



**Bible Readings**

**Zephaniah 3: 14-20**

**Philippians 4: 4-7**

**Luke 3: 7-18**

**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 Vivienne Strong  
 and Albert Olley

**9.30—Worship**  
 Led by Sharon Underwood  
 and Dean Drayton

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

**5pm—Shine**

**6.45pm—Worship**  
**Making Sense of Advent**  
 Led by Alexander Lawless  
 and Clive Pearson

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

**MONDAY 16 December**  
**9am—Sorting and Pricing for Op Shop and Garage Sale**  
 lower hall

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

**TUESDAY 17 December**  
**9am-2pm—Op Shop**  
**9.30am-11am—Christian Meditation**  
 community room and church

**7pm—Lectionary bible study**  
 In the church or community room  
**7.30pm—Thrive bible study**

**WEDNESDAY 18 December**  
**9am-2pm—Op Shop**  
**LAST DAY FOR 2024**  
**10am-12pm—In Stitches**  
 in the church and upstairs hall  
**10am-12noon—Men's Morning Tea**  
 McKels Café Bella Vista

**THURSDAY 19 December**  
**Pest spraying**  
 whole church & Preschool

**FRIDAY 20 December**  
**No Scheduled Activities**

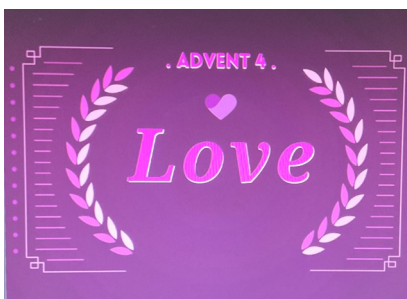
**SATURDAY 21 December**  
**No Scheduled Activities**

**SUNDAY**  
**22 DECEMBER**

**8am—Worship**

**9.30am—Worship**  
**KUCA** In Recess  
 Followed by morning tea

**6.45pm—Worship**



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

**CHURCH OFFICE SECRETARY:**  
 LYNN SAMUEL  
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 BAULKHAM HILLS

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Thank you to all who have contributed to this publication.

# Something to think about

## 15th December Advent 3 JOY

### Lectionary Readings:

Zephaniah 3: 14-20

Isaiah 12: 2-6

Philippians 4: 4-7

Luke 3: 7-18

### JOY

The third Sunday in Advent is traditionally the Sunday for joy. It is also known as Gaudete Sunday, which comes from the Latin word gaudete meaning "rejoice". Traditionally, the pink candle is lit. I always feel that the pink candle, the one that is different and thus perhaps more special, should be for love.

The pink candle has a blurred history. Some say that it is to represent joy and the shift from penitence to anticipation for Christmas. Others view it as the Shepherd's Candle, and represents the joy felt at the birth of our Lord, as well as the joy we have in anticipation of His return. It is said that it was a tradition for the pope to give someone a rose on the fourth Sunday of Lent to liven up the sombre tone of Lent. Advent was also a sombre time and the rose custom became part of Advent with the candle being pink to represent joy. Rose is a "brightening" of the ordinary violet and

thus symbolizes joy says other people. Ironically, I have never seen purple as sombre, but as a colour for royalty, and I've never really ever only focused on the penitent aspect of Advent.

However you view it, the third Sunday is a traditionally a Sunday to mark Joy. Joy is a rich emotion which many see to be deeper than happiness. The Greek word often used for joy is Χαρά [chara (pronounced with a k)]. There is a helpful Bible Project video: "Joy" which I am recommending as part of this week's active discipleship / applied learning activities. Here is the link to it <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvOhQTuD2e0>

Joy is a time travelling emotion. We can think back to the past and past experiences which have brought us joy and then find that we experience joy in the present. The same can be said of future joy which we might anticipate, and even though it is yet to be, we can also experience it in the present. Joy is linked with love, because joy is linked to connection and relationship. Joy seems centred in relationship with someone or something and usually comes from the experience of a positive connection. The positive connection or positive relationship, even if vicarious (such as observing the joy of someone else) often triggers joy in us if we let it. In this way joy is also linked with compassion, which at its root means to feel with someone else.

Continued next page

## Joy -Continued

Dr Barbara Fredrickson did work on the Ten Big Emotions which resource us in our wellbeing, and joy is in that top ten. Here is a link to learn more about her work and, in particular, how joy is related to love. <https://www.pursuit-of-happiness.org/history-of-happiness/barb-fredrickson/> Barbara Fredrickson has published a book called, 'Love 2.0.'

