

Weekly Newsletter

29 June 2025

Pentecost 3

Bible Readings

Luke 9: 51-62 Galatians 5: 1, 13-25

Response after Bible Readings

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

us as spirit.

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 Followed by morning tea

9am—Worship @ the Willow's Led by Warren Arthur

> 9.30am—Worship Led by Jon Humphries

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

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 30 JUNE

9am-10.30am—Coffee & Play

NEW group for Grown ups and their little ones

upstairs hall

9am—Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale

lower hall 7.30pm—Christian Meditation

TUESDAY 1 JULY

8.45-12pm—Preschool using upstairs hall

9am-2pm—Op Shop open 9.30am-11am—Christian Meditation

community room and church 11.30am—Care & Prayer

WEDNESDAY 2 JULY

9am-2pm—Op Shop open 10am—In Stitches

upstairs hall

THURSDAY 3 JULY

9am-2pm—Op Shop open 9-12pm—Coffee & Discovery upstairs hall & Church

FRIDAY 4 JULY

No Scheduled Activities

SATURDAY 5 JULY

9am-12pm—Op Shop 9am-12pm Garage Sale lower hall

SUNDAY 6 JULY

8am— Worship Includes communion

9.30am—Worship
Includes communion
Followed by morning tea

KUCA in Recess for school holidays

6.45pm—Worship



MINISTER

REV JON HUMPHRIES

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PASTORAL CARE WORKER

SARA WIENAND

SUNDAY am , MONDAY, TUESDAY **Email:** saraw@nswact.uca.org.au

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LYNN SAMUEL

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Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

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Something to think about

29 June

Pentecost 3

Revised Common Lectionary Readings:

2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14 Psalm 77:1-2, 11-20 Galatians 5:1, 13-25 Luke 9:51-62

What to Do with the Bad News

On any day in any week the mainstream news media presents us with a largely negative picture of society and the world we have made as humans. You might note that I left off the 'kind' after human. That is because in the mainstream news most of the stories are about humans being unkind. Of course there is the sprinkling of human-interest stories, ironically often about cute animals, or people doing good. However, there is an abundance of adjectives used such as shocking, terrifying, horrific, scary, alarming, tragic, sad, and the list sadly goes on. Stephen King said: "The road to hell is paved with adverbs" and the same can surely be said for news adjectives. Watching the mainstream news can present a bleak and even depressing picture of the state of the world which does seem to be going to hell.

The state of the world is unfortunately, to a significant degree, a sad state of affairs. The news does portray information which is (mostly) factual. The reality is that there is

ever an abundance of examples of humans being unkind to others or sad events taking place. How do we deal with this? How do we sustain hope? Also, how do we cope with the fact that the facts are usually wrapped in a package of fear and worry-inducing sensationalising and exaggerating of the negative elements of what is being presented?

This week's epistle reading [epistle means letter] set in the Revised Common Lectionary is from Galatians and includes the well-known passage about the Fruit of the Spirit. The Fruit of the Spirit are really, helpful spiritual disciplines. They are also great tools for helping us deal with all the negativity of the mainstream media news.

The Fruit of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control. One of the reasons that feeling anxious can lead to anxiety [anxiety being where emotions such as stress, worry, fear become excessive and persistent, then being to interfere with our daily life and our ability to function and cope] is that we can lose a sense of control or agency in situations or circumstances. The Fruit are actions we can take, and in working to manifest them they give us some sense of agency and hope as we join with God, who is with us as Spirit, to work for good in the world. Doing something restores some sense of agency.

The reality is that we sometimes may not be able to change much about our circumstances or the situation we find ourselves in, but we can always choose how we think and act. Practising the Fruit of the Spirit aligns us with God who is Spirit who is with us.

Continued next page

They also are things that usually move us to action for the benefit of others, and thus, are ways to love others as ourselves. Therefore, they help us love. Embodying the love of God to others centres us in God, because when we live in love we live in God and God lives in us [1 John 4:16]. This is good for our souls. Living out the Fruit of the Spirit, and the way that they are facets of embodying the love of God, also leads to positive emotions and a sense of wellbeing because in making a difference for others in some way then that makes a positive difference for us as well. This is also good for our souls.

Paul gives us some further great help in dealing with the bleak aspects of our human being in the world in Philippians 4: 6-8. He writes, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." When Paul writes of not being anxious, this is not about us not feeling anxious. We can't help feeling what we feel. However, we can moderate our emotions by how we shape our thinking. Not being anxious is about not clothing ourselves in anxious thinking through such things as ruminating on the negative. Instead, choosing to think about good things and using prayer as a tool for this is a spiritual practice of self-control which leads us into better being.

