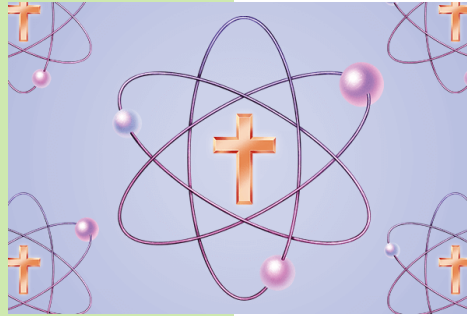




Faith and Science



Science has played an important part in my faith. It has helped shape my theology and scientists such as Carl Sagan have been inspirational in my seeking understand of life, the universe and everything. I am not a physicist, yet I am curious about physics and seek to understand the concepts. I just don't have the brain to be able to yet do the mathematics. I am though a person of faith who takes up the ancient theological legacy of trying to understand the universe which I believe owes its existence to God. I have always had a passionate interest in science and my faith is heavily influenced by my understanding of science. Science helps me stay curious and faithfully sceptical of locking any beliefs as being definite and absolute.

Theology was once known as the 'Queen of the Sciences.' Sciences in universities, many of which were initially established by the Church, were a logical part of academia as they sought to learn about the nature of the universe created by God and about us who were created in the image of God.

This is the narrative arc which I work from or which I use to help justify an interest in science. It might also be that I am a naturally curious person who likes to understand things, grow in knowledge, practise critical thinking and learn how things work.

Science is an important part of my faith. It is science which has kept me curious and asking questions. Theology, as defined by St Anselm, is faith seeking understanding. Science, from my perspective, is an act of faith. We develop hypotheses which we arrive at through observation or contemplation and these lead to theories (which often become doctrines/ teachings) and then we seek in faith answers for our confirmation of what we believe to be true. We act in faith because we trust in our processes and trust/ have faith that there are answers to be found. I believe that this applies to much of religious belief and theology too, although it is harder to do empirical experiments.

Science is important to my faith because, if I have learnt anything from science, it is that what we often believe to be true can later found to be not true, or at least not true in the way we first understood things to be. I have learnt to trust/have faith in this important principle. We see it at work in the evolution of our cosmological understanding as we evolved from thinking and believing that the world was flat with the heavens being above us, to our world being three-dimensional and part of a greater universe. We have evolved from us thinking and believing that we were the centre of our solar system to coming to understand the complexity of motion in the cosmos. We, of course, have also evolved our understanding of evolution.

In theology we have seen an evolution in our understanding of God. The Scriptures are a prime example of how we as humans have evolved in scientific understanding and in civilisation, and at the same time have evolved in understanding of God. Science is important to my faith, because it teaches me the principle of evolving understanding.

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The danger of faith and belief is the temptation to become fixed in a moment of this continuing evolution and become dogmatic about certain beliefs, theories or understanding. Science is important to my faith as it teaches me to be a lifelong learner and to continually be flexible in my thinking and challenge what I believe, with there is always more to know and that things are not always as we believe them to be. Certainly, there is always more to know and understand about God who transcends the limits of our thinking and knowledge.

Challenging belief is a positive and proactive form of doubt. Challenging belief is not disbelief or lack of faith. In fact, it is active faith because it trusts in God and trusts that there is usually more to learn. Challenging belief is not negative doubt, nor does it always mean that beliefs are then debunked. Challenging belief is a testing of what is believed for its truth. It can result in strengthening of belief when they are found to be true (for now). However, it can lead to a changing of belief as it leads to new beliefs or an evolution of belief. We see this as theoretical physicists and cosmologists seek to understand the nature of our universe and seek a unified theory of everything which brings the Einsteinian relativistic model of the cosmos into harmony with quantum theory and understanding of the universe.

As we seek to understand the nature of time and gravity we continue to ponder the nature of the universe. These two seemingly fundamental aspects of our universe and our reality continue to be enigmatic and allude our full understanding.



Some of the latest theories of the nature of the universe are quite wild. They involve such things as quantum field theory suggesting that all existence, including matter, is a function of harmonics of waves in the quantum field or the nature of our reality and our cosmos might be a 'holographic' projection of quantum dynamics onto space-time. This truly bend our minds when we try to think about it.

