



st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together

Weekly Newsletter

9 April 2023

Easter Sunday

Bible Readings

Acts 10: 34-43

Matthew 28: 1-10

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

8am & 9.30am only

8am—Worship
Led by Clive Pearson

9am—Worship @ the Willow's

9.30am—Worship
Led by Dean Drayton
and Clive Pearson
KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8

6.45pm—Worship
Led by Daniel Gibb
and Clive Pearson

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

**MONDAY 10
APRIL**

Public Holiday



TUESDAY 11 APRIL

9am-2pm—Op Shop

9.30-11am—Christian Meditation
in the Church

WEDNESDAY 12 APRIL

9am-2pm—Op Shop

10am-12pm—Women's

Fellowship upper hall & Church

THURSDAY 13 APRIL

9am-2pm—Op Shop

FRIDAY 14 APRIL

No Scheduled Activities

SATURDAY 15 APRIL

No Scheduled Activities

**SUNDAY
16 APRIL**

8am—Worship

9.30am—Worship
KUCA in Recess

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:

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Thank you to all who have
contributed to this publication.

Easter Sunday *Do not be Afraid* 9 April

Acts 10: 34-43 Matthew 28: 1-10

It is sometimes said that the key to your personal faith is how you understand the resurrection. That is a far from easy task, of course. The apostle Paul declared that Jesus was raised by God the dead: that is beyond our present experience. It is a mystery. The 'evidence' or 'proof' for the resurrection is indirect: it cannot be like the standard proofs we associate with life in our world partly because it is a unique event and because the ones who bear witness to the resurrection all belong to the company of the faithful. Imagine someone under cross-examination today having to testify to the resurrection. And yet Paul will also say that unless there is no resurrection, our faith is in vain. We become fools for Christ's sake.

The evidence—such as is—falls into four categories. There is a need to explain the empty tomb; there are the 'appearances' to the women, disciples and those referred to by Paul. There is a need to explain the transformation of the disciples: they had been fearful, huddled away after having fled from the scene of the crucifixion. They become confident, outspoken, and willing to challenge others with the claim that Jesus has been raised. And, finally, for all its faults and flaws, we need to understand the emergence of the church. If the narratives had ended at the tomb, there would have been no need for such a body. It would never have arisen.

The importance of the resurrection is critical then. It means that Jesus has been raised to life – stands up again – in first century Palestine. Our understanding of the resurrection must nevertheless also leave room for the 'ascension'. That is, the return of Christ into the nearer presence of God. Without the ascension the risen Christ ends up locked in Galilee so long ago. It is the ascension which makes him available across time and place.

Now if you were to use just your memory and relate the journey to the cross, you would be able to do so with just a few uncertainties. That is because the first 3 gospels tell a somewhat (though not identical) story. If you were to do the same with the resurrection, you would be all over the place. The resurrection narratives in the gospels are very different from one another. They cannot easily be woven together. It begs the question: what resurrection story/episode would you choose if you were to preach on this theme on Easter Day? Why that one? That is the key to your personal understanding of the Christian faith.

The way in which Matthew describes the day of resurrection is not expansive: there is no account of Mary meeting in the garden; there is no foot race between Peter and the other disciple to the tomb. There is no road to Emmaus story, nor 'doubting' Thomas and there is no fish breakfast down by the lake. Nor is there the exchange between Peter and Jesus about whether Peter loves Jesus and how he is told to 'feed my sheep'.

What Matthew provides can be described as a highly strategic reading for his community that is still seeking to come to terms with them having parted ways with the synagogue. They are mainly Jewish Christians, perhaps with a handful of Gentiles. How are they to understand these Easter events in the light of the cross seemingly fulfil a Hebrew scripture that would regard anyone hanging from tree as being accursed—and thus beyond God's blessing? How do we maintain their belief in the resurrection faced with the rumour circulated among 'the Jews' that the disciples have stolen his body during the night.

The women come to the tomb on the first day of the week: it is after the sabbath; it is the first day of the week. It is dawning. The reader is reminded of how this gospel began with an echo of the opening lines of Genesis: 'the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ'. The witness of the women will transform an understanding of the sabbath so that it becomes, for Christians, a Sunday and is associated with resurrection and the dawn of a new covenant.

Most paintings show 3 women at the tomb: Matthew has only two – Mary Magdalene and 'the other Mary'. Why they have made their way to the tomb is not made clear, other than to 'see'. They have no spices. Seeing is for them—and, for the church—key: they watched from a distance Jesus die on the cross; they saw where he was buried and now they will see the empty tomb. They are primary witnesses.

In Matthew's version alone there is an earthquake and strange events at the time of Jesus' death. No other gospel refers to how the stone is rolled away from the mouth of

the tomb. Only Matthew. There is then a remarkable irony: The soldiers had been stationed to prevent the body of a dead man being stolen: they now become like 'dead men' as the one who was dead now lives. Would this become something of a 'joke' in this community in due course?

