



18 January 2026

Epiphany 2

Bible Readings

John 1: 29-42
Psalm 40: 1-11



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, 9.30am and
9am in January each year

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 19 JANUARY

Furniture been moved for the laying of carpet on stairs and stage in the church.

7.30pm—Christian Meditation

TUESDAY 20 JANUARY

Op Shop re opens for 2026

9.30am-11am—Christian Meditation

community room and church

WEDNESDAY 21 JANUARY

9am-2pm—Op Shop

THURSDAY 22 JANUARY

9am-2pm—Op Shop

FRIDAY 23 JANUARY

Carpet laying on stairs and stage in church.

SATURDAY 24 JANUARY

No Scheduled Activities

**SUNDAY
25 JANUARY**

9am—Summer Worship

Followed by morning tea

KUCA in Recess for school holidays

5pm—Shine— setup from 4pm

6.45pm—Worship



9am—Summer Worship

Led by Jon Humphries
followed by Morning Tea

KUCA in Recess for school holidays

6.45pm—Worship

Led by Jon Humphries

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 : lynns@nswact.uca.org.au
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:

BAULKHAM HILLS UNITING CHURCH
PO Box 773 BULKHAM HILLS 1755

WEB SITE: www.stmatthewsuniting.net.au
Weekly newsletter available on website

FACEBOOK:

[@stmatthewsunitingchurchbaulkhamhills](https://www.facebook.com/stmatthewsunitingchurchbaulkhamhills)

PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR 9639 8570

SONALI WANIGESEKERA
PO Box 321 BULKHAM HILLS 2153

EMAIL: director@stmatthewsps.net.au

Something to think about

18 JANUARY

**2nd SUNDAY
AFTER
EPIPHANY**

Revised Common Lectionary Readings:

Isaiah 49:1-7
Psalm 40:1-11
1 Corinthians 1:1-9
John 1:29-42

Sharing My experience as Disaster Recovery Chaplaincy network Chaplain at Bondi

Leading up to and in the week of Christmas I was deployed three times as a Disaster Recovery Chaplain to Bondi, and then the two days before New Year's day. This week I have been back at Bondi as Disaster Recovery Chaplain again. The Disaster Recovery Chaplaincy Network is one of the many organisations and resources which is part of our government's emergency plan. This is not a side of the government that we hear a lot about, and often the work of the many people involved in providing help, support and assistance to people in times of disaster goes unannounced or unmentioned in the speeches of politicians. However, being a disaster recovery chaplain has opened my eyes to the degree of planning and preparation and then the amazing response that is coordinated by government departments such as the NSW Reconstruction Authority and the NSW Premier's Department each time there is a serious catastrophic or disastrous incident or event.

The level of support that is planned for and released in the wake of a disaster, be it natural or human-caused, as in the Bondi massacre. It can be fire, flood or storm, but also the bus crash, a unit block fire, repatriation of Australians from evacuation zones, or incidents such as the tragedy which unfolded at Bondi on 14 December, then a range of helps and supports are activated. As one who has been deployed now several times, it is humbling and encouraging. It is awesome to see how caring staff are and how hard volunteers and staff work to help and assist people in need. Sometimes the grants and assistance may not seem much for an individual, but when we calculate the number of people who receive them it takes on a size worth appreciating. People are constantly and consistently trying to be a help to others.

The Disaster Recovery Chaplaincy Network (DRCN) is an ecumenical network of chaplains established to assist people in NSW who have been affected by disasters and major emergencies within their communities. The network was established in 2009 by the Uniting Church (Synod of NSW and ACT) as a result of deliberations within the State Disaster Welfare Committee, which recognised the need for chaplaincy to complement the other welfare services within evacuation and recovery centres following major emergencies.

Since 2009 the DRCN has grown to a network of 400 trained disaster chaplains who are from 15 different faith groups and diverse backgrounds. With the increasing regularity of natural disasters our services are increasingly needed. As Chaplains we put to the side our faith backgrounds and just seek to be a presence for help and care to people in need in the midst of, or following, disasters. Of course our faith and training are the foundations of what we do. However, promoting or being limited by one faith background or another is the reason why we take on the vestments and ethos of the DRCN when we serve.

