



AFTER PENTECOST – Theologically Diversity



I am a theological mongrel. A mongrel is something or someone who is of no identifiable type or breed, being a mix of a range of things. Theological mongrelism is about not fitting into any set or established boxes or delineations. It is about not defining ourselves into types or brands or tribes. In my faith journey I have attended different denominations and been part of different fellowship groups with roots in different traditions. At theological college I learnt about many different streams of understanding and ways of knowing God and different ways of interpreting and understanding the Bible. In the end I have found that I have not settled into any tribe or team or theological faction. I'm progressively conservative and conservatively progressive. I'm post-evangelical, if I was ever truly evangelical, but value what I learnt and how I was formed in evangelicalism.

I appreciate liberal theology and liberation theology. I have been stretched and challenged by feminist and queer theology. I have explored a range of spiritual practices, including such things as Taizé services, and Christian meditation.

In a world of increasing factionalism and tribalism (or a resurgence of such things), where people often look to aligning with a particular theological orientation or group, being a theological mongrel means that I am a curiosity. This is not sometimes seen as a good thing. Curiosity is a word many of us think that we are familiar with. Many of us will think of inquiry, fascination and wonder. When we hear the word 'curiosity,' yet, it once carried the meaning of paying careful attention to detail. This older meaning fits with our modern understanding in that if we are being inquisitive and curious then we should pay attention to detail.

However, when we describe something as a curiosity then for many that carries a sense of unusuality or weirdness.

Curiosities were often freakish. People in seeing others as curiosities focused on differences and used such terms as oddities. What people paid attention to was that which placed the oddity outside of normal. This is a sad reality, but maybe we can reclaim a positive aspect of curiosity and curiosities. We can stretch our understanding of who we are to be welcoming and inclusive of difference, paying attention to our differences but not seeing them as oddities, and just seeing them as part of the fullness of our complexity as a diverse community.

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Maybe it is just due to how I have just described myself, but I see Jesus as a true curiosity. Jesus was God incarnate, and the way he presented God through example and teaching was outside of the bounds of his faith traditions. Ironically, if we pay careful attention to him and his way, then we might find that we are often viewing him as an oddity, or at least we might find that we are out of step with his view of religion and the Kingdom of God. We need to be curious about Jesus and pay careful attention to our biases and theological prejudices. Otherwise, we will simply see Jesus in the way that we want him to be.

The Reverend Doctor Clive Pearson taught me theology and introduced me to the idea of theological allies and aliens. Theological allies are those who hold similar ideas and theology to us or are from our general theological tradition. Theological aliens are those whose theology seems alien or strange to us, being very much outside the bounds of our understanding of theology. Clive encouraged us to explore and attend to the thinking of theological aliens, and to do it with curiosity and an absence of hostility.

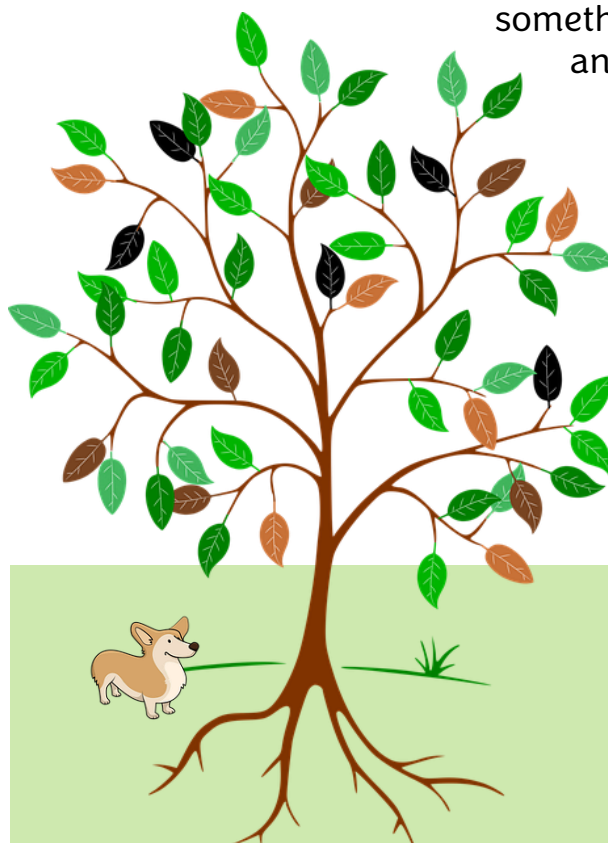
Learning what our theological aliens understand about God and why they think that way doesn't mean that we have to accept their ideas or change ours. However, when we pay the ideas of others some attention with curiosity and care to detail then, together, we are made richer in our knowing of God.

