



Bible Readings



Acts 9: 1-20

John 21: 15-19

Revelation 5: 11-14

Acts 9: 1-6

John 21: 1-19

Response after Bible Readings

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

Response: *Thanks be to God who speaks to*



EASTER 3

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 Clive Pearson

9.30am—Worship
Includes Communion
 Led by Hugh Darling
 and Dean Drayton
Followed by morning tea

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

6.45pm—Worship
 Led by Jane Cole
 and Abbey Sim

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 5 MAY

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

7.30pm—Christian Meditation
 community room and church

TUESDAY 6 MAY

9am-2pm—Op Shop open

**9.30am-11am—Christian
 Meditation**

community room and church

11.30am—Care & Prayer
 community room and church

**Lectionary bible study in recess
 for May**

WEDNESDAY 7 MAY

9am-2pm—Op Shop

10am-12pm—In Stitches

Upstairs hall

7pm—Finance Committee meeting
 Lower hall

THURSDAY 8 MAY

9am-2pm—Op Shop

FRIDAY 9 MAY

No Scheduled activities

SATURDAY 10 MAY

No Scheduled activities

**SUNDAY
 11 MAY**

Mothers Day

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**



EASTER 4

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

PASTORAL CARE WORKER
 SARA WIENAND

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

4 MAY

3rd Sunday of Easter

Lectionary Readings:

Acts 9: 1-6 (7-20)

Psalm 30

Revelation 5:11-14

John 21:1-19

Can We Choose What We Believe?

I was challenged after last Sunday's service to consider whether we could choose what we believe or not. My initial response was to repeat my belief that we could choose what we believe, but it then got me thinking. We know that believing in Jesus, who is God with us and the means of our salvation, is important. John 3:16 famously states that God so loved the world that God sent the Son into the world that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life. However, it doesn't explain how we come to believe and what degree of choice we have in it.

Acts 16:31 has Paul and Silas declaring, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." Jesus says in John 14: 1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me," and "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" in Mark 1: 15. These verses seem to imply that it is not only important to believe but that we do have some choice in what we believe.

However, I kept thinking about the nature of belief. Belief is a strongly held conviction of what is held to be true. Thus, belief is linked to both our thinking and our emotions: our cognitive and affective domains. What we know to be true is not something that we always get a choice in. Jesus, may have said to Jairus, the synagogue leader, "just believe!" Yet maybe it isn't easy as just believing. After all, Jairus came to Jesus in faith, but his daughter had died and raising someone from the dead is not an easy thing to believe to be possible. Believing his daughter to be dead, it is not easy to believe that she will cease to be so.

Believing is to think that something is true, correct, or real. The word comes from the Proto-Germanic root "ga-laubjan," which is thought to be connected to the Proto-Indo-European root "leubh-," meaning "to care, desire, love". The German word for love is *liebe*, and there seems a strong connection between belief and love in the background of the word. When we think about love, though, we don't always think about choice. We can choose whom we demonstrate love to or share love in the form of ἀγάπη (*agape*) love to. However, who feel love for and when we feel love is within our power of choosing. So, maybe believing is not within our power to choose.

In John 20: 24-29 Thomas is an unbeliever [the Greek literally has Jesus telling him to stop unbelieving (ἄπιστος / *apistos* and believe (πιστός / *pistos*), although ἄπιστος / *apistos* is usually translated as "doubting"]. Yet he comes to believe. In the New Revised Standard Version (Updated Edition) it has Jesus saying, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." [John 20:29] I think this 'coming to believe' is a helpful understanding to unlock how much choice we have in what we believe. Belief is something that comes to us and that we come into. There may be some things we can choose to believe, but some things we don't really choose to believe, but we choose to be open to believing and then we come to believe them if we find them to be true.

Perhaps, believing is also connected with knowing. When we know something to be true it then is part of our beliefs. People who believe the world to be flat have come to know that this is true for them. Many of us wonder at how they can know this is true, or possibly believe it, but for them it is what they know and believe, and no one is likely to easily persuade them differently. Thomas, who was an unbeliever knew that Jesus was dead, and he was adamant that he would not believe unless he saw the marks of the nails and put his finger where the nails were and his hand in the wound in Jesus's side. However, having encountered Jesus and being able to be confronted with the proof he set as the conditions for belief, he came to know Jesus was alive and came to believe.

