



Bible Readings

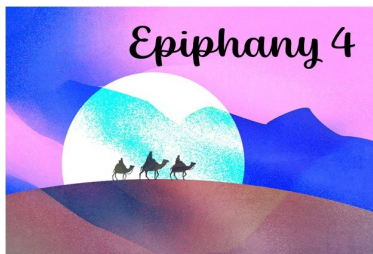


Luke 2: 22-40
1 Corinthians 13: 1-13

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 Jon Humphries

9.30am—Worship
Includes Communion
 Led by Jon Humphries

KUCA returns for 2025
 Preschool,
 Years K-2 & Years 3-8
Followed by morning tea

6.45pm—Worship
Includes Communion
 Led by Nicholas Lawless
 and Jon Humphries

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 3 February

Church Office Closed

7.30pm—Christian Meditation
 community room and church
7.30pm—9pm—KYB Introductory night
 Upstairs hall and church

TUESDAY 4 February

8am-2.30pm—Church Office Open
9am-12pm—Op Shop open

9.30am-11am—Christian Meditation

community room and church

11.30.am—Care & Prayer

Community room & Church

7-9pm—Lectionary Bible Study

WEDNESDAY 5 February

8am-2.30pm—Church Office Open
9am-12pm—Op Shop

10am-12noon—In Stitches

Upstairs hall

7pm—Finance committee Meeting

Lower hall

THURSDAY 6 February

8am-2.30pm—Church Office Open
9am-12pm—Op Shop

FRIDAY 7 February

No Scheduled Activities

Church Office Closed

SATURDAY 8 February

No Scheduled Activities

SUNDAY 9 FEBRUARY

8am—Worship

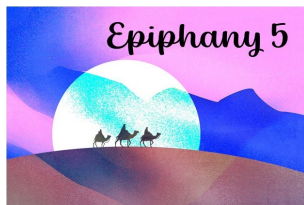
9am—Worship @ the Willow's

9.30am—Worship

KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8

Followed by morning tea

6.45pm—Worship
Community Meal



MINISTER

REV JON HUMPHRIES

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

Weekly newsletter available on website

FACEBOOK:

@stmatthewsunitingchurchbaulkhamhills

PRE-SCHOOL DIRECTOR 9639 8570

SONALI WANIGESEKERA

PO BOX 321 BAULKHAM HILLS 2153

EMAIL: director@stmatthewsps.net.au

Thank you to all who have contributed to this publication.

Something to think about

2nd February

Epiphany 4

Lectionary Readings:

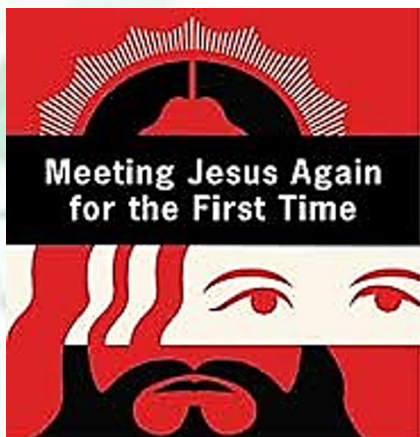
Jeremiah 1:4-10
Psalm 71:1-6
1 Corinthians 13:1-13
Luke 4:21-30

Meeting Again for the First Time

"Is this not Joseph's son?"

(Luke 4: 22)

They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. **But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.** (Luke 4: 29-30)



We don't know Jesus, or at least not as well as we think that we do. Our image of Jesus is always mediated through the ideas of others, through

writing, art, our own biases, what we have heard, how we have read the Bible. This is something that Marcus Borg presented as part of his book, 'Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time.'

Just like the people in Nazareth met the Jesus they thought they knew, they encountered someone very different to how they understood him in their heads. Many of us have met Jesus through being part of the Church and reading and hearing Scripture be read, through sermons and Bible studies, but many of us will also have had that experience of reading things again, but realising that we have never noticed them before or that we have an epiphany where we understand it better for the first time.

In the reading from Luke 4 Jesus, after he has been baptised and had the Spirit who is God descend on him like a dove, then driven by God as Spirit into the wilderness to test his understanding of his identity and call and to test his mettle (Mettle is the courage to carry on), he has read from the scroll of the Prophet Isaiah, proclaiming that God as Spirit is upon him and highlighting the anointing of God to proclaim good news to the poor, freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, and to set the oppressed free, as well as proclaiming the year of the Lord's favour. A lot of very significant happenings have been going on. He then has a drop-mic moment (Drop-microphone moment: a way to indicate that the performance was successful and that what was said or done cannot be topped). He declares, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4: 21)

Jesus then, in verses 24 to 27, gets very provocative and points out a series of times in the Bible where it wasn't the so-called "people of God" who received healing from God, but those outside the faith, and intimated that the same would be true here in his home town and own people. On hearing this, "all in the synagogue were filled with rage." (Luke 4: 28). That is when they drove him out of the synagogue, and out of town to a cliff in order to throw him off. We can go to Nazareth today and find Mount Precipice, also known as Mount of the Leap, which is a steep hill with a cliff and is that which people purport is where this all happened.

Continued next page

Meeting again for the first time -continued

When we read this story, who do we relate to or see ourselves as? Do we simply see ourselves as the readers of an ancient story? Do we see ourselves as the 'friend of God' (Theophilus) whom Luke wrote the Gospel for? Do we see ourselves as the unmentioned few in the crowd who felt that what was happening to Jesus was wrong? Most of us probably don't see ourselves as the crowd. However, is that not who Luke sort of wants us to place us in. Isn't, perhaps, the inference in the story is that would we not have done the same thing? May be not. Maybe that is not the intention of Luke, but the question is still valid. If we knew Jesus as people in his town knew him, would we not have reacted just the same?