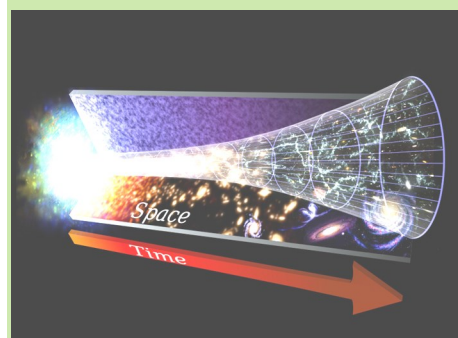
I am not a physicist, but I like wondering about the nature of things. As I learn about new theories and what scientists are learning about the nature of matter and the universe, I wonder about things. One thing I have pondered as I learn about what cosmologists are learning is the notion that might time be a function of the expansion of the universe just as gravity seems to be a function of mass warping the fabric of space in a fourth dimensional manner? I don't have the mathematical skills to be able to explore a proof for this, but it is still enjoyable to play with ideas and understanding and theorise in my own limited way.



My faith in science comes from my faith in God who I have come to know and whom I believe created all being. I believe that I don't fully comprehend the nature of God, just as we don't fully comprehend the nature of our universe. Science, including theology, is important to my faith because it stops my belief from atrophying. It keeps my thinking flexible and keeps me seeking understanding. As a disciple/learner I'm called to keep learning. Learning leads me into new ways of being - to level-up my skills and understandings in order to level-up or increase my aptitude and effectiveness in the way that I manifest and live the love of God whom I believe in and have faith in. Science, including theology, gives us a lot to think about. We may not feel like doing it all the time, but there is danger if we don't.

God bless

Jon





Christian Meditation

Pamela Avis / Brown from Tuesday meditation has written this in response to the communities request for stories of how practicing Christian meditation has affected their lives.

My journey into Christian Meditation began in 2005 after hearing a radio interview about this practice of meditation. My curiosity motivated me to find a local group. I was hesitating at first but I found a group, run by an Augustinian Priest. The group was welcoming and friendly. Thus I started to understand and practice Christian Meditation. What I gained from meditating was a sense of sacred silence where I was able to encounter Jesus our Lord in peaceful and restful prayer. It was nourishment for my soul.

I have no doubt that the practice of Christian Meditation was beneficial to my health. In 2000 I was diagnosed with follicular B Lymphoma, a white blood cell cancer. This type of cancer is not treated early like other cancers. It was managed by a watch and wait schedule until the growth of lymph node is accelerated throughout your body. Treatment does not work if given early. I was given a prognosis of 5-8 years at the time of diagnoses. However in 2008 following a PET scan it was apparent I had gone into a 'Spontaneous Remission' and at the time I was told by my specialist - "the chances of this happening was less than 1%."

My joy and my family's relief were enormous. I had a profound sense of gratitude.

However from 2013 Life challenges were overwhelming. By the end of 2017 the Lymphoma resurfaced. Moving on from that I was diagnosed with Breast cancer in 2018. My practice of meditation dissolved. Apart from employing a mini practice during painful and stressful medical treatments and assessments. I found peace and calmness during these brief practices of meditation. I was treated for Breast cancer while continuing frequent assessments for my blood cancer. By the end of 2020 it was apparent I needed treatment for the blood cancer. I had a treatment program for over 6 months followed by a very very long recovery time - 3 years.

In 2024 when recovered my aim was to find a Christian Meditation group. And that lead me to the Baukham Hills group at St. Matthew's. The group members were so friendly and welcoming - I had a sense of "coming home" to the practice of Christian Meditation. It's been a group where I have continued to learn as I practice Christian Meditation joyfully. I feel a sense of belonging and connectedness to my fellow meditators. This year I'm enjoying outstanding health so different from the last 7 years. And a lovely blessing for me is that I am able to enjoy and get to know my youngest grandchildren who have recently turned three. I have regained my sense of peace, grace and enthusiasm for Christian Meditation.

Pamela Avis / Brown



David Gungor



**Performing at Castle Hill Uniting Church
Saturday, 9th November, from 6:30pm**

Tickets \$30 - including drinks and snacks

<https://events.humanitix.com/the-brilliance-concert-at-wesley-uniting>



An Afternoon Tea with a Sri Lankan Flavour...

Held on 28th September



It was an afternoon filled with the presence of God, light entertainment and I would say (although with a bias) delicious eats of savouries and sweets.



The church was filled with friends from the Sri Lankan community as well as members of our St. Matthew's congregation.