This rolling away of the stone is the work of 'an angel of the Lord'. The word angel refers to a 'messenger': angels have played a significant role in this gospel, especially with reference to the words of warning to the magi. In other gospels we have two men or more than one angel. His appearance reminds of the dazzling appearance of Jesus on the mount of Transfiguration. The angel speaks directly to the women: 'do not be afraid'. That wording could mean more than just not to be afraid at this unusual sight: it suggests to Matthew community that they need. Not be afraid of those who oppose them because of their belief in the risen Christ.

The witness / testimony of the women is consolidated; they need to understand what they are 'seeing'. The 'angel' provides them with the interpretive 'message'. In this gospel Jesus predicted four times that he would be handed over, crucified and raised on the third day. Now the women are told that they are not to look for him in the tomb: he has been raised. The tomb is empty. And just to emphasize the point, the angel bids them to come into the tomb to 'see' where he had been laid.

The 'function' of the angel is thus to provide an understanding for the woman and enable the next step to happen. There are no disciples on site in Matthew's resurrection narrative. The women are to convey the message given to them that the disciples are to return to Galilee where they will meet Jesus again. Now there is no reference in Matthew to the disciples hiding away in an upper room for fear of the Jews. Nor had there been any previous mention of Jesus meeting them again in Galilee. In Mark the women leave the tomb in fear: in Matthew they do so in a mix of 'fear and great joy'. ON their way back to the disciples these two women become the first to encounter an appearance of the risen Christ. In a rather striking phrase he indicates that he will meet with 'the brothers and sisters in Galilee'. They are not to be afraid. Those words of Jesus most likely resonate throughout the life of this community for whom Matthew is writing: they are a small minority surrounded by 'the Jews' in an occupied nation. There is plenty to be fearful about.

Music:

'Because you live, O Christ'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-TNFdhH26I>

'Jesus Christ is risen today'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=duLZz7c-Uaw>

'Thine be the glory'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CComsf5oav8>

'Up from the grave he arose'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PA9R6e4fBhc>

'I will rise'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VD4joM7INws>

'Surrexit Christus' (Taizé)

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLRLrhq6uKs>

'Easter Song' (Men Unified in Christ)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EbcryQFqWp0>

'Easter medley' (Anthem Lights)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f26P1ftbCco>

Reflection:

Rowan Williams on the resurrection

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9wLxMSppSMk>

NT Wright on the resurrection: fact or fiction?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cz201Od_Xe4

NT Wright Why does the resurrection matter?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgiGB21LWmM>

Yours in Christ,

Clive



Music for Easter:

Good Friday

O sacred head, sore wounded

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

The Gesualdo Six

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3M4uUJibpvw>

King's College Choir

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JwgM8R7akeU>

Chet Valley Churches

Here hangs a man discarded

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EXisOIsQHA>

Ruth and Joy Everingham

Holy Saturday

When will you rise?

Austin Stone Worship

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDXXF8hpJs0>

Canon of Holy Saturday, Ode 9

Lesser Znamenny Chant

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Sbo7BT9iOY>

Easter Day

Christ the Lord is risen today (arr. Rutter)

Kyiv Symphony Orchestra

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G_x-HM7IroA
And Chorus

Jesus Christ is risen today

Hereford Cathedral

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=duLZz7c-Uaw>

Because you live, O Christ

Renae Wolfsberger

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-TNFDhH26I>

Easter Services:

Our Easter services this year will follow a mix of how this part of Jesus' ministry was described in the gospels of Matthew and John. The focus for each day will be in a different place or 'site'. In our Holy Week services last year we focused upon 'characters' in the story rather than places. It can matter where we stand—and when—as to what we see.

The Holy Week services on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday will be on-line at 7:30pm. They will be a time of prayer, song (on video), art and reflection. They will last around 20 minutes each.

The zoom connection is:

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

Monday 3 April Ephraim. John 11:45-57 Sara Weinand
will reflect

Tuesday 4 April Bethany John 12:1-11 Clive Pearson

Wednesday 5 April Gethsemane Matthew 26:36-56 Dean Drayton

Maundy Thursday will be a Tenebrae service in the church, including a recollection of the last supper. It will begin at 7:30pm and **not** be live streamed. The readings will be taken from Matthew and end with Jesus before Caiaphas, the chief priests and the elders—and Peter's denial, hence Matthew 26:57-64. The site is thus Caiaphas' Court.

For **Good Friday** there will be one service at 9am. The Easter site moves from Pilate's headquarters through the streets of Jerusalem to focus on **Golgotha**.

On **Saturday night**, on zoom, we will wait at the **Sealed Tomb** for a short vigil. In many denominations Holy Saturday (as it is called) is a part of a 3 day vigil and is itself a significant time of worshipful reflection.

