



st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
 growing together

Weekly Newsletter

8 December 2024

Advent 2

Bible Readings

Luke 1: 68-79
Philippians 1: 3-11
Luke 3: 1-6
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 Vanessa Williams-Henke

9am—Worship @ the Willow's

9.30—Worship
 Led by Albert Olley
 and Vanessa Williams-Henke

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

6.45pm—Worship
 Community Meal

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 9 December

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

7.30pm—Christian Meditation
 community room and church

TUESDAY 10 December

9am-2pm—Op Shop

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

7.30pm—Remembrance & Thanksgiving Service

WEDNESDAY 11 December

9am-2pm—Op Shop

10am-12pm—Women's Fellowship FINAL FOR 2024
 in the church and upstairs hall

THURSDAY 12 December

9am-2pm—Op Shop

FRIDAY 13 December
5-7PM—Fusion end of year party offsite

SATURDAY 14 December
No Scheduled Activities

SUNDAY 15 DECEMBER

8am—Worship

9.30am—Worship
KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8
 Followed by morning tea

5pm—Shine

6.45pm—Worship



MINISTER

REV JON HUMPHRIES
 Email: jon@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

CHURCH OFFICE SECRETARY:
 LYNN SAMUEL

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS 9AM-3PM MON-FRI

OFFICE : 9686 3003
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LOCATION:
 CNR CHARLES & EDGAR STREETS
 BAULKHAM HILLS

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Thank you to all who have contributed to this publication.

Something to think about

8th December Advent 2 PEACE

Lectionary Readings:

Malachi 3:1-4
Luke 1:68-79
Philippians 1:3-11
Luke 3:1-6

Peace

What a terrible word is peace! At the same time, it is so beautiful, wonderful and awesome.

One hundred and ten years ago, in 1914 amidst the trenches of Flanders Fields something beautiful and wonderful happened in this space of devastation and bleakness. It was Christmas and the soldiers fighting in World War 1, the 'Great' war – the war to end all wars, were thinking about their loved ones and missing home as they lay in the mud with the stench of death and battle around them. It is said that it was around 8.30pm and the German soldiers began to sing, "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht." It was a song written in 1818 by Joseph Mohr, an Austrian priest, and composed by Franz Xaver Gruber, and we know it as the Christmas carol, 'Silent Night.' The British soldiers recognised the song and began to sing as well.

What happened then was beyond amazing. An informal truce ensued and the German and British soldiers left their trenches. They crossed "No Man's Land" to meet and exchanged gifts they'd received from home: chocolate, tobacco, alcohol, articles of clothing, buttons, badges, and hats. The British soldiers bartered tins of plum pudding and tobacco sent to them by King George. The Germans had pipes with a picture of the Crown Prince. A game of soccer even happened. It was an astounding moment of peace and joy.

Watch a video about what happened using this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6KHoVBK2EVE&t=123s>

What is the most tragic aspect to all of this was the fact that those men who had become friends and who had shared a powerful time of celebration and done so at the time of the celebration of Christ's birth, a day later returned to killing each other, possibly with even greater regret than before. Peace is thus, a terrible word, for it promises much but is so fragile in our human hands that it easily breaks and crumbles to dust and ashes. This of course is not the fault of peace. It is ours because how we misunderstand and misuse it, or consume it like so much in life, that it is used up and then the remains becomes waste to be thrown away.

Continued next page

Peace -Continued

Before we lament the awful tragic shortness of the 1914 Christmas truce, we need to consider our reaction to peace in the season of Advent.

Sometimes it seems that we take a break in the chaos of the preparations for Christmas, and remember peace for an hour or so, before that candle has been lit and it is time to move on to joy and all the other stuff of our modern Christmas.

Even though we sing of and celebrate Jesus as the Prince of Peace at Christmas, how much does that peace really mean to us, or how much of it do we actually take onboard, and for how long does that peace last in us when we do capture a sense of peace at Christmas?

Let us remember that peace is the shalom – the wholeness which comes from God. Peace is rooted in human-kindness, where we look into the eyes of each other, even our enemy and see the image of God and see them as our brother or sister or sibling in our common humanity. We see that despite difference and diversity inside and out, that we all share the same kind of being. Peace comes when we are making humanity whole.