Christian meditation is also a great tool for helping us deal with the negative aspects of humanity and how we treat each other and the world. Firstly, it centres us in God who is the source of our hope, peace, life and being. Secondly, it involves us in the self-discipline of setting aside worries and concerns, and all other thoughts which might be positive or negative in nature, and just focusing on being present and centred in being in God and God being in us. The use of a mantra, which is a simple word or set of words, is a proven

psychological and neuroscientific strategy for focusing us away from thoughts which aren't helpful, or which are even harmful. The brain can only focus on one thing at a time. So, focusing on a mantra [The World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM) recommends maranatha, which is Aramaic for "come Lord] means that we are not focusing on other thoughts and it helps us simply sit and be present with God who is always present with us. It is also the beginning point for thinking about whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, and lovely.

On the WCCM website there is a helpful series of talks (we can even call them podcasts) by Rev. Glenda Meakin titled, 'Listening to the Daily News with a Contemplative Heart.' Here is a link to the series of talks https://meditatiotalks.wccm.org/cd/

In all this the aim is not denial of the sad reality of life. It is not a naïve hope that all will be miraculously better or that spiritual practices work to make things instantly better. For the most part God does not work this way. Choosing to think on good things is not the practice of ignorance by seeking to somehow convince ourselves that it is not as bad as it seems or that it isn't even really true. That would be contrary to the Gospel which is about the Kingdom of Heaven breaking through into the brokenness of human being and restoring us to how God intends things to be. God in the person of Jesus confronted and took on the awfulness of human existence. This is most exemplifying in his suffering culminating in his death on the Cross. Thinking on good things in the face of the awful and focusing on God when constantly confronted by evil is about transversing and transcending. It is the active resistance and manifesting the Kingdom of Heaven through manifesting the markers and ways of God's presence with us as Holy Spirit. The Fruit of the Spirit therefore not only are good things to think about but are good practices to practise.

God bless Jon





weekly:

Annette Watson
Jacinta Bell
Callum Wood
Peter Sexton
Julie Kolosowski

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

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

29 June —5 July

Kenya, Tanzania



Saturday 5th July

9am-12pm

Pre-loved
Household Items,
Electrical, Toys & Books
(Fiction, Non-fiction & Children's Books)

St. Matthew's Lower Hall





Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter

For (20 June 2025) please see link to Synod

Synod Weekly



Thank you to all who have contributed to this publication.



In Focus for July 2025 is out. copies are available in the Church foyer.
or you can go to the

St. Matthew's website.

www.stmatthewsuniting.net.au

Wesley Mission Media Release 12th June 2025 re: The NSW Auditor General's Report – Regulation of gaming machines



Wesley Mission says today's damning performance audit into the regulation of poker machines in New South Wales is no surprise and proves successive governments have done nothing of substance to reduce gambling harm while losses soar and vulnerable communities pay the price.

The NSW Audit Office report reveals the government has failed to focus its gaming strategy on harm minimisation, has no targets to reduce gambling losses, and has let licence conditions for poker machine venues go unchecked for years.

Wesley Mission CEO, Rev Stu Cameron, says, "While we didn't need an audit to know the system is broken, as frontline services have been saying this for years, now it is in black and white: the NSW Government has done next to nothing to reduce gambling harm while clubs and hotels pocket billions.

"The government has been sitting on the recommendations of its own Independent Panel on Gambling Reform for over seven months. These recommendations include mandatory cashless gambling to reduce harm and stop money laundering. This inaction privileges the special pleading of a harmful and predatory industry over and above the health and wellbeing of the people of New South Wales.

"The Audit Office's report confirms what we have been seeing for some time—that the government's stated commitment to gambling reform and reducing harm is not translated into effective action."

The Audit report also found:

The number of poker machines in NSW has increased since the government took office in 2023
The Department of Liquor and Gaming's strategy lacks any clear targets to reduce harm
The Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority does not routinely review gaming licences once issued
High-risk venues are operating with outdated, unchecked licence conditions

Rev Cameron says, "If people were being harmed this badly by alcohol, drugs or unsafe roads, action would be swift. This is a public health crisis and it needs to be treated as such."

The Audit was tabled just days after new figures revealed poker machine losses exploded to \$2.17 billion in the first 90 days of 2025—or \$24 million a day. It is estimated some communities are now losing more than \$3,200 per person every year.

Wesley Mission is calling on the government to immediately:

Introduce mandatory venue shutdowns from midnight to 10am
Implement a cashless gambling card with enforceable harm reduction limits
Place tighter caps on poker machines in high-risk areas

Rev Cameron reiterated, "These are basic public health protections, not radical ideas. The independent and objective report confirms what we already know. The question now is will the government finally act?"