When disasters strike, people are affected in every aspect of their lives, physically, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. Holistic care must account for all aspect of a person's experience and need. Issues of meaning, justice, forgiveness, hope and worldview have spiritual elements. These are all challenged at a time of major loss, and many people connect these things with their own faith or spirituality. Holistic care should allow for pastoral and spiritual care and comfort in this context. This is where disaster recovery chaplaincy fits into the mix of services provided.

While other services and groups aid in taking care of people's physical and emotional needs, disaster recovery chaplaincy seeks to support people spiritually.

DRCN Chaplains:

- Provide best practice pastoral and spiritual care and comforting presence in support to of people and communities following disasters.
- Work in collaboration with other community partners to provide specific elements of holistic care.
- Participate in short- and long-term recovery activities.
- Provide resources, training and support to local ministry agents as they, in turn, support their communities in recovery.

At Bondi along with being a part of the work of the support hub which had services from Service NSW, mental health services, Lifeline counselling, Insurance Association, Legal Aid and Red Cross, as chaplains we did a lot of walking around the area, particularly around the Bondi Beach. We were there if people wanted to talk, and we also initiated conversations to check in on people and how they were coping with processing and coming to terms with what had happened.

I met families of victims, some who had travelled from Israel. I met people from all over Sydney. I met people who had travelled from Canberra and Wollongong, even from Melbourne. People were dealing things in different ways, but all felt it was important to come to Bondi as a sign of respect and solidarity.

I met local rabbis who were there to not only serve their own communities, but also all who came to serve the wider community and work for hope and healing. It was moving and encouraging to hear messages of resilience and hope amongst the sadness and grief. It was humbling to be thanked for the work we did, especially by those whose work seemed so much more important.

We might ask where God is in such situations. I believe that when we live in love we live in God and God lives in us. We saw love in so many ways during the tragedy and following it. God was present. God was named as being present across different faith groups. Sadly, there was still great anger and blame, and some might blame God for not stopping it. The story of God in the person of Jesus, and in much of the Scriptures is that God allows humankind free will and some use that to do evil and harm others. However, God is always present, like as Christ, and is not stopping the evil, but redeeming it and working for new good in its wake.

The Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control. God is present whenever these are lived out. As disaster chaplains, we seek to live out such good things. We cannot change the situations or circumstances of the people we are deployed to help. However, like God, we can seek to care for, comfort, listen to, support, and encourage people as they seek to move to healing and recovery.

Even in the wake of those who demonstrate the worst of humankind, we repeatedly and consistently see the best of humankind. We see the flourishing of hope, even when things seem hopeless. As a faith community, how might we continue to grow as a means and conduit for hope and love in our community? It is something to think about.

God bless

Jon

PEOPLE NEWS



Helen Olley
Alastair Burn
Jeff Cameron

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

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

18—24 January

Arabian Peninsula: Bahrain,
Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia,
United Arab Emirates, Yemen

Please
return
completed
forms by
1 February

Volunteer Form

Assisting with
Morning Services



MARCH, APRIL, MAY 2026

Are available from the
church foyer.

**NEW HELPERS
WELCOME**



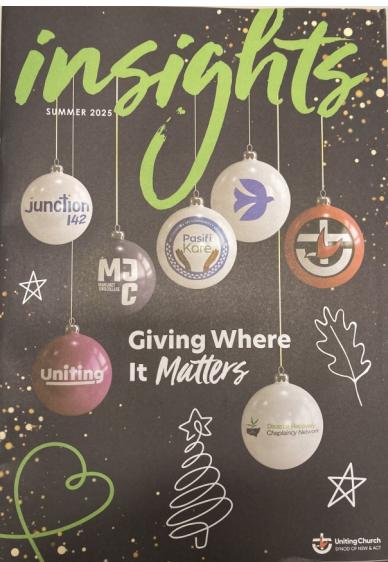
**Please return forms to the blue
mail tray or church office.**

UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
GROWING TOGETHER

Help Needed

This coming week from Monday 19th January we will be having new carpets laid throughout the church. On the Monday we need some strong people to help in moving the furniture, including the piano and organ (organ professional will be here to assist at 10.30 am), also vestry needs to be emptied. We will need assistance for everything to be put back on the Friday once carpet is laid.