Saul/Paul (one being his Jewish version of his name and the other his Roman) knew that the followers of 'The Christ' were wrong and were a threat or a problem for his faith. He believed that they should be stopped. That was until he encountered Jesus in a vision which ironically blinded him. Having encountered Jesus, and having to submit to the process of his redemption and healing, he came to know the risen and ascended Christ and he believed. This belief changed his life to the degree that he devoted his life to helping others come to believe and to help shape their belief.

Perhaps there are times and things where we can choose our beliefs. However, I have come to believe that it is more complicated than simply choosing to just believe about most things, especially things to do with faith. I know believe that we more often than not have to come to belief. I think about when I was learning gymnastics when I was young. There were things such as vaulting, cart-wheels and tumbling that I was encouraged to believe that I could do, but when I first tried them I was usually hesitant and had some doubt and then would not always commit to doing the vault or tumble. I did believe to a degree that I could do it, but I had to come to believe that it really could through incremental knowing and faith in both myself and those

guiding and supporting me.

I think with faith that we come to believe through knowing. John Westerhoff III, a prominent thinker in Christian Education, is quoted as saying that faith cannot be taught, but is caught. Many of us come to Christian belief through knowing other people of faith, hearing their teaching and witness and coming to know their faith. There is some choice in this, but it is often an intellectual or cognitive belief. We can be convinced to believe certain things, that is we can choose to accept them as true or real. However, our Christian faith is centred in knowing God, who we know as Christ and experience as Spirit. Our faith is more powerfully about who we believe in rather than what we believe about.

As the Church, which is the Body of Christ, and with our call to live love, because when we embody the love of God, who is love, then we live in God and God lives in us. When we manifest the presence of God through such things as the Fruit of the Spirit, then we manifest the reality that God is present with us and within us as the Holy Spirit. Therefore, when people engage with us as we are embodying God's love and manifesting God's presence then they are more likely to come to belief as they encounter God in themselves and through our faith. Thus, our belief leads us to a choice about how we will be and behave. What do you believe? How did you come to believe? What do you believe God might be calling you to be and do? What do you believe is your choice in this and how might you know truth and reality which God brings to us in the person of Jesus the Christ? I believe this gives us a lot to think about.

*God bless
Jon*

PEOPLE NEWS

**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY**



Betty Carmody
Alarice Rust
Barbara McIntosh

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

**Due to issues with the Website
You can access the livestream for our
8am & 9.30am Sunday services
through Twitch.**

Please use this link.

<https://www.twitch.tv/stmattsuniting>

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

4 — 10 May

*Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan,
Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan,
Uzbekistan*

LECTIONARY
READINGS

**Tuesday Evenings
Bible Study
Will be recess for the month
of May.**

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

Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter

**For (18 April 2025) please see link to Synod
weekly:**

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

Thank you

A big Thank you to the Church and Community for your support for a very successful Open Garden and Studio last weekend.

Friends and neighbours came and supported our fund raiser and helped raise \$525 which has now been given to Parramatta Mission.

