



st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
 growing together

Weekly Newsletter

22 December 2024

Advent 4

Bible Readings

Sunday 22 December
 Luke 1: 46-55, Luke 1: 39-45

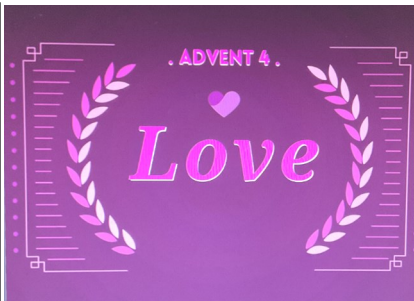
Christmas readings

Luke 2: 1-20, John 3: 16-17
 Matthew 1: 18-25, Matthew 2: 1-12
 John 1: 1-5 & 9-14

Response after Bible Readings

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

Response: *Thanks be to God*



**8am—Worship
 Lessons and Carols**
 Led by Jon Humphries

**9.30—Worship
 Lessons and Carols**
 Led by Hugh Darling
 and Jon Humphries

KUCA in Recess for school holidays
 Followed by morning tea

6.45pm—Worship
 Led by Jon Humphries

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**

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 23 December

9am-3pm—Church Office Open
 7.30pm—Christian Meditation
 community room and church

TUESDAY 24 December

Christmas Eve

9am-3pm—Church office open
 9.30am-11am—Christian Meditation
 community room and church
 5pm—Family Service
 11.15pm—Late Service

WEDNESDAY 25 December

Christmas Day 9am Service



THURSDAY 26 December

Boxing Day Public holiday



FRIDAY 27 December

No Scheduled Activities
 Church Office Closed

SATURDAY 28 December

No Scheduled Activities

SUNDAY 29 DECEMBER

9am—Summer Worship

KUCA In Recess

Followed by morning tea

6.45pm—Worship

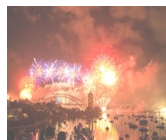


Monday 30 December

Church Office Closed
 No Scheduled Activities

Tuesday 31 December

Church Office Closed
 No Scheduled Activities



MINISTER

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

CHURCH OFFICE SECRETARY:

LYNN SAMUEL
CHURCH OFFICE HOURS 8AM-2.30PM
 TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY

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
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Thank you to all who have
 contributed to this publication.

Something to think about

22nd December Advent 4 LOVE

Lectionary Readings:

Micah 5: 2-5a
Luke 1: 46b-55 or Psalm 80: 1-7
Hebrews 10: 5-10
Luke 31: 39-45 (46-55)

LOVE

Love is the simplest, hardest idea and action in the world. It is an ideal to strive for, but one which seems continuously out of reach. It is the nature of God, and if we could just live in it we would live in God and God would be seen to truly live in us and earth would be like it is in Heaven.

Love is a simple word, but it gets confused with what it means. That is perhaps why there are at least eight words in Biblical Greek for love:

Eros: Sexual Passion.
Philia: Deep Friendship.
Ludus: Playful Love. ...
Agape: Love for Everyone.
Pragma: Longstanding Love.
Philautia: Love of the Self.
Storge: Familial Love.
Mania: Obsessive Love

Having so many options avoids the awkwardness of saying that we might love to scratch our itchy skin and love our partner or family, which could lead to people possibly being confused that we love both things the same way and to the same degree. Of course most of

us who are fluent English speakers know the nuance, but maybe some times we don't.

When we say that God loves us and we love God, I'm not sure we always understand what that means, or how God in the person of Jesus, the Christ/Messiah taught us what it means. There is a degree of affection involved. However, the agape love of God is about self-giving and self-sacrificing love. It is giving of our best for the best for others and to bring out the best in another. If you want to get a good summary of this, read 1 John, Chapters 3 and 4.

