



st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together

Weekly Newsletter

14 December 2025

Advent 3

Bible Readings

Philippians 4: 4-9
John 15: 9-17



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



twitch.tv

Livestreaming at
8am and 9.30am only

8am—Worship
and Jon Humphries

9am—Worship @ the Willow's

9.30am—Worship
Led by Jon Humphries

KUCA Preschool,
Years K-2 & Years 3-8
FINAL for 2025

followed by Morning Tea

5pm—Shine setup from 4pm

6.45pm—Worship
Led by Jon Humphries

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 15 DECEMBER

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

7.30pm—Christian Meditation

TUESDAY 16 DECEMBER

9am-2pm—Op Shop open

9.30am-11am—Christian Meditation

community room and church

WEDNESDAY 17 DECEMBER

9am-2pm—Op Shop open

10-12pm—In Stitches

FINAL for 2025

upstairs hall

THURSDAY 18 DECEMBER

9am-2pm—Op Shop open

FINAL FOR 2025

FRIDAY 19 DECEMBER

5-7pm—Fusion Youth Group
End of year pool party

SATURDAY 20 DECEMBER

No Scheduled Activities

SUNDAY 21 DECEMBER

8am—Worship

9.30am—Worship
Followed by morning tea

KUCA in Recess for school holidays

6.45pm—Worship



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
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CHAIRPERSON OF ELDERS

HELEN OLLEY
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BAULKHAM HILLS

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Something to think about

14 December

Advent 3

Revised Common Lectionary Readings:

Isaiah 35:1-10
Psalm 146:5-10
Luke 1:46b-55
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11

Bringing Joy

I believe that joy is centred beyond ourselves. I believe that joy, true joy, is about the glow of our soul from recognising goodness. Of course, we can take joy in the good that we do for others or good in good achievements, but even then, that is about good which stretches beyond ourselves.

What is joy? Joy is like many of these kinds of words, such as hope, peace and love, being a word with complex meanings. We all assume that we know what it means, but if we try to define it, especially in trying to differentiate it from happiness, and then things are often not as easy as they might seem. Joy which in Greek is χαρά [chara] is different from happiness. It's seen as a divine, Spirit-related state linked to God's grace Χάρις [charis]. It's linked to an awareness of God's favour, often flourishing in hardship, because Χάρις [charis] holds other meanings including favour, kindness, and a generous gift.

I know that I have shared this video from the Bible Project about the words for joy in the Bible in the past. You may have watched it previously, but I encourage you to watch it again and again. I like to watch these things again because, whilst I know that I have watched them before, I can rarely remember much of what was said in them.



Chara – Joy: The Bible Project

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvOhQTuD2e0&t=11s>

Continued next page

In the story of the Nativity, we have the account of an angel bringing news of great joy to some shepherds in the fields in the region around Bethlehem. Luke 2 tells this story. "...the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am **bringing you good news of great joy** for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah,[Christ] the Lord." [Luke 2: 10-11]

For me, as I write this, two things stand out: The angel and the bringing of joy – at least the good news which brings great joy. Angels are messengers of God. ἄγγελος, [ángelos] means "messenger" or "angel" referring to someone who delivers news, often divine. It is the root for our English word "angel," signifying a spiritual being or intermediary between gods/God and humans, carrying important messages. It was used in ancient Greece for any courier or messenger and later adopted in the Septuagint (Greek Bible) for heavenly messengers, linking it to spirituality, purity, and divine communication. Angels (and they are more complex than the image of a person in a shining white robe with wings) are said to stand in the presence of God and speak the words or Word which God gives them to the person they are also manifesting to.

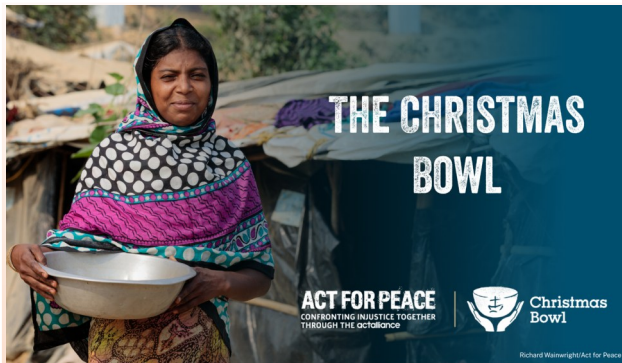
The reality is that many in life can be joy-less. They might be lacking in joy, or because of their situation or

circumstance, can't see joy which might be available to them. To such people we can be kind of angels. We are people with the presence of God with us. In fact, we are temples of the Holy Spirit [who is God]. [1 Corinthians 6:19] Furthermore, if we are abiding in with God and allow God to abide in us, then we should manifest the Fruit of the presence of God, who is Holy Spirit, some of which is joy. We should be bringers of joy, at least the good news that God is present and at work for good. [Romans 8:28] We can be angel-like and bring joy to others.

