



BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT

Have you ever dipped your hand in a river to drink? What usually happens is that the water slips through our fingers. We can hold a little for a little while. Imagine trying to hold a river in your hands. It can't be done. Even if we could have a large handful and stop any from leaking out, we then only have a handful of water. It is no longer a river but a tiny pool. So, it is with the love of God.

Blessed are the poor in Spirit. This is something many of us are familiar with, at least in terms of us being familiar with the Beatitudes in Matthew 5 where Jesus declares this. However, many of us are not as familiar with this as a way of being. Poverty of Spirit is a way of meekness and an attitude of humility and grace. It is knowing that we cannot hold for ourselves the fullness of God or God's love, just like we cannot hold a river in our hands.

There can be a sense of being poor in Spirit, where we lack spirituality, or our spirit is empty or impoverished. I don't think that necessarily referring to this state of being. Although, it could be argued that when we are like this, then we can be very much blessed by God as Spirit who fills us with love, grace, compassion and mercy and inspires in us a wellbeing which leads us to live well in faith and discipleship.

However, I interpret a poverty of spirit being a stance and a result of our giving ourselves over to the will and way of God.

The reality is that we are never actually poor in spirit in terms of the presence of God. God, who is Spirit – that is Holy Spirit – is with us, within and present at all times. This is richness of blessing which is almost incomprehensible. However, poverty of spirit is a way of discipleship which is about living into the image of God and being the Body of Christ as the Church, communally and individually. It is about embracing kenosis – which is self-emptying.

Κένωσις [Kenosis] literally means, 'the act of emptying'. Theologically it is the "self-emptying" of Jesus. The word ἐκένωσεν [ekénōsen] is used in Philippians 2:7 where Paul states, "[Jesus] made himself nothing" or "[he] emptied himself" using the verb form κενώω (keno-ō), meaning "to empty".



Blessed are the poor in spirit cont'd ..

Kenosis has a range of theological meanings and interpretations. However, I think in the context of trying to understand poverty of Spirit, being poured out or emptied in spirit has to do with the ongoing breaking through of God's Kingdom of kindness, with the blessings of heaven being poured into our reality. As we allow God to fill us with grace and mercy and other goodnesses, we are not called to hold them for ourselves but be filled that we might let God's love and grace flow through us to others.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." {Matthew 5: 3} For me Jesus is talking about kenosis. As we let ourselves be emptied in our living of love to others then we are letting the love and grace of God pour into us, but also out of us. We become in a state of perpetual spiritual poverty for we do not hold much for ourselves. However, in the process of emptying ourselves, just as God poured God's being in the person of Christ and then was spilt in the cross, we have God as Spirit poured into us who are empty vessels so that we might give of ourselves sacrificially as Christ, who was God with us,

gave and was poured out. 2 Corinthians 4:7 says, "But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us" and Paul describes it in 2 Timothy 4:6, "I am already being poured out like a drink offering." When we open ourselves to being filled with the life of Heaven as God as Spirit pours blessing into us, the Kingdom of heaven is ours. Yet it is not ours to keep, but to pass on as it passes through us. We are always being emptied, thus always poor in spirit, but at the same time we are always being filled and blessed with and by God's communion of the common good.

We cannot hold the river. Yet, we can place our hands in the river and allow it to pass through them. We may drink from the river in our thirst and carry some to others who are thirsty, but we come to the river to be in it and alongside it. So, it is with the Kingdom of God. We are blessed to be poor in spirit



when we are blessed to be poured out in Spirit. In doing so we make room to be filled anew with the blessing of the love and grace of God so that we might be emptied once more in this cycle of love and blessing.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. It is truly something to think about.



God bless

Jon



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 *****



1st Saturday of the month
9am-12pm

Upcoming dates

- **1 March**
- **5 April**
- **3 May**

Pre-loved Household items, Electrical, Toys & Books (Fiction, Non-fiction & children's books)