In this season of After Pentecost where we have a liturgical focus on growth in understanding, discipleship and ministry, it is good to grow in our theological understanding. I challenge us all to be theologically compassionate and to be curious about those who may be theologically alien to us or ideas which may be theologically alien to us.

It is good to develop our own sense of who we say God is as we journey in faith into understanding. It is good to settle on certain themes or core truths which we build our theology around. However, let us not become too comfortable within the bounds of our understanding, lest we inadvertently put God in boxes of our making. Let us also remember that we are called to the ministry of reconciliation by Christ, who is God incarnate, and part of that ministry is a call to unity in our diversity and being able to reconcile different ideas about God and the people who hold them into the one Body of Christ, one people of God, and one Church. A little theological alien encounter is thus, something to consider and think about.

God Bless.

Jon



A New Chapter

Having been at St. Matthew's for 24 years, 6 of which in my current role as Children's, Youth and Young Adult Ministry Worker, there is quite a lot to reflect upon as I draw this chapter to a close.

My time at St. Matthew's has given me the chance to develop my skills in ministry through a number of different experiences. From Friday night youth groups to Sunday worship, teaching SRE and everything in between there is so much involved in this role and it has been my pleasure to participate in ministry at St. Matthew's over the years.

It is impossible to capture it all in one article but perhaps I might offer some small highlights. Throughout the six years I have been in this role, I have probably given over 300 learning together messages. As I reflect upon some of these messages (some more memorable than others), I am reminded of the way in which my ministry has allowed me to share the gospel message with people of all ages in a way that can be understood by everyone.

I have also had the pleasure of leading worship and preaching across all three congregations which has given me invaluable experience for my ministry journey.

I have loved seeing the young people of St. Matthew's grow in their faith and continue to build each other up in their spiritual journeys. In particular over the past few years, it has been amazing to see some of the young people (who once attended youth group themselves) step up and take on a leadership role for the younger youth.

As I move to Turramurra, to begin a new chapter in my ongoing ministry journey, I would like to take this time to thank the community of St. Matthew's for all of the support and encouragement that you have given me over the years. Your prayers, friendship, and encouragement have meant so much to me and I will truly miss being a part of St. Matthew's.

Daniel Gibb



From St. Matthew's Finance Committee:

Update on the Roof loan repayments:

We have two loans for the roof, the Schofields Loan and the Uniting Financial Services Loan (UFS).



The original amount of the Schofields loan was \$50,000.

This loan commenced on 19th September 2022. The balance of the amount owing as at 11th June 2024 is \$41,838.98. So far the Church has repaid \$8,161.02 from the Schofield Loan. The current repayments are \$427.26 per month.

The original amount of the UFS loan was \$150,000. The balance of the UFS loan is \$117,316.12, as at 11th June 2024. It has an offset account with a balance of \$125,000, of which \$100,000 is a loan from a kind congregant and \$25,000 is what we have put aside from the church funds, roof donations and fundraising. This means that we are saving on paying interest on the UFS loan and as a result we are paying down the principal more quickly than originally anticipated. Although the offset account exceeds the Church loan balance, we typically pay approximately \$70-80 per month interest which equates to a reduction in the principal of approximately \$900 per month. So far we have paid off \$32,683.88 from the UFS loan. The Church pays \$977.18 per month off this loan.

In the last financial year (22/23), the total of roof donations and fundraising was \$7,211. So far in this financial year (23/24) the amount received from donations and fundraising is \$4,327.

We would like to thank the St. Matthew's community for their continued support and for their donations towards the roof.

St. Matthew's Annual General Meeting:

The Finance Committee will be presenting the 2024/25 Church Budget at the church **AGM** that will be held on **18th August 2024**, there will be one **combined morning service at 9am** and the AGM will be held after the service.

Best wishes

Dom Schuster and Alastair Burn

Coffee
and
Discovery

Thursday 4 July
10am to 12pm

Guest Speaker:
Colin Booth



WHAT MAKES SOMETHING A TREASURE?



