



Bible Readings

8am and 9.30am Services



Genesis 17:1-7
Romans 4:13-25
Mark 8:31-38

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 and 9.30am only**

8am—Worship
 Led by Vivienne Strong
 and Jon Humphries
 Followed by morning tea

9.30am—Worship
 Led by Daniel Gibb
 and Jon Humphries
KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8
 Followed by morning tea

5pm—Shine

6.45pm—Worship
 Led by Abbey Sim
 and Alexander Lawless

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 26 FEBRUARY
 9am—Sorting and Pricing for
 Op Shop lower hall

TUESDAY 27 FEBRUARY
 9am-2pm—Op Shop

9.30am-11am—Christian Meditation
 Community Room

WEDNESDAY 28 FEBRUARY

9am-2pm—Op Shop
 7.30pm—Church Council
 Meeting upstairs hall

THURSDAY 29 FEBRUARY
 9am-2pm—Op Shop

FRIDAY 1 MARCH
 7.30pm—World Day of Pray
 @ Our Lady of Lourdes
 Catholic Church,
 Canyon Road, Baulkham Hills

SATURDAY 2 MARCH
 9am-12pm—Op Shop
 and Garage Sale
 in lower hall

**SUNDAY
 3 MARCH**

8am—Worship
 Includes Communion

9.30am—Worship
 Includes Communion
KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8
 Followed by morning tea

6.45pm—Worship
 Includes Communion



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
 Email: office@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

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

FACEBOOK:

@stmatthewsunitingchurchbaulkhamhills

PRE-SCHOOL 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

25th February

2nd Sunday in Lent

Lectionary Readings:

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

Psalms 22:23-31

Romans 4:13-25

Mark 8:31-38

Denying Ourselves, Taking Up Our Cross and Following Jesus

Anyone who has done some work translating or who has some knowledge of translation of one language to another usually knows that meaning is a complex thing. It is often hard to exactly translate one word or idea directly from one language into another. Words often carry a raft of meanings and can mean different things in different contexts. Furthermore, what words commonly mean now may not be what their original meaning was. This is something that we encounter in many instances in the Bible.

This week's Gospel reading has the very well-known saying of Jesus where he proclaims to the disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." This takes some unpacking as to how we might understand it.

My brother-in-law asked me last week how I come up with ideas for sermons. It is something that people often wonder about, as I have been asked it several times before. Firstly, I usually look at the passages in the Revised Common

Lectionary and see if there seem to be common threads which might lead to a theme. Then I usually look at the passage that seems to be most relevant to that theme. This is usually the Gospel, but not always. I then consider what are some of the crucial or key words in the passage. I then look at those words in the original language and explore the meaning of the words in the original language. Then, I try to weave how those words come together contribute what might be the theme.

This week when I went back to the Biblical Greek and looked at the words for "denying," "taking up" and "cross." There are some surprises that I found, and it really became one of those instances where understandings around translation and how things might have originally been understood bring up a rich complexity which sometimes gets overlooked in the English translation and our Christian culture. For most Christians the cross refers to Jesus's cross and, therefore when Jesus calls us to take up our crosses, most of us hear that us that we need to follow Jesus on the way of the cross (whatever we understand that to mean.) Sometimes, though, taking up our cross has come to mean bearing with suffering, like putting up with a long-term injury or illness. The Greek in this case opens up some different ways of understanding what Jesus is calling us to.

The Biblical Greek word which is translated as 'cross' is σταυρός [stauros]. This means a stake or pole. It can be like a stake to impale someone but can also be a pole like a tent pole or stake or pole from a fence, or even a marker pole to stake out some land. This opens up a parallel meaning to the cross just being about Jesus's crucifixion. It can help us in our thinking about what we give up and take up in the season of Lent.

Continued next page.

