



Bible Readings



Luke 5: 1-11
1 Corinthians 13: 1-13

Response after Bible Readings

Leader: *In this we hear the word of God*
Response: *Thanks be to God*



Epiphany 5

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 Jon Humphries

9.30am—Worship
 Led by Jon Humphries

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

6.45pm—Worship
 Led by Nicholas Lawless
 and Jon Humphries

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 10 February

Church Office Closed

7.30pm—Christian Meditation
 community room and church

TUESDAY 11 February

8am-2.30pm—Church Office Open
9am-2pm—Op Shop open

9.30am-11am—Christian Meditation

community room and church

7-8.30pm—Lectionary Bible Study

7.30pm—Thrive Bible Study

WEDNESDAY 12 February

8am-2.30pm—Church Office Open
9am-2pm—Op Shop

10am-12noon—Women's Fellowship

Upstairs hall and Church

7.30pm—Church Council Exec meeting

Upstairs hall

THURSDAY 13 February

8am-2.30pm—Church Office Open
9am-2pm—Op Shop

7.30pm—Upstairs hall in use

FRIDAY 14 February

5-7pm—Fusion Youth Group
Church Office Closed

SATURDAY 15 February

9-12pm—Upstairs hall in use

SUNDAY
16 FEBRUARY

8am—Worship

9.30am—Worship

KUCA

Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8

Followed by morning tea

6.45pm—Worship



Epiphany 6

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:

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 PO BOX 773 BAULKHAM HILLS 1755

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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

9th February

Epiphany 5

Lectionary Readings:

Isaiah 6:1-8, (9-13)

Psalms 138

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Luke 5:1-11

Woe to Me I Am Someone of Unclean Lips

We like the idea of truth, but most of us have not truly encountered it and know it mostly as a philosophical concept or theological doctrines. The truth of God, at least as we hear about it in the Bible is not an easy thing. It is piercing of our souls when we encounter it, and it confronts us with the fullness of our being in ways which we would prefer not to encounter.

In our readings set in the Revised Common Lectionary this week, we have examples of people who have encountered the truth in the Prophet Isaiah and in the Apostle Paul. Both experienced the truth and how it both humbled them but also called them to be something new as they joined in God's mission.

In the Isaiah 6 reading, the prophet encounters a vision of God. In the presence of God, with the heavenly hosts declaring the holiness of God and the nature of God's glory, the prophet experiences the conviction of truth.

The experience is so powerful that he cries out, "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips." (Isaiah 6:8) This is the true awe-full fear of God, which is not fearfulness or being afraid of God, but is being humbled in reality of being. We seek to emulate this experience in our Church services as we come and offer praise and thanksgiving as we try to connect with the presence of God. We do have times of confession, but most of us would admit that in our prayers of confession that we are not experiencing anything coming close to the degree that Isaiah is. We do offer prayers of confession, but much of the time whilst we know in our heads that we sin and fall short of the glory of God, we don't always know it in our hearts and our prayers can sometimes be more lip service than experiences of true metanoia and repentance.

Last week I attended the Future Church conference and there was a session on the future of the Church is that we will be anti-racist. This is an uncomfortable topic, especially as I am a White, middle-class, educated male. I am very privileged with the gifts of my upbringing such as a loving family and good public school education, but I am not always aware of the inherent privilege this birth-effect is accorded to me in a society which is biased towards those of my kind and living in the socioeconomic area which I was raised and in fact haven't moved to far from. Baulkham Hills, although the socioeconomic profile is changing, as is the culture and racial demographic, is still similarly privileged to Anglo-Celtic culture. This privilege has a shadow side where those outside the dominant race and culture do not experience the same privilege, and in fact are often disadvantaged. This can be an expression of what I am learning is named as aversive racism.

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In a work by Sarah Trembath, she identifies that aversive racism is unintentional in that its perpetrators don't feel they have prejudices or are acting out of them and often self-describe as liberal and without racial bias (Gaertner and Dovidio). But yet they hold deep within them aversions--strong feelings of "dislike, opposition, repugnance, or antipathy"- to people of certain racial or ethnic groups. The key distinction in this term has to do with averting, a "turning away or preventing." However, even those of us who may not believe that we hold a dislike or antipathy towards people of other races or cultures, we often fail to be proactive in our love for them as neighbour and participate in systems which uphold inequity, or which reinforce the privilege of the dominant culture in society. Even when we recognise that we are part of prejudiced society systems which disenfranchise, debilitate and devalue the humanhood of others and their ability to access equality of opportunity in our society, or recognise instances external to us where this is happening, we too often do not do anything to challenge it.

