



**Christmas Services
@ St. Matthew's**

**Remembrance and Thanksgiving Service
Monday 11 December 7.30pm**

A service specifically designed for all those who experience a sense of loss at Christmas, especially those for who, this is the first Christmas without a loved one.

**Carol Services
Sunday 17 December 8am, 9.30am and 6.45pm**

Join our voices together to sing many traditional and contemporary carols.

**Christmas Eve Services Sunday 24 December
Morning Service 9am
Family Service 5pm**

A chance for young children to be part of the Christmas story. A great family time!

Late Service 11.15pm

An excellent way to celebrate Christmas in a relaxed family atmosphere with music, a relevant message and candles representing Christ's light in our world.

**Christmas Day Service
Monday 25 December 9am**

Celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ with a Christmas message and carols.





Advent is often described as the season of waiting. We wait expectantly for the remembrance of Christmas and the celebration of Christ, Immanuel – God with us. We wait in the sense of making space for God in our lives. This is the first season of the Church liturgical year, so it is important to start as we intend to continue and finish. We also wait for the coming of Christ anew into our lives, both as a community and as individuals, but there is also the eschatological sense (which is a big word for the end of all things and God bringing to completion God's work) where we are waiting for the return of the Christ. Finally, there is the sense of hopeful waiting. In a world with so many issues which result in hardship and suffering for so many, we are hopefully waiting for these to be resolved.

Here is a nice piece about Advent and waiting from Ignatian spirituality. I found it helpful and based some to the information above on what I read there. <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/three-characteristics-of-advent-waiting/#:~:text=Advent%20waiting%20is%20hopeful.&text=God%20has%20already%20given%20us.us%20to%20give%20us%20hope.>

However, Advent isn't really about waiting.

Advent comes from the Latin word 'adventus' which apparently means coming or arrival. So, yes there is the sense that we are waiting for the coming of Christ, both in the Nativity narrative and in the sense of the return of Christ. Yet, advent in English also refers to the fact of an event happening, an invention being made, or a person arriving. God has come in the person of Jesus. That has happened. We are not waiting for that, and we shouldn't be waiting to celebrate it. There can be a lot of anticipatory waiting ahead of Christmas, but that isn't the point of waiting. The liturgical seasons give us work to do. After all, the word liturgy comes from the Greek word λειτουργία (leitourgia) which literally has as its roots the meaning of the work of the people. Advent gives us the not only the work of preparation for the celebration of the coming of God as the Messiah, but the work of being ready by doing what we know is right and good as we follow in the way of the Christ.

Over the last month or so, we have had in the Revised Common Lectionary a whole series of Gospel readings about being ready. Advent, being the first season of the liturgical year is about remembering that God, in the person of Christ, is already present and at work. The Kingdom of God isn't coming in the sense of it is yet to come, but is here and present now and is coming more and more into being as we join with God in God's work of bringing it further and deeper into reality.

So, Advent gives us work to do. The traditions of Advent scaffold us in that work with the key ideas of hope, peace, joy and love. These are not just nice words or nice concepts. Whilst we would like to see more of all of what they hold in the world, the reality is that God is at work, as God has consistently always been at work, to make them a greater reality and to keep undoing the mess we as humans keep making of the world. Yes, we are getting ready to celebrate anew the Advent of Jesus' birth, but it is not just about his birth, but what that signified and what it means for us as we start a new Church year. Advent is about the fact that hope, peace, joy and love are already a part of our existence, but we need to take up the work of bringing them further into our relationship and make them more consistently a part of human being.

So, what are we waiting for? We really should get on and get back to work. The whole reason for the seasons of the liturgical year to keep repeating and cycling through again and again is to keep reminding us about what we should be doing. There is much work to be done. There so much need for hope, and the best way to bring hope is to get down and dirty in caring for others. There is so much need for peace, especially with the prevalence of anxiety, stress and worry and our need to always be busy, but busy in ways which don't seem to result in much satisfaction or wellbeing. There is always a need for joy, for joy makes all things more bearable. It lightens the soul and makes good our living because it is usually rooted in appreciation, gratitude and thanksgiving. Finally, there is love, and the greatest of these is love. God is love and we who live in love live in God and God lives in us. We are called, dare I say commanded, to love, for that is how we honour God and express true worship and there is no greater way to show our love for God than loving our neighbour as ourselves.

Advent gives us a whole lot of work to do. It is good work which is good for the soul. What are we waiting for?
Let's keep meeting together and encourage each other to love and good work.



Blessings.

Jon

You are invited to a Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving Monday 11th December @ 7.30pm

A service specifically designed for all those who experience a sense of loss at Christmas, especially those for whom this is the first Christmas without a loved one. During the service we intend to read out the names of people we have known and loved but see no longer, and whose absence is particularly felt at Christmas. People will be invited to light a candle in memory of their loved one after the names are read out. Please contact us with any name (s) you would like included. The names may be phoned or emailed through to the church prior to 11th December.