Colin, a treasure collector, will speak about treasures he has collected throughout his life and some of the treasures that have been uncovered at the Op Shop and taken to auction to raise money for St. Matthew's.

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

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

Favourite Hymns Singalong

Sunday 11 August

@ 2pm

At St. Matthew's

*Led by David Short on the organ and
Barry Gregory on vocals*

*All are welcome to come along for an afternoon of
wonderful music and reminiscing singing your favourite
hymns.*

**Please record your favourite hymns on the form provided
in the foyer.**

Op Shop Morning Tea



All Welcome

**Saturday
27th July**

Starting at 10:30am

**St. Matthew's
Uniting Church**
lower church hall

*Come and join our
friendly volunteers and
Op Shop customers for
a special morning tea
get-together.*

*Everyone is asked to
bring a small plate of
food. Tea and coffee
will be provided.*

*To follow us on **Facebook** search: 'St Matthews Op Shop Baulkham Hills'*

*To follow us on **Instagram**, search: StMatthewsOpShopBH*

To contact Op Shop by email, go to: stmatthewsopshopbh@gmail.com



st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together

Op Shop Support Needed

People to help with:

- Sorting and Pricing 'trash and treasure' for the Garage Sales
- Washing pre-loved 'treasures'
- Sorting & Pricing second hand clothing
- Serving customers
- Creating shop displays



For more Information please contact the church office.

Garage

SALE

SATURDAY

6th JULY

9am-12pm

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

St. Matthew's lower hall Edgar St

Op-Shop Report ... July 2024 ...

St. Matthew's Uniting Church Op-shop Baulkham Hills has been operating since the late 1990's. It started with an acknowledgment that despite being an affluent area, there were many people living locally who were struggling financially. Clothing donations were always sorted carefully, and only the best quality items kept. The rest was re-donated to be made into rags. The price of clothing was kept low because the intention was to offer help to the community rather than fund raising. Customers became friends, with many coming in regularly for a chat.

Over time we have expanded from a couple of trestle tables piled with clothing to proper hanging racks and display cabinets for 'treasures'. We open from 9am to 2pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and the first Saturday of each month when we hold a garage sale as well as the Op-shop. Almost thirty people give their time to ensure everything runs smoothly and efficiently.

The mission has not changed however; we still offer low cost clothing, a friendly greeting and



a chat, and prayer for ailments or family members, relying on the Spirit to lead us.

The volunteers recently decided to run a Bridal Expo after being given 5 brand new wedding dresses. We advertised our intentions to the congregation and received many more beautiful dresses, shoes, handbags and accessories. We collected some good quality evening wear and men's wear to make up the display, and took over one of the church halls to set up a display. One of our customers kindly donated a lot of time to help with marketing and display organisation. The whole event was a team effort and well received by the public. Ladies seemed to enjoy the idea of coming into an area with 'special' clothing and trying on some gorgeous dresses. We extended the event to three consecutive Saturdays to cater for women who work during the week, and the staff all dressed in black for fun.



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Op-Shop continued..

Next month we will be holding a morning tea for our customers on a Saturday morning. The idea is to create an environment where we can all sit with a coffee and biscuit and share stories.

We are fortunate to be able to support some local companies and individuals, including Parramatta Mission, a lady providing clothing to Ukraine refugees, a lady fostering 'seeing-eye' puppies, and a lady supporting a village, school and hospital in the Philippines. Donations of clothing, blankets, towels (for the puppies), school and hygiene supplies are collected and placed in storage waiting to be collected.

Working in an op-shop is tremendous fun, with many laughs and friendships made. One volunteers recently said: if you told someone you were meeting a group of friends every week for coffee AND lunch, they would they would not believe you, but we do.



I love to Op-Shop!



