



Christmas Services

@ St. Matthew's

Remembrance and Thanksgiving Service

Tuesday 10 December 7.30pm

A service specifically designed for all those who experience a sense of loss at Christmas, especially those for who, this is the first Christmas without a loved one.

Carol Services

Sunday 22 December 8am, 9.30am and 6.45pm

Join our voices together to sing many traditional and contemporary carols.

Children's Christmas Eve Celebration

Tuesday 24 December 5pm

A chance for young children to be part of the Christmas story. A great family time!

Christmas Eve Late Service

Tuesday 24 December 11.15pm

An excellent way to celebrate Christmas in a relaxed family atmosphere with music, a relevant message and candles representing Christ's light in our world.



Christmas Day Worship

Wednesday 25 December 9am

Celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ with a Christmas message and carols.

HOPEFULLY INTO THE NEW

The end of one year and the beginning of a new, like any of our times of ending and beginning in life, provide an opportunity for reflection and a chance for planning or setting new directions. In the Season of Advent we had an opportunity for reflection as part of the preparation for Christmas. We also focused on the ideas of hope, peace, joy and love as lenses to orient ourselves in our understanding of the meaning of Christmas. Christmas is the advent (which means the arrival of a notable person or thing) of God being incarnate (enfleshed) in Jesus who was the Christ/Messiah. It is the beginning of the Good News of God in the person of Jesus – Immanuel: God with us.

Christmas is more than just a birthday party. The season goes for twelve days where we not only celebrate the birth of the Christ but also begin to lean into the hope which that brings and seek to comprehend its meaning in the context of Jesus's life, death and resurrection. The Season of Christmas overlaps with the coming of the New Year which is traditionally a time of taking stock in our lives and setting resolutions for the coming year. Unfortunately, it is almost part of the tradition of 'New Year's Resolutions' to set ourselves goals which we know that we are likely not going to achieve. There is a hopefulness in identifying what needs to be changed, but we often lack the willpower or grit and determination to carry through with our intentions.

Rick Snyder developed Hope Theory, which is not a theory of what hope is, but is a practical way of bringing our hope to bear and our hopes into reality by setting goals, developing pathways to achieve them and being aware of our agency in realising our hopes. He described the need for clear and structured goals

achieving the goals which recognise likely obstacles, both internal and external to ourselves, and the need to plan for them and how we might work around or through them.

The third aspect of his Hope Theory was the notion of agency. Agency refers to the level of intention, motivation, confidence and ability to follow various pathways towards the desired future framed as a goal. If we hope to achieve our goal, then we have to plan to work to achieve it and take ownership for our part in doing this.

Here is a video which explains Hope Theory:

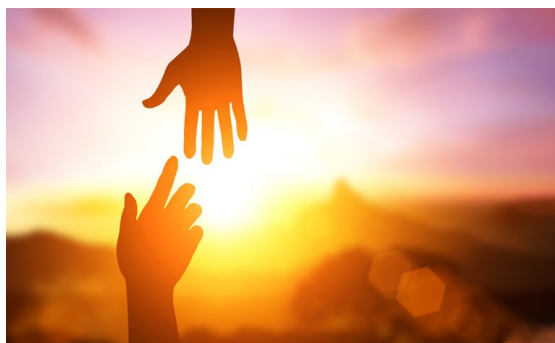
'The Theory and Power of HOPE'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Op4bp9hKV7Y>

Here is a helpful video which sets out a Hope Theory approach to goal-setting and working to achieve goals. **Hope Theory - Make Your Life Better**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZuHZhi1B4T4&t=56s>

We might wonder what all this Hope Theory stuff and goal setting or resolving has to do with Christmas, faith and discipleship. However, if we stop to think on the announcement of the angels of what Jesus's birth was to mean and then to Jesus's proclamation of his mission, as well as how his life sets before us call to the way of the cross as a means of joining with God in God's mission to bring the Kingdom of God and all of what this encompasses, then we have something to set goals around as we seek to be faithful in our discipleship. If we know that God is calling us

such as those using the S.M.A.R.T Goal framework, that is: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. He then presented the need for identified pathways for

to join in God's mission, and if that call connects to our commission to love God with our whole being and love our neighbour as ourselves, and if loving our neighbour and ourselves as part of loving God also incorporates our commission to be disciples, disciples others and teach everyone what God has commanded, then we need to both resolve to do this better,



set some goals about what aspects of this we hope to achieve and make some plans

about how we are going to go about doing this.