Denying Ourselves, Taking Up Our Cross and Following Jesus—continued

I really recommend that you read the article, 'The Greek Word Mistranslated as "Cross"' by Gary Gagliardi. He doesn't suggest that understanding that the reference to the cross is about Jesus's death on a Roman cross. What he opens for us is that there is a richer meaning when we understand how the disciples would have heard it without the knowledge of what was to come. He concludes, "I think that Jesus knew that it would become his sign and that people in later eras would here his references to a stake differently after his death than before it. However, if we want to understand what Jesus taught and what his followers heard, we need to hear the word 'cross' differently than we do today. The idea is one of pulling up the stakes we have driven into the earth and, instead of staking claims for ourselves, following Jesus, wherever he may lead."

<https://rediscoveringjesus.substack.com/p/the-greek-word-mistranslated-as-cross>

Jesus was killed, not just for the theological reason pre-ordained by God. In the context of his life, his death was very much politically motivated due to the way his teaching was perceived as a threat or disruption to the order of things by those who maybe sought to control belief and religion or who out of deep, well-intentioned devotion to their understanding of tradition sought to work for the interests of protecting the faith which they were charged to protect, like the Romans, sought to impose what they understood was good order in their Empire and which served the interests of the Roman state.

"A "stake" driven in the ground, sets a place of residence and of ownership, whether it supports a building or creates a fence or marks a claim. In a building, it supports a wall. In a fence or a claim, it defines a boundary. In a foundation, it creates a point of support. In all of these examples, it solidifies an existing, established place in the world. Then, as now, pulling up a stake was an a..."

Gary Gagliardi
The Greek Word Mistranslated as "Cross"

REDISCOVERINGJESUS.SUBSTACK.COM



Taking up our cross puts us in the way of God. We can be like Peter, and seek to get in the way of God by denying what God is telling us, or we can deny ourselves and take up, or align ourselves, with the way of God who we know in the person of Jesus, and this may call us to become politically active, work for the transformation of society, and relinquish our self-interests and the comfortable boundaries which we put ourselves in. Taking up our cross, can mean that we take up a stake in the Kingdom of God and place our belonging there. It is where we make our tabernacle, and it will be often always on the move to the promised end, rather than becoming settled and established in one state or another.

How do you understand what it means when Jesus says, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."? It is certainly something to think about.

God bless.

Jon



PEOPLE NEWS

Merilyn Philip

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

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

25 February—2 March
Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands

Garage

Saturday 2nd MARCH

SALE

9am-12pm
Pre-loved
Household Items,
Electrical, Toys & Books
(Fiction, Non-fiction & Children's Books)

St. Matthew's Lower Hall

St. Matthew's
UNION CHURCH
growing together

MARCH 2024 SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES at the church

3rd March - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm
includes Communion

10th March - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm
Community Meal

17th March - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm

24th March - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm

31st March - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm

Live streaming at morning services

Easter Services at St. Matthew's

Palm Sunday
24 March
8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm
Maundy Thursday
28 March 7.30pm
Good Friday
29 March 9am
Easter Sunday
31 March
8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm

Weekly SYNOD SPOTLIGHT

Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

For Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter
for 16 February 2023 please see link :

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

St Matthew's HAPPY HOUR!

At NBC

166 Windsor Rd, Northmead

15 MARCH | 5 PM FRIDAY



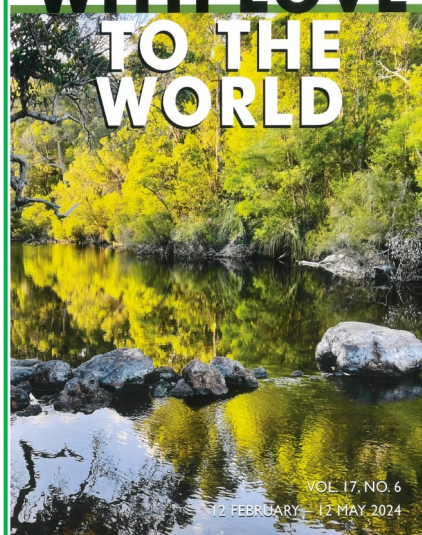
COME AND SHARE IN SOME HAPPY CONVERSATION, A DRINK AND SOME FOOD WITH FRIENDS FROM ST MATTHEW'S.