The Op Shop Team



**Parramatta
Mission**



**uniting
church**
in Australia,
Synod of NSW & ACT

Calendar of Events for July 2024

School Holidays

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

1 9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall  7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room and Church All Welcome 	2 9am-2pm Op Shop  9.30-11am Christian Meditation Community Room  11.30am Care & Prayer Community Room 	3 9am-2pm Op Shop  10am-12pm In Stitches upstairs hall 	4 9am-2pm Op Shop  10am-12pm Coffee and Discovery Guest Speaker Colin Booth. "What makes something a treasure" 	5 5pm-7pm Fusion Youth Group  5TH JULY Secret Agent Night TOP SECRET upstairs hall	6 9am-12pm Op Shop  9am-12pm Garage Sale lower hall 	7 <i>7th Sunday</i>  8am Worship Includes Communion 9.30am Worship Includes Communion Followed by Morning Tea KUCA in recess for school holidays 6.45pm Worship Includes Communion
8 9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall  7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room and Church All Welcome 	9 9am-2pm Op Shop  9.30-11am Christian Meditation Community Room  7.30pm Thrive Bible Study lower hall	10 9am-2pm Op Shop  10am-12noon Women's Fellowship in the upstairs hall & church 	11 9am-2pm Op Shop 	12 No scheduled events	13 No scheduled events	14 <i>8th Sunday</i>  8am—Worship 9am—Worship @ the Willows 9.30am—Worship includes Baptism Followed by Morning Tea KUCA in recess 6.45pm—Worship Community Meal
15 9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall  7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room and Church All Welcome 	16 9am-2pm Op Shop  9.30-11am Christian Meditation Community Room  7.30pm Thrive Bible Study lower hall	17 9am-2pm Op Shop  10am-12pm In Stitches upstairs hall  10am-12noon Men's Morning Tea McKels Café Bella Vista 	18 9am-2pm Op Shop 	19 No scheduled events	20 No scheduled events	21 <i>9th Sunday</i>  8am—Worship 9.30am—Worship Followed by Morning Tea KUCA in recess 6.45pm—Worship
22 9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall  7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room and Church All Welcome 	23 9am-2pm Op Shop  9.30-11am Christian Meditation Community Room  7.30pm--Property Committee Meeting lower hall 7.30pm Thrive Bible Study lower hall	24 9am-2pm Op Shop 	25 9am-2pm Op Shop 	26 No scheduled events	27 9am-12pm Op Shop  10.30am-12pm Op Shop Morning Tea  ALL WELCOME lower hall	28 <i>10th Sunday</i>  8am—Worship Followed by Morning Tea 9.30am—Worship KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 Followed by Morning Tea 5pm—Shine 6.45pm—Worship
29 9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall  7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room and Church All Welcome 	30 9am-2pm Op Shop  9.30-11am Christian Meditation Community Room  7.30pm Thrive Bible Study lower hall	31 9am-2pm Op Shop  10am-12pm In Stitches upstairs hall  7.30pm Elders Meeting upstairs hall			st. matthew's UNITING CHURCH BAULKHAM HILLS growing together 	

MONTHLY ACTIVITIES and REGULAR GROUPS



Wednesday 10th July @ 10am
"Auction with Adele"
 Precedes for Philippines postage
 Enquires: Dulcie Duncum & Margaret Gray

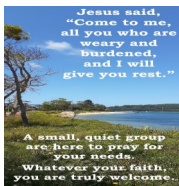
Please bring tinned
 food for Bill Crews
 Foundation box.



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



Meeting Dates July 3, 17 and 31
 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:

2nd July

CHRISTIAN MEDITATION



NEW GROUP
**MONDAY
 Evenings**
 7.30pm—8.30pm

Tuesdays at the Church 9.30am-10.30am
 For more information or to express your
 interest in attending please contact

Katherine Pedersen
 Facilitator kathped56@gmail.com

ALL WELCOME



OP SHOP

Open Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 9am-2pm
 and 1st Saturday of the month 9-12pm

Pre-loved clothes & accessories, Books,
 Haberdashery, Bric-a-brac, Pot Plants.



**Saturday
 6th July
 9am-12pm**

Pre-loved Household 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 after High school.
Meets Sundays Monthly for dinner & fun. Cost \$5
Still collecting 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
AUGUST
In Focus
St. Matthew's
Monthly Newsletter
 please send details to Robyn and Lynn in
 the Church Office by **15 JULY**
 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 9. 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 Tuesday evenings

Contact Daniel Gibb

daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

**JULY 2024
 SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES**
 at the church

7th July - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm
 includes Communion

14th July - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm
 Community Meal

21st July - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm

28th July - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm

Live streaming at morning services

Thank you to all who
 have contributed to
 this publication.

MINISTER

REV JON HUMPHRIES

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)

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