Aversive racism is the term that was used in psychologist Joel Kovel's pivotal book, [White Racism: A Psychohistory](#) (1970). This title might make those of us who are white uncomfortable, and we may find ourselves becoming angry or defensive. No one likes to be judged or accused of injustice or wrongdoing which we don't believe ourselves to be guilty of. However, if we take up the elements of love which we read about in 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7 and the fruit of the Spirit and practise a modicum of patience and a submission to the truth, we might learn some things which we might come to accept as being valid.

Subsequent researchers on the phenomenon of aversive racism found, across many studies, that many people in the dominant cultures and race in countries like Australia, USA and Great Britain, were in practice biased against people of other race and culture and failed to assist them, or uphold equitable opportunities for them, while still seeing themselves as holding egalitarian values (Gaertner and Dovidio). "Conscious values and unconscious negative feelings" operate simultaneously in the aversive racist (Gaertner and Dovidio). Even though their acts may seem subtle, passive, or at least hard to detect, they often have the same effect on their target that more overt forms of racism do. They may be unintentional but the result for those experiencing them are the same.

Part of my calling to St. Matthew's, as expressed by the Joint Nominating Committee (JNC), was a desire to help reach out in life and witness to an increasingly diverse local community. As the people of God, who know God in the person of Jesus, the Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life, (John 14:6) we know we are called to love our neighbour as ourselves (Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 22:39 and Mark 12:31). We are called to live and love better and to enter into repentance when we come to understand that we are falling short of the glory of God. Part of our metanoia (changing of heart and mind) as a congregation as we look to better engage in ministry in our community as part of the mission of God, is to acknowledge in confession that we do have elements of systemic and aversive racism subtly and unintentionally woven through our life as a Church.

Woe to me I am someone of unclean lips -continued

I regularly have to face the fact that, whether I like it or not, participation in systemic and aversive racism is a part of Australian society. Recent comments by The Honourable Susan Ley, deputy leader of the Liberal Party and Deputy Leader of the Opposition, member of parliament for the New South Wales seat of Farrer, about Australia Day and her biased understanding of British settlement confirm for me that I can, like Isaiah, confess that, I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips. I am not seeking to be party-political, for the Labour Government has many flaws and failings too. However, God calls us to justice, mercy and loving-kindness and to walk humbly as we love our neighbour as ourselves. The good news is that God calls us to be part of the solution even if we might be part of the problem, or perhaps because we are. God restores us in grace to right living. Like the prophet, I hear the "voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!" (Isaiah 6:8)

Are we racist? Most of us would want to say, "No, I don't believe that I am." However, are we actively anti-racism? Most of us, if we are truly honest, would likely answer the same. How we not only tolerate, but welcome, accept, honour and celebrate all people, especially those of other culture and race, as a welcoming congregation of the People of God as an essential part of our life and witness is something to truly think about.

God bless Jon

Share the prayer below

I Am a Racist

I am a racist

Not by choice,

But by programming.

Not often in practice,

But certainly in legacy.

This truth you know, God.

You confront me with it as Christ.

You speak it to me as Word.

You bring it to my soul's attention as Spirit.

I am a racist.

It is not a nice name.

It is not a good title.

I would like to think that it is not an accurate label.

I would like to be known at least as a recovering racist.

Yet, the truth is that still makes me one.

The ghost of bias against those different to me still haunts my thinking and my heart.

It battles to control my reaction,

My attitude,

And my behaviour.

I have to be constantly vigilant,

Always on guard.

Continue to help me with metanoia (the changing of my mind and heart).

Lead me in the constant journey into redemption through my living repentance.

Honestly and humbly,

I confess and pray.

Amen.

-Jon

PEOPLE NEWS

**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY**



Ron McIntosh
Katherine Pedersen
Lynn Samuel

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

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

9—15 February

Andorra, Italy, Malta, Portugal,
San Marino, Spain, Vatican City



**We need your help
teaching KUCA
During the 9.30am
service**

**Preschool, Year K-2 and
Years 3-8**

Please see Jon if you can help.

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.

*Sympathy to Janet Goodman and family on
the death of Janet's Step Mother
Cecile Layt on Wednesday 29 January 2025
at the age of 99.*

*A Memorial service will be held at
St. Matthew's.*

The date is to be confirmed.

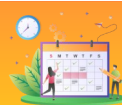


Please pick up
the latest

insights

magazine
Summer 2024

from the
church foyer



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

St. Matthew's
Evangelical Church
growing together

URGENT REQUEST

This is an urgent request and invitation for people to be a part of an audiovisual production, which is a modern adaptation of the story of the Life and Teachings of Jesus.

In this production, the voice and face of God is the Rev Geoff Stevenson, the voice and face of Jesus is the Rev Kent Crawford, the Rev 'Oto Favia is a member of God's committee and the Rev Ian Pearson is one of the 17 narrators, who have already recorded the audio channel for this production.

We need at least 200 people to be the members of a large crowd, to take part in a photography session during a relaxed picnic lunch on the banks of the Hawkesbury River, in the grounds of the Ebenezer Church, from 11 AM on Saturday 15 February.