On **Easter Day** we return to three services and contemplate the **Empty Tomb** as told by Matthew: we renew our baptismal vows.



PEOPLE NEWS

Eulalie Herat

Barbara Fiedler

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

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

9—15 April

Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania

All St. Matthew's Groups Leaders

We are currently updating our 2023 details for all St. Matthew's groups.

Group leaders please send your group information to the church office by 15 April. This includes

- name of group
- description of group
- meeting days, times & place
- position holders and titles
- current members

Many thanks

EASTER WORSHIP SERVICES

at the church

Maundy Thursday — 6 April @ 7.30pm

Good Friday — 7 April @ 9am

Easter Sunday — 9 April
@ 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm

Live streaming at 7.30pm, 9am, 8am, 9.30am services only

APRIL SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

at the church

2 April - 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm
includes Communion

9 April - 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm

16 April - 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm

23 April - 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm

30 April - 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm

Live streaming continues for 8am & 9.30am services only

Blankets for Refugees

We are collecting blankets for Ukrainian refugees, some who have arrived in Australia and some who are in Poland. A lady whose family in Poland is supporting the refugees is organising a shipment of clothes and would like to include blankets. Her group is also supporting refugees who have arrived in Australia.

If you have any spare woolen blankets that you would like to donate please drop them in to the Op Shop. They can be in any condition as they can be washed and mended if needed.

Contact Pamela Leslie 0404 023 588 or Amanda Manson 0407 221 374



Katherine Pedersen Open Garden

Dates for APRIL

Wednesday mornings of 19 & 26 April at 9.30am- 12noon

Saturday afternoons of 1st, 22 & 29 April at 1.30pm-3.30pm

Dates for May

Wednesday mornings of 3, 10 & 31 May at 9.30am- 12noon

Saturday afternoons of 6 & 12 May at 1.30pm-3.30pm

Up to 8 people can visit on any open day.

\$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.

(Children must be constantly supervised by their parents or carers and follow the Instructions for their safety.)

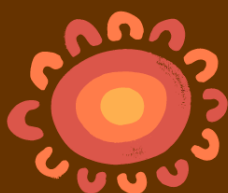
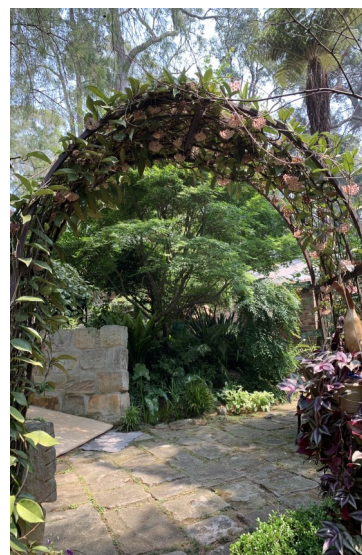
Cash is required for payment and some extra as there are plants for sale

Visitors must be physically able to walk down 100metres including a couple of hills. There is Water, steps, trip hazards, wildlife in the garden .

The garden will be open at various times each month of this year, sometimes on other days of the week.

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.



*Listen to
the Heart*

Common Grace (the interdenominational Christian social justice advocacy organisation I work for) is running a training event on **Saturday, April 29 from 10am to 12:30pm at Northside Baptist Church in Crows Nest**, around the Voice to Parliament.

The training will be conducted by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Christian leaders. Common Grace is advocating for a Yes vote in the anticipated referendum and for implementing the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full.

The event is free and registrations are through https://www.listentotheheart.org.au/sydney_training_event.

Abbey Sim

Report on Congregation Meeting of 19th March 2023

Welcome

Barbara Gibb opened the meeting and explained the purpose of the meeting was to inform the Congregation about progress in obtaining both a new minister and a supply minister and to explain the next steps as Rev Dr Clive Pearson's time with us draws to a close.

Thank you Clive

Barb welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave some details of Clive's ministry to us all since his arrival and acknowledged that this ministry will close at the end of April, this year. Barb thanked Clive and Mary for their ministry and the knowledge shared in their time with us. Luke and Matthew now have a new life with us all plus a bit of Mark and John thrown in for good measure. Barb also thanked Clive for the wonderful support and encouragement for all those in our Church family who have received care, visits and conversations. Barb then wished Clive and Mary safe travels in the period ahead.

JNC

Karen Vandenberg then explained the progress of the Joint Nominating Committee (JNC). Karen is the spokesperson for the JNC Team for our Church and she gave details of the progress or lack of progress and the reasons behind it. Lack of ministerial candidates is the main reason. Karen asked for prayers going forward for the work of the JNC.

Preaching Roster

Barbara Gibb then mentioned the plan for a six-month preaching roster with visiting lay preachers and ministers, without putting extra stress on our Lay Preachers.