Her website describe the book as serving as "a guide to learn how to increase opportunities to receive and provide moments of love. Fredrickson describes love, as being an emotion that, like all emotions, is momentary, not enduring and can be experienced in micro-moments. Love, through this lens, is not an emotion for just soul mates and/or family ties. Love 2.0 defines love as an emotion that can be shared several times a day with different people ranging from family members to strangers on the street."

In Advent, which is a liturgical time of preparation for the celebration of Christmas, which is ironically the commemoration of the actual advent [meaning the arrival of a notable person or thing], the week of joy is about looking forward in time with God to God's working in the world as much as it is about looking back through remembering God's work in the world. We look back to the incarnation of God in the person of Jesus, the Christ/Messiah [both words mean the same thing] as a great work of God to bring the Kingdom of God into a new and deeper way of being. This is a thing to rejoice, or be joyful, in and about. However, the coming of Christ is not simply about his birth, but his life, death and resurrection, which also were in the past, but are going to be celebrated in our coming future, just as this week in Advent is still two weeks before Christmas. This is something to rejoice in and be joyful about.


Finally, alongside all the joy of knowing God in the present and experiencing joy when we discern and celebrate God being at work in our lives for good in the present, we have the eschatological [meaning the end times] perspective of both the joy of God's work at the end of our mortal lives and the hope of heaven, as well as the joy of the hope of the redemption and renewal of all creation. All this future joy becomes experienceable by us as individuals and as the Church in our present time. There is great joy and much joy to be had at anytime we do the work of thinking on it. So, joy is definitely something to think about.

Plus, there is just joy to be had in life as we share it with others – yes, simply sharing joy with others leads to an experience of joy in itself. I commend this week's active discipleship and applied learning activities to you. They are available in the Church space foyer. One of the activities is to watch a joyful video of people sharing joy, which brings joy to someone and leads to an experience of joy for those doing the sharing and us who get to share in it through watching the video. If you don't get to the activity sheet, here is the link to the Yes Theory video: 'We Took a 102-Year-Old Around the World' where they brought an 102 year-old lady to Sydney and had a joyful time. Please watch and enjoy [pun intended] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38PwG3zGDDI>

*God bless*

*Jon*

PEOPLE NEWS



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

Joy Stewart

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**  
 15— 21 December



*P.R China, Hong Kong, Macau*

*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)



**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. Matthew's on the form**

**Give to a special web site set up for St. Matthew's donations**

put [mycb.link/45881](http://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.



[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 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.

# 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  
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**

## *From the Social Issues Group at St. Matthew's*

How doing little things makes a big difference.

### *Gambling Reform:*

Thank you to all the people who have signed the Wesley Mission online petition for reducing the hours of poker machine operation so that they are shut down from midnight to 10am. If you haven't signed yet but would like to, here is the link: <https://www.wesleymission.org.au/get-involved/advocacy/gambling-reform/help-us-put-an-end-to-sports-gambling-2/>

### *The Drug Summit:*

The 2024 NSW Drug Summit for 2024 meetings have come to an end and have informed the NSW Parliament of what the community needs moving forward. The report is yet to be published, but the main points that Uniting Fair Treatment were supporting include:

- Introduction of drug checking services, giving opportunities for discussions about drug education and ways to access to treatment.
- Improve cross-agency partnerships, including wraparound services and coordination between health, mental health, education and justice supports.
- Enhance access to treatment and support for children and young people.
- Improve alcohol and other drug education in schools and the community.
- Enable more supervised injecting facilities (SIFS) by removing the legislative restriction to one facility in NSW.
- Enhance funding for prevention and early intervention programs.
- Have meaningful consultation and community led work in the culturally and linguistically diverse community.

### *What is naloxone? It can save a life.*

Naloxone is a drug that can temporarily reverse the effects of an opioid overdose or adverse reaction. It is available at no cost at participating pharmacies, no prescription required, under the Australian Government Take Home Naloxone (THN) program which started in 2022. This is for anyone who may experience or witness an opioid overdose or adverse reaction, including friends, family or general community members. It is available from approved providers such as community pharmacists, dispensing doctors and hospital pharmacists.

There was a story in the ABC News app recently about a girl who wasn't a drug user, but who goes to music festivals and thought that she would just keep a small nasal spray of naloxone in her bag for these events. She went to a chill-out area during one music festival and found there was someone there suffering from the signs of opioid overdose, she administered the naloxone and got a witness to bring a medic and as a result the person recovered within 45 minutes. Doing little things makes a big difference.

<https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/take-home-naloxone-program/about-the-take-home-naloxone-program>

Blessings from

Alexander Lawless on behalf of the St. Matthew's Social Issues Group