Being joy-bringers, and sharers of good news is part of our discipleship and should be a focus in our everyday-liturgical work during Advent, and not just in the third week. How we can be more angelic in our joy-bringing is certainly something to think about.

God bless

Jon



**A St. Matthew's page
Just for us at**

[MyCb.link/45881](https://mycb.link/45881)

Check it out!

**Envelopes will be
available as usual at
each service.**

**Four ways to give to those in need
beyond Australia**

***Cash in the Christmas Bowl
envelope given to the person in
the WHITE HAT at the back of
the Church each Sunday
Service.***

***Give credit details in the form
in the Christmas Bowl envelope
and tie it to the person in the
WHITE HAT and receive a
receipt later.***

***Give directly to a letter sent to
you from Christmas Bowl to
your address. Put that you are
at St Matthews on the form***



**Op
Shop**

st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together



***CLOSES for 2025
Thursday
18th December
Last Day of Trading***

9am—2pm

**Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday
& first Saturday of the month 9am-12noon**

. Pre-loved clothes & accessories
. Books, Haberdashery, Bric-a-brac

Edgar Street Baulkham Hills



***REOPENS for 2026
Tuesday
27th January***

Jam Jars

The Op-shop has about 30 clean
used jam jars going free to anyone
who wants them. Ask the
volunteers in the Op-shop or
call/ message Pamela on
M: 0404023588

Thank you

PEOPLE NEWS



David Sieber
Joy Stewart

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

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

14—20 December

Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam

Weekly SYNOD SPOTLIGHT

Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter

For (5 December 2025) please see link to Synod weekly:

[Synod Weekly Spotlight 2025 -](#)

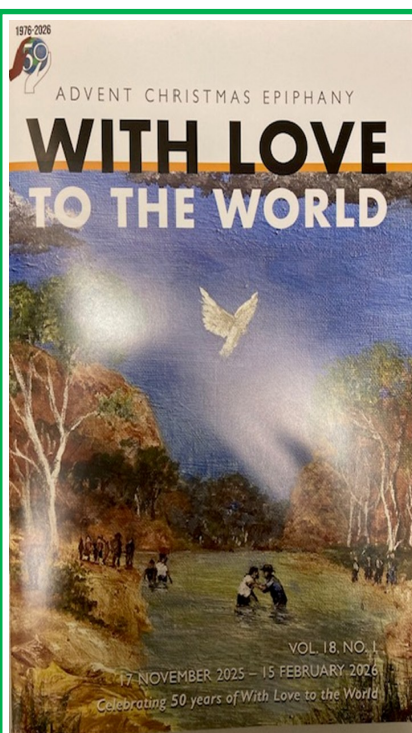
Sympathy to Alan Williams and family on the death of Bronwyn Williams on Saturday 6 December. A funeral service will be held for Bronwyn at **Macquarie Park Crematorium on Friday 19 December at 10am.**

Can you
help us?



**St Matthew's
Netball Club**

St Matthew's Netball Club would like someone to voluntarily review this year's accounts. This is not a huge job. Please see Belinda Schuster if you can help.



**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.**

Christmas Services @ St. Matthew's

Remembrance and Thanksgiving Service
Tuesday 9 December 7.30pm
A service specifically designed for all those who experience a sense of loss at Christmas, especially those for who, this is the first Christmas without a loved one.

Carol Services
Sunday 21 December 8am, 9.30am and 6.45pm
Join our voices together to sing many traditional and contemporary carols.

Children's Christmas Eve Celebration
Wednesday 24 December 5pm
A chance for young children to be part of the Christmas story. A great family time!

Christmas Eve Late Service
Wednesday 24 December 11.15pm
An excellent way to celebrate Christmas in a relaxed family atmosphere with music, a relevant message and candles representing Christ's light in our world.

Christmas Day Worship
Thursday 25 December 9am
Celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ with a Christmas message and carols.



On Tuesday night this week we held our service of thanksgiving and remembrance. It was a beautiful time to acknowledge and remember loved ones who are not with us and to give some expression to grief that we might feel as we also looked for hope, peace and even joy.

