



st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together

Weekly Newsletter

9 November 2025

Pentecost 22

Bible Readings

Psalm 122



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

22nd
Sunday
After
Pentecost



twitch.tv

Livestreaming at
8am and 9.30am only

9am—Worship

Led by Hugh Darling and
Melissa Gibson Darling
and Nicholas Fried

Followed by morning tea

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

9am—Worship @ the Willow's

**11am-3pm—Picnic Lunch at John
Curtin Reserve**

Huxley Drive, Winston Hills

6.45pm—Worship
Community meal

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 10 NOVEMBER

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

7.30pm—Christian Meditation

TUESDAY 11 NOVEMBER

9am-2pm—Op Shop open

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

WEDNESDAY 12 NOVEMBER

9am-2pm—Op Shop open
**10am-12pm—Women's Fellowship
AGM and Christmas Craft**
Upstairs hall and church
**7.30pm—Church Council
Exec meeting**

THURSDAY 13 NOVEMBER

9am-2pm—Op Shop open

FRIDAY 14 NOVEMBER

**11am—Preschool concert practice
in church**

SATURDAY 15 NOVEMBER

**5.30pm—50th Celebrations
Trivia, Games, Dinner, please
let us know your coming**

SUNDAY 16 NOVEMBER

8am—Worship

9.30am—Worship

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

6.45pm—Worship
**Youth service plus shine
celebrations**

23rd
Sunday
After
Pentecost



MINISTER

REV JON HUMPHRIES

Email: jon@stmatthewsuniting.net.au
jhumphries@nswact.uca.org.au

PASTORAL CARE WORKER

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

CHURCH OFFICE SECRETARY

LYNN SAMUEL

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS 8AM-2.30PM
TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY

OFFICE : 9686 3003
Email: office@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

CHURCH COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON

MIKE UNDERWOOD
Email: mikeu@nswact.uca.org.au

CHAIRPERSON OF ELDERS

HELEN OLLEY
Email: helen.olley@optusnet.com.au

LOCATION:

CNR CHARLES & EDGAR STREETS
BAULKHAM HILLS

POSTAL ADDRESS:

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SONALI WANIGESEKERA
PO Box 321 BAULKHAM HILLS 2153

Email: director@stmatthewsps.net.au

Something to think about

9 November

Pentecost 22

Revised Common Lectionary Readings:

Haggai 2:1-2:9
Psalm 145:1-5, 17-21
2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17
Luke 20:27-38

Getting our minds around gender diversity

Most of us have heard the letters LGBTQI or LGBTQI+. These stand for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex. Some may not be aware that these have been expanded to LGBTQIA+. The "A" is for asexual, which are people who experience no sexual attraction for other people, but also includes Aromantic (little to no romantic attraction) and Agender (without gender) identities. The "+" (Plus) represents all other identities that are not explicitly listed in the letters of the acronym.

For many of us getting our heads around these terms is not easy, especially if we have grown up in a tradition or culture which has taught us that there are only two genders: Male and female and the 'normal' [and some would say 'right'] expression of sexuality is between the two different sexes. Many of us have been taught that God made people either male or female and sexuality is only rightly expressed in heterosexual normality. This, we have been taught, is natural.

I am a parent of two queer daughters and have had to do my own work learning and re-thinking my thinking. The Uniting Church

Assembly has endorsed a proposal that seeks to affirm, welcome and honour the life and faith of transgender, intersex and gender diverse people in our Church. As part of the proposal, the 17th Assembly members agreed "to recognise that transgender, gender diverse and intersex people are beloved by God and full members of the Body of Christ in baptism." <https://uniting.church/affirming-gender-diverse-people/>

In this piece I want to sidestep discussion about different forms of sexuality for a moment and just focus on the letter 'I' which is for Intersex because these are realities that people have to face without inherent choice. In our modern society in recent times speaking about the pronouns that people use for themselves has become part of how we identify and introduce ourselves and indicate how we want to be addressed. Again, for those of us who have come from traditions or cultures where there is only male and female gender and we only accept the gender one is born with physically, it can be very difficult to get our minds around that which seems to go against what we have been taught is natural and what we have been told God, through the Bible, has taught us is right and good. Yet, what do we do when the gender someone, or we, are born with is unclear or complicated?