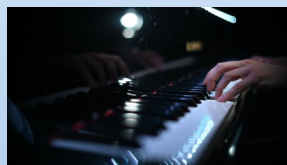
St. Matthew's Lower hall

Recital of Piano Repertoire
Presented by Colin Watts

2.30pm

Saturday 8th March
Holy Trinity Anglican Church
Windsor Road, Baulkham Hills

Contact: Christine Haines 0401 344 800



Entry by donation in aid of a project to build a well in Uganda

Seniors Golf Day in Seniors week put on by Cumberland Council

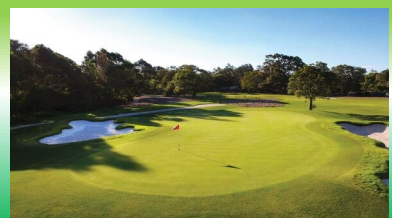
Dates:

- Monday 10 March Sefton Golf Course \$10 entry fee
- Thursday 13 March Woodville Golf course

Free lunch

First in best dressed

Please contact Earl Gray



Ash
 Wednesday
 Worship Service
 at St. Matthew's
 Wednesday
 5 March
 @ 7.30pm



Friday 7 March
Saturday 8 March

The Property Committee will be holding the next working bee over 2 days to make it easier for volunteers to attend. The focus of the working bee is to be ready for Erin Matthewson & Sam Lam wedding on the 15th March which is being held at St. Matthew's together with afternoon tea and Easter soon after. We want the church to sparkle for these events.

Times and dates:

- ◇ **Friday 7th March:** from 2.00pm to 6.00 pm
- ◇ **Saturday 8th March:** from 8.00am to 11.00am (morning tea provided)

Please come along for a little while or the whole time. Many hands make light work and would be most appreciated.



Youth @ St Matts
Term 1, 2025

5-7PM FORTNIGHTLY ON FRIDAYS
 Year 3-9 \$10 (includes supper)

WEEK 4

21 February

Youth vs Leaders

WEEK 8

21 March

Games Show Night



WEEK 6

7 March

Park Night



WEEK 9

4 April

Engineering Challenge



st. matthew's
 UNITING CHURCH
 BAULKHAM HILLS
 growing together



For more information contact Jon Humphries
jonestmatthewsuniting.net.au 9686 3003

From the Social Issues Focus Group at St. Matthew's

'Doing little things can make a big difference'.

Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) is one of the greatest challenges that we face in Australia, with one woman killed per week and one man killed a month by a former or current spouse or partner. Sometimes we can feel helpless to do anything about it.

On Friday 2nd May 2025 there will be a 'Hills March for Change' for raising awareness of domestic and family violence. Marchers assemble from around 6:30am under the covered area at the front of the entrance to the carpark nearest the Event Cinemas at Castle Towers. The march starts at 7am and will proceed down Castle Street to the Castle Hill Bowling Club (next to the Castle Hill RSL Club). It is a downhill 10 minute walk. Marchers will then go to the auditorium at the Castle Hill Bowling Club to hear a talk by a guest speaker who works in the field of DFV. In 2024 the Castle Hill Police Area Commander spoke of the impact of DFV on families within the Castle Hill Area Command.

There will also be a DFV prayer vigil at Wesley Uniting Church, Showground Road, Castle Hill on Friday 30th May 2025 from 5pm to 8pm.

The Uniting Church of Australia Assembly has also put out a very good booklet called 'Beyond Violence' that is a starting point to help members of congregations and communities begin a time of conversation and to raise awareness of DFV. The link to the pdf is here:

https://uniting.church/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/DFV-Report_FINAL_web.pdf

Phone numbers: for any person in immediate danger, or in an emergency call 000

If this article has raised any issues for you and you would like to talk to someone confidentially

1800 RESPECT or 1800 737 732 www.1800respect.org.au

Lifeline 13 11 14 www.lifeline.org.au

Domestic Violence Legal Advice Line 1800 810 784

Mensline Australia 1300 789 978 www.mensline.org.au

Kids Helpline (for children & young people) 1800 55 1800 www.kidshelp.com.au

Men's Referral Service 1300 766 491 www.mrs.org.au

To ask about joining the Social Issues Group at St Matthew's email: Alexander on alexander.lawless7@gmail.com To subscribe to the Uniting Advocacy Social Justice E-News emails, send an email to register to: advocacy@uniting.org

Blessings,

Alexander

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 Uniting Church at info@guc.org.au**

For 20 consecutive years just before the end of term 1, the Gordon Uniting Church building has been transformed into Jerusalem 2000 years ago. The place comes alive with people from ancient times telling the story of Jesus' last week on earth, in a production called "The Easter Experience".