If you can help please let Jane Jenkyn know by email jmap@optusnet.com.au or message 0422149530



Please pick up the
latest

insights

Magazine
Summer 2025

From the church foyer

St Matthew's Social Action Missional Ministry Team

How doing little things makes a big difference.

Topic: Gambling Reform Action

1. Federal Government – Banning All Gambling Advertising in Australia:

In the final weeks of sitting of the Federal Parliament in 2025, there was a groundswell of support by Federal parliamentarians to pass legislation to put a complete ban on gambling advertising. However, the ALP are not allowing their members to exercise a conscience vote, which means they have the numbers to reject the proposed bill. There are ALP parliamentarians who are supportive of a ban and in favour of tackling the issue as a matter of public health. If the bill isn't allowed to be debated in the first week of sitting in January or February 2026, this bill may lapse and be removed from Parliamentary business according to the 2025 Parliament House of Representatives Notice Paper number 29 for Thursday 27th November 2025.

2. NSW State Government – Wesley Mission ‘Put Pokies In Their Place’

The details for the Wesley campaign are on the Wesley ‘Put Pokies in their Place’ campaign website. <https://www.wesleymission.org.au/get-involved/advocate-with-us/poker-machine-reform/>

The current priority for Wesley Mission is to restrict poker machine operating hours in NSW and to enforce a shut down from midnight to 10am, as a harm reduction measure. The NSW Government has revoked the 24 hour operation of pokies and now has imposed a 4am shut down. However, this still means people using poker machines can still gamble double their daily banking withdrawal limits (which resets at midnight) both before midnight and after midnight to 4am. Wesley will continue to ask for a midnight shutdown of pokies in NSW as means of harm reduction.

What can I do?

v 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. Also please pray for the Wesley Mission campaign to implement harm reduction measures for the use of poker machines.

v 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. The first sitting of federal parliament for 2026 will start on 19th January.

v Email your state parliamentarian about supporting legislation to power down all poker machines in NSW from midnight to 10am every day.

(see the next page for draft emails and politician's contact details)

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 at 7pm in the Lower Church Hall

Federal Members of Parliament for areas where St Matthews members live:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Description of area</u>	<u>Electorate Office</u>	<u>Postal Address</u>
Dr Andrew Charlton MP (ALP) Member for Parramatta	Toongabbie east of the railway line to Old Windsor Road	Electorate Office (Principal Office) Shops 1 & 2, 25 Smith St Parramatta, NSW, 2150 Andrew.Charlton.MP@aph.gov.au House of Rep Select Com: Cabinet Secretary, Assistant Minister for Science, Technology & the Digital Economy	Postal address PO Box 395 Parramatta, NSW, 2124 Telephone: (02) 9689 1455
Alex Hawke (Liberal) Member for Mitchell Most of St Matthews congregation lives in the seat of Mitchell	Mitchell – From Old Toongabbie on the north side of Old Windsor Road. Includes Baulkham Hills, Winston Hills, North Rocks, Bella Vista and Norwest	Phone (02) 9899 7211 Email: alex.hawke.mp@aph.gov.au Fax: (02) 9899 7990 Suite 8, 23 Terminus Street, Castle Hill, NSW 2154 Manager of Opposition Business	PO Box 1173, Castle Hill, NSW 1765 (postcode correct – is for Castle Hills PO Boxes)
Mr Julian Leeser MP (Liberal) Member for Berowra	West Pennant Hills And further north	Electorate Office Level 11, 423 Pennant Hills Road Pennant Hills, NSW, 2120 Julian.Leeser.MP@aph.gov.au Telephone: (02) 6277 4826	Postal address PO Box 743 Pennant Hills, NSW, 1715