Dear Church Family,

Thank you for the thoughtful, heartfelt, and deeply considered responses you shared regarding the question of allowing same-sex marriages to be celebrated in our church building. We are truly grateful for the honesty, care, and prayerful reflection you brought to this important conversation.

I am pleased to share that there was overwhelming support for allowing same-sex weddings to take place in our church. While it was noted during our conversations that we haven't received any requests to this date we can now move forward with confidence should an occasion arise in the future.

The congregation's vote has given Church Council a clear sense of its collective views on this issue. Your Church Council will now reflect on these insights and discern the best way forward.

Your willingness to engage with respect, compassion, and openness reflects the very best of who we are as a community. It has been encouraging to witness the grace with which you have listened, reflected, and responded.

As we continue to discern the path ahead, please know how much we appreciate your participation and the spirit in which you have offered your views. Thank you for being a congregation committed to love, unity, and the generous welcome of Christ.

I would also like to acknowledge with gratitude the guidance and support we have received throughout this process with the sermons and conversation forums from Reverend Dean Drayton, Reverend Clive Pearson, and our own minister, Reverend Jon Humphries, who have all guided us through this process. If you have any further questions or concerns, please feel free to contact any of us through the Church office.

With gratitude,

Mike Underwood

Chair St. Matthew's Uniting Church

Baulkham Hills

ELDERS ELECTION RESULT

As a result of the congregation vote last Sunday 7 December, the following were elected/re-elected to the council of Elders for our congregation;

Alexander Lawless

Bronwyn Tweeddale

Robyn Matthewson

Helen Olley

Sandra Morrell

Thomas Smith



**The Bill Crews Foundation
is need of these items for
their food Hampers:**

- Tinned Foods (ring pulls)
- ◇ Spaghetti
- ◇ Baked beans
- ◇ Tuna/Salmon
- ◇ Meats/chicken
- ◇ Soup
- ◇ Fruit & Vegetables
- Rice
- Dry Pasta
- Pasta Sauces
- Supermarket & store gift cards
- Noodles cups/packets
- Chips
- Crackers
- Biscuits
- Cereals
- Muesli Bars
- Up & Go breakfast drinks
- Fruit juices/poppers
- Tea/coffee
- Long life milk
- Bottled water (600ml)

Please donate to the St. Matthew's collection for the
Bill Crews Foundation Christmas Food appeal.
Please leave items in the containers in the upstairs
foyer by 15 December.

**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.

St Matthew's Social Action Missional Ministry Team

How doing little things makes a big difference.

Topic: Banning Gambling Advertising

From the ABC article: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-11-25/gambling-advertising-ban-push-multi-partisan-support/106047600>

A total ban on gambling advertising would pass parliament with a conscience vote, according to a Labor MP Mike Freeland, who is in favour of tackling the issue as a matter of public health. Liberal Simon Kennedy and independent Kate Chaney are also in agreement and are the co-chairs of the newly revived Parliamentary [Friends of Gambling Harm Minimisation](#) group. Ms Chaney said there was "broad support" across the political spectrum for "serious reform of the predatory online gambling industry".

[There is also a growing movement to tighten up other gambling legislation.](#) Alliance for Gambling Reform chief executive Martin Thomas said the current system had allowed the Northern Territory to act as a "regulatory haven" for foreign-owned bookmakers with "low tax, light oversight and quick approvals". "A single NT licence allows foreign companies to operate nationwide, bypassing stronger regulatory regimes that in places in other states," he said.

A national survey reveals that around three million Australians are engaged in some form of harmful gambling, which is linked to financial stress, family violence and poor mental health. About 1 per cent of online bettors generate more than 40 per cent of all losses, according to research collated for the Alliance. High-loss gamblers are predominantly employed men aged 25 to 44, including many with children and mortgages, as well as people in financial stress or with mental health vulnerabilities.

What can I do?

Pray for an end to all gambling advertising in Australia on all forms of media and legislation to put stronger controls on multinational gambling corporations.

Email your federal representative and NSW Senators. Explain to them why it is so important to ban all gambling advertising and that a partial ban will not work. Parliament sessions have finished for 2025. It is expected that the first week of parliament for 2026 will be in the first week in February. Contacting them from mid-January might be the most effective strategy.

Read the full ABC article: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-11-25/gambling-advertising-ban-push-multi-partisan-support/106047600>

Alliance for Gambling Reform- Friends of Gambling Harm Minimisation <https://www.agr.org.au/parliamentaryfriendsofreducinggamblingharmgroup>

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