



Bible Readings

8am and 9.30am Services



Numbers 21: 4-9
 Ephesians 2: 1-10
 John 3: 14-21

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 Roland Bryant
 and Jon Humphries

9am—Worship @ the Willows

Led by Mike Strong

9.30am—Worship

Led by Sharon Underwood
 and Jon Humphries

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

Followed by morning tea

6.45pm—Worship

Community Meal

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 11 March

9am—Sorting and Pricing for
 Op Shop lower hall

TUESDAY 12 March

9am-2pm—Op Shop
 9.30am-11am—Christian Meditation
 community room

WEDNESDAY 13 March

9am-2pm—Op Shop
 10am-12pm—Women's
 Fellowship upstairs hall & Church

THURSDAY 14 March

9am-2pm—Op Shop

FRIDAY 15 March

5pm—Happy Hour @ NBC

SATURDAY 16 MARCH

8.30am-12pm—Working Bee
 Morning tea supplied

**SUNDAY
 17 MARCH**

8am—Worship

9.30am—Worship

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

Followed by morning tea

6.45pm—Worship



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:

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Thank you to all who have
 contributed to this publication.

Something to think about

10th March

4th Sunday in Lent

Lectionary Readings:

Numbers 21:4-9
Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22
Ephesians 2:1-10
John 3:14-21

God So Loved the World

As I reflect on this week's Gospel reading where we have the famous quote of Jesus, "for God so loved the world that God sent the son so that whomever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life," the word 'so' stands out for me. The Greek word which is translated as 'so' is οὕτως [houtos] which means thus, so, or in this manner. However, in English 'so' can also be used for emphasis as an adverb which enhances an adjective and means 'to such a great extent.' This simple little word opens up God's love for us in that it leads us to contemplate how God shows love for us and how much God loves us in the person of Jesus, the Christ.

If you haven't watched them already, here are two great videos from the Bible Project which help us understand God, God's love and how we can love God in return. They are something that I go back to from time to time as there is so much good stuff in them that I often need reminding about.

If you have watched them before, maybe consider watching them again as we seek to understand the 'so' in the statement that 'God so loved the world...'

What It Means to "Love" God (With All Your Heart, Soul and Strength) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HV_LUs2InIQ

Agape – Love <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=slyevQ1LW7A&t=118s>

How much do you contemplate how much God loves us? This is about how often we contemplate God's love, and then about us contemplating the amount of love God has for us. Most of us understand in our minds that God loves us greatly, and this love is fully expressed in Jesus's death on the cross, but we don't always fully understand this in our hearts. We have a cognitive appreciation, but that is not the same as a deep knowing and awe-inspiring connection in our soul as to the fullness and completeness of God's love for us.

This lack of knowing is brought to our attention in the part of the passage which precedes what we have in our Gospel reading this week. Jesus is speaking with Nicodemus, "was a Pharisee" and "who was a member of the Jewish ruling council" (John 3: 1). Jesus speaks to Nicodemus and tries to help him understand that there is a difference in knowing about God and worshipping God through rules and ritual and knowing God deeply and spiritually which comes from knowing the love of God in the person of God's Son.

Continued next page.

God So Loved the World – continued

We know that Jesus is God's son, and in fact not just God's son but God in person and in flesh with us. God didn't just send a member of the family, however valued that member might be, but gave us all in becoming human. This knowledge is realistically more than we can fully comprehend. We understand it in part, but will come to know it fully when we come to fully know God. Jesus uses the analogy of being born again, which is in some way about letting go of our human thinking and understanding in the Spirit, or coming to deeper understanding as God, as The Spirit, works in us.

God so loved us that God became one with us in a way which is awe-inspiring. It is the deepest form of compassion. We are reminded that when we come to believe this we are brought into eternal life. This πιστεύων [pisteuōn] believing is not just a cognitive acceptance, but is an entrusting and allowing us to be persuaded by God. That is notion of faith and believing is echoed in the passage from Ephesians where the definitive statement is offered by Paul that we are, "made us alive with Christ" (Ephesians 2: 5) and that "by grace you have been saved, through faith" and "not by works." (Ephesians 2: 8 & 9).

What should we do in the light of this knowing? Well Jesus states, "Whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God." (John 3: 21) God isn't like prison guards with searchlights at night trying to catch those escaping so that they can be punished. God, in Jesus, and in this God whom we know in Jesus, is life, and that life was the light of all humankind. (John 1: 4) Here is a different way to understand the Good News which Jesus proclaims. It is a different expression of the Kingdom of God which has come near.

Paul notes the importance of responding to this Good News. He like in John 3 makes it clear that we are not saved by works, or by what we do. However, we do have work to do if we know who we are in Christ, who God is through Christ, how much God loves us as we learn in Christ and who God calls us to be in Christ. Paul writes, "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2: 10 and which the writer of James echoes when it says, "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead." (James 2: 26)

For God so loved the world that God entered fully into our existence and showed us true life and how to live life well and eternally. If we love God, what is our response? That is something to think about.

God bless.

Jon



PEOPLE NEWS

Norma Hillier

Alan Watson

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

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

10– 16 March

Scandinavia: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden

Weekly SYNOD SPOTLIGHT

Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

For Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter for 1 March 2024 please see link :

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

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

lentevent

14 FEBRUARY – 28 MARCH 2024

40 DAYS OF FAITHFUL ACTION FOR GOD'S CREATION

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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.

Support Lent Event go to the website : [here](#)

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

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.

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.

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
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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!

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.