State Members of Parliament for areas where St. Matthew's Church Members live:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Description of area</u>	<u>Electorate Office</u>
Mr Mark Hodges, MP, Member for Castle Hill (Liberal) Shadow Assistant Minister for Western Sydney, Shadow Assistant Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Shadow Assistant Minister for Housing	Baulkham Hills Castle Hill	Suite 1A, 19-21 Terminus Street CASTLE HILL NSW 2154 Phone (02) 9686 3110 Fax (02) 9686 3212 Email: cas- tlehill@parliament.nsw.gov.au
Mark Taylor MP Member for Winston Hills (Liberal) Policing (Prosec), LLM Member, Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission & the Crime Commission	Winston Hills, Seven Hills (east of railway line) and Lalor Park	Mr Mark Taylor, MP Shop 43, Winston Hills Mall 180-190 Caroline Chisholm Drive WINSTON HILLS NSW 2153 Phone (02) 9831 8022 Email: winstonhills@parliament.nsw.gov.au

A sample email to your federal member of parliament about banning all gambling advertising:

Dear _____

Re: Banning All Gambling Advertising in Australia

I am a constituent of your seat of _____ and I am asking you to support the recommendations of Peta Murphy's 2023 parliamentary inquiry into gambling report 'You win some, you lose more'. The most urgent of the recommendations is the complete banning of gambling advertising in Australia.

Gambling losses have been proven to be one of the major factors in the incidence of domestic violence. It is also essential that we stop the normalisation of gambling for our children. European countries are successfully regulating gambling advertising. There is no reason why Australia can't do the same.

Please give your full support to removing gambling advertising from all forms of media in Australia. The gambling industry in Australia has a very powerful lobby network with huge influence and they will fight this all the way, but we need to show them that our politicians are strong and have a moral obligation to protect our citizens.

Yours sincerely
(your name)
(street address)
(mobile phone number)

continued next page

From previous page

A sample email to your state member of parliament re poker machines operating hours:

Dear _____

Re: Reducing the hours of operation for poker machines in NSW

I am a constituent of your seat of _____ and I am asking you to support the Gaming Machines Amendment (Mandatory Shutdown Period) Bill 2025 that would require all pubs and clubs to shut down their poker machines between midnight and 10am and which delivers on a key recommendation of the Independent Panel on Gaming Reform.

It is vital that midnight is the starting time for the shut down as bank withdrawal limits reset at midnight. Allowing a closing time of 4am means that gamblers can access twice their daily withdrawal allowances from their bank accounts, both before and after midnight. Gambling losses from poker machines have been proven to be one of the major factors in the incidence of domestic violence and suicide. We need to reduce the harm and misery that poker machines are causing in New South Wales.

Please give your full support to the reduction of hours for poker machines with a shutdown from midnight to 10am in NSW, with no exceptions. The gambling industry in NSW has a very powerful lobby network with huge influence and they will fight this all the way, but we need to show them that our politicians are strong and have a moral obligation to protect our citizens.

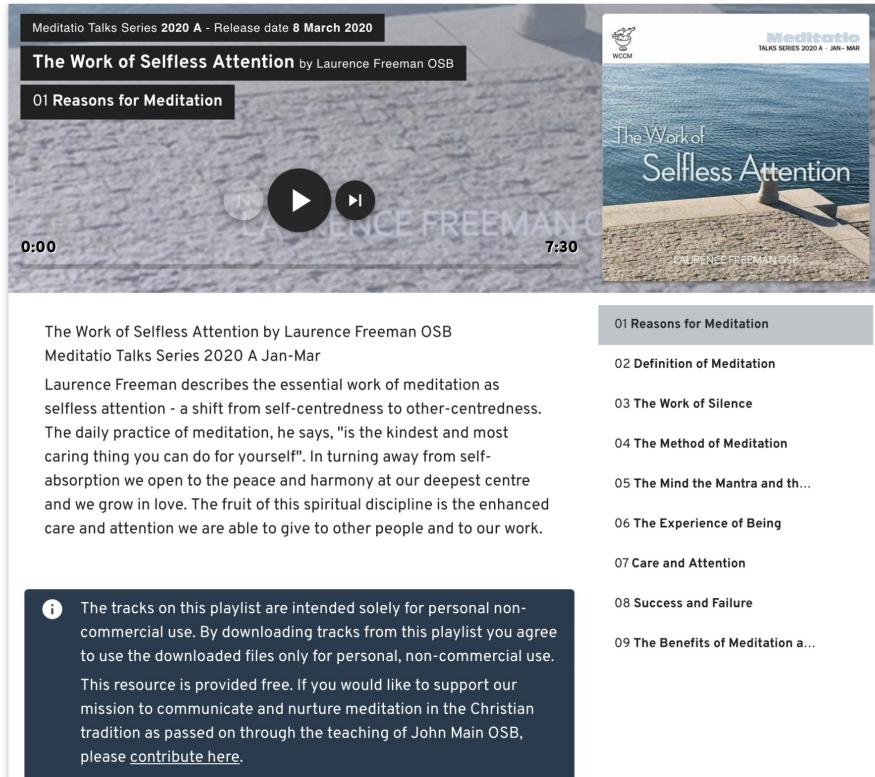
Yours sincerely

(your name)