All that is required is to arrive at Ebenezer by about 11 AM, then set up your picnic blanket or chairs and your lunch in the designated area, before enjoying everybody's company.

Photos will be taken of Kent Crawford, speaking as in the Sermon on the Mount and the feeding of the 5000, and of the assembled crowd of extras.

Any questions should be directed to John Law, who is the writer, director and producer at Cosmic Publications and Productions. John's phone number is 0414 409 098 and his email address is jvl@dutg.com.au.



Uniting Church
SYNOD OF NSW & ACT

Join Us for the First 2025 Missional Reading Group!

Whether you're deeply involved in mission or exploring fresh perspectives on church, culture, and creation, this reading group promises enriching discussions that deepen our understanding of a blended ecology of the church, mission in Australia, First Nations voices, and key issues of intercultural life, gender, and creation care.

When: Tuesday, 25 February, 7–9 PM

Where: Online via Zoom

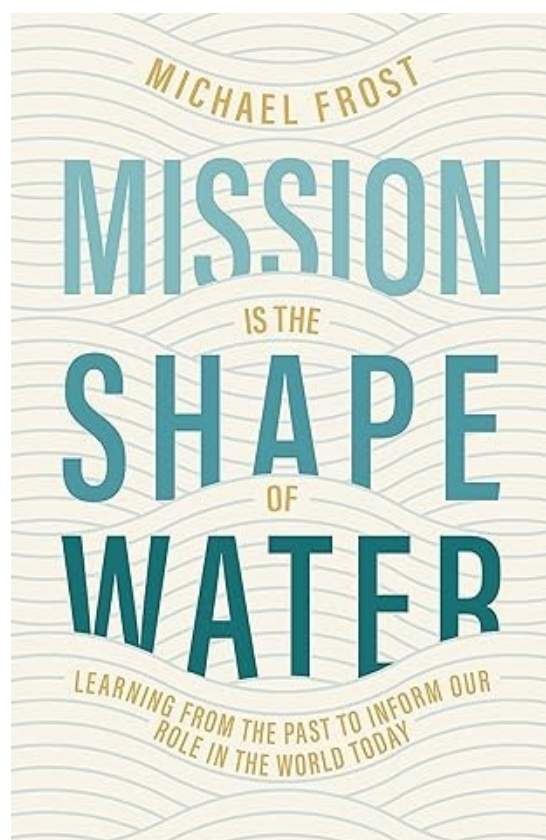
Book: [*Mission Is the Shape of Water: Learning From the Past to Inform Our Role in the World Today*](#) by Michael Frost

Discover how mission, like water, adapts and flows through changing contexts. Let's explore how lessons from history can shape our role in today's world.

Special Guest: We are thrilled that the author, Michael Frost, will be joining us for a conversation about the themes of this powerful book!

Open to everyone across our churches and Synod!

[Missional Reading Group – First Gathering - UCA](#)





The first Thursday of each month from March until December

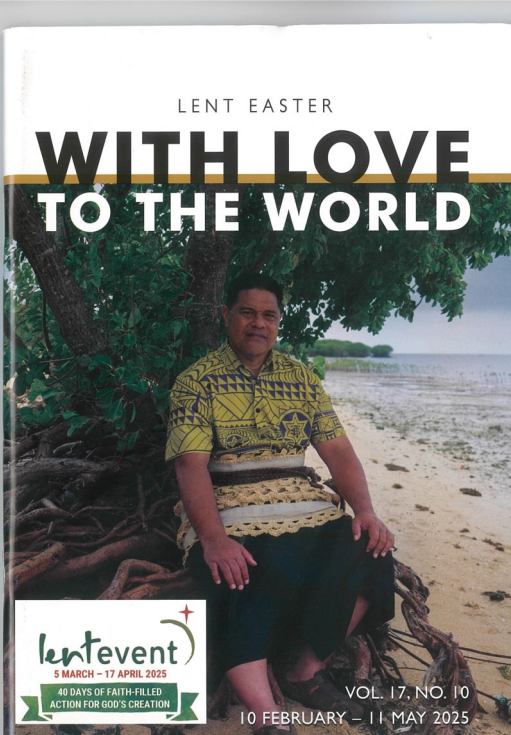
Next meeting will be **6th March**
10am—12noon



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 *****



LENT EASTER

WITH LOVE TO THE WORLD

a daily Bible reading
guide based on the
Revised Common Lectionary

Volume 17, Number 10
10 February 2025 to 11 May 2025

is available in the church foyer.

**Please place
\$7 in offering bag
to help cover costs**



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.

**The St. Matthew's Uniting Church weekly
Newsletter is available to view at the
end of each week for the upcoming Sun-
day on the St. Matthew's website
www.stmatthewsuniting.net.au
Click on the metal dove image / publications
or find in recent posts.**

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.