



**Bible Readings**

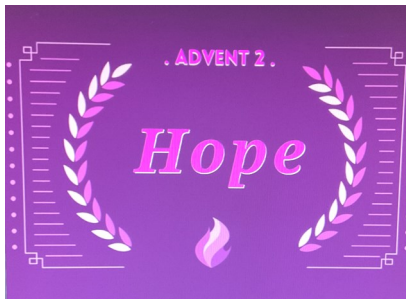
**Revelation 1: 4-8**  
**1 Thessalonians 3: 9-13**  
**Luke 21: 25-36**  
**8am and 9.30am**



**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**  
 Includes Communion  
 Led by Roland Bryant  
 and Jon Humphries  
**Followed by morning tea**

**9.30—Worship**  
 Includes Communion  
 Led by Jon Humphries  
**KUCA** Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8  
**Followed by morning tea**

**6.45pm—Worship**  
 Includes Communion  
 Led by Nicola Lawless  
 and Alexander Lawless

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

**MONDAY 2 December**

**9am—Sorting and Pricing for Op Shop and Garage Sale**  
 lower hall

**7.30pm—Christian Meditation**  
 community room and church

**TUESDAY 3 December**

**9am-2pm—Op Shop**

**9.30am-11am—Christian Meditation**  
 community room and church

**1.30—Memorial service at the church**

**4.30pm-6pm—Preschool Christmas Concert** church, upstairs hall

**7pm-9pm—Lectionary Bible Study**  
 in the church or community room

**7.30pm—Thrive Bible Study**

**WEDNESDAY 4 December**

**9am-2pm—Op Shop**

**10am-12pm—In Stitches**  
 upstairs hall

**4.30pm-6pm—Preschool Christmas Concert** church, upstairs hall

**THURSDAY 5 December**

**9am-2pm—Op Shop**

**10am-12pm—Coffee & Discovery**  
 Music by David Short

**12.30pm—Preschool Concert Rehearsal** in the church

**4.30pm-6pm—Preschool Christmas Concert**

**FRIDAY 6 December**

**11.30am—Preschool Concert Practice** in the church

**4.30pm-6pm—Preschool Christmas Concert**  
 in the church and upstairs hall

**SATURDAY 7 December**

**9am-12pm—Op Shop**

**9am-12pm Garage Sale**  
 lower hall

**SUNDAY 8 DECEMBER**

**8am—Worship**

**9am—Worship @ the Willow's**

**9.30am—Worship**

**KUCA** Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8  
 Followed by morning tea

**6.45pm—Worship Community Meal**



**MINISTER**

REV JON HUMPHRIES

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**CHURCH OFFICE SECRETARY:**

LYNN SAMUEL

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Thank you to all who have contributed to this publication.

# Something to think about

## 1st December Advent 1 HOPE

### Lectionary Readings:

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Psalms 25:1-10

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Luke 21:25-36

### A New Church Year

This Sunday marks the beginning of a new liturgical year. We will be in the third year of the Revised Common Lectionary three-year cycle, Year C, which focuses on the Gospel of Luke. We begin with the season of Advent. Advent means the arrival or happening of a notable person or thing or an invention being made. Advent is a season of preparation for Christmas, that being the celebratory season commemorating the birth of Jesus, who was the Christ and Immanuel (which means God with us).

This Advent, the Uniting Church Assembly will be sharing a series of reflections under the theme, 'Expanding Advent'. The series has been prepared in recognition that we are living in a time of acute crisis in the Holy Land, the very lands of Jesus' birth. Some communities and worship leaders may be wrestling with the language,

themes and ideas of the Advent season in light of the present war in Palestine, Israel and the wider Middle East. There is all the other issues, problems, and conflicts throughout the world which impinge on our faith and discipleship.

Over the next five weeks the Assembly will offer a range of resources including reflections, art and vigil to enrich our journey through this season of the church.

Offerings will be released weekly:

- Week 1 - **Introduction and Expanding our Language** (released 20 November)
- Week 2 - **Expanding our Hearts** (released Wednesday 27 November)
- Week 3 - **Expanding our Minds** (released Wednesday 4 December)
- Week 4 - **Expanding our Senses** (released Wednesday 11 December)
- Week 5 - **Expanding our Hospitality** (released Wednesday 18 December)

Here is the link to the Assembly website <https://uniting.church/expanding-advent/>

As is the tradition in many Churches, we will have an Advent wreath and be lighting Advent candles on each of the four Sundays leading up to Christmas.