RSVP to Belinda or just come along
bdschuster@optusnet.com.au



LENT EASTER

WITH LOVE TO THE WORLD



LENT EASTER

WITH LOVE TO THE WORLD

a daily Bible reading
guide based on the
Revised Common
Lectionary

Volume 17,
Number 6
12 February
to
12 May 2024

is available
in the church foyer.

Please place \$7
in offering bag
to cover costs.

VOL 17, NO. 6
12 FEBRUARY - 12 MAY 2024



lentevent
14 FEBRUARY – 28 MARCH 2024
40 DAYS OF FAITHFUL ACTION
FOR GOD'S CREATION


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14 FEBRUARY – 28 MARCH 2024
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Supports critical climate action in vulnerable communities who are fighting to build resilience and mitigate climate impacts.

By supporting Lent Event, you're making a real difference in the lives of those who need it most.

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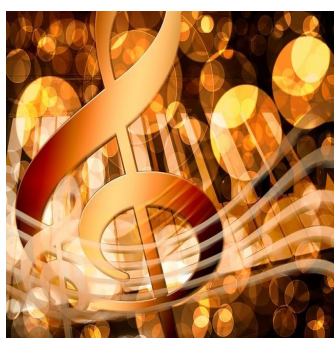
**Thursday
7th
March**

10am—12noon

Entertainers

**NOELEEN & DAVID
NEIDECK**

Noleen and David will present some keyboard duets and oboe solos, and we are very excited to welcome back a **guest vocalist Henry Wilden** who performed with Noleen & David some 10 years ago at St. Matthew's. Henry will choose some show tunes and ballads in the style of Anthony Warlow and Josh Groban. All will be very welcome.



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.

Church Working Bee



St. Matthew's
Saturday 16 March
8.30am-12pm

Many hands make light work.
Please come along
and lend a hand.
Morning tea supplied.

ROSTERS

Worship Rosters for 8am and 9.30am,
for March, April and May 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 of 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.*



Smart debit regular giving

Do your own direct debit direct to St Matthew's

1. Login to your online banking
2. Create a schedule to 'Pay Anyone' from your acct
3. Create St Matthew's as a payee
BSB 634-634
Acc 1000 25924
4. Use reference :
Offering 8.00 or 9.30 or 6.45
5. Set the amount and frequency as you wish – weekly/monthly
6. Done!

- ✓ Similar to Pushpay but uses your savings accounts not credit card
- ✓ More flexible than a direct debit form lodged at a branch
- ✓ Start/vary/stop as you choose
- ✓ No fees
- ✓ Regular recurring gifts allows St Matthew's to budget more accurately

Thankyou to all St Matthew's regular givers whatever method – cash, envelopes, direct debit and Pushpay!

Volunteers are invited to take part in ***The Easter Experience***

at **Gordon Uniting Church**
18th, 19th & 20th March



If you would like to take part please contact
Gordon Uniting Church at info@gpuc.org.au

For 20 consecutive years just before the end of term 1, the Gordon Uniting Church building has been transformed into Jerusalem 2000 years ago. The place comes alive with people from ancient times telling the story of Jesus' last week on earth, in a production called "The Easter Experience".

We invite Year 4 children from local schools to come and experience this important story in an interactive way. In addition we run a Year 7 program in the afternoon, challenging the students to look at the Easter story in a new way, relevant to today.



The Easter Experience is staged each year with volunteer actors from our congregation and others. For many children it is their first experience of the Easter story, and they walk through the scenes of The Last Supper, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Trial of Jesus in the courtroom scene, and then experience the impact of the empty tomb, with Jesus re-appearing to assure them that he is alive.