We also invite you to bring a card, item or memento to place on the Tree of Remembrance.



This tree has been supplied by the Baulkham Hills Council and after the service the tree will be planted, together with the messages etc., somewhere in the community. Please contact us if you would like further information, and know that we are thinking of you at this time of year.

st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together



St. Matthew's Baulkham Hills Uniting Church
Cnr Edgar and Charles Streets
and St Matthews Ln
Baulkham Hills NSW 2153

PO Box 773, Baulkham Hills 1755
Phone 9686 3003
office@stmatthewsuniting.net.au
Website www.stmatthewsuniting.net.au



- Rice
- Dry Pasta
- Noodles packets
- Noodle cups
- Pull Ring Tinned soup
- Pull Ring Tinned fish
- Pull Ring Tinned baked beans
- Pull Ring Tinned spaghetti
- Powdered soup
- Muesli bars
- Cereal
- Long life milk
- Tea/coffee
- Up and Go

Please donate to the St. Matthew's collection for the Bill Crews Foundation Christmas Food Appeal .

Please leave items in the containers in the lower foyer.
BY 13th December. Entrance on Edgar St .



Pastoral Care

Hi everyone,

There have been eleven funerals this year for people who have connected with the St. Matthews' Community. No doubt there have been other deaths experienced in the families and circles of friends known to you. It was indeed timely that Mary Pearson included a bereavement segment in our June Workshop on Pastoral Caring. In part 2 of the sharing of material from the Workshop there are some thoughts about helping people who are mourning the loss of a loved one. We don't often talk about death and dying and so we have difficulty knowing what to say when friends or family are bereaved. I hope you find the words of some value to you.

Mike Strong - Seniors Pastoral Carer.



Helping the Bereaved

Give:

A good ear
Time to really listen
A hug when appropriate
Continuing contact

What can help bereaved persons:

Contact the person as soon as you hear of the death. Tell them you are sorry to hear of their loss, or send a card or flowers.
Maintain contact personally or by phone, notes, cards. Visits need not be long.
LISTEN. Possibly the most important thing you can do.
Accept their behavior i.e. crying, screaming, being quiet, laughing. Allow expressions of anger, guilt and blame.
Offer practical help, such as a cooked meal, taking care of the children, cutting the grass etc.
Really try to understand the person. Every person is different.
Indicate that grief takes time.
Include children in the grieving process. Be sensitive about dates that might be upsetting or significant for the bereaved person.

What may not be helpful:

Avoiding talking about the person who has died unless the bereaved persons does so.
Inhibiting them by offering advice.
Stopping contact if the going gets too heavy.
Lectures or reasoning.
Expecting or judging how it should be.
Using cliches.
False reassurances.
Saying "I know how you feel."
Trying to do everything for them.
Comparing one loss to another.
Describing the theory of grief.
Taking the focus away from what they are saying.
Equating a loss you have experienced to theirs.
Giving details of your grief, unless the person finds this relevant to their situation.

OP Shop News 2023

Dear friends,

It has been an exciting year for the St. Matthew's Op Shop. We have welcomed a few new members of staff, and we continue to recruit more where possible. The Lord has shown His generosity through a great many community donations which have sustained us with our 'garage sales' every month and treasures for the Op Shop. We have continued to support the Ukraine refugee community with donations of clothes and bedding. We also support the foster parents of the 'seeing-eye' puppies as they grow the dogs for the first year of their lives. We are extremely fortunate to have a strong, cohesive team of volunteers who keep the door open every week. I am personally very grateful for the dedication and hard work of everyone of the team.



We not only have the teams that arrive each day of trading, we also have those who work behind the scenes with sorting and pricing on a Monday, assessing treasures for auction, and cultivating plants for sale. There are people who help with financial spreadsheets, banking, and selling goods on-line to raise extra money. We rely on one particular gentleman to maintain our aging clothes racks and do a myriad of jobs around the shop and dungeon to improve safety and conditions.

Many of the volunteers take work home, sorting and pricing jewellery, washing garments, and making watches work.

Many of these folk are not part of the St. Matthew's congregation, but happily contribute time and energy into helping us.



We are also fortunate to have very loyal customers. I would estimate that half of our customers have become friends that we look forward to seeing each week.

On another positive note, David Porter has recently acquired a portable ramp for the Op Shop. This will assist those with mobility problems coming into the Op Shop from the Church foyer.

Our last day of trading for 2023 will be 14th December, and we open again on 30th January 2024.

On behalf of the entire team, we wish everyone a very joyful, safe Christmas, and a very Happy New Year.

With love.