It was truly a representation of God's children. Eulalie played the organ and the singing filled the church rising up to glorify God. Many said that they felt the Holy Spirit in the house.

A big thank you to St. Matthew's to have opened up the church and hall to hold our ten year anniversary of supporting evangelism in Sri Lanka.

Channels of Peace began with a small seed and now our mission and vision has grown and flourished to support many communities. Thank you to all who helped and contributed to our mission.

We ask for your continued prayers, that God will open doors and lead us to touch and reach people who have not heard His message of Salvation.

With gratitude and thanks,

Shamali



St Matthew's

HAPPY HOUR!

At NBC

166 Windsor Rd, Northmead

29
NOVEMBER

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 belinda.schuster0709@gmail.com



Studying theology in times of strife

Each day, students and staff at United Theological College pursue their studies in the peaceful, leafy environment of the Centre for Ministry at North Parramatta.

This is in marked contrast to the students and staff at the Near East School of Theology (NEST) which is situated on the western tip of Beirut, only a short distance from the Mediterranean Sea. As their librarian, Liza Titizian recently wrote in an email to Moira Bryant, Manager of UTC's Theological Library, 'The situation here is very difficult these days. Honestly, we live day by day, we don't know what tomorrow will bring... We raise our prayers to God to bring peace and tranquility to this region and country.'

NEST was formed in 1932 as an interconfessional Protestant Seminary to train pastors and church workers for ministry in the churches and other evangelical organizations in the Middle East. It also provides continuing education for pastors and church workers in active service, and for lay people.

During their visit to Lebanon in 2023, Clive and Mary Pearson visited NEST. Although they found an excellent print collection in the library, they also found that even as early as mid-2023, most students had been advised to return to their home countries because of the worsening political situation. They now cannot access library resources to support their study.

To support the students and staff of NEST, UTC began providing them with access to their eBook collection. Since the start of 2024, Moira Bryant and Liza Titizian have worked closely to achieve this goal. The Near East School of Theology now has access to a wide range of eBooks thanks to the efforts of these librarians.

If you feel moved to support this initiative financially, so that more eBooks can be made available, please contact Moira at library@nswact.uca.org.au to receive information how you could make a tax-deductible donation.

Moira Bryant



**To all our beautiful customers.
In the lead up to Christmas the Op Shop
are requesting donations of:**



- Ceramic glazed, decorative pots
- Large good quality black plastic pots
- Unwanted/unloved pot plants
- Hanging baskets
- Bird baths
- Chimes
- Statues
- Hose reels
- Hose hangers
- Sprinklers
- Gardening tools
- Unwanted plant food, fertilizer
- Plants stands/patio plant display/shelving/small round tables

• Pick up may be available depending upon location, weight etc.

If you require items to be collected, please contact the church office.



Thursday 7 November
10am-12pm

“From Humble Beginnings” Transport Heritages NSW

Guest Speaker: **Allan Williams**

Allan will share his interest and experiences with this organization which is committed to preserving our State’s transport history.



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

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



Setting up for Communion

I will be retiring from setting up for communion at the end of this year so there is an opportunity for someone else to take over.

The job involves purchasing the bread and grape juice, cutting up the bread and spending about 15-20 minutes setting up, either on Saturday or before the 8am service on Sunday.

Pamela Leslie and I set up on alternate months; Pamela will continue setting up on odd months. I set up on even months. If you would like to take on this role, let me know and we can set up together in December, then you take over in February.

Many thanks
Christine Haines

**You are invited to a Service of
Remembrance
and
Thanksgiving
Tuesday 10th 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 10th December.