As we seek to expand our understanding about how we accept and welcome diversity in our Church, it can be helpful to start with Intersex because it is a physical or genetic way that people are born. Intersex is when someone is born with variations in sex characteristics, including chromosomes, gonads [testes or ovaries], or anatomy, that don't fit typical male or female binary definitions. Experts estimate that up to 1.7 percent of the population are born with intersex. Biological variations of Intersex variations can include different combinations of chromosomes (like XXY), having both testicular and ovarian tissue, or having genitalia that is not distinctly male or female.

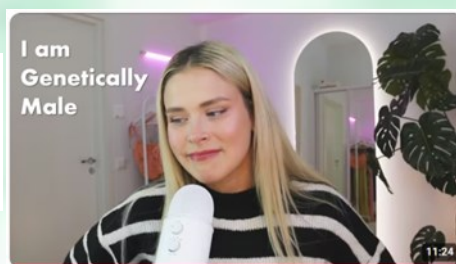
Some intersex traits are evident at birth, but others may not be discovered until puberty, or even later in life during medical testing for other reasons like infertility. Intersex is not a disease. Being intersex is a naturally occurring variation in humans and is not a disorder or a condition that needs to be "fixed". It has an impact on identity. An intersex person's assigned sex at birth does not determine their gender identity. People who are intersex can identify as male, female, both, or neither.

Intersex is a helpful place to start in getting our heads around that which stretches what many of us have been conditioned to think as normal. It is helpful because this is a natural condition because it occurs within the normal human population. Whilst not very common, up to two in one hundred people might be born intersex. Like genetic birth differences or other physical differences in appearance of ability this fits within the "natural" order of things and stretches our understanding of natural.

As many of us may not have encountered many or anyone who is intersex it might be helpful to meet some people via video and watch and listen to their story.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fP8WZXpIR4>



**Explicit
Language
Warning**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W9um3rLIFYE>

The theological question in this is whether or does God make people different? How do we understand the work of God in such things as intersex and other genetic and developmental differences?

Whilst many of us within the Christian tradition find it hard to get our minds around this, the ancient Jewish rabbis tried to understand this. In ancient rabbinic literature there is mention of 6-8 'genders' depending on which commentator you read. The Talmud, a huge and authoritative compendium of Jewish legal traditions, contains in fact no less than seven gender designations including:

Zachar: male.

Nekevah: female.

Androgynos: having both male and female characteristics.

Tumtum: lacking sexual characteristics.

Aylonit: identified female at birth without developing secondary female sexual characteristics at puberty.

Saris hamah: identified male at birth without developing secondary male sexual characteristics at puberty.

Saris adam: identified male at birth without developing secondary male sexual characteristics because of castration.

The rabbis did not use the word gender as we do today, as referring to a cultural construct distinct from biological sex.

The seven genders they describe are distinguished by physical and biological realities, not culturally conditioned categories. Rabbinic literature describes God's role in physical gender diversity by viewing God as the ultimate creator who made humankind in a dual image, implying both male and female attributes within the divine. While God is often described using masculine imagery, this is seen as reflecting God's relationship with humanity rather than God's own gender, and sources note that God is ultimately without gender. Some interpretations, such as an early Palestinian midrash, propose that Adam was initially created as an androgynous being who was later split into male and female, suggesting that physical diversity is a fundamental aspect of God's creation.

Intersex people present us with a challenge of how to stretch our understanding of gender norms, because if we subscribe to such verses as Psalm 139, Verses 13 and 14, which states, "For you created my inmost being. You knit me together in my mother's womb: I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made," then we have to accept that God makes people different. If we are awesomely and wonderfully made, then does not this apply to all people regardless of their differences? This is something to think and pray about.