Love at Christmas time is more than all the joy and warm emotions. It is more than family and friends. These are powerful and great expressions of love, but at Christmas we are focused on the incarnation of God as Jesus, Immanuel - God with us, who is the Christ/Messiah. It is the radical self-giving of God who, in the ultimate act of compassion, breaks into our reality and takes on our being. Incarnation is not just a baby Jesus, as amazing as that it is for God to lie in a manger. It is the beginning of a life laid down in love; A life lived in the love of God; A life lived in love of the neighbour; And a life lived through death and resurrection which opened up eternity.

Christmas is the advent of God's incarnation as Christ. May this Christmas be a time when we come to better know and understand how deep an expression of love that this is and what a deep and lifelong call to love it presents us with.

Love is something to love thinking about.

God bless

Jon

PEOPLE NEWS

**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY**



Harry MacWilliam

*January Birthdays to
the 11th*

Sandra Pentland
Graham Cotterill
Cecile Layt

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

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

22— 28 December

Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan

5—11 January

Middle East: Egypt, Israel, Palestine,

Jordan, Lebanon

St Matthews Pre school Closure dates

St Matthews Pre School will be closed from Friday 20 December and we re-open for a pupil-free staff only day on Friday 31 January 2025.

Classes begin from
Monday 3 February

**Please note there will be no Lectionary
Bible Study next week as it is
Christmas Eve.**

**Bible study will resume on Tuesday 28
January 2025.**

**Please join us for either the
5pm family service or the 11.15pm late
service.**

**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 (20 December 2024) please see link :

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

Thank you– Open studio and Garden

*Thomas and I were pleased to welcome locals,
friends and church members to our garden and
studio on the weekend. In spite of the heat, we
all enjoyed the days and, via donations and
plant sales, raised \$400 for Parramatta Mission.*

sincerely, Rosemary and Thomas Smith

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**.

**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.

Children's Christmas Eve

Tuesday 24 December 5pm

A chance for children and families to be part of the Christmas story. An interactive fun and engaging celebration of the birth of Jesus.



Carol Services

Sunday 22 December Combined 8am, 9.30am and 6.45pm

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

Christmas Eve Late Service

Tuesday 24 December 11.15pm

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.



Christian Meditation Silence in Very Season Daily readings with John Main

December 24

As we prepare each year for the feast of Christmas we have a precious opportunity to reflect upon the marvellous context of the Christian vision. The Incarnation, the birth of Jesus, is the revelation of God. It is the showing of his power, his wisdom, his love in the man Jesus. The Incarnation is like a pouring out of God on earth and, as the life of Jesus proves, God holds nothing back. The generosity of God is incarnated in the generosity of Jesus. In his life we see his availability to the crowds, his compassion for the sick, for the mourning, his utter selflessness, we know, Come to a climax in his death on the cross.

Christ was born in Bethlehem and that is a marvellous, historical fact. But it is fact that is completed. It was completed in the past so that now he must be born in our hearts. Our hearts must be made ready for him. There must be room for him in the inn of our heart. That is all meditation is; a readying and opening of our heart for the birth of Christ.

And it is because he is the infinite God that we must let go of everything else, so that there is space for him in our hearts. The mystery is that when he is come to birth in our hearts, everything is come to birth with him, our hearts are filled with all his love, all his compassion, all his forgiveness. We know ourselves forgiven, loved and understood by the infinite God and by his son, our brother. Filled with this experiential knowledge we cannot fail to communicate and share it with anyone to whom we turn, with whom our lives are interwoven.

The Heart of Creation

Church Office Hours

Please note the Church Office will be open Monday 23 December and Tuesday 24 December (Christmas Eve) from 9am to 3pm.

The office will then be closed over Christmas and New Year and will re open on Tuesday the 7 January.

New Office hours will be 8am to 2.30pm
Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays each week.

Blessings to all for a happy Christmas.

Calendar of Events for January 2025

School Holidays

	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		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 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	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 7.30pm Elders meeting upstairs hall	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	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	28 7.30pm Christian Meditation Australia Day Public Holiday  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		