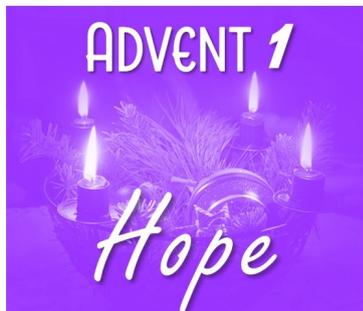




Bible Readings
Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19
1 Corinthians 1: 3-9



Response after Bible Readings
Leader: Hear the word of the Lord
Response: Thanks be to God



8am—Worship
 Includes Communion
 Led by Jon Humphries

9.30am—Worship
 Includes Communion
 Led by Shamali Perera
 and Jon Humphries

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

6.45pm—Worship
 Includes Communion
 Led by Nicola Lawless
 and Jon Humphries

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**

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 4 DECEMBER
9am—Sorting & Pricing
for Op Shop lower hall

TUESDAY 5 DECEMBER
9am-2pm—Op Shop
9.30am—Christian Meditation
 in the church
7.30pm—Thrive Studie
 lower hall
7.30pm—Advent Bible Study
 in the church

WEDNESDAY 6 DECEMBER
9am-2pm—Op Shop
10am-12pm—In Stitches
 Offsite
7.30pm—Advent Studies
 in the church
4-6pm—Preschool Concerts
bottom playground
7.30pm—Elders meeting
 in the church

THURSDAY 7 DECEMBER
9am-2pm—Op Shop

FRIDAY 8 DECEMBER
4-6pm—Preschool Concerts
bottom playground
5pm-7pm—Fusion Christmas
Pool Party offsite

SATURDAY 9 DECEMBER
No Scheduled Activities

**SUNDAY
 10 DECEMBER**

8am—Worship
9am—Worship at the Willows
9.30am—Worship
KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8
6.45pm—Worship
 includes Community Meal



MINISTER
 REV JON HUMPHRIES

**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

PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR 9639 8570
 SONALI WANIGESEKERA
 PO Box 321 BAULKHAM HILLS 2153
EMAIL: director@stmatthewsps.net.au

Thank you to all who have
 contributed to this publication.

Something to think about

3 December
1st Sunday of Advent
HOPE

Lectionary Readings:

Isaiah 64:1-9
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Mark 13:24-37

Having Hope

This week I learnt hope anew. I was reminded about hope in a real and powerful way. I started the week with a sense of hopelessness. That sounds over dramatic and is if you think that I'd given up on life or something like that. It was about how I started to prepare a sermon but didn't feel any sense of inspiration and had no good ideas. I just didn't know what I was going to do or how I was going to develop a decent sermon, especially in the wake of most of the last weeks coming easily with a strong sense of inspiration and creativity. Yet, in some ways, even though I didn't feel hopeful, I was.

I sat at my computer and started to research hope. This is an act of hope in itself. I was not giving up. I didn't just sit there paralysed by procrastination or hopelessness but went looking for inspiration. I found it and I found hope at the same time.

I started by typing in, "What is hope?" into the YouTube search bar. I skimmed down through what popped up, and for some reason an American preacher caught my attention. I listened and watched his talk. He talked about Romans 15. I didn't really agree with what he was saying or his message, but the passage was helpful. I read through it and tried to make sense of it. It clearly talked about hope, but not in the way I felt that I needed to talk about in an Advent sermon.

It says, "May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 15:5-6 NRSV) ...And then the bit that the preacher was quoting. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13 NRSV)

I still didn't know what I was going to do, but I put the passage in a PowerPoint presentation. I then went and watched the Bible Project video for this week's Advent study. The Bible Project is always helpful because of the simple and clear way that they present understanding the Bible, yet not in a simplistic way. However, I'm using it in the study, and we can't play videos in services because of streaming and copyright issues.

So, I couldn't use it in my sermon. I did, though, copy from the video talking about looking back at what God has done in the past to help us look forward to what God might do in the future. Again, this wasn't really what I felt needed to be said in the sermon, but I put it into the PowerPoint.

I then watched a video about people talking about what hope was for them. They had some great things to say, and I started screen-shotting some of their quotes and put that into the presentation. However, this somehow reminded me of a thing that I've done in the past where I ripped off Andrew Denton's show 'Enough Rope' but changed it to be 'Enough Hope' and had interviewed someone as part of a sermon about what they thought about hope and how they had experienced it in their life. I added the intro video that I made into the presentation and will do the same thing as the 'hook' for this week's sermon. It was then the end of the day and I shut my laptop and went home.

That night, I woke at about 3am needing to go to the toilet, but also with a head full of ideas which I needed to get out of my head so that I could go back to sleep. I stayed up and put all that down into an email to myself. In fact, I wrote most of this newsletter entry in those early hours of Tuesday morning. It had all come together. I had a sermon that I felt inspired to share and which I was happy with. My hope that something would come to me, even if I felt worried that it wouldn't.

I found hope, by having hope. I didn't give in to hopelessness. The important thing that I learnt anew as I reflected on all this, was that our hope is God. This isn't some trite Christian saying to become like a mindless mantra for us. It takes real and gritty faith. We have to face the hopelessness of our situation and then trust God. We just need enough hope, to trust. It isn't about what God will or won't do. It isn't about knowing about God and believing in what God has done in the past so that we can hope that God will do something for us in the future.

