



**Bible Readings**

**9am Service**

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16, Romans 16:25-27

**5pm Christmas Eve Family Service & 11.15pm Christmas Eve Late Service**

Matthew 1: 18-25, Luke 2: 1-20,  
Matthew 2: 1-12, John 3: 16-17

**9am Christmas Day Service**

Luke 2:1-20, John 1:1-5 & 9-14

**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 9AM**



**9am—Combined Worship**

Led by Hugh Darling  
and Jon Humphries

**KUCA** In recess

**5pm—Christmas Eve Family Service**

Led by Daniel Gibb  
and Jon Humphries

**11.15pm—Christmas Eve Late Service**

Led by Alexander Lawless  
and Jon Humphries

**Livestreaming at 9am only**

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

**MONDAY 25 DECEMBER**

**Public Holiday  
CHRISTMAS DAY**

**9am—Worship Service**



**SATURDAY 30 DECEMBER**

**No Scheduled Activities**

**SUNDAY  
31 DECEMBER**

**9am—Summer Service**

**KUCA** in recess

**TUESDAY 26 DECEMBER**

**Public Holiday  
BOXING DAY**

**WEDNESDAY 27 DECEMBER**

**Church Office Closed**

**THURSDAY 28 DECEMBER**

**Church Office Closed**

**29 DECEMBER**

**Church Office Closed**



**MINISTER**

REV JON HUMPHRIES

Email: jon@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

**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

24 December  
4th Sunday of Advent

## Lectionary Readings:

2 Samuel 7:1-11, & 16

Psalms 89:1-4, 19-26

Romans 16:25-27

Luke 1:26-38

John 1:1-14

## LOVE

Love is probably one of the most misunderstood, though widely talked about words which everyone seems to know what it means, but finds it so hard to find, hold and do. After, all for our one English word for love there are about five Biblical Greek words and several Hebrew words. One English word which means a whole range of things just isn't enough sometimes.

Why talk about love, other than it is on the list of words for each of the Sundays in Advent? Well, Christmas is about love. As the writer of John notes in the well-known verse of John 3: 16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him." That is why the Angel proclaims, "Don't be afraid! I have good news for you, a message that will fill everyone with joy. 11 Today your Saviour, Christ the Lord, was born in David's city." (Luke 2: 10-11) So, what does that mean or us. Well, in one of my favourite verses, it states that "God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them." (1 John 4: 16) and so, "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." (1 John 4: 7-8). God in the person of Jesus pretty much says the same thing when he says that the greatest commandment is to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is the same: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'" (Matthew 22:37)

Love, it is as easy and simple as that: God loves us, and we should love God back and the best way to do that is to love other people. Yet, isn't loving others the hardest thing in the world? To me it is if love is about what the Apostle Paul describes it as, which is: Being patient and kind;

Not envying anyone; Not boasting; Not being proud or rude; Not self-seeking; Not being easily angered; Keeping no record of wrongs and not delighting in evil; Rejoicing with the truth; Rejoicing in all things; Always protecting; Always trusting; Always hoping; Always persevering; And never failing in the end. (1 Corinthians 13: 6-8 & 1 Thessalonians 5:16)

Just think of how many times last Christmas that you lost patience, especially with someone, or weren't patient enough to understand something that they done and so consequently were easily angered at them. Just think how many times last Christmas or previous Christmases where you envied what someone else got as a gift or boasted about what you got. Just think about how hard it is, especially at Christmas time, to not be self-seeking, at least in terms of having a great list of things that you want. Just think of all the people who are on your bad present list. Just think of how this Christmas is probably not going to be any different, and we haven't even touched on the biggies of the list about hoping and protecting and never failing etc. Love is a lot.

Love isn't easy. Love is costly, but it is the most powerful and wonderful transformative thing. A lot of Christians think about the sacrifice of God in Jesus as just being about the cross, but the sacrifice started way before that, probably as soon as we humans walked the planet, but certainly for Jesus, who was Immanuel – God with us, that sacrifice started in being born and humbling the divine into a living of human existence. For us, the sacrifice may be large at times, but there are the many daily sacrifices that we should look to if we truly want to be loving and be followers of God who we know in Christ, and who is with us as Spirit.

Perhaps the greatest gift you can give to people this Christmas is love, and not just a symbol of love in the form of a present, but loved lived deeply and strongly in your relationship with them. And, if you want to wrap this gift up nicely, then the Fruit of the Spirit is probably the best way, this fruit being love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control.

Love is something to deeply think about and, more importantly, put into practice in every moment in every relationship. That is a lot to think about, but a great blessing.

May God bless you and all you hold dear, and all your neighbours whom you are called to love, this Christmas.

God bless.

Jon





## PEOPLE NEWS

Daniel Gibb  
Val Whitmore  
Sandra Pentland

Graham Cotterill  
Cecile Layt  
Mary Ross  
Ken Caldwell

Our very best wishes to all the St. Matthew's community who are celebrating their birthdays over the next few weeks.

## Weekly SYNOD SPOTLIGHT

Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

For Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter for 15 & 21 December 2023 please see links:

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

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

## Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

24 – 30 December

*Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan*

31 December – 6 January

*Middle East: Egypt, Israel and Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon*

7 – 13 January

*Iran, Iraq, Syria*

JANUARY 2024  
SUNDAY SUMMER  
WORSHIP SERVICES  
at the church

7th January - 9am  
14th January - 9am & 6.45pm  
includes Communion

21st January - 9am & 6.45pm  
28th January - 9am & 6.45pm

### 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.*

### Christmas and New Year Greetings from Clive and Mary

We wish to extend you all the very best for this Christmas season and the New Year. It was a wonderful privilege to journey with you. Our seasons greetings are captured in a piece of music and a work of art!

The music: Bule Water Highway singing 'Joseph dearest, Joseph mine'.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-M905heJX0>

The painting: Banksy, 'Merry Christmas Gaza'.  
(just google)



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

**The Op Shop is now CLOSED for 2023**  
**Re-opens Tuesday 30 January 2024**

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



## Fourth Sunday of Advent



## Showing Love to the most vulnerable

Sisters Srinidhi\* and Mahira\* are Sri Lankan refugees who have been living in refugee camps in India for decades and aren't able to access medical care outside the camps. OfERR, a refugee-run organisation supported by Act for Peace, has been providing crucial support in the camps for over 40 years. Through the Christmas Bowl you can help send health workers into the camps and provide medical care to those who need it. **Please give today.**

\*Names changed for safety reasons



CALL: 1800 025 101

VISIT: [christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au](http://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](http://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. www.actforpeace.org.au



## 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.

## Christmas Day



## Sharing God's love

Meh Reh fled Myanmar more than 29 years ago. Living in a refugee camp on the Thai-Burma border ever since, he hopes that one day it will be safe for he and his family to return home. Your gifts through the Christmas Bowl can help Act for Peace's local partners, like The Border Consortium on the Thai-Burma border, provide practical care so refugees and people who have been displaced can live in safety and dignity and know that they are loved and not forgotten. **Please give today.**



CALL: 1800 025 101

VISIT: [christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au](http://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





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

**The downstairs foye 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 foye a welcoming and update look and feel.

*Thank you in advance of your support and help.*

Barbara Gibb

**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 Neideck

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>

**Garage**



**Saturday  
3rd February  
9am-12pm**

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

St. Matthew's Lower Hall



**SAVE THE DATE**

**Thursday  
1st February 2024  
10am—12noon**

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

\*\*\*\*\* ALL WELCOME \*\*\*\*\*

# Calendar of Events for January 2024

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