



Bible Readings

Revelation 1: 4-8
John 18: 33-38



8am and 9.30am

Response after Bible Readings

Leader: *In this we hear the word of God*

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

Livestreaming at
8am and 9.30am only

8am—Worship
 Led by Dean Drayton
 and Jon Humphries
Followed by morning tea

9.30—Worship
 Led by Sharon Underwood
 and Jon Humphries
 and Albert Olley
KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8
Followed by morning tea

5pm—Shine
6.45pm—Worship
 Led by Alexander Lawless
 and Jon Humphries

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 25 November
9am—Sorting and Pricing for Op Shop and Garage Sale
 lower hall
9.30am-11.30am—Preschool Concert Practice in the church
12pm—Op Shop
Volunteers End Of Year Celebration
 Toongabbie Sports Club
7.30pm—Christian Meditation
 community room and church

TUESDAY 26 November
9am-2pm—Op Shop
9.30am-11am—Christian Meditation
 community room and church
4.30pm-6pm—Preschool Christmas Concert
 in the church and upstairs hall
7pm-9pm—Lectionary Bible Study
 in the church or community room
7.30pm—Thrive Bible Study
 lower hall

WEDNESDAY 27 November
9am-2pm—Op Shop
7.30pm—Church Council Meeting upstairs hall

THURSDAY 28 November
9am-2pm—Op Shop
10am-12pm
12.30pm—Preschool Concert Practice in the church

FRIDAY 29 November
11am—Preschool Concert Practice in the church
5pm—Happy Hour @ NBC
5pm-7pm—Fusion Youth Group
“Water Games” upstairs hall

SATURDAY 30 November
8am-3.30pm—Church Working Bee

SUNDAY 1 DECEMBER
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

CHURCH OFFICE SECRETARY:
 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

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

24th November

27th Sunday
after Pentecost

Christ the King
Sunday

Lectionary Readings:

2 Samuel 23:1-7
Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14
Revelation 1:4b-8
John 18:33-38

Missional Relationality

Here we are at the end of another liturgical year. It is the celebration of Christ who is King. The last few weeks the lectionary has been walking us through the letter to the Hebrews and we learnt that God in the person of Jesus, who was Christ (which is the Greek word for 'messiah') is also our/the Great High Priest. Revelation 1: 6 which is set as a reading connects us being a priesthood and kingdom of God – not the Kingdom of God, but an expression of it. This is at the heart of the Good news which should shape our life and witness as faithful disciples. The writer of Hebrews links Jesus as temple, priest and sacrifice as the reshaping of our understanding of faith and religion from worship and ritual in a set building to us being the temple, priest and sacrifice as we offer our lives as a living sacrifice to God as true worship and witness through service.

Missional resonance is a term many of us will not be familiar with. Missional resonance is a way of being the Church in our wider community context which opens a way of evangelism based on transformational relationships. It is very much linked to what the writer of Hebrews was trying to convey. It helps us gain a radical understanding of how our faith, life and witness might be relevant in our modern society which is increasingly sceptical and resistant to organised religion.

Relevance to our society arises not from us trying to emulate or be a facsimile of aspects of society but evolves from a resonance of our witness to God and our faith in God in ways which meaningfully connect with other people and the way which they experience and understand life. The Good News becomes good news because it is news about how God is at work in them, their life and the world around them for good. What we say and do resonates with people and they begin to resonate with us. It is a transformation of us all through a sharing in mutuality.

Missional relationality comes from a theology of the new covenant and the new temple which writers such as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and of course Jesus, speaks about. This is a complex doctrine in some ways which requires an understanding of how the Tabernacle, and then later the Temple in Jerusalem, functions in terms of God's presence, sacrifice and atonement and worship. However, it can be summarised in a way which might be easily more simply understood and one which helps shape our missional identity.

continued next page

Missional Relationality-Continued

In the past worship in the Jewish faith at the time of Jesus was centred in Jerusalem and the Temple. In the Temple was the Holy of Holies, the section which was divided off – literally set apart – by a large curtain, that was also known as the veil. In this space was the symbolic, and for some literal, place of the presence of God. It was the connection point between Heaven and Earth. It was the intersection of the holy being of God and our time and space as part of God's creation.

The Holy of Holies was the space that only the High Priest could enter only once a year to offer sacrifices on behalf of the people to set God's people in right relationship with God, despite all their falling short / sinning for the year leading up to that time. However, when Jesus died on the Cross the curtain, which was over one storey tall, which separated people from the presence of God, was torn in two from top to bottom. This was part of the symbolic and literal breakdown of the Temple as part of the new covenant God was making through God as the person of the Christ.

There is a lot around atonement theory and theology which could be explored and is worth exploring, but the relevance to our missional identity comes from an understanding of atonement being at-one-ment. That is through God in the person of Jesus, who was the Christ and Immanuel – which means 'God with us' [Matthew 1:23], we can be at one with God. Helping us understand this is Jesus claiming to be

the ultimate expression of the temple with his body being the symbol for it.

The writer of Hebrews, as this understanding of a new covenant and a new understanding of how to relate to God speaks that Jesus is the temple, the high priest, the veil which is torn open and the sacrifice which brings atonement.

Why this became important for our understanding of our mission is that we who are the Church are also known as the Body of Christ. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 3: 16-17, "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst" If ...for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple." As Christ is the temple and we are the temple under the new covenant.