Whilst what God has done and what God will do is something true and good to believe in, that in itself realistically isn't enough to give us hope, at least when things are hopeless. For me, I learnt again that the important thing is just knowing God, and that this knowing leads us in hope. God is present with us and holds us in whatever is happening and in whatever we are going through. We may not find our situation being made miraculously better. However, miraculously we can find hope find peace and joy, even in the most hopeless of circumstances. It is then, as God holds us and we have hope, that we can hold it for others.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of God as Holy Spirit."

There is much to hopefully think about.

God bless.

Jon



PEOPLE NEWS

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

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

3 – 9 December

Myanmar, Thailand



Help Required to teach SRE at Jasper Road on Tuesday Mornings in 2024

Speak to Daniel Gibb for more details

Weekly SYNOD SPOTLIGHT

Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

For Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter for 24 November 2023 please see link :

[New Insights \(uca.org.au\)](http://uca.org.au)

DECEMBER SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES at the church

3 December - 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm
includes Communion

10 December - 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm
Community Meal

17 December - 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm

24 December - 9am (combined)

31 December - 9am (Summer)

Live streaming morning services only

st. matthew's Advent Studies



We'd love you to come and be involved as we not only learn more about Advent, but also learn more about each other and encourage each other in faith and discipleship. **Come for one or come for all.**

Week 1

Wed 29 Nov
@ 10am

Thur 30 Nov
@ 7.30pm

Week 2

Tue 6 Dec
@ 10am

Tue 5 Dec
@ 7.30pm

Week 3

Thur 14 Dec
@ 10am

Thur 14 Dec
@ 7.30pm

Week 4

Thur 21 Dec
@ 10am

Thur 21 Dec
@ 7.30pm

The downstairs foyer and hall are getting a makeover.

New floors, a bit of paint and the removal of the compactus storage unit from the kitchens. The new floor will be laid on 16 January so the old floors need to be removed before this can be done.

Monday 8 January will be the start of the demolition and then we move onto to the painting.

If you are free anytime during this week to help, please contact David Porter.

This will give St. Matthew's downstairs foyer a welcoming and update look and feel.

Thank you in advance of your support and help.

Barbara Gibb

First Sunday of Advent



Hope for families forced to flee

Jehan*, a brave mother of five, made the courageous decision to escape on foot to Pakistan with her family when Afghanistan fell to the Taliban in 2021. Your gifts through the Christmas Bowl can help Act for Peace coordinate rapid emergency responses with local partners, like Church World Services Asia, so that they can immediately act, giving families like Jehan's safety in exile – and hope for the future – when they need it most. **Please give today.**



*Name changed for safety reasons



CALL: 1800 025 101 VISIT: christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au



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 so refugees
are not forgotten this Christmas

Please give today. 1800 025 101
www.christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au

Please
give
today

The Christmas Bowl is the Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the International Humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. ABN 86 619 970 188



Extra ways to give to Christmas Bowl 2023.

A St. Matthew's page Just for us at

[Mycb.link/45881](https://mycb.link/45881)

Check it out!

Envelopes will be available as usual at each service.

Enjoy Gardening?

The Property Committee are asking for help with the watering, weeding, pruning and general care of the whole perimeter of the church and preschool property. Please reply to the Garden Maintenance team on the committee.

George Haines 0478 693 245
Katherine Pedersen 0437 772 011

All ages can apply and no need to be a member of St. Matthew's, neighbours etc please apply to talk with us about the possibility of joining the team.

COMMUNITY CONTACT LIST 2023

The community directory is now available - those that have entered their family details are welcome to have a copy by email (please request from the church office by email) OR get a printed copy by calling into the office. The information will not be published on any website or sent out in bulk.

Need to update, fix an error or add your family? Version 1.2 is now open – please click [HERE](#) .

Thanks

David N

The Church Council and Elders are working with Jon to gather some feedback about how we can continue to grow ways nurture people in faith and discipleship. There is a survey that we are asking you to complete. It also asks for feedback about some of the new things that Jon has introduced in recent times.

You can scan the QR code below or use the link below.



<https://forms.office.com/r/EV8b6YqQmY>

ROSTERS

Worship Rosters for 8am and 9.30am, Christmas and Summer services. for December 2023, January and February 2024 have been emailed.

If you do not have email or would like an A3 copy please collect a copy from the table in the church foyer.

If you are able to help with any on the gaps please contact the church office.

Thank you to everyone who has helped on the last 3 month roster and to those who have been able to help on this roster.



Coffee and Discovery

Speaker & Musician

DAVID SHORT

Thursday

7th December

10am—12noon

The final Coffee and Discovery for 2023 will be a mix of music, including some well-known Christmas songs (not carols), and information about the work of the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Dubbo. David is a member of the Dubbo Support Group that raises money for



specific projects for the RFDS from the Dubbo Base. There will be an opportunity to make a donation for this work at the end of the concert and presentation.

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

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

**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 or find in recent posts.**