



**Bible Readings**



**Matthew 8: 5-13**

*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**  
 Led by Albert Olley  
 and Vanessa William-Henke

**9.30am—Worship**  
 Led by Sharon Underwood  
 and Vanessa William-Henke

*Followed by morning tea*

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

**5pm—shine**

**6.45pm—Worship**  
 Led by Jon Humphries

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

**MONDAY 24 March**

*Church Office Closed*

**9am—Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale** lower hall

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

**TUESDAY 25 March**

**9am-2pm—Op Shop open**

**9.30am-11am—Christian Meditation**  
 community room and church

**7-8.30pm—Lenten Studies**  
 In the church

**WEDNESDAY 26 March**

**9am-2pm—Op Shop**

**THURSDAY 27 March**

**9am-2pm—Op Shop**

**FRIDAY 28 March**

*No Scheduled Activities*

*Church Office Closed*

**SATURDAY 29 March**

*No Scheduled Activities*

**SUNDAY  
 30 MARCH**

**8am—Worship**  
 Followed by morning tea

**9.30am—Worship**  
*Includes Baptism*

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

**6.45pm—Worship**



**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

**WEB SITE:** www.stmatthewsuniting.net.au

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Thank you to all who have contributed to this publication.

# Something to think about

## 23 March

### LENT 3

#### Lectionary Readings:

Isaiah 55:1-9

Psalms 63:1-8

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Luke 13:1-9

#### The Edge of Faith

Last week in the newsletter I wrote about the idea that faith leads us into both/and thinking more often than either/or thinking. This week in the readings, especially in the Gospel reading, which has the Parable of the Unfruitful Fig tree, we are reminded about not being complacent in our faith. Faith has an edge. It is meant to cut into complacency and apathy in our life and carve out greater space for God in our hearts, minds, souls and living. The Parable of the Unfruitful Fig Tree is a reminder that Jesus wasn't always gentle, meek and mild. The faith of Jesus has an edge which we need to be mindful of. As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10: 12, "So, if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall."

The fig tree is cursed because it fails to bear fruit. Other than figs (which might naturally come to mind having mentioned a fig tree) when you hear the word 'fruit' in a faith context what comes to mind? What stories, teachings or Bible passages come to mind about fruit? Take a moment to think about

that and maybe write some ideas down. Try not to read ahead at this point and just sit and do some of your own thinking and pull out from your memory things that might be lying there from your reading of the Bible and the times you have spent being a part of the Church.

There are over 60 mentions of fruit in the Bible. There are references to fruit in both the Jewish Scriptures/Old Testament and the New Testament. Feel free to Google them or use another search engine to look them up. As I think about fruit in the Bible, the Fruit of the Spirit comes to instantly to mind [Galatians 5:22-23]. For me it is obvious given the literal use of the word, "fruit". The second story that comes to mind is Jesus talking about being the vine and we the branches [John 15: 1-8]. What other ones come to mind? What were the ones that you thought of or were things you discovered when you looked them up? When you think about these passages where do you begin to hear or notice the edge, or how does it jump out and cut through your thinking?

The references about fruit in Jesus being the true vine and with the Fruit of the Spirit, just like the Parable of the Unfruitful Fig Tree, have an edge which cuts through to an understanding of the both/and nature of our discipleship. What do I mean by that? Well, it makes clear that we are both/and in terms of being on the right and wrong side of God's calling. The people of faith in the parable can be seen to be the fig tree, God being the owner and Christ being the gardener, or at least that is one interpretation that it is often described.

*Continued next page*

If this is so then, the axe lies at the foot of our trunk if we are not bearing fruit. Jesus in his talk about being the vine and we being the branches minces no words and leaves no room for ambiguity. He states, “If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.” So, we are part of Christ, but we should not take this for granted.

The edginess of these readings cut through our complacency. We are both saved, and we are also sinners. We are both part of Christ, being the branches of the vine as the Body of Christ, and we are those fruitless branches which, like the fig tree in the parable, stand at risk of being cut off or cut down. We live in grace but we should not take such grace for granted, and not out of fear, but out of sincere love and appreciation and out of a desire to bring God, who has one so much to save us and works so hard to redeem us, we should seek to honour God’s love in gratitude through seeking to bring God glory through our good living and bearing good fruit.