Pamela



St. Matthew's O P - S H O P
9am—2pm
 Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday
 & First Saturday of the month
9am—12pm

Please note that St. Matthew's
**Op Shop closes over the
 Christmas and New year period.**

The **last shopping day** for 2023
 is **Thursday 14 December.**

Re-opens Tuesday **30 January 2024**
 at 9am to 2pm.

**Please hold on to
 your donations
 until we re-open.**



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

Speak to Daniel Gibb for more details



**Saturday
 2nd December
 9am-12pm**

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

St. Matthew's Lower Hall

St. Matthew's
 BELMONT PUBLIC UNITING CHURCH
 growing together



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

St. Matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together

Christmas Bowl envelopes are available as you enter and leave the services from Sunday 3rd December.

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).

Christmas Bowl
Coordinator:
Dean Drayton

THE CHRISTMAS BOWL SINCE 1949

Christmas Bowl

“Love your neighbour as yourself.”
Mark 12:31

Share God's love through the Christmas Bowl.
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. www.actforpeace.org.au



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

Christmas Bowl

ACT FOR PEACE

The Christmas Bowl is the Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. www.actforpeace.org.au

National Council of Churches in Australia

Share God's love through the Christmas Bowl



Thank you for joining with churches across Australia as we share God's love through the Christmas Bowl.

Since 1949, the Christmas Bowl has brought together committed Australian Christians with dedicated local partners around the world to give hope to people uprooted by conflict and disaster. By sharing this tradition, you are helping build a world where all people have a safe place to belong. **Thank you.**

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

News From the Finance Committee

Report on Roof Fundraising

We are most grateful to the congregations of St Matthews Baulkham Hills for their generous donations to pay down the loans for the replacement of the church roof.

The donations for the roof are:

Trivia Night:	\$2,124	
From Pushpay (to last report Sept 23)	\$20,662	
From Direct Debit:		\$1,440
From cash or cheque:		<u>\$8,410</u>
Total	\$32,636	

Loan from a parishioner for the offset account: \$100,000

'Raise the Roof' Fundraising

Donations for the roof repayments are being accepted through PushPay, by direct debit to the church bank account and by envelope via the offertory during services. Please make sure to label your roof donations with 'roof' so that we know that money is to be set aside for this special purpose.

Details of the Three Ways of Giving

There are several ways that we can forward our offering at St Matthews. We can use:

Direct debit – the details are:

Account name: UFS Direct Debit Account St Matthews UC

BSB 634-634 Account number 100025924

Reference: 'Offering' with congregation time of either '8am', '9 30' or '6 45'

Pushpay – giving via credit card. To set up text 'SMBH' to phone number 0488 202 202

Offering envelopes – for cash or cheque

Best wishes

Dom Schuster and Alastair Burn

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.

SATURDAY 6 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



Calendar of Events for December 2023

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

					1	2	3
					No scheduled events	9am-12pm Op Shop 9am-12pm Garage Sale lower hall 	ADVENT 1 8am—Worship includes Communion 9.30am—Worship includes Communion KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 6.45pm—Worship includes Communion
4 9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop lower hall	5 9am-2pm Op Shop 9.30–11am Christian Meditation in the Church 7.30pm Thrive Bible Study lower hall	6 9am-2pm Op Shop 10am-12pm In Stitches Offsite 4pm-6pm Preschool Concerts in the playgrounds 7.30pm—Elders Meeting at the church	7 9am-2pm Op Shop 10am-12pm Coffee & Discovery upstairs hall and church	8 4pm-6pm Preschool Concerts in the playgrounds 5pm-7pm Fusion Youth Group “Pool Party” offsite			10 ADVENT 2 8am—Worship 9am—Worship @ the Willow's 9.30am—Worship KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 6.45pm—Worship
11 9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop lower hall 7.30pm Remembrance and Thanksgiving Service	12 9am-2pm Op Shop 9.30–11am Christian Meditation in the Church	13 9am-2pm Op Shop 10am-12noon Women's Fellowship in the upstairs hall & church	14 9am-2pm Op Shop FINAL DAY FOR 2023	15 No scheduled events	16 No scheduled events	17 ADVENT 3 8am—Worship Carols Service 9.30am—Worship Carols Service KUCA in Recess 5pm—Shine 6.45pm—Worship Carols Service	
18 Pest Spraying Whole church & Preschool 9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop lower hall	19 9.30–11am Christian Meditation in the Church 7.30pm Thrive Bible Study OFFSITE	20 10am-12pm In Stitches Upstairs hall 10am-12noon Men's Morning Tea McKels Café Bella Vista	21 No scheduled events	22 No scheduled events	23 No scheduled events	24 ADVENT 4 9am Summer Worship KUCA in recess 5pm Children Service 11.15pm Christmas Eve Service	
25 CHRISTMAS DAY 9am Service	26 PUBLIC HOLIDAY BOXING DAY	27 Church Office Closed No scheduled events	28 Church Office Closed No scheduled events	29 Church Office Closed No scheduled events	30 No scheduled events	31 CHRISTMAS 1 9am Summer Worship KUCA in recess 6.45pm—Worship	