So, in the new year as there is a tradition of making some resolutions for improving ourselves and the way we go about living then, maybe as the Church, both collectively and individually members of it, we might set some resolutions and goals about how we are going to live better and work to do this. Here is where Hope Theory becomes helpful as it provides a great scaffold to assist us in doing better as disciples who seek to bring God's Kingdom more fully into being through our life and witness.

What resolutions or goals might you set in the new year? What faith and discipleship resolutions or goals might you set in the new year – of which one might be to do some discernment of your gifts and how God is calling you to use them? How might you plan to achieve your goals, including staying motivated and persevering through times when working to achieve them become difficult or hard?

This gives us something to think about as we transition from one year to the next and go deeper into the liturgical cycle of seasons.

God bless

Jon

SHINE'S BIG BIRTHDAY BASH

Take fourteen folk all clamouring for birthdays soon to be, just past or even in the distant future needing to be celebrated with flair and you have the makings of the inaugural SHINE Big Birthday Bash.

The Hills Club, just around the corner, in Jenner Street, became the chosen venue. The staff bent over backwards to accommodate our gang signing them in making sure they found the table and just generally being all round great people.

No off the shelf party hats for us, armed with crowns, colours and sparkles, we all created our own. Then suitably party attired perused the menu.

The kitchen staff again went to extra effort to ensure that all the meals came out at pretty much the same time and great meals they were too!

The obligatory rendition of "Happy Birthday" and blowing out of candles brought smiles from neighbouring tables that turned into lovely conversations as our guys joined in singing for their birthday person.

Turns out they know St. Matt's and visit the op shop...who'd have thought.

The evening ended with Birthday presents all round and the promise that we'll do it again.

Jane Cole



Act for Peace this Christmas

Celebrating 75 years of acting for peace together

75 years
Christmas Bowl

Call 1800 025 101, visit christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au or simply scan this QR code.

ACT FOR PEACE
The Christmas Bowl is the Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. 1949 to 2024

75 years

Christmas Bowl

ACTING FOR PEACE TOGETHER

Peace I leave with you;
My peace I give to you.
John 14:27

ACT FOR PEACE THROUGH THE CHRISTMAS BOWL. PLEASE GIVE TODAY.

ACT FOR PEACE
The Christmas Bowl is the Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. 1949 to 2024

Christmas Bowl envelopes are available as you enter and leave the services from Sunday 1st December.

1. Go to the website and donate directly.
 2. If you want to give by cheque or credit card, please fill in the details in the envelope and **PUT IT IN THE POST.**
 3. Cash to Christmas Bowl person at the back of the church. (if you want a receipt – put the cash in the envelope, fill out the form inside and hand it to the Christmas Bowl person so that a receipt can be mailed to you).
- Christmas Bowl
Coordinator:
Dean Drayton*

Act for Peace this Christmas

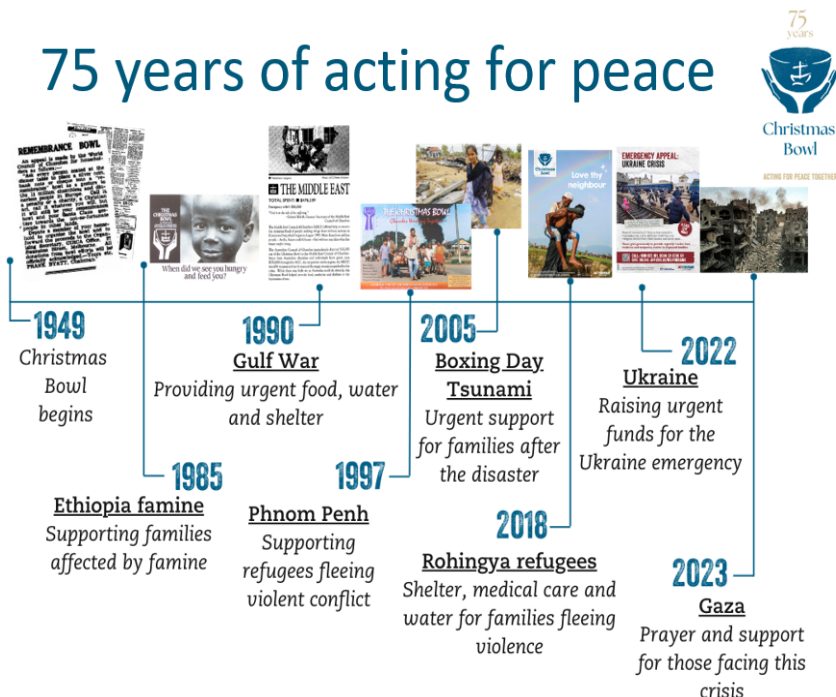
75 years of acting for peace in the world together.