God bless

Jon

I invite you to come and have a conversation with me if you would like to discuss this further. There is also plenty of information on the Internet if you want to learn more about this or other related issues.

Grateful

Being Grateful

Being grateful is linked to thankfulness. Maybe they are even the same thing. The Bible encourages us many times to be thankful.

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. [1 Thessalonians. 5:18]
always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. [Ephesians 5:20]

The interesting thing is that it is common for the Bible to encourage us to be thankful/grateful in all things all the time. We might wonder why.

The Science of Gratitude

Gratitude is not only nice. It is not only a great form of politeness. It is a power which can change our brains, improve our health and wellbeing and strengthen and deepen our relationships.

Watch this video about how science has discovered many benefits to the practise of gratitude.



<https://youtu.be/JIMd1CcZYwU?si=IZfUM3RSGXpI6Qr>

Do your own research on the Internet about the benefits of gratitude and thankfulness

Practising Gratitude

Gratitude is good for us and good for others. It increases wellbeing and helps us be spiritually fit. However, gratitude only works when it is practised.

Watch this video about a gratitude challenge

An Experiment in Gratitude



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHv6vTKD6lg>

The interesting thing about gratitude letters is that it has even more power when you not only give someone a gratitude letter, but read it to them. Dr. Martin E. P. Seligman, a psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania, tested the impact of various positive psychology interventions on 411 people, each compared with a control assignment of writing about early memories. When their week's assignment was to write and personally deliver a letter of gratitude to someone who had never been properly thanked for his or her kindness, participants immediately exhibited a huge increase in happiness scores. This impact was greater than that from any other intervention, with benefits lasting for a month for both the letter writer and the recipient

The Power of a Gratitude Letter

1. Write a letter to someone who has encouraged you in faith or been a key person in your development as a disciple.
2. Go to that person and read that letter to them
3. Give the letter to that person

If the person is no longer living, Read the letter to someone close to you and then try to give the letter to someone related to the person you wrote to.

PEOPLE NEWS



Janine Cameron

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

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

9—15 November

Oceania: French Polynesia, Kanaks, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu



Thank you

Reverend Ray Longmuir, former minister at St. Matthew's Uniting Church, Baulkham Hills (1984-1993) would like to thank the St. Matthew's community for the card and lovely words of congratulations and blessings on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of his ordination as a Minister. Ray, at 92 years of age, has recently moved to Peter Sinclair Gardens Residential Care Home, Hawks Nest. He is currently still able to worship at Tea Gardens Uniting Church. The congregation celebrated this 60th anniversary milestone during a recent Sunday service followed by a lovely morning tea and words of thanks and appreciation for Ray and Lois' ministry.

Craig and Kathryn Longmuir

SYNOD SPOTLIGHT

Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter

For (31 October 2025) please see link to Synod weekly:

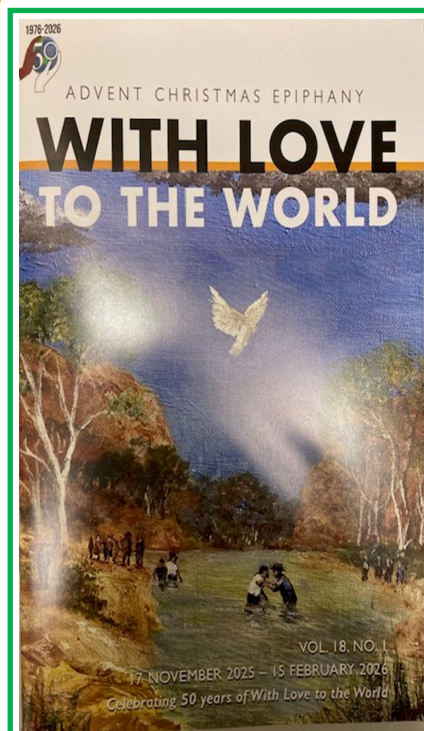
[Synod Weekly Spotlight 2025 - 31 October](#)

