



Bible Readings

John 9: 1-41



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

8am—Worship
Led by Jon Humphries

9.30am—Worship
Led by Jon Humphries
KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8
followed by Morning Tea

6.45pm—Worship
Led by Jon Humphries

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 16 MARCH

7.30pm—Christian Meditation
9am—sorting and pricing for Op Shop & Garage sale lower hall

TUESDAY 17 MARCH

9am-2pm—Op Shop
9.30am-11am—Christian Meditation
community room and church
7.30pm— Lent Studies
In the church & online via Zoom

WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH

9am-2pm—Op Shop
10am-12pm—In Stitches
upstairs hall
10am-12pm—Men's morning tea
Mckel's café Bella Vista
7.30pm—Elders meeting

THURSDAY 19 MARCH

9am-2pm—Op Shop

FRIDAY 20 MARCH

5-7pm—Fusion Youth Group
"Chill night"

SATURDAY 21 MARCH

No Scheduled activities

SUNDAY 22 MARCH

8am—Worship
9am—Combined morning tea
9.30am—Worship
KUCA—Preschool,
Years K-2 & Years 3-8
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 : 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
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LOCATION:

CNR CHARLES & EDGAR STREETS
BAULKHAM HILLS

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SONALI WANIGESEKERA
PO BOX 321 BAULKHAM HILLS 2153

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Something to think about

15 March

Lent 4

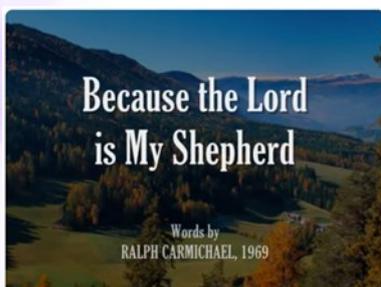
Revised Common Lectionary Readings:

1 Samuel 16:1-13
Psalm 23
Ephesians 5:8-14
John 9:1-41

Learning About The Lord as My Shepherd

Most people are familiar with the 23rd Psalm or Psalm 23, at least if they have been hanging around Church for a while. Not everyone has thought about it to any great degree though. A lot of us look on it as very encouraging and comforting. However, when we look at it more closely there are things that can be discomfoting about it. So, I am going to explore it here.

To start off maybe read Psalm 23 in the Bible. Here is a lovely musical version.



[https://youtu.be/C9n2rHGfwxI?
si=kCxq9SkJ1wj18mqb](https://youtu.be/C9n2rHGfwxI?si=kCxq9SkJ1wj18mqb)

The 23rd Psalm starts with an encouraging description of God as a shepherd who cares for, guides and provides for the sheep. [Psalm 23: 1-3] They have everything they need: food from green pastures and a place to rest in them; water from a quiet stream and even he “restores my soul.” Here is our first discomfort which is comforting.

To have one’s soul restored implies that it was damaged or worn to begin with. This is a reality in life. Life can wear down our soul. There are troubles, stresses and strife, losses and griefs that damages us or wear down our spirits. The comfort is that God promises us a sense of rest and a restoring of our soul. Jesus spoke about this with the Samaritan woman at the well when he spoke about a spring of living water welling up in us to eternal life.

The psalm then moves to God leading us in right paths. [Psalm 23: 3] This is comforting. However, doing the right thing and going on the right path, often means not taking shortcuts. This is not always easy to do, and the temptation is often there to just cut across something to save a little time or effort. Yet the call is to right living and right walking. For us who follow Jesus on the Way of the Cross, this will lead us into righteousness, but likely also some challenges and difficulty.

“Even though I walk through the darkest valley [or the Valley of the Shadow of Death] I will not fear evil for your rod and staff they comfort me.” [Psalm 23: 4] This is clearly not a place of fun or joy. The darkest valley and the Valley of the Shadow of Death are realities for us. We will know dark times. There will be sadness and hardships and suffering. We will face death in our lives. We will know people and loved ones who die.

Continued next page

We will also face our own death at some stage. Some of us will do that through decline of our wellbeing through illness. Others of us will face it through the decline of age. In this God guides us, for that is the symbol of the shepherd's staff, and the rod is a symbol of God defending us. This is not necessarily preventing us from dying but is about defending us from darkness and evil. The promise is that God, who is love and compassion, is always present with us as a guide, support and comfort.

The notion of a table being prepared before us in the presence of our enemies [Psalm 23: 5] is a bit perplexing. One interpretation is that God provides for us even in the face of hostility and our basic needs are met. However, it can perhaps be an invitation to hospitality. The table may not just be for us. It is prepared before us, and then also before or in the midst of our enemies. We are called by God, who is Christ, to love our enemies [Matthew 5:44] and to the ministry of reconciliation [2 Corinthians 5:18-20] God reconciled and is reconciling humanity to Godself, as Christ, and we are entrusted as believers with the "ministry of reconciliation" and the "message of reconciliation," acting as ambassadors for Christ to implore others to be reconciled to God and with us.