For 75 years, church communities like yours, have been giving hope to families who are displaced through the Christmas Bowl appeal. Funds raised are invested in life changing support and programs around the globe that empower people to find safety in exile and rebuild their lives.

From your church community to theirs, your Christmas Bowl gifts help bring the peace that comes with having a safe place to belong, to those who need it most.

Please join us in praying and acting for peace in the world as we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Christmas Bowl.

75 years of acting for peace



We encourage you to join us in celebrating the **Christmas Bowl** this year, to support people around the world who are forced to flee their homes due to conflicts and disasters. Please find our giving envelopes located (church foyer or from Dean). You can also give online to our St. Matthew's Church's Giving Page at this link:

[Mycb.link45881](https://mycb.link45881)



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*****



St. Matthew's O P - S H O P
9am—2pm
Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday
& First Saturday of the month
9am—12pm

Please note that St. Matthew's
**Op Shop closes over the
Christmas and New year period.**

The **last shopping day** for 2024
is **Wednesday 18 December.**

Re-opens Tuesday **28 January 2025**
at 9am to 2pm.

**Please hold on to
your donations
until we re-open.**

LECTIONARY READINGS

Everyone
is invited
to come
along.

Bible Study

Tuesday Evenings

*We Focus on the Lectionary
Readings from the previous Sunday.*

Where: St. Matthew's UC
Church or Community Room

Time: 7pm-9pm
(last half hour will be supper)

Weekly: On a Tuesday night until
17 December 2024 (excluding 10 December)

Led by Jon Humphries and Alastair Burn

December Op-shop Report

We have been blessed to receive the

is very much more than that. We have 28 volunteers who are mostly retired. We are a big family of brothers and sisters who enjoy each other's company. You can guarantee morning tea and lunch discussions are never boring. Then we have our amazing customers, some of whom come in every week to browse and have a chat. The Op Shop is a safe environment to share worries.

None of this could happen without the people who donate goods and clothing, we are grateful for our very generous public.

We continue to support Parramatta Mission, the Social Work Dept in Blacktown Hospital with clothes for disadvantaged people, Ukraine refugees in Poland and towels for people raising 'seeing eye' dogs.

Apart from 28 'vollies', there is a team behind the scenes. The 'Sorting and Pricing' team, recently headed up by Annette Watson, who has also taken on the organisation of the Garage sales. The 'Auction' team of Colin Booth and Geoff Cameron, without whom all the precious items would be sold for \$20. I feel very privileged to be part of this big machine, and I thank our gracious Lord for bringing us all together.

Our first day of trading next year will be Tuesday 28 January 2025, with Saturday 15 March 2025 booked for our customer and volunteer's morning tea. Please come and join us.

We hope the light that came to earth 2000 years ago leads you into joy this Christmas and into 2025.

*God Bless you
Pamela*

What an amazing year we have had in the Op-shop! We have opened the Op Shop six extra Saturdays this year for two special Saturday sales, one bridal, and one vintage sale, and two customer morning teas. We have run very successful garage sales on the first Saturday of each month, and opened the Op-shop every week since the January 30 this year.

We have welcomed new volunteers from the community and from the congregation. When volunteers are unable to come in to help, it makes such a difference when we have a bigger team.