Choir Practice

There will be a Choir practice at the church on

**Saturday 22 November
From 10.30am to 11.30am**

This practice is to prepare for the Anniversary service on Sunday 23 November



Advent Christmas Epiphany

WITH LOVE TO THE WORLD

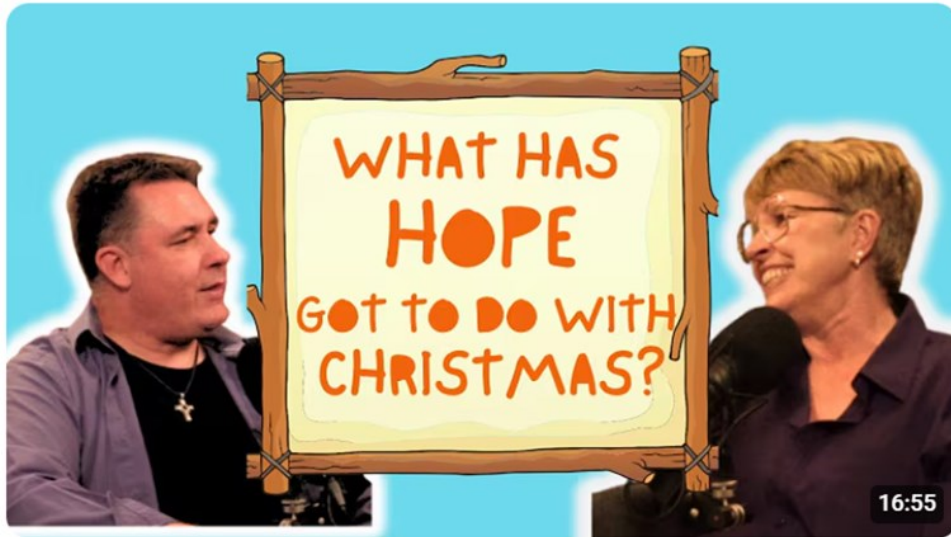
a daily Bible reading guide based on the Revised Common Lectionary

**Volume 18,
Number 1**

**17 November 2025
To
15 February 2026**

is available in the church foyer.

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



On the Way with Ness and Jon
What has Hope Got to do with Christmas?
Season 2 – Episode 1



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DgzsMkT83Ok>



Thanks to Barb and the banner makers. It is great to have a new banner as part of our 50th Celebrations. Thank you to Barbara Gibb and all who coordinated, cut out letters, and put the banner together.



Nominations for Elders and Church Council

Nominations for Elders and Church council are now being accepted. All nominations need to be received by ***Monday 17 November.***

Nomination forms are in the foyer. Nomination forms can be given to the office, Helen Olley or Jon.

Listening Forums

We will be holding listening forums ahead of our voting to decide who is permitted to be married within our Church spaces here at St Matthew's. These will be times when people can ask questions, seek clarification about things and express their thoughts and feelings in a safe and respectful forum.

These will be held in the main Church space.

Saturday 15 November @ 10am

Sunday 16 November @ 11am

Tuesday 18 November @ 7.30pm

The voting is currently proposed to take place on December 14.

50th Anniversary Picnic Lunch

9 NOVEMBER 2025

FROM 11:00 AM

JOHN CURTIN RESERVE

HUXLEY DR WINSTON HILLS

BBQ FACILITIES

**MEETING ROOM WITH KITCHEN
FACILITIES**

**BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH
FOLLOWED BY GAMES AND
T10 CRICKET MATCH**



**COME AND JOIN US FOR LUNCH,
SHARE STORIES AND PLAY GAMES**

Games Night This Saturday

15 November

5:30 Trivia

Adults \$20

6:30 Dinner

Family \$40

7:30 Games

Bring snacks, drinks & games



Morning Tea Help Required

There will be a special Morning Tea following the Anniversary Service on ***Sunday 23 November***

If you are attending the Service, it would be appreciated if you could bring a small plate of food to assist with the catering.

Help will also be required to set up, serve and pack away – if you will be available to help can you please either contact Barbara Gibb or the Office.

With Thanks from the 50th Anniversary Celebration Planning Committee

St Matthew's Social Action Missional Ministry Team

How doing little things makes a big difference.

