chester

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.



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 *****

News From the Finance Committee

Church Budget 2023/24

Here we are in March already! The Finance Committee will soon be commencing work on the church budget for the next financial year. Groups and committees at St Matthew's should start estimating their budgets for the next financial year. During March, Amanda from the Finance Committee will again be contacting leaders of groups and committees to gather their budget information so that the church budget can be compiled.

Roof Fundraising

The loans for the new roof are in two parts, the Schofield Loan and the repayment to Presbytery. The total of both loans is currently \$1500 per month. The repayment to Presbytery is a variable interest loan and is subject to interest rate fluctuations. The Finance Committee gratefully acknowledges the extra contributions that church members are giving via PushPay or by extra cash offerings, in a separate labelled envelope, to help with repaying these loans.

A Schofield Loan is a low-interest loan available to Uniting Church organisations for repairs to church buildings and manse properties and for installing solar power. Established in 1898, Schofield Loans were created following a bequest from the late Reverend William Schofield, who died in 1878 and left a sum of £22,000 in his will to be employed as a perpetual loan fund for churches. We are most grateful for the foresight of Reverend Schofield.

New Members of the Finance Committee

Are you interested in helping to guide the financial decisions for St Matthew's? St Matthew's Finance Committee is actively seeking new members. We meet on the first Wednesday in February, May, August and November, to review the previous quarter's financial accounts and to make suggestions and decisions on financial matters occurring within our church. We also have a special meeting in mid-June to finalise the church budget for the following financial year. If you are interested, please make yourself known to Dom or Alastair or any of the other members of the Finance Committee.

Best wishes

Dom Schuster and Alastair Burn

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

5 March

**Theme:
Lent 2**

**The Midwifery
of Faith**

Sunday

5 March:

8am

9.30am

6.45pm

Bible Readings:

**Genesis 12:1-4a
John 3:1-17**



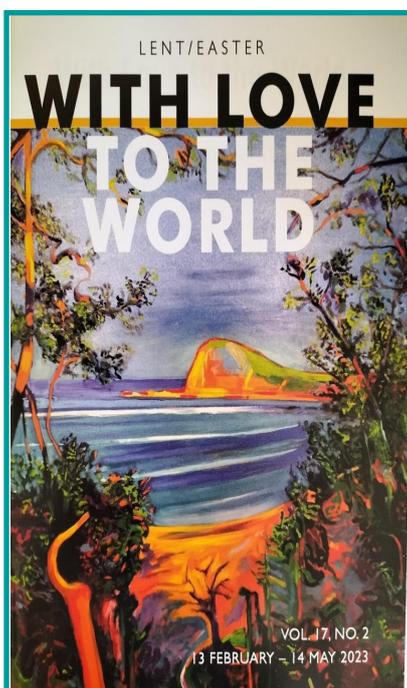
The readings for the next few weeks turn to John's gospel. Its narrative is very different from the first three gospels. 90% of the material in John is peculiar to John. One of those stories only found in this gospel has to do with Nicodemus. He is a Pharisee, a recognized 'leader of the Jews', and, as such, there is an expectation that he is likely to be sympathetic to those most opposed to Jesus and his public ministry. But that is not the case: Nicodemus appears three times in the gospel of John. On this first occasion he comes under cover of the dark to discuss with Jesus his teaching and is told that he must be born 'from above'. In the second instance (7:50-51) he advises the Sanhedrin that the law requires a person to be heard before they are judged. Following the deposition from the cross he provides the embalming spices and assist Joseph of Arimathea with the burial of Jesus.

It is evident that Nicodemus discerns a difference in Jesus that is worthy of further exploration. John's gospel is full of 'signs' that are designed to bear witness to Jesus' true identity and his divine status. He recognizes that no one can do these signs unless 'God is with him'. Through their exchange the metaphor of 'birth' is employed, much to Nicodemus' surprise: 'how

can anyone be born having grown old?' Nicodemus is thinking in terms of a physical birth through a mother's womb. Jesus is speaking of a birth through the spirit which captures again something of how Yahweh had breathed life in Adam, the earthling.

There is a sense in which Abram undergoes a rebirth as well—even though he is now seventy-five. He is about to start again in a new land. What will lie before him? Will those of these other lands welcome him or curse him? Will he speak their language and know their customs? As the story unfolds further, he will receive a new name, becoming Abraham; he will become a father and the bearer of a promise that God makes whereby he will become the forerunner of 'a great nation': 'he will be blessed'.

The John passage concludes with the well-known lines 'For God so loved the world' which is not always fully cited in people's memory. The necessity of stepping out in faith (Abraham) and being born from above (rather than again) through the Spirit is pivotal for the possibility of eternal life and being 'saved'. The Nicodemus story invites us to consider the midwifery of faith – of how people are assisted to be born into this hope.



LENT/EASTER

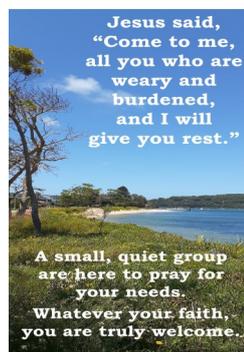
**WITH LOVE
TO THE
WORLD**

a daily Bible reading
guide based on the
Revised Common Lectionary

**Volume 17,
Number 2
13 February
to
14 May 2023**

is available
in the church foyer.

**Please place \$6
in offering bag
to cover costs.**



Care and Prayer

All Welcome

3pm

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

February to November

Next Date: 6 March



**WORLD DAY
of Prayer 2023**

Taiwan

**7.30pm
Friday
3rd March**

**Wesley
Uniting Church
Showground Road
Castle Hill**