(street address)

(mobile phone number)

“Christian Meditation is not what you think”



Titles of talks we
will be
listening to at
both weekly
sessions.

An invitation to everyone to come and taste and experience for themselves that

“Christian Meditation is not what you think”.

The talks will begin on
Monday 5th and Tuesday 6 January 2026 at the church during our
normal meditation times.

Contact Katherine Pedersen
kathped56@gmail.com 0437 772 011

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Quiet Saturday afternoons in January 2026

The afternoons will include two periods of meditation/prayer in the Christian tradition followed by Lectio Divina and personal time for reflection and relaxation. Afternoon tea/refreshments will be included and a donation of \$10 to the WCCM is suggested.

Where: Bundaleer, Castle Hill on 10th and 24th January 2026.
Time: 1-5pm contact kathped56@gmail.com 0437 772 011



**\$110 / PLAYER
ACTIVE KIDS VOUCHERS WELCOME!**



PLAY NETBALL IN THE HILLS!

JOIN ST MATTHEW'S NETBALL CLUB

- We prioritise a fun, social game to develop your skills or have a weekend run around!
- Completely ungraded - play with friends!
- All ages from Pre Kindergarten - Opens
- Saturday afternoon competition - no early mornings!



REGISTRATIONS OPEN NOW UNTIL

FEB 7 2026

 **GOODEN RESERVE BAULKHAM HILLS**



Go to www.stmatthewsnetballclub.com to complete your registration.

For enquiries please email stmatthewsnetballclub@hotmail.com



OP SHOP Re-opens For 2026 Tuesday 20 January

then Wednesday & Thursday 9am-2pm
and

1st Saturday of the month 9-12pm

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



**1st Saturday of the month
9am-12pm**

Upcoming dates

- **7 February**
- **7 March**
- **No Sale in April**

Pre-loved
Household items,
Electrical, Toys & Books
(Fiction, Non-fiction & children's books)

St. Matthew's Lower hall

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.

Calendar of Events for January 2026

School Holidays

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
			1 New Years Day Public Holiday 	2 Church Office Closed No scheduled events	3 No scheduled events	4 Christmas 2  9am Summer Worship Includes Communion Followed by Morning Tea KUCA in session 6.45pm Worship Includes Communion
5 7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room	6 Church Office Reopens 9.30-11am Christian Meditation Community Room	No scheduled events	No scheduled events	No scheduled events	No scheduled events	 9am Summer Worship followed by Morning Tea KUCA in session 9am—Worship @ the Willows 6.45pm—Worship Community Meal
12 7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room and Church	13 9.30-11am Christian Meditation Community Room	No Scheduled events	No Scheduled events	No Scheduled events	No Scheduled events	 9am Summer Worship followed by Morning Tea KUCA in session 6.45pm—Worship
19 9am Sorting & Cleaning for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall 7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room	 9am—Set up for Op-Shop 9.30-11am Christian Meditation Community Room	9am—Set up for Op-Shop 10am-12noon In Stitches upstairs hall 10am-12noon Men's Morning Tea Mudgee Cellar Door Visit	9am—Set up for Op-Shop	No scheduled events	No scheduled events	 9am Summer Worship followed by Morning Tea KUCA in session 9am—Shine setup from 4pm 6.45pm—Worship
26 7.30pm—Christian Meditation Australia Day Public Holiday 	27 Op Shop RE-OPENS 9.30-11am Christian Meditation community room 7.30pm—Property meeting Church office closed	9am-2pm Op Shop Church Office Closed	9am-2pm Op Shop Church Office Closed	No scheduled events	No scheduled events	