Topic: State Government's Response to Drug Treatment Reform - from Uniting Fair Treatment

The NSW State Government released its response to the Drug Summit report in late October and Uniting Fair Treatment states that it is most disappointing. It fails to adopt, resource and implement the 56 recommendations of the Drug Summit Report in full - to comprehensively deal with our unfair drug laws and the very real harm they cause.

Here is Uniting Fair Treatment's preliminary analysis:

We welcome the support for much-needed reforms to the Early Drug Diversion Initiative scheme, however, this was already going to happen as part of its two-year review.

We welcome the commitment to a whole-of-government drug and alcohol strategy within 12 months. This is a sorely needed item that was also recommended in the Ice Inquiry.

The government has "noted" recommendations to allow for more injecting centres, stating there has not been sufficient evidence for additional centres. This is in stark contrast to the evidence given at the 2024 NSW Drug Summit that showed the lives that had been saved at the Kings Cross Injecting Centre.

In terms of an "investigation into cannabis driving laws" - we don't need another investigation; we need the action already identified by the Cannabis Inquiry.

The government has outright rejected the recommendation to cease use of sniffer dogs and strip searching in the wake of the landmark court ruling against the practice- this was a stunning response that goes against all principles of harm reduction.

Uniting Fair Treatment are concerned that this latest disappointment is only going to lead to further harm and further stigma in NSW. Regardless - they will not stop pushing and agitating for change and will continue to fight for better laws alongside the most marginalised in our community.

*Blessings,
Alexander
Social Action Missional Ministry Team (SAMMT)*

To ask about joining the Social Action Group at St Matthew's
email Alexander on alexander.lawless7@gmail.com

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 17th February 2026
7pm in the Lower Church Hall



Celebrating 50 Years

St. Matthew's Uniting Church & Preschool's 50th Anniversary

Celebrate with us in November 2025!!

THANKSGIVING SERVICE

9 NOVEMBER 2025

9:00 AM

FOLLOWED BY

MORNING TEA

BRING A PLATE OF FOOD TO SHARE

GUEST PREACHER

REV NICHOLAS FRIED

PICNIC LUNCH

9 NOVEMBER 2025

FROM 11:00 AM

JOHN CURTIN RESERVE

HUXLEY DR WINSTON HILLS

BBQ AND KITCHEN FACILITIES AVAILABLE

BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH

FOLLOWED BY GAMES AND

T10 CRICKET MATCH

GAMES NIGHT

PLUS TRIVIA AND OPEN MIC

INCLUDES DINNER

15 NOVEMBER 2025

FROM 5.30pm

TICKETS

\$ 20 ADULTS

\$40 FAMILIES

TICKETS CAN BE PURCHASED ONLINE

OR AFTER CHURCH SERVICES

COME JOIN US FOR A NIGHT OF FUN

SHARE FOOD STORIES AND GAMES

50TH ANNIVERSARY SERVICE

(CHURCH AND PRESCHOOL)

23 NOVEMBER 2025

9:00 AM

FOLLOWED BY MORNING TEA

BRING A PLATE OF FOOD TO SHARE

AND BBQ LUNCH - DONATION

SHARE WORSHIP FOOD AND STORIES

A SHOWCASE OF CHURCH AND

PRESCHOOL HISTORY ON DISPLAY

CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE IF PLANNING TO

ATTEND FOR CATERING (02) 9686 3003



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

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

Celebrate with us In October/November 2025!!!

You have saved the dates!
Now it's time

SUNDAY 19 OCTOBER 2025

SYDNEY WELSH CHOIR PERFORMANCE 2:00 PM

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

- DINNER, OPEN MIC & 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 & 6:45 PM

SUNDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2025

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

- CHURCH & PRESCHOOL SHOWCASE (AFTER WORSHIP)
- MUNCH (SHARE FOOD & STORIES) (AFTER WORSHIP)
- YOUTH SERVICE (INCL SHINE CELEBRATIONS) 6:45 PM