"The Ultimate Surprise"

We are very blessed to have an amazing and inspiring member of our Congregation in the person of Dean Drayton. Professor R. Dean Drayton introduces his new book, "The Ultimate Surprise: Surely the Lord is in this Place – And I did not know it" in an interview with Rev. Dr Clive Pearson in the linked YouTube clip.



Dean challenges us to rethink how we encounter God, showing that the gospel is far more than a personal comfort - it's a cosmic revelation that upends our assumptions. In this conversation, he invites us to see how God's presence is already renewing the world, often in unexpected ways.

This conversation may stretch you - but it will also open your eyes to a surprising gospel

truth.

(Recorded on 7 June 2025, at Iona Trinity College, Rhodes NSW, Australia)

https://
www.youtube.com/
watch?v=Yfvt5nNvlcY



Cenffee Discovery

Thursday 3 July 10am-12pm

Guest Speaker: Alan Wright

My First.....and other stuff



Do you remember your first...? Was it the first and last or was it the first of many?

Inevitably, 'firsts' happen when we are young, but not exclusively.

Alan digs deep into his memory bank and talks about some of his 'Firsts.'

Hats for the Homeless



'This week St. Matthew's Uniting Church,
Baulkham Hills, has donated seven bags of
clothing, including one large bag of beanies to
Parramatta Mission.



The staff expressed their sincere appreciation for these donations.

The beanies are claimed very quickly, and more are needed please.

The staff also disclosed they are short of volunteers at the Mission. If you have a few hours to give, the Mission would appreciate your help.

The number to call is 98912277.'

Winter Blanket Drive for Parramatta Mission

Help Us Share the Warmth
Drop off time & location:
From Fri 1 May to 31 Jul, 9.00am – 4.30pm
Address: Allan Drew Funerals
221 Old Northern Rd. Castle Hill

221 Old Northern Rd, Castle Hill (please don't bring blankets to St Matthews)
Let's wrap our community in kindness this winter. For More information, please visit https://brnw.ch/21wT6Op







Please pick up the latest

insights

Magazine Winter 2025

From the church foyer

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.stmatthewsuni

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

The Past Today

The Christian faith has a very rich history that is largely unknown to members of congregations today. There is a benefit in looking at the past.

- It can give us a sense of perspective on the present.
- It can show us where we have come from.
- It can also show us the times when the church got things 'right' and when it did not.

The following 4 part series is part of a plan to offer enquiries into slices into our past on an annual basis.

This series will consist of a presentation with questions and discussions. Led by Clive Pearson

When: last Saturday of the month for 4 months:

June 28-'We believe' July 26- 'Herstory' August 30- 'Plagues and Pandemics'. September 27 .'Allah'.

Time: 10am-11am approx.

The themes for this first series are:

1. 'We believe'.

2025 marks the 1700th anniversary of the first great ecumenical council of the church, the Council of Nicaea. It was called into being by Constantine, the first emperor of the Roman Empire. Its principal focus was on dealing with contested understandings of how Jesus Christ, the was a 'creature', the first-born of creation? The Islam into what were Christian territories in the Middle East theological stakes were high: our faith and worship depends on how this 'problem' was resolved.

Constantine's conversion to the Christian faith had gone German language and know what Muslims actually believe. hand in hand with tolerance and legal status being given to Christians following a period of great persecution. No longer was the Christian faith a persecuted minority on the edges of empire. Was something lost in this change of status? That is an ongoing concern over the centuries. territories in Eastern Europe and were at the gates of Vienna. The Council also set the date for Easter.

2.'Herstory'.

So often the history of the church has been exactly that - 'his' story. This way of viewing the past has tended to reinforce patriarchy but is it as true as we might be led to believe. In this presentation we consider the role played by women in the early church, including the 'order of widows', medieval women mystics and the life and witness of Argula von Grumbach during the Reformation.

3.'Plagues and Pandemics'.

'Doing' church during COVID-19 gave us an experience of what it means to be a community of Christ during a time of pandemic. What was it like to worship, extend pastoral care, maintain youth groups? It is likely that there will be future pandemics. - which will most likely be a complication bound up with a changing climate. We were fortunate: we had the advantages of technology and vaccines. In the past that was not so.

In the course of its history the church has often had to negotiate its way through a plague / pandemic. In this presentation we will look at 3 of those and see how our forebears dealt with them. We will look at plagues in the early church (the Antonine, Cyprian and Justinian), the Black Death of the 14th century and Luther's response and advice during the Reformation.

The conduct of Christians during the early church struck pagan observers who were struck by the care extended to unknown 'neighbours'. The Black Death did much damage to the church's witness and ministry; Luther instructed the people of his day on how to exercise care for one self while calling upon those who exercised authority and oversight of society to work for the common good.