Rosemary & Thomas Smith

**Please
return
completed
forms by
ASAP**

**Volunteer
Form**
Assisting with
Morning Services



June, July, August 2025

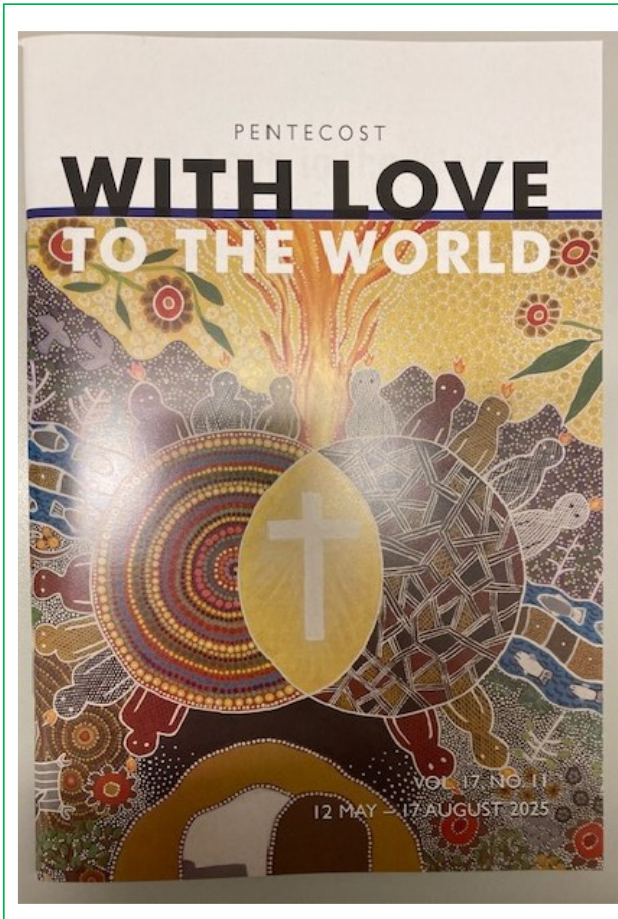
Have been emailed or
collect a copy from the foyer.

**NEW HELPERS
WELCOME**



**Please return forms to the blue
mail tray or church office.**

UNITING CHURCH
BAURHAM HILLS
uniting together



**PENTECOST
WITH LOVE
TO THE WORLD**

a daily Bible reading
guide based on the
Revised Common Lectionary

Volume 17, Number 11
12 May 2025 to 17 August 2025
is available in the church foyer.

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

We have several 9:30am morning
tea helpers away in the winter
months and we would love to
have some new volunteers to
come along and join the team.

If you can help, please
contact Amanda Manson

or

let Lynn in the office
know and she can put
you on the roster.





Youth @ St Matts Term 2, 2025

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

WEEK 1
2 May
Movie Night

WEEK 7
13 June
Spy Night

WEEK 3
16 May
Dude Perfect Night

WEEK 9
27 June
ADVENTURE NIGHT

WEEK 5
30 May
Music Night

Rockclimbing @ The Edge

st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together

For more information contact Jon Humphries
jon@stmatthewsuniting.net.au 9686 3003

St. Matthew's are still collecting your stamps. Please place them in the box marked used stamps in the Church Foyer.

Thank you



 **Cancer Council**
Australia's Biggest Morning Tea



You are invited to join with us for
'Australia's Biggest Morning Tea'

being held at the home of
Dulcie & Peter Duncum
at 53 Sarah Crescent Baulkham Hills

Friday 30th May.

Everyone is welcome,
so please come and join with us

from 10.00 am

in support of the work and fundraising of
The Cancer Council and of our many friends
who have journeyed with cancer.

Bring your friends also.

We look forward to your company.

You can also
make a
donation by
clicking on the
link below or



**We're hosting a
Biggest Morning Tea**

Please help us
support people
impacted by cancer!

Barry Gregory
0425 815 340

Dulcie Duncum
0417 070 848

<https://www.biggestmorningtea.com.au/fundraisers/DulcieDuncum/biggest-morning-tea-nsw>

Wednesday afternoon ONLINE Meditation Group

An Online meditation group catering for teachers, parents, carers.

Others are welcome to join.

Time: 4.25pm to 5pm

If you require a chat or introductory session. This is available from 4pm. Please contact Penny on 0409 309 344

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85087024028?pwd=SUNFTjk5QlRLS21sQ3l5cGw4VXd1dz09>

Meeting ID: 850 8702 4028

Passcode: 042924

Christian Meditation

Monday night @ 7.30pm and Tuesday morning @ 9am

During May at all Christian Meditation sessions at St. Matthew's there will be a 15 minute session of teachings preceding the time of Meditation named;

Christian Life in the Light of Christian Meditation

1: Discipleship By Laurence Freeman OSB

Fr Laurence defines discipleship as being on the way to becoming one with Christ, and presents meditation as a way to discipleship. In the practice of Christian meditation we take our attention off ourselves and turn wholeheartedly to Christ dwelling in our hearts—we leave self behind. This shift from habitual self-fixation allows us to experience Jesus' gaze turned towards us. In the mutual recognition, a personal relationship develops that transforms us gradually to be more Christ-like.

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.