The customer morning teas in March and July were a huge success. We have some very talented cooks in our team and community, and they graciously brought along plates of delicious treats for

assistance of Jenny, one of our regular customers. Jenny has donated mannequins and



staging equipment for our displays. Jenny also donates her time to produce the amazing graphics on our social media posts. As a result of her work the St. Matthew's Uniting Church Op Shop has a far bigger media 'reach', attracting new customers every week.

During the month of October the Op Shop donated 10% of the taking (excluding the garage sale) to Ovarian cancer research. We raised \$573.70. Part of this fund raiser was the 'Vintage' sale. Dresses and evening wear from the 40's, 50's, 60's and 70's. We had shoes, handbags, jewellery and so much more. What a hoot! We even sold three more wedding dresses.

Our last day of trading will be 18 December 2024. We are all looking forward to a well earned rest. Although the Op Shop is sometimes seen as a fundraiser for the church, it



us to share.

Although an enormous amount of work, we had great fun setting up the Bridal sale in June. The downstairs hall took on the appearance of David Jones!! Our team of volunteers very generously gave up three Saturday mornings to run this event and the Op Shop. Although we only sold one wedding dress, we did sell many evening gowns and accessories.



News from the Finance Committee

Roof Loan Information Update:

Following a good discussion about the Church's roof loans at this year's Annual General Meeting, this seemed a good time to provide an update on the status of the loans.

We took out two loans to finance the roof renewal: a Schofield that attracts a low concessional interest rate, and a larger loan at commercial rates. We have paid \$37,510 off the \$150,000 borrowed through the main loan and \$10,211 off the \$50,000 Schofields Loan. The current loan balances owing are \$39,789 for the Schofield loan and \$112,490 for the main loan, totalling \$152,279.

Thanks to the generosity of one of our congregation, the Church is receiving the benefit of a repayable deposit that is offsetting the outstanding balance of the commercial loan. Donations identified as being made for the loan are also put into the offset account, giving us \$136,698 in the offset account. Because it has been offset, this means that we do not have to pay interest on the main loan. We pay \$17 per month interest on the Schofield loan.

However, we still need \$17,027 per annum (\$1418.92 per month) for the roof loan repayments, we are just fortunate that these mostly go to repaying the principal. St. Matthew's will largely be relying on general revenue to fund the roof loans repayments and we thank all of the congregations at St. Matthew's for their support with the repayments for the roof.

A summary is shown below:

	Schofield Loan	Main Loan
The original amounts borrowed	\$50,000.00	\$150,000.00
Amount repaid as at 28/10/24	\$10,211.00	\$37,510.00
Current Loan balances owing	\$39,789.00	\$112,490.00
Current interest included in repayments pm	\$17.00	(none for a few months)
Per month repayments	\$427.26	\$991.66
Amount in offset account (\$100k to be repaid in years to come)	-	\$136,698.00

Best wishes
Dom Schuster and Alastair Burn


From the Social Issues Group at St. Matthew's

Jesus taught us that we are to love our neighbours and the Bible also tells us that faith without action is dead. The Social Issues Group is focused on calling attention to and acting on issues in our broader community, so that St. Matthew's can be a church of faith in action.

In early August expressions of interest were invited from members of St. Matthew's who would be interested in forming a Social Issues Group. This group is composed of six church members: Alexander Lawless, Alex Barnett, Nicola Lawless, Robyn Mathewson, Amanda Manson and Abbey Sim. We would also welcome more members.

The main purpose of the group is to assist Uniting Advocacy with their campaigns at parish level. This includes emailing our local politicians and providing awareness to the church community of the important social issues and campaigns that the Uniting Church are currently conducting in NSW and nationally.

So far this group has sent emails to local politicians in regards to gambling reform and The Drug Summit. Other issues that Uniting Advocacy are pursuing include climate change, family and domestic violence and advocating for those who may not ordinarily have their voices heard.



37 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

38 This is the first and greatest commandment.

39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

Matthew 22:37-39 (NIV)

To ask about joining the Social Issues Group at St. Matthew's email: Alexander on alexander.lawless7@gmail.com

To subscribe to the Uniting Advocacy Social Justice E-News emails, send an email to register to: advocacy@uniting.org

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.