4.'Allah'.

The Christian faith and Islam are the world's two leading religions. They can both look back to Abraham / Ibrahim. Jesus (as Isa) is the most mentioned prophet in the Qur'an, while Mary is mentioned more times there than in the New Testament. Their history has often been one of conflict – and Son, relates to God, as the Father. Was Christ divine or caricature. This presentation fastens upon the expansion of and North Africa, the Crusades, the Fall of Constantinople and Luther's determination to have the Qur'an translated into his

> Luther was wanting to get beyond received stereotypes inherited from the Crusades. He was writing at a time when the Ottoman Turks had advanced through formerly Christian



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

ST MATTHEW'S UNITING CHURCH AND PRESCHOOL'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Celebrate with us In October/November 2025!!!

SAVE THE DATES

SUNDAY 19 OCTOBER 2025 -

WELSH CHOIR PERFORMANCE @ 2pm

SUNDAY 2 NOVEMBER 2025

WORSHIP SERVICES WITH GUEST PREACHERS 8:00 AM, 9:30 AM & 6:45 PM

SUNDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2025

THANKSGIVING WORSHIP SERVICE – FOLLOWED BY MORNING TEA 9:00 AM

PICNIC LUNCH AT JOHN CURTIN RESERVE WINSTON HILLS FROM 11: 00 AM

SATURDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2025

SOCIAL EVENTS AT CHURCH

- TALENT SHOW FROM 3:00 PM (DEPENDING ON ENOUGH PARTICIPANTS)
- DINNER & GAMES NIGHT FROM 5:30 PM (SHARE FOOD, STORIES & GAMES)

SUNDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2025

WORSHIP SERVICES WITH GUEST PREACHERS 8:00 AM, 9:30 AM

YOUTH SERVICE - GUEST PREACHERS (INCL SHINE CELEBRATIONS) 6:45 AM

SUNDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2025

50TH ANNIVERSARY - CHURCH & PRESCHOOL WORSHIP SERVICE 9:00 AM

- CHURCH & PRESCHOOL SHOWCASE (AFTER WORSHIP)
- BANQUET LUNCH (SHARE FOOD & STORIES) 12 NOON



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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

TO ENSURE THAT OUR 50TH ANIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS ARE A SUCCESS WE WILL NEED VOLUNTEERS TO ASSIST IN THE PREPARATION OF THE VARIOUS EVENTS. HELP IN A SMALL WAY CAN LIGHTEN THE LOAD.

IF YOU CAN ASSIST WITH THE FOLLOWING TASKS YOUR HELP WOULD BE MOST APPRECIATED BY THE PLANNING COMMITTEE.

- JOIN AS A MEMBER OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE
- ASSIST WITH PREPARATION OF A GAMES NIGHT (SAT 15 NOV)
- HELP PREPARE OR PERFORM IN THE TALENT SHOW (SAT15 NOV)
- ASSIST IN PREPARATION OF A PHOTOGRAPHIC SHOWCASE
- HELP TO PREPARE MEALS (CONTACT ANNETTE WATSON)
 - PICNIC LUNCH (SUN 9 NOV)
 - GAMES NIGHT DINNER (SAT 15 NOV)
 - BANQUET LUNCH (SUN 23 NOV)
- ASSIST IN PREPARATION OF WORSHIP SERVICES

IF YOU FEEL YOU CAN ASSIST IN ANY OF THESE TASKS, PLEASE SEE GREG GIBB OR CALL HIM ON HIS MOBILE 0414 764 437





CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

ST MATTHEW'S UNITING CHURCH AND PRESCHOOL'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

JOIN THE CELEBRATIONS & GET CREATIVE

AS PART OF THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE 50TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS WE WILL RUN A COMPETITION INVITING HELP TO CREATE AN ANNIVERSARY THEME AND LOGO THAT REFLECTS THE CHURCH'S JOURNEY AND THAT INSPIRES HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.

SHARE YOUR VISION AND CREATIVITY
TO CHOOSE A THEME AND DESIGN A LOGO.

ALSO, WE ARE LOOKING TO PREPARE A BANNER TO ADVERTISE OUR CELEBRATIONS – IF THIS IS SOMETHING YOU COULD HELP WITH LET US KNOW.

IF YOU FEEL YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE CREATIVE, PLEASE SEE GREG GIBB, CALL HIM ON HIS MOBILE 0414764 437

OR SEND AN EMAIL TO greg.gibb1955@bigpond.com

SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR THE COMPETITION IS 15 AUGUST 2025.

A SMALL PRIZE WILL BE OFFERED FOR THE WINNING THEME AND LOGO.