This is an outreach to the local primary schools (year 4) telling them the story of Easter. The event is participatory, children walk down a time tunnel into a world 2000 years ago, into a marketplace in Jerusalem. They then walk through the last week of Jesus' life.

The Easter Experience is staged each year with volunteer actors from our congregation and others. For many children it is their first experience of the Easter story, and they walk through the scenes of The Last Supper, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Trial of Jesus in the courtroom scene, and then experience the impact of the empty tomb, with Jesus re-appearing to assure them that he is alive.



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**

From the book Silence & Stillness in Every Season Daily readings with John Main

My advice is to see your times of meditation not as times that are at your disposition at all. See your meditation, your prayer, not as your own but as the prayer of Jesus. As long as we are self-importantly thinking of our meditation, or our prayer, we have not fully started this pilgrimage. The time is his, the prayer is his. The miracle is that his prayer is ours, and the miracle is worked by simply bringing us to that total and unshakeable confidence in the Father which the gospel describes as hope. We approach meditation with hope rather than desire: without hesitation and with a childlike sense of being available to God.

We learn therefore to say the mantra with this same simplicity. We are not analysing it, or its effect, in a calculating way. We say it with wholly sincere, self-emptying love. Yet by virtue of this self-emptying we are filled with the power of God and with the knowledge that we are one with God because we are lovable and loved. The only requirement is total selflessness expressed in the total abandoning of all our own thoughts, imagination, insights and, above all, our own prayers. This is our openness to the prayer of Jesus in our heart.

Word Made Flesh

Calendar of Events for March 2025

Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall</p> <p>7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room</p>	<p>9am-12pm Op Shop</p> <p>9am-12pm Garage Sale lower hall</p> <p>Garage SALE</p>	<p>8am— Worship Includes Communion</p> <p>9.30am—Worship Includes Communion Followed by Morning Tea KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8</p> <p>6.45pm Worship Includes Communion</p>	<p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall</p> <p>7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room</p>	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>9.30–11am Christian Meditation Community Room</p> <p>11.30am Care & Prayer Community room & church</p> <p>7-8.30pm— Bible Study church or community room</p>	<p>ASH Wednesday</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>10am-12noon In Stitches Upstairs hall</p> <p>7.30pm Ash Wednesday service</p>	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>10am-12noon Coffee & Discovery Guest Speaker: Jennifer Philps</p>	<p>5pm-7pm Fusion Youth Group “park night”</p> <p>FUN!</p>	<p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>8am— Worship</p> <p>9am—Worship @ the Willow's</p> <p>9.30am—Worship Followed by Morning Tea KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship Community Meal</p>	<p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall</p> <p>7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room and Church</p>	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>9.30–11am Christian Meditation Community Room</p> <p>7.30pm Thrive Bible Study lower hall</p> <p>7-8.30pm— Bible Study church or community room</p>	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>10am-12noon Women's Fellowship “Bring something old and talk about it” Upstairs hall & church</p>	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p>	<p>5pm— Setting up for Wedding</p>	<p>9am-12pm Op Shop Includes Community morning tea at 10.30am</p> <p>11am—Set up for wedding</p> <p>2.30pm— Erin & Sam's Wedding</p>	<p>8am— Worship</p> <p>9.30am—Worship Followed by Morning Tea KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship</p>	<p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall</p> <p>7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room and Church</p>	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>9.30–11am Christian Meditation Community Room</p> <p>7pm-8.30pm Bible Study church or community room</p>	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>10am-12noon In Stitches Upstairs hall</p> <p>10am-12noon Men's Morning Tea McKels Café Bella Vista</p> <p>7.30pm—Elder's meeting upstairs hall</p>	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p>	<p>5pm-7pm Fusion Youth Group “Games show night”</p> <p>GAME SHOW GAME NIGHT</p>	<p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>8am— Worship Followed by Morning Tea</p> <p>9.30am—Worship Followed by Morning Tea KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8</p> <p>5pm—Shine</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship</p>	<p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall</p> <p>7.30pm— Christian Meditation</p>	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>9.30–11am Christian Meditation community room</p> <p>7pm-8.30pm Bible Study church or community room</p>	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p>	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p>	<p>No Scheduled events</p>	<p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>8am— Worship Followed by Morning Tea</p> <p>9.30am—Worship Followed by Morning Tea KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship</p>



st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together