Jesus is the Great High priest who offers the sacrifice for the people to make them right in relationship with God [Hebrews 4: 14-16], and does not need to do this repeatedly because he offered himself as sacrifice. We are then claimed as priests as part of the priesthood of all believers. The writer of 1 Peter 2: 9-10 states, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." As Christ is the Great High Priest we are the priests of God as the Body of Christ under the new covenant.

continued next page

Missional Relationality-Continued

Jesus is the sacrifice which brings atonement / at-one-ment. As part of God's atonement / at-one-ment for us is Jesus being killed on the cross and God submitting to this death as an expression of God's love and part of the working of God's redemption of us and all humanity. This helps shape our missional understanding because as the writer of 1 John 3 makes clear, "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters." [1 John 3: 16} Christ is the sacrifice which brings at-one-ment with God and we are called to be imitators of Christ as Paul writes in Ephesians 5: 1-2, "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma."

To bring this all together as part of an understanding of missional relationality, under the new covenant which God established as Christ, we do not worship God in a temple for God's presence is not located or symbolised in a special building. God's presence is located not just symbolically, but spiritually in us. We don't need priest to mediate to God on our behalf, for God is in us as we are the priesthood of all believers of God as Christ. Thus, when we come into relationship with others who may not yet know or comprehend God being at work in them or their lives, we become a way for them to open them to the presence of God. As we are in relationship with them and resonate with the pres-

ence of God then, hopefully, they begin to comprehend the resonance of God being in them as Spirit.

In all this our relationships become our worship, for we not only mediate or resonate with the presence of God for others, but we embody the love of God for them as we seek to love them as ourselves, just as Jesus identified as being the most important aspect of faith and discipleship [Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27-28] Those who live in love, live in God and God lives in them [1 John 4:16] Here our living becomes our witness. Our loving others not only is a joining in God's mission, but it also should resonate with people who do not yet comprehend God at work in them and their lives because most people know what love is and live it as part of their lives. However, our witness becomes also the inviting others to seek to understand how this is good news about what and who we understand God to be and how God is at work in all of us, as well as how this is are the core of what God in the person of Jesus referred to as the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven.

This is a lot to think about, but very important as we move into the preparation for celebrating anew the incarnation of God in the person of Jesus.

God bless

Jon

PEOPLE NEWS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Sandra Drayton
Bruce MacWilliam
Pamela Leslie

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

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

24 — 30 November

Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore

Church Working Bee



**Saturday
30 November
8am – 3.30pm**

Come for an hour or more.
MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK.

For cleaning and tidying the church, hall and downstairs and gardens.

Morning tea will be provided.

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

1st December - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm
includes Communion

8th December - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm
Community Meal

22nd December - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm

29th December - 9am ^{combined summer,} 6.45pm

Live streaming at morning services

Weekly
SYNOD SPOTLIGHT
Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter

For (15 November 2024) please see link :

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

Church Diary for 2025

A note to all group leaders — If your group is planning to use a part of the church property please ensure the area is available before finalizing your program. Even if you will be continuing to use the same space as this year, we still need your confirmation.

Please send your 2025 programs to the church office ASAP.

ADVENT CHRISTMAS EPIPHANY

WITH LOVE TO THE WORLD

THE HOLY FAMILY



VOL. 17, NO. 9
11 NOVEMBER 2024 – 9 FEBRUARY 2025

ADVENT CHRISTMAS EPIPHANY

WITH LOVE TO THE WORLD

a daily Bible reading guide based on the Revised Common Lectionary

Volume 17, Number 9
11 NOVEMBER 2024 to 9 FEBRUARY 2025

is available in the church foyer.

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

To find out what's happening at St. Matthew's during December/January click below:
Or go to the St. Matthew's website.



www.stmatthewsuniting.net.au

To be included in the February edition of In FOCUS please send your articles and group activities to the church office by **15 January**.



Thursday 5 December

10am-12pm Final for 2024

“Music to Relax With”

Guest Musician: **David Short**

David will delight and entertain with his amazing music, performed on both piano and organ.



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

ROSTERS

Worship Rosters for 8am and 9.30am, for December 2024 January and February 2025 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.



Op Shop

st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together



CLOSES for 2024
Thursday
18th December
Last Day of Trading



9am—2pm

Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday
& first Saturday of the month 9am-12noon

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

Edgar Street Baulkham Hills



REOPENS for 2025
Tuesday
28th January

Congratulations to the following Congregation members who have been elected to Church Council and Elders Council

Church Council

Hugh Darling, Greg Gibb, Sandra Gordon, Doug Mathewson, Sandra Morell, Terry Oliver, David Porter, Michael Strong, Mike Underwood, Karen Vandenberg, Sara Wienand

Elders Council

Erin Mathewson, Katherine Pedersen

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

PARRAMATTA COMMUNITY UNITING CHURCH

FAIR TRADE MARKET

SATURDAY 30 NOVEMBER

Centenary Uniting Church, Cnr Sorrell & Fennell St, North Parramatta

10:00 am - 3:00 pm

A GREAT CHANCE TO GET A VARIETY OF GIFTS AND MORE THAT MAKE AN IMPACT

Multiple stalls featuring:

- Jewellery
- Clothing
- Homewares
- Ornaments
- Sausage sizzle
- Devonshire teas, coffees & cold drinks
- And loads MORE

This is an activity of the Uniting Church in Australia

Morning Tea will be held after the 9am combined services for the month of January. We are seeking volunteers from 8am and 9:30am congregations to help on 5th January, 12th January and 19th January 2025.

If you can help, please contact Amanda Manson from the 9:30am congregation



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.