Calendar of Events for January 2024

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>Church Office Closed</p> <p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>Church Office Closed</p> <p>9.30–11am Christian Meditation  in the Church or Community Room</p>	<p>Church Office Closed</p> <p>10am-12pm In Stitches  upstairs hall</p>	<p>Church Office Closed</p> <p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>Church Office Closed</p> <p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>Domolisiton Starts Flooring in Lower hall, kitchen & foyer</p> <p></p>	<p> Baptism of Jesus</p> <p>9am Summer KUCA in recess</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship</p>
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
<p>9am Church office reopens</p>	<p>9.30–11am Christian Meditation  in the Church or Community Room</p>	<p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>No scheduled events</p>	<p> Epiphany 2</p> <p>9am—Summer Worship includes Communion KUCA in recess</p> <p>9am—Worship @ the Willow's</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship includes Communion</p>
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
<p></p>	<p>9.30–11am Christian Meditation  in the Church or Community Room</p> <p>Laying new Flooring in Lower hall, kitchen & foyer</p>	<p>10am-12pm In Stitches  upstairs hall</p>	<p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>No scheduled events</p>	<p> Epiphany 3</p> <p>9am Summer Worship KUCA in recess</p> <p>5pm—Shine</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship</p>
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
<p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop lower hall</p> <p></p>	<p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop lower hall</p> <p></p> <p>9.30–11am Christian Meditation  in the Church or Community Room</p>	<p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop lower hall</p> <p></p>	<p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>Australia Day Public Holiday</p> <p></p>	<p>No scheduled events</p>	<p> Epiphany 4</p> <p>9am Summer Worship KUCA in recess</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship</p>
29	30	31	<p>st. matthew's UNITING CHURCH BAULKHAM HILLS growing together </p>			
<p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop lower hall</p> <p></p> <p>9.30am-12pm KYB upstairs hall & church</p> <p>7pm-9.30pm KYB upstairs hall & church</p>	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop RETURNS</p> <p>9.30–11am Christian Meditation  in the Church or Community Room</p>	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>10am-12pm In Stitches  upstairs hall</p>				

**MONTHLY ACTIVITIES and
REGULAR GROUPS**



Wednesday 13th December @ 10am
Christmas Theme: Please bring a small gift for the women in the Philippines and a plate of food to share. Please Note: NO MEETING IN JANUARY
 Enquires: Dulcie Duncum & Margaret Gray



3rd Wednesday of the month 10am to 12noon
 Mckel's Café, Shop 14, Circa Boulevard Bella Vista
 Every third Wednesday of the month Enquiries Alan Wright



1st, 3rd & 5th Wednesdays of the month in the upstairs church hall. **10.00am to 12.00pm**
 Bring your craft along to do. Share fun and fellowship with other crafty ladies. Morning Tea supplied. Enquiries: Jane Cole



Care and Prayer

All Welcome
 11.30am on the **first TUESDAY** of each month at St. Matthew's February to November

Next Date:
6th February 2024

CHRISTIAN MEDITATION



Tuesdays at the Church 9.30am-10.30am
 All welcome

For more information or to express your interest in attending please contact

Katherine Pedersen. Facilitator of the Tuesday 9.30am sessions and for information. kathped56@gmail.com



OP SHOP Closing for 6 Weeks
 Open Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 9am-2pm and 1st Saturday of the month 9-12pm
 Pre-loved clothes & accessories, Books, Haberdashery, Bric-a-brac.

LAST DAY
Thursday 14th December

REOPENS
 Tuesday 30th January



Saturday 6th December 9am-12pm

Pre-loved Household Items, Christmas Items, Electrical, Toys & Books
 (Fiction, Non-fiction & Childrens Books)

St. Matthew's lower hall Edgar St



SHINE is a special needs social group for all ages from high school up. Meets Sundays Monthly for dinner & fun.

Still collecting in 2023 on 2024 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.

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 Community. To assist with this, we have set up the following account with Uniting Financial Services:
 Account Name: Baulkham Hills Uniting Church
 – Giving Direct
 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 **FEBRUARY In Focus** St. Matthew's Monthly Newsletter please send details to Robyn and Lynn in the Church Office by **15 JANUARY**
 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

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.....

For young adults
 Fortnightly on Tuesdays
 Contact Daniel Gibb
daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au



Thank you to all who have contributed to this publication.

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](https://www.facebook.com/stmatthewsunitingchurchbaulkhamhills)

PRE-SCHOOL DIRECTOR 9639 8570

SONALI WANIGESEKERA
 PO BOX 321 BAULKHAM HILLS 2153

EMAIL: director@stmatthewsps.net.au