Anointing is a sign of selection and blessing. David was anointed by Samuel as a sign that he was to be king. Jesus was anointed by a woman as a sign that he was Christ and redeemer. Our heads are anointed as chosen by God [Psalm 23: 5] to bear God's love. Our cup overflowing can be meaning that we have more than enough, like a wellspring of living water to share with others. The idea of a cup overflowing can also be seen by us as about sorrows. This we get from Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass me by." [Matthew 26:39] The "Cup of Sorrow" is a profound symbol of Jesus' obedience and submission to the Father's will. If we follow

Jesus on the Way of the Cross, then surely our cup may also overflow.

I personally like the ending of the psalm due to an epiphany that I had about it once. "Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life," [Psalm 23: 6] I used to think that this was God giving me love, mercy and goodness. However, when reading the psalm, I noted that the goodness and love follows me, rather than being with me. Thus, whilst I know that God is with me as Holy Spirit and God's goodness and love is with me and for me, the reality is that if I am living the way of God by living God's love to others, and doing good as I follow in right paths, then God's goodness and love will follow me as I leave such footprints in the world and the lives of others.

Finally, I look to dwelling in the House of the Lord forever. [Psalm 23: 6] This I have realised is not just a reference to Heaven, even though in God's house there are many rooms prepared for us. [John 14:2-3] God's house is the Temple of God. For us that temple is us. We are temples of God as Holy Spirit. [1 Corinthians 6:19-20] Jesus us called us to abide in him and bear much fruit [John 15:4-5] Thus, I will seek to live as if God is not only present in me, but I am shining with the realisation of this to others.

Psalm 23 is a great Psalm. Many have it as their favourite psalm. It holds much encouragement for us, but it also holds much challenge. Psalm 23 gives us much to think about that is worth thinking about, especially as we continue to journey in reflection in Lent on the way to the Cross.

God bless

Jon

PEOPLE NEWS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Anne Oliver
Yee-Cheng Eldridge

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

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

15-21 March

Scandinavia: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden

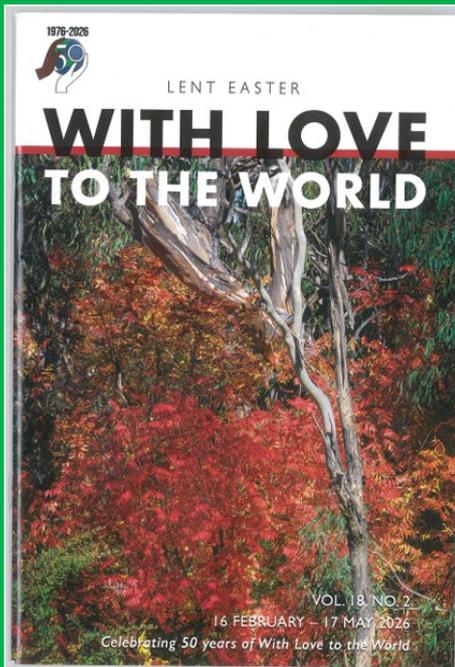
Weekly SYNOD SPOTLIGHT

Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter

For (6 March 2025) please see link to Synod weekly:

[Synod Weekly Spotlight 2026 - 6 March |](#)



Lent Easter **WITH LOVE TO THE WORLD**

a daily Bible reading guide based on the Revised Common Lectionary

**Volume 18,
Number 2
16 February
To
17 May 2026**

is available in the church foyer.

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

St Matthew's

HAPPY HOUR!

NEW TIME!

At NBC

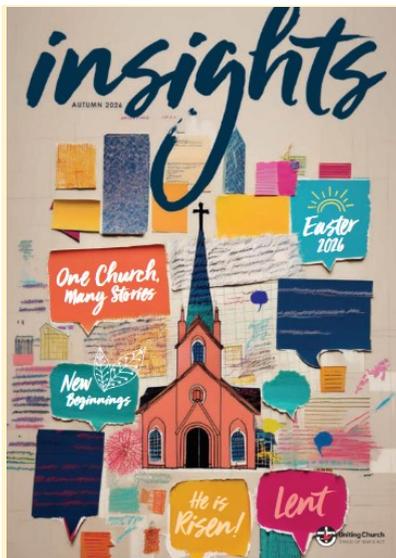
166 Windsor Rd, Northmead

20 MARCH | **5:30 PM**
FRIDAY



COME AND SHARE IN SOME HAPPY CONVERSATION, A DRINK AND SOME FOOD WITH FRIENDS FROM ST MATTHEW'S.