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



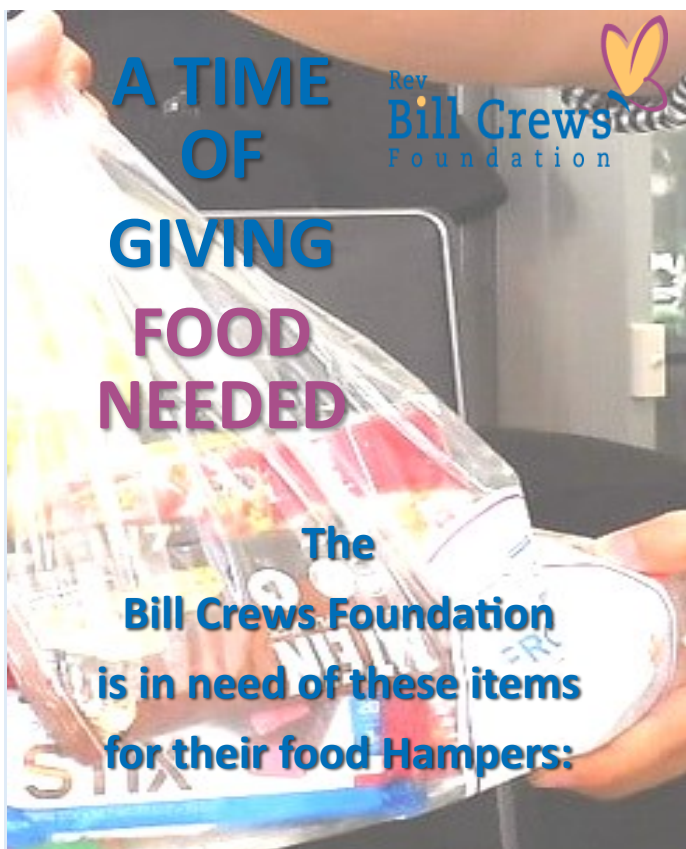
This tree has been supplied by the Baulkham Hills Council and after the service the tree will be planted, together with the messages etc., somewhere in the community. Please contact us if you would like further information, and know that we are thinking of you at this time of year.

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 9688 3003
office@stmatthewsuniting.net.au
Website www.stmatthewsuniting.net.au



**A TIME OF
GIVING
FOOD
NEEDED**

Rev
Bill Crews
Foundation

**The
Bill Crews Foundation
is in need of these items
for their food Hampers:**

- 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 upstairs church foyer.
BY 15th December.
Entrance on St Mathews Lane**

Calendar of Events for November 2024

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

st. matthew's UNITING CHURCH BAULKHAM HILLS growing together				1	2	3
				5pm-7pm Fusion Youth Group 	9am-12pm Op Shop  9am-12pm Garage Sale lower hall 	24th Sunday  After Pentecost 8am Worship Includes Communion 9.30am Worship Includes Communion Followed by Morning Tea KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 6.45pm Worship
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall  7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room 	9am-2pm Op Shop  9.30-11am Christian Meditation Community Room  11.30am Care & Prayer Community Room & church  7pm-9pm Bible Study church/community room 	9am-2pm Op Shop  10am-12noon In Stitches Upstairs hall  7pm—Finance Committee Meeting Upstairs hall	9am-2pm Op Shop  10am-12pm Coffee and Discovery Guest Speaker 	No scheduled events	No scheduled events	25th Sunday  After Pentecost 8am—Worship Includes Elders Election 9am—Worship @ the Willows 9.30am—Worship Includes Elders Election Followed by Morning Tea KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 6.45pm—Worship Includes Elders Election
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall  7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room and Church 	9am-2pm Op Shop  9.30-11am Christian Meditation Community Room  7.30pm Thrive Bible Study lower hall  7pm-9pm Bible Study church/community room 	9am-2pm Op Shop  10am-12pm Women's Fellowship in the upstairs hall & church  7.30pm Church Council Executive upstairs hall	9am-2pm Op Shop 	5pm-7pm Fusion Youth Group "Task Master" 	No Scheduled events	26th Sunday  After Pentecost 8am—Worship 9.30am—Worship KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 Followed by Morning Tea 6.45pm—Worship
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall  7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room and Church 	9am-2pm Op Shop  9.30-11am Christian Meditation Community Room  7pm-9pm Bible Study church/community room 	9am-2pm Op Shop  10am-12noon In Stitches Upstairs hall  10am-12noon Men's Morning Tea McKels Café Bella Vista  7.30pm Elders meeting In the Church	9am-2pm Op Shop 	4.30-6pm Preschool Christmas concert in church, upstairs hall & kitchen	No scheduled events	Christ the King  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
25	26	27	28	29	30	
9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall  7.30pm Christian Meditation community room and Church 	9am-2pm Op Shop 9.30-11am Christian Meditation community room 4.30-6pm Preschool Christmas Concert church, hall & kitchen 7.30pm Thrive Bible Study lower hall 7pm-9pm Bible Study church or community room 	9am-2pm Op Shop  7.30pm Church Council meeting Upstairs hall	9am-2pm Op Shop 	5pm-7pm Fusion Youth Group "Water Games" 	No scheduled events	