Each candle has a traditional meaning of hope, peace, joy and love, with the final candle, the white candle in the middle being the Christ candle which is lit on Christmas Day.

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## A New Church Year -Continued

Hope, peace, joy and love are really lovely ideas. They hold much meaning for many of us, but they are also not always easy words to put into practise. In our lives, as is in the world, there is often a lot which can potentially diminish our hope, rob us of peace, lessen our joy, and separate us from love. We, who are people of faith in God, know (or at least claim) that God is the source of hope, peace, joy and love, and that God in the person of Jesus is the way into these blessings. Yet, it takes some work to work out how that all works. What seems simple actually is not always easy to comprehend.

As we start a new liturgical or Church year, it can seem like we are stuck in an endless cycle. The fun and celebration of Christmas is a highlight, but some of us can wonder what the point is to doing the same thing over and over again. This is understandable, but there is a way to overcome any resistance to this seeming perpetual habit of religious waiting and celebration. The reality is that we need to keep doing it over and over again until it becomes reality.

We need to keep finding hope and ways to bring into being that is real and powerful in our lives. We need to keep working for peace, both in our own lives and in our world, because we humans can't seem to ever live in peace for long. We need joy: joy which is not simple happiness. Joy is a feeling of intense, happiness and contentment that comes from within and is connected to living a more authentic life. It can coexist or be present at the same time as sorrow. It can be momentary as we notice or remember things which give us joy, or it can be a long-lasting foundation which sits in the bedrock of our souls. Finally, we need love. Love, that deep self-giving love, is the thing in life which brings meaning and purpose, but

it takes work and effort, and we need to practise it all the time, and be reminded of its power and importance when our loving gets fatigued. For all this, we need God, because we can't always do it on our own.

So, in this season of Advent, where we tread a maybe familiar road, may we find new paths which lead us to new insight. May we look to find how God is awakening in us new understandings of the power of hope, peace, joy and love to transform our living and our world. To do this let us put in some effort to use resources which are available to us and to set aside time, in this most busy of seasons, for reflection and contemplation. After all, it is our connection with God which is what the season of Advent is all about. God takes on the most intimate of connections in the incarnation that we might come to know the good news of how God is at work for good in the world.

Incarnation is the Word but it is also our work. We are called not to simply sit and wait for Christ to come, because we know that as a present reality and truth, but the season of Advent is a reminding and a remembering that we are called to embody, that is incarnate: put into our fleshly existence as humans, hope, peace, joy and love in ways which transform our living and the lives of others. There is not one simple way to do this and no one can tell us how we as individuals must work it out. We have helps and guides, but we have to find the way as we open ourselves to God and be led into deeper faith and discipleship. So, there is quite a lot to think about in Advent.

*God bless*

*Jon*



PEOPLE NEWS



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

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

**Ecumenical Prayer Cycle**


1— 7 December



**Myanmar, Thailand**

**Sympathy** to Barbara and Bill Fiedler on the death of their daughter Lauren. A service celebrating the life of Lauren will be held next Tuesday 3 December at 1.30pm at St. Matthew's.

If you are comfortable to do so, Lauren's family have requested bright floral clothing or some bright colours be worn as we celebrate her life.



**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 <sup>combined summer,</sup> 6.45pm

Live streaming at morning services

*Weekly*

**SYNOD SPOTLIGHT**  
Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter

**For (22 November 2024) please see link :**

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

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




December 2024  
January 2025

*St. Matthew's Monthly Newsletter*

[www.stmatthewsuniting.net.au](http://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**.



**The Christmas Bowl**  
Celebrating 75 years of acting for Peace together

ACT FOR PEACE

**Four ways to give to those in need beyond Australia**

**Cash in the Christmas Bowl envelope given to the person in the WHITE HAT at the back of the Church each Sunday Service.**

**Give credit details in the form in the Christmas Bowl envelope and tie it to the person in the WHITE HAT and receive a receipt later.**

**Give directly to a letter sent to you from Christmas Bowl to your address. Put that you are at St Matthews on the form**

**Give to a special web site set up for St Matthews donations - put [mycb.link/45881](http://mycb.link/45881) into browser.**

**All ways will bring resources of hope to others. Thankyou.**



# 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\*\*\*\*\*

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



### 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**

**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](http://www.stmatthewsuniting.net.au)

Click on the metal dove image / publications or find in recent posts.