RSVP to Belinda or just come along
belinda.schuster0709@gmail.com



Please pick up the latest

insights

Magazine for Autumn 2026

From the church foyer

**Lent Studies will take
place
EACH TUESDAY IN LENT
7.30pm
In person in the church
space
and online via Zoom**

**Tuesday 24
February
To
Tuesday 31
March**

Topic: 2026 St Matthew's Uniting Lenten Studies

Time: Feb 24, 2026 07:30 PM

Every week on Tue, 6 occurrence(s)

<https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/98002215746>

Meeting ID: 980 0221 5746

One tap mobile

+61871501149,,98002215746# Australia

+61280156011,,98002215746# Australia

Join by SIP

• 98002215746@zoomcrc.com

Join instructions

[https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/meetings/98002215746/invitations?
signature=8pWbv39wLUCWvOM7fPthgCNckTnA6iSAOR8KpCqNU3I](https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/meetings/98002215746/invitations?signature=8pWbv39wLUCWvOM7fPthgCNckTnA6iSAOR8KpCqNU3I)



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.

Combined MORNING TEA

9AM



22
MARCH
2026



PLEASE TELL SARA IF YOU CAN
BRING SOMETHING TO SHARE

Micah Women's Network Dinner

Date & time: 27th March 2026 starting at 7pm

Cost: \$30 each, tables can be booked for groups.

Location: Northside Community Church, Crows Nest

Getting there: there is car parking at the church and the church is a 4 minute walk from the Crows Nest Metro.

Keynote speakers:

1. **Asuntha Charles**, the Humanitarian Response Director at World Vision
2. **Tim Costello**, Chief Executive Officer and Chief Advocate of World Vision Australia

Micah Womens Network equips women through connection, training, and advocacy to engage churches and to meet with Federal MPs to help shape a more just world.

<https://www.micahaustralia.org/take-action/micah-womens-network/>

To book tickets: ask Amanda to send you the email link



World Day of Prayer



The World Day of Prayer Service was held at St. Matthew's Uniting on March 6. We had leaders from other local churches lead the service as we shared in prayer and reflection, particularly in respect to the people of Nigeria. People came from a range of denominations. Together we raised over \$2,500 to support the work of the Bible Society in Nigeria.





Church Working Bee

It is nearing Easter so it is time to carry out the working bee to make the property sparkle. We only have a couple of working bees each year so if you can afford to give a few hours the Property Committee would appreciate your help. Mark your diary on

Saturday 28th March
from 8.00 am to 11.30 pm

We will be cleaning windows, church seats, Furniture in the church, clean tops and inside of cupboards, clean fans and more if we have the time and the manpower.

If you prefer to garden this is your opportunity.

Remember many hands make light work. 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷



A LENTEN INVITATION
from President Rev Charissa Suli



[https://
uniting.church/2026-
lenten-invitation/](https://uniting.church/2026-lenten-invitation/)

St Matthew's Social Action Missional Ministry Team

How doing little things makes a big difference.

Topic: A Christian Response to the Conflict in the Middle East

Iran, historically known as Persia, has a history stretching back more than 2,500 years and is one of the world's oldest continuous civilizations. Today it is home to more than 90 million people. Ancient Persian empires once ruled large parts of the Middle East. In modern times, Iran was governed as a monarchy under the Pahlavi dynasty until the 1979 Islamic Revolution, when a popular uprising replaced the Shah with an Islamic republic led by religious authorities.

Following the revolution, Iran established a political system that combines elected institutions with powerful religious leadership. The revolution also reshaped Iran's foreign policy, particularly its relationship with the United States and Israel.

It is important to remember that Israel and Iran were not always adversaries. Before 1979, Iran's monarchy maintained a quiet but cooperative relationship with Israel. After the revolution, however, Iran's new leadership strongly opposed Israel and expressed support for groups they view as resisting Israeli occupation. Over time, this hostility has contributed to cycles of tension and confrontation across the region.

These tensions are part of a complex web of political rivalries and regional interests involving countries such as Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Gaza, and Yemen. Rivalries between Iran and several Arab governments, particularly Saudi Arabia and its allies, also shape the broader regional landscape.

The human cost of these conflicts is profound. Violence and instability have forced many people from their homes, leaving families grieving the loss of loved ones and communities struggling to survive amid destruction and uncertainty. War is never abstract. It means destroyed homes, frightened children, and families carrying the trauma of displacement for generations. In almost every conflict, it is innocent civilians who bear the greatest suffering.

Many Australians are watching these events with deep concern, particularly those whose family members and friends live in the affected regions. Within our churches, ministers, students, and lay leaders remain in close contact with loved ones whose homes and communities are now overshadowed by violence and uncertainty.

At the same time, churches and faith-based communities across the region continue to offer hope. Many are opening their doors to shelter displaced families, while church schools and community buildings are becoming places of refuge for those who have lost everything.