[We don't know Jesus, or at least not as well as we think that we do. Our image of Jesus is always mediated through the ideas of others, through writing, art, our own biases, what we have heard, how we have read the Bible.](#)

Most of us have an image of a blonde-haired Jesus, and even though we know he would have spoken Aramaic and Hebrew, most of us really only think of Jesus as speaking English. We often think of him having long hair, even though no such description is ever presented in the Scriptures and historically it is very likely that he had short black hair and a black beard with olive skin as most men of his time in Israel would have.

In the follow-up to President Donald Trump's inauguration prayer service there has been very strong and widely held rage at directed at the bishop, The Right Reverend Mariann Budde, Episcopal bishop of the Diocese of Washington, who in her homily/sermon ended with a plea to the president to have mercy and compassion especially for transgender children, immigrant people and their children and refugees and asylum seekers. Unless we watched the service at the time, before we comment we should perhaps watch the sermon on YouTube using this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwwaEuDeqM8> or read a transcript that accompanies the video or with this link

<https://www.northjersey.com/story/opinion/2025/01/29/trump-bishop-budde-sermon-transcript/78002821007/>

We know that the president was not happy at the sermon from what he posted and stated that she was "not very good at her job," and "She and her church owe the public an apology." Personally, I can't find a lot of fault with what Mariann Budde presented, especially in the light of what we read about Jesus, especially in the Gospel of Luke. As I reflected on the incident in light of this week's Gospel reading, I can't help hold the idea that Jesus passed through the crowd and went on his way. Some will have noticed in gratitude, others will have held anger and rage, and some won't acknowledge him being there. For me the situation seemed to echo the scene of Jesus being unwelcome in his home town.

As we face an upcoming election how will our faith in God, especially in God as the Christ, shape our thinking about policies and attitudes presented by the different and the way we look to vote. I believe that Jesus is present and passing through the crowd. Of course, God is present with us. The Spirit, who is God, who descended upon Jesus in bodily form as a dove, is God who is present with us and within us – something that we will soon celebrate at Pentecost, but which is also a part of our baptism. Just as Jesus saw himself as the fulfilment of the passage, have we not also in a similar way been anointed to proclaim good news to the poor, freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, and to set the oppressed free, as well as proclaiming the year of the Lord's favour? How will Jesus's presence and teaching be received by us who are the crowd? Will we be enraged at his leftist leaning and be affronted that God would care for the poor, but more so suggest that we should as well?

We don't know Jesus, or at least not as well as we think that we do. Our image of Jesus is always mediated through the ideas of others, through writing, art, our own biases, what we have heard, how we have read the Bible. This will always be the case. Even if we were part of the twelve disciples, we still wouldn't fully know Jesus, just as the Scriptures describe them as not fully knowing Jesus. Yet, through prayer, meditation and reading what the Scriptures actually say, rather than what we think that they say and looking to love our neighbour as ourselves, then we can better know Jesus. We might come to meet Jesus again for the first time, not as we think we know Jesus, but as Jesus, who is God with us, wants us to know and understand. This is something to truly think about

God bless you

PEOPLE NEWS



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Margaret Bell

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



Please pick up the latest *insights* magazine Summer 2024 from the church foyer

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

2—8 February



North Africa: Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia



OP SHOP

Open Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 9am-2pm and 1st Saturday of the month 9-12pm

Pre-loved clothes & accessories, Books, Haberdashery, Bric-a-brac, Pot Plants.



Volunteers Form

Assisting with Morning Services

For March, April & May 2025

If you haven't yet sent in your forms, please either email them to the church office or place in the blue mail tray on Sundays, forms are in the foyer or you can phone me or just email me your dates.

Thank you



Please note the Lectionary Bible Study will resume in February 2025.



The first Thursday of each month from March until December

Next meeting will be **6th March**

10am—12noon

Speaker: Jennifer Philps
"Genetics Medical Research Institute"

These informal morning gatherings include devotions, morning tea and guest speakers which cover a large range of interesting and informative topics.

***** ALL WELCOME *****

Please note change to Church Office Hours and opening times

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

St Matthew's

HAPPY HOUR!

At NBC

166 Windsor Rd, Northmead

21
FEBRUARY

5 PM
FRIDAY



COME AND SHARE IN SOME HAPPY
CONVERSATION, A DRINK AND SOME FOOD
WITH FRIENDS FROM ST MATTHEW'S.

RSVP to Belinda or just come along
belinda.schuster0709@gmail.com



WORLD DAY of Prayer 2025

**Focus country: The
Cook Islands**

**7.30pm
Friday 7th March**

**Holy Trinity Anglican Church
295 Windsor Road, Baulkham
Hills.**

**Join your local one-hour prayer
service**

The Easter Experience 2025

**at Gordon-Pymble Uniting Church
Sunday 6th, Monday 7th, Tuesday 8th
& Wednesday 9th April**

**If you would like to take part please contact
Gordon-Pymble Uniting Church at info@gpuc.org.au**

The Easter experience staged each year with volunteer actors from Gordon/Pymble congregation and others, an outreach to the local primary schools (year 4) telling them the story of Easter.

**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.