God knows peace, for God is peace. Yet, at the same time God knows no peace with humanity for we are continually at war or in conflict with peace. We lack peace in our hearts with the turmoil of our emotions. We lack peace in our minds with all our stresses and worries. We lack peace in our souls for we are rarely at rest or in a state of peace where there is space for God to flow into our being. We lack peace in our muchness or our all, for a lack of peace in any part of our being means that we are not in a state of shalom or wholeness. Peace requires the working and strength of our all/ our muchness for it to be a part of who we are and what we are able to share with others.

Thus, peace ironically is a work and an outcome. We have to work hard and continuously to make peace, share peace and be at peace, only then does the fruit of our labour result in peace within us and between us who are the other to each other. As we remember, celebrate and pray for peace this week, may it be a long-lasting aspect of our being. Peace is more than just something to think about, and that itself is something to think about.

God bless

Jon

PEOPLE NEWS



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Dulcie Duncum
Rosemary Sexton
Lyn Booth
Evelyn Medcalf
David Sieber

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

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

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

8— 14 December



Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam

Weekly
SYNOD SPOTLIGHT
Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter

For (29 November 2024) please see link :

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



The Christmas Bowl
Celebrating 75 years of acting for Peace together

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 into your browser

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

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



IN FOCUS st. matthew's UNITING CHURCH BAULKHAM HILLS growing together
December 2024 January 2025
St. Matthew's Monthly Newsletter

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 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.

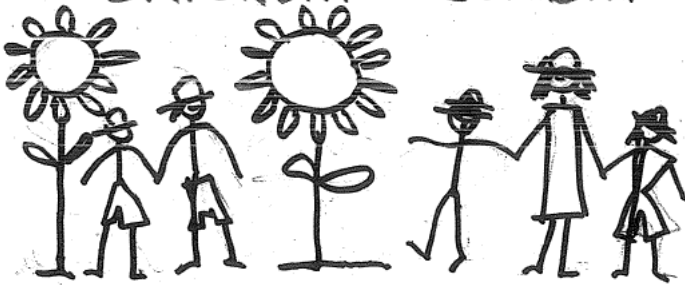
OPEN STUDIO OPEN GARDEN

Come n see
paintings n plants

ALL DAY

at
40 BULLI ROAD
TOONGABBIE

on
14th n 15th December
SATURDAY n SUNDAY



Rosemary & Thomas
Smith from the 8am
congregation will be
having an Open Studio
and Garden on

**Saturday 14 &
Sunday 15 December**

Raising funds for
Parramatta Mission.

**All welcome.
All day event.**

Morning Tea will be held after
the 9am combined services for
the month of January.

Many thanks to the people
who have already volunteered.

We now only need someone
for 19th January.

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



Op Shop

st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
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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

From the Social Issues Group at St Matthews

Wesley Mission's 'Put Pokies in their Place' campaign:

Gambling is a prevalent issue in Australia, with Australians spending more per capita than any other jurisdiction in the world on legal forms of gambling, losing a staggering \$25 billion annually. The most recent whole year data is from 2023. From July to September 2023, individuals in NSW lost \$2.1 billion to poker machines. The data suggests Western Sydney is the region with the highest losses in New South Wales. The social impact of gambling can range from productivity loss, bankruptcy, crime, suicide, illness, divorce and separation and increased rates of domestic and family violence.

Wesley Mission Goals for their 'Put Pokies in their Place' Campaign

Mandatory cashless gambling card with harm reduction measures.

Power-down poker machines between midnight and 10am

Fund an independent statewide self-exclusion register.

Let local communities have a say in local poker machine applications.

Publishing gambling venue data.

As part of this campaign, Wesley Mission would like as many people as possible to sign their petition to reduce the hours that poker machines are available in order to reduce the harm being done to the community. They need more than 501 signatures to be able to present it to the NSW Parliament.

The Wesley Mission petition 'On Poker Machine Shut Down Hours' wording is:

'To the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly, especially The Hon David Harris, Minister for Gaming and Racing: We petition the NSW government to amend the operating hours of poker machines (Electronic Gaming Machines) in NSW to enforce a shutdown from midnight to 10am every night of the week.'

Here is the link to the Wesley Mission petition website:

<https://www.wesleymission.org.au/get-involved/advocacy/gambling-reform/help-us-put-an-end-to-sports-gambling-2/>

Below is the QR code to access the petition if you would like to use your phone to sign the petition.



Blessings from

Alexander Lawless on behalf of the St Matthews Social Issues Group