As Christians, we are called to respond not with hatred or division, but with compassion, prayer, and a commitment to peace and justice. The history and conflicts of the Middle East remind us that political struggles often carry deep wounds and long memories. Yet our faith calls us to work toward reconciliation wherever possible.

Scripture reminds us in Matthew 5:9: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

The Most Revd Hosam Naoum, Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem and Primate of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East, recently said: "Finally, we must remain bridge builders. Even as diplomatic windows seem to slam shut, the Church must keep the doors of reconciliation open. We refuse to see our neighbours as enemies, whether they be in Tehran, Tel Aviv, or the military bases of the Gulf. I extend an urgent invitation to the wider Anglican Communion and all people of goodwill: intercede for us now. The hour is late, and the danger is great. Yet we remain battered and bruised but not defeated."

In times like these, the Church is called to stand with those who suffer and to pray for peace.

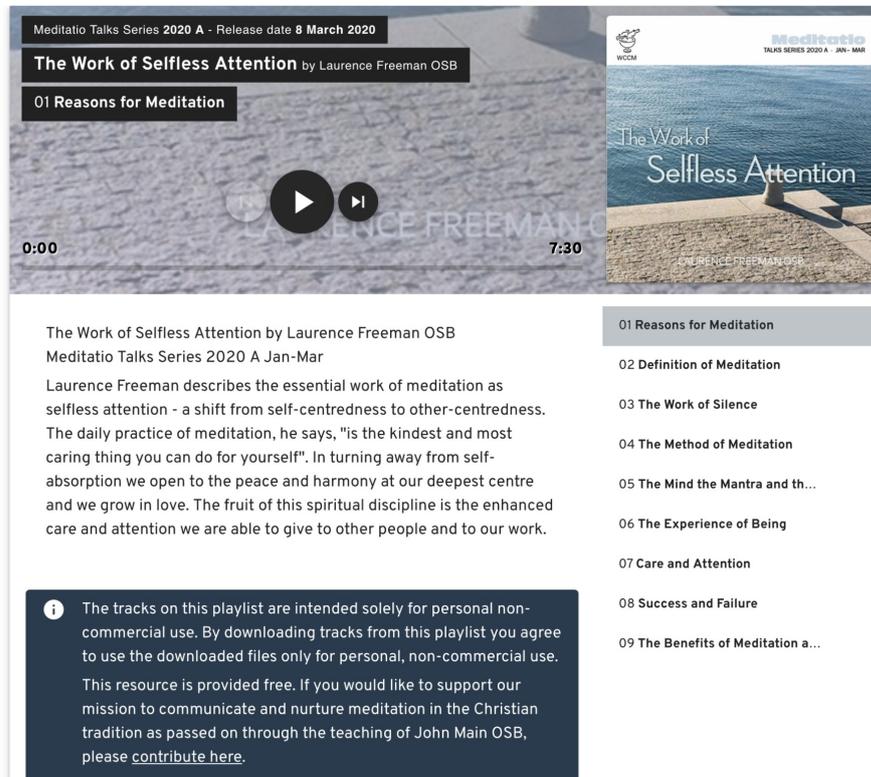
Prayer for Peace

Heavenly Father, We pray for the people of the Middle East—those in Iran, Israel, and the surrounding nations. Comfort those who are grieving, protect innocent lives, and guide leaders toward wisdom and peace. Soften hearts hardened by conflict and bring reconciliation where there has been hatred. May your justice, mercy, and peace prevail. In Jesus' name, ***Amen.***

Dr Sandra Morell

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 21st April 2026 at 7pm in the Lower Church Hall

“Christian Meditation is not what you think”



Meditatio Talks Series 2020 A - Release date 8 March 2020

The Work of Selfless Attention by Laurence Freeman OSB

01 Reasons for Meditation

0:00 7:30

The Work of Selfless Attention by Laurence Freeman OSB
Meditatio Talks Series 2020 A Jan-Mar

Laurence Freeman describes the essential work of meditation as selfless attention - a shift from self-centredness to other-centredness. The daily practice of meditation, he says, "is the kindest and most caring thing you can do for yourself". In turning away from self-absorption we open to the peace and harmony at our deepest centre and we grow in love. The fruit of this spiritual discipline is the enhanced care and attention we are able to give to other people and to our work.

01 Reasons for Meditation

02 Definition of Meditation

03 The Work of Silence

04 The Method of Meditation

05 The Mind the Mantra and th...

06 The Experience of Being

07 Care and Attention

08 Success and Failure

09 The Benefits of Meditation a...

i The tracks on this playlist are intended solely for personal non-commercial use. By downloading tracks from this playlist you agree to use the downloaded files only for personal, non-commercial use. This resource is provided free. If you would like to support our mission to communicate and nurture meditation in the Christian tradition as passed on through the teaching of John Main OSB, please [contribute here](#).



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