So, to continue to be a bit edgy, do we give a fig (a saying meaning that we care and have a concern for something) about what God calls us to as Christ? If God is the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, are we bearing the fruit of God as Spirit, and is it healthy and plentifully evident in our lives or is it just a small fig of an offering? In the light of the

cutting edge of the Gospel let us, as Paul writes to the Philippians, work for good in faith and discipleship. He writes, “Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence but much more now in my absence, work on your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Do all things without murmuring and arguing, so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world.” [Philippians 2:12-15]. However, let us not focus on fear, but in love and gratitude let us take up some of Paul’s other encouragement. For he writes to the Church in Rome, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, on the basis of God’s mercy, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable act of worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.” [Romans 12:1-2] Having discerned what is good and acceptable, let us go about doing it.

What does giving a fig in faith look like for us, as we ponder the edginess of our faith? That is something to think about in Lent.

*God bless.*

*Jon*

PEOPLE NEWS



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

Barbara Brookes  
Judy Lance  
Amanda Manson  
Carl Denison

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

*Weekly*  
**SYNOD SPOTLIGHT**  
Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter

**For (14 March 2025) please see link to Synod weekly:**


[\(Synod Weekly \)Spotlight 2025 -](#)

**Ecumenical Prayer Cycle**

23 — 29 March



Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania



Please pick up the latest

**insights**

magazine  
Autumn 2025

from the church foyer



**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.**

*Coffee and Discovery*

**Thursday 3 APRIL**  
10am-12pm

**How long until the Next Bus?...and other transport secrets**

Guest Speakers: **Warren & Colleen Finnan**

Warren and Colleen have over 45 years experience in the bus and transport industry. Join them to discover just what makes the system work.



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

**FUSION**

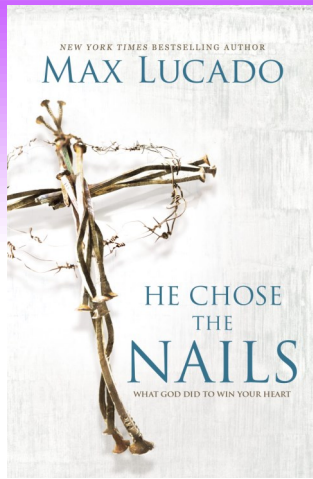
**Youth @ St Matts**  
Term 1, 2025

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

<b>WEEK 4</b> 21 February <b>Youth vs Leaders</b>	<b>VS</b>	<b>WEEK 8</b> 21 March <b>Games Show Night</b>
<b>WEEK 6</b> 7 March <b>Park Night</b>	<b>FUN!</b>	<b>WEEK 9</b> 4 April <b>Engineering Challenge</b>



For more information contact Jon Humphries  
[jon@stmatthewsuniting.net.au](mailto:jon@stmatthewsuniting.net.au) 9686 3003



# Lenten Bible Study Max Lucado "He Chose The Nails"

**Where:** St. Matthew's UC in the Church

**Time:** 7pm-8.30pm

**When:** Tuesday nights

beginning 11 March to Tuesday 15 April

**Everyone is invited to come along.**

## **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](mailto: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](http://www.stmatthewsuniting.net.au)**

**Click on the metal dove image / publications or find in recent posts.**

# lentevent

5 MARCH - 17 APRIL 2025

40 days of faith-filled  
action for God's Creation

*"The impact of climate change  
is very real in the lives of our  
people in Tonga.*

*It means a lot to us that the  
people of the Uniting Church in  
Australia are standing with us,  
through UnitingWorld."*

*-Rev Makoni Pulu, Free  
Wesleyan Church in Tonga*



**Take on a climate challenge!** For 40 days, transform the way you eat, shop, travel or use energy. Set a fundraising goal and inspire your friends and family to sponsor you

**Give generously to create a big impact.** Your donation will support climate action led by people and communities on the frontlines of climate change.



**Donate**



**Keep faith**

**Explore how your faith can inspire action,** change lives and spread much-needed hope to face the climate crisis. We have great resources to inspire you on the journey.

**\$20** can help our partners **plant trees** to stabilise landslide-prone areas and absorb carbon.

**\$90** can help provide **seeds and tools** for a family to grow their own food.

**\$200** can help equip local churches to lead **disaster preparedness and recovery** efforts.

**\$500** can help supply **clean drinking water** to a remote community impacted by drought.

<https://donate.unitingworld.org.au/event/lent-event/resources>