Worship Committee

We are planning to start a Worship Committee to provide consistency to our worship services during this time without a Minister. Normal rosters will continue as the worship committee will have extra responsibilities. Ideally this Committee should have one to two representatives from each worship congregation. Please contact Barbara Gibb for more details or if you are interested in being apart of this committee. We are currently looking for representatives from the 8.00am service and 6.45pm service.

Worship Volunteers

There will be an increased need for volunteers (particularly the 8am and 9:30am) in the following areas:-

Worship Committee	Prayers for the people
Preaching	Morning tea
Liturgy	Leading Singing
Welcoming / Door Stewards	Multimedia operation

Fundraising

David Neideck then spoke about Fundraising which is always important. There has been a great response to the 40/40 campaign started last year and the Church is grateful for some large donations, which have been applied to reduce the principal of the roof loan. Additional initiatives include an Open Garden by Katherine Pedersen at her beautiful garden, Trivia night (enjoyed by all). Please send any ideas to the Secretary, Terry Oliver at terry.oliver@bigpond.com.

Acknowledgement of a bequest – Terry Oliver acknowledged that St Matthew's has been the beneficiary of a bequest of \$20,863 from the Estate of the late Elaine Dunning. This bequest has made a significant contribution to the Church by reducing the term of the Roof Loan by up to seven years. The letter of thanks has been sent to the Dunning family.

Barbara Gibb closed the meeting with prayer for future.

Please continue to pray for –

JNC

Organisation of the Preaching Roster

Worship Committee

Volunteers for each Worship service

Following the meeting a light lunch was enjoyed by all who stayed.

Attendance – Sixty-one with seven apologies.

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

16 April

**Theme:
Easter 2**

**'Competing
truths'**

Sunday

16 April:

8am

9.30am

6.45pm

Bible Readings:

Acts 2: 22-36

Matthew 28:11-15



There is no description in Matthew of the encounter that took place between the two Marys and the disciples. It is simply glossed over. Instead Matthew turns his attention to a rumour that 'is still told among the Judeans to this day'—meaning the time he is writing his gospel. This is a mainly Christian community needing to understand how Christ is a fulfilment of scripture as well as determining where the boundary line with the ongoing worship at the synagogue lies. There is a parting of the ways. This point of tension can be seen in the two readings that have been brought together. Neither were set down in the lectionary. The two of them placed alongside each other, nevertheless, help illustrate the difference.

The Matthew passage is peculiar to this gospel. It is not told in any of the others. It follows on from the secret meeting that the Jewish leaders had had with Pilate: they had expressed their fear that the disciples would steal the body and say that Jesus had been raised. They had requested that a guard be placed at the tomb.

The guards now take their leave of the tomb. Their departure marks the beginning of this parting of the ways; The women had left to tell the disciples that the risen Jesus would meet with them in Galilee.

The guards make their way to the priests (and not Pilate); they assemble the elders. How might they hear the guards' news? The Pharisees believed in the resurrection; the Sadducees / the priests did not. The way in which the story unfolds it shows that they are still fearful of the response of Pilate and the Romans. Their position is this compromised. And so alternative accounts constructed: the body was stolen by the disciples.

The guards are to say that they were 'asleep'. Being asleep is both a need in Matthew's gospel but is also a metaphor for not being awake and being able to notice the coming of Christ / the kingdom. They are paid for their deceit—the comparison can be made with Judas who was paid for his betrayal.

Peter's confession takes place after the day of Pentecost in the book of Acts. It is the first time that the Christian faith presents itself in the form of an address to 'fellow Jews and all who live in Jerusalem'. Peter openly declares that 'God has God raised him up, having released him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power'. Furthermore, those whom the crowd think were 'drunk' are actually 'witnesses' to his having been raised up.



Meditation Talks Series beginning on the first Tuesday in April

Tuesdays at 9.30am—11am at the church

All are welcome

**"The Art of Waiting"
By Laurence Freeman OSB**



These talks invite us to understand patience as an essential condition for spiritual growth. The ability to be fully present to the moment that we are in, without the need for answers or control, is the poverty of spirit that allows God's power to manifest in our lives. In a culture accustomed to speed and instant outcomes, this insight presents a challenge. Laurence Freeman says we need to relearn the art of waiting through the practice of meditation. The twice-daily discipline of reciting the mantra without expectations teaches us gradually to just be in the present moment, giving God the space to do his transforming work in us.

- Week 1—Conditions for Breakthrough
- Week 2—The Art of Waiting
- Week 3—God is waiting for us
- Week 4—Conversion
- Week 5—Fruits of the Spirit & Divinisation
- Week 6 —Unified Consciousness
- Week 7 —State of Assurance
- Week 8—The last stage of saying the Mantra
- Week 9—Beatitudes; The new way of Being

Enq: Katherine Pedersen 0437 772 011, Rosemary Sexton