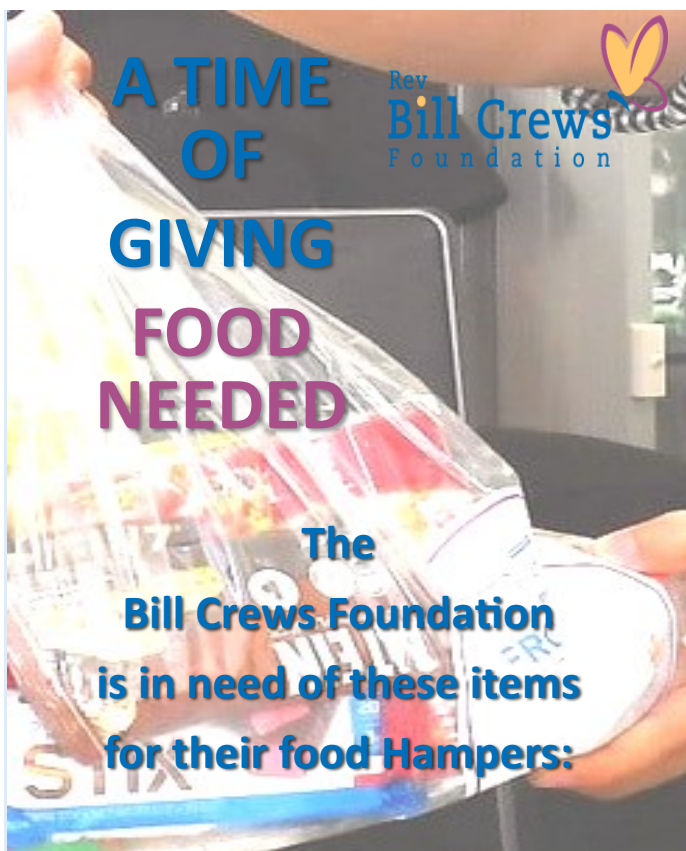
This tree has been supplied by the Baulkham Hills Council and after the service the tree will be planted, together with the messages etc., somewhere in the community. Please contact us if you would like further information, and know that we are thinking of you at this time of year.

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



- 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





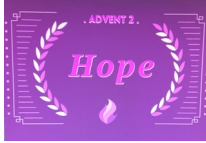




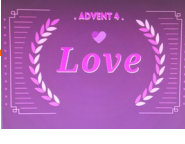



Please donate to the St. Matthew's collection for the Bill Crews Foundation Christmas Food Appeal.

**Please leave items in the containers in the upstairs church foyer.
 BY 15th December.
 Entrance on St Mathews Lane**

Calendar of Events for December 2024

School Holidays



Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<p>30 Church Office Closed</p> <p>No Scheduled events</p>	<p>31 Church Office Closed</p> <p>No Scheduled events</p> 	<p>st. matthew's UNITING CHURCH BAULKHAM HILLS</p>  <p>growing together</p>				<p>1</p>  <p>8am Worship Includes Communion</p> <p>9.30am Worship Includes Communion Followed by Morning Tea KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8</p> <p>6.45pm Worship</p>
<p>2</p> <p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall</p> <p>7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room</p>	<p>3</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>10am-3pm Christian Meditation Offsite</p> <p>4.30pm-9pm Preschool Christmas Concert Church & upstairs hall</p> <p>7pm-9pm Bible Study church/community room</p>	<p>4</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>10am-12noon In Stitches Upstairs hall</p> <p>4.30pm-9pm Preschool Christmas Concert Church & upstairs hall</p>	<p>5</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>10am-12pm Coffee and Discovery Music by David Short</p> <p>12.30pm Preschool Concert Rehearsal In the Church</p> <p>4.30pm-9pm Preschool Christmas Concert Church & upstairs hall</p>	<p>6</p> <p>12.30pm Preschool Concert Rehearsal in the Church</p> <p>4.30pm-9pm Preschool Christmas Concert Church & upstairs hall</p>	<p>7</p> <p>9am-12pm Op Shop</p> <p>9am-12pm Garage Sale lower hall</p> 	<p>8</p>  <p>8am—Worship</p> <p>9am—Worship @ the Willows</p> <p>9.30am—Worship Followed by Morning Tea KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship Community Meal</p>
<p>9</p> <p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall</p> <p>7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room and Church</p>	<p>10</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>9.30-11am Christian Meditation Community Room</p> <p>7.30pm Remembrance and Thanksgiving Service in the church</p> <p>7.30pm Thrive Bible Study lower hall</p>	<p>11</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>10am-12pm Women's Fellowship in the upstairs hall & church</p> <p>FINAL FOR 2024 WILL RESUME ON 12 February 2025</p> 	<p>12</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> 	<p>13</p> <p>12pm Op Shop Christmas Party @ Arthurs Café</p> <p>5pm-7pm Fusion Youth Group End of Year Pool Party Off site</p> 	<p>14</p> <p>No Scheduled events</p>	<p>15</p>  <p>8am—Worship</p> <p>9.30am—Worship KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 Followed by Morning Tea</p> <p>5pm—Shine</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship</p>
<p>16</p> <p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall</p> <p>7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room and Church</p>	<p>17</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>9.30-11am Christian Meditation Community Room</p> <p>7pm-9pm Bible Study church/community room</p>	<p>18</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop FINAL for Year</p> <p>10am-12noon In Stitches Upstairs hall</p> <p>10am-12noon Men's Morning Tea McKels Café Bella Vista</p>	<p>19</p> <p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>20</p> <p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>21</p> <p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>22</p>  <p>8am—Worship Lessons and Carols</p> <p>9.30am—Worship Lessons and Carols KUCA in recess Followed by Morning Tea</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship</p>
<p>23</p> <p>7.30pm Christian Meditation community room and Church</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Christmas Eve</p> <p>9.30-11am Christian Meditation community room</p> <p>5pm Family Service</p> <p>11.15pm Late Service</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Christmas Day</p> <p>9am Service</p> 	<p>26</p> <p>Boxing Day</p> <p>Public Holiday</p> 	<p>27</p> <p>Church Office Closed</p> <p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Church Office Closed</p> <p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>29</p>  <p>9am Summer Worship KUCA in recess Followed by Morning Tea</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship</p>

Calendar of Events for January 2025

School Holidays

Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

		1	2	3	4	5
		1 New Years Day Public Holiday 	2 Church Office Closed No scheduled events	3 Church Office Closed No scheduled events	4 No scheduled events	5  9am Summer Worship Includes Communion Followed by Morning Tea KUCA in recess 6.45pm Worship Includes Communion
6 7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room	7 Church Office Reopens 9.30-11am Christian Meditation Community Room	8 No scheduled events	9 No scheduled events	10 No scheduled events	11 No scheduled events	12  9am Summer Worship Followed by Morning Tea KUCA in recess 9am—Worship @ the Willows 6.45pm—Worship Community Meal
13 9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall 7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room and Church	14 9.30-11am Christian Meditation Community Room 7.30pm Thrive Bible Study lower hall	15 9am—Op Shop/ garage sale sorting day 10am-12noon In Stitches Upstairs hall 10am-12noon Men's Morning Tea McKels Café Bella Vista 7.30pm Elders meeting	16 No Scheduled events	17 No Scheduled events	18 No Scheduled events	19  9am Summer Worship Followed by Morning Tea KUCA in recess 6.45pm—Worship
20 9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall 7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room and Church	21 9am—Set up for Op-Shop 9.30-11am Christian Meditation Community Room	22 9am—Set up for Op-Shop	23 9am—Set up for Op-Shop	24 No scheduled events	25 No scheduled events	26  Australia Day 9am Summer Worship Followed by Morning Tea KUCA in recess 5pm—Shine 6.45pm—Worship
27 7.30pm—Christian Meditation Australia Day Public Holiday 	28 9am-2pm Op Shop RE-OPENS 9.30-11am Christian Meditation community room 7pm-9pm Bible Study church or community room	29 9am-2pm Op Shop	30 9am-2pm Op Shop 	31 5pm-7pm Fusion Youth Group "Water Games"		

