



**Bible Readings**

John 11:1–45



**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

**9am—Combined morning tea**

**9.30am—Worship**

Led by Jon Humphries

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

**5pm—Shine**

**Set up 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 23 MARCH**

7.30pm—Christian Meditation

9am—sorting and pricing for Op Shop & Garage sale lower hall

**TUESDAY 24 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 25 MARCH**

9am-2pm—Op Shop

**THURSDAY 26 MARCH**

9am-2pm—Op Shop

**FRIDAY 27 MARCH**

No Scheduled activities

**SATURDAY 28 MARCH**

No Scheduled activities

**SUNDAY 29 MARCH**

8am—Worship

followed by Morning Tea

9.30am—Worship

KUCA—Preschool,  
Years K-2 & Years 3-8  
followed by Morning Tea

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  
Email: helen.olley@optusnet.com.au

**LOCATION:**

CNR CHARLES & EDGAR STREETS  
BAULKHAM HILLS

**POSTAL ADDRESS:**

BAULKHAM HILLS UNITING CHURCH  
PO BOX 773 BAULKHAM HILLS 1755

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

**FACEBOOK:**

@stmatthewsunitingchurchbaulkhamhills

**PRE-SCHOOL DIRECTOR** 9639 8570

SONALI WANIGESEKERA  
PO BOX 321 BAULKHAM HILLS 2153

**EMAIL:** director@stmatthewsps.net.au

# Something to think about

## 22 March

### Lent 5

#### Revised Common Lectionary Readings:

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Psalm 130

Romans 8:6-11

John 11:1-45

#### Living Anew

In this week's Gospel reading, as set by the Revised Common Lectionary, we have the story of the raising of Lazarus. This is a story that many will be familiar with. Yet, it is a story which still holds many questions, even for those who know it well.

Maybe you don't, but I have many questions. Where was Lazarus after he died? What was it like for him being alive again? Did he feel ripped off to have to have left heaven (or wherever he was)? Why do we not hear about Lazarus in any accounts of the early Church? These are just questions I have about Lazarus.

I have lots of questions about Jesus too. Why did he wait? Why did he not speak plainly at first to the disciples? What was it like to wait, knowing that it was the will/God's will/His will even though his friend was suffering? Why does Jesus always speak cryptically and enigmatically? I perhaps will never know and I'm left only to my own answers and others guesses.

However, the questions are not really our focus. Lazarus is raised, and it is perhaps a foreshadowing of Jesus' own resurrection. Jesus tells Mary that he was the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in him, even though they die, will live, and everyone who believes and lives in him will never die. [John 11: 25-26] Clearly, just like when he told the disciples that Lazarus was asleep, there is some metaphorical theology happening here in this enigmatic statement which sets up Jesus physically raising Lazarus from the dead.

Resurrection and being raised from the dead are theologically different, at least according to some doctrines. Resurrection is the coming back from the dead with an immortal and transformed body. Being raised from the dead is a returning to life in the body that was previously associated with the person, and is usually a return to the same stage in life.

Jesus, in raising Lazarus from the dead, performs the greatest of signs [other than his own resurrection] showing that he was the Messiah/Christ. It was from this point that the key Jewish leaders began to plot his death because of this miracle many were turning to follow Jesus. Jesus, who is light of the world and Word of God, and Word-Made-Flesh is the One, the Messiah/Christ. It was right to follow him. He was the one to lead us into eternal life. We just need to work out what living in him means.

This story in the reading set for the day has a link with Ezekiel 37:1-14 which has God getting the prophet to raise the bones as a symbol of God raising and restoring the nation of Israel. It has the words from God which are, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' Therefore, prophesy and say to them: Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people, and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ... I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act," says the LORD." [Ezekiel 37: 11-12 & 14]

It is easy as the Church, or as disciples of Jesus, having heard that God so loved the world that he sent himself, the Son, into the world that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life [John 3:16] to hear the story about Lazarus and think about heaven. It is not wrong to do so. However, we maybe miss the point if we simply think about ourselves and life after death. Jesus was about the Kingdom of God being at hand. Jesus was about how we live now.

The story of Lazarus and the bones brought to life in Ezekiel, tie with such teaching that we need to lose our lives if we want to save them. [Matthew 16:25, &10:39] It ties with the notion of being born again [John 3; 3] It is about how we live, and that living being different than before. It is about dying to sin and being alive in Christ. [Romans 6: 1-14] It is about the new way of being when we live for God and surrender self-centred ambitions, desires, and safety in to follow Jesus on the way of the Cross. It being raised to life as the Church leads to true, eternal life.

It signifies a life of sacrifice in love, putting God's will above worldly gain to gain true purpose and meaning in life as we join in eternal living. It about being radically different to simply living a mundane life.

The story of the raising of Lazarus for me is not really about death, but it is about living. It is not really about life after death but living in a way where death becomes less significant or less important and just a step in the journey into living well. A lot of our doctrine about death and resurrection is metaphorical in nature, about us dying to things that are unhelpful and wrong, or killing them off, and us rising to a new way of living which God brings us into.

In the next chapter on from this story Jesus gives us some greater insight into what death and life are about. He says, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it produces much fruit." [John 12: 24] In our faith and discipleship we are called to die to that which holds us back from living the way of the Kingdom of Heaven. We are called to die to that so that we might be alive in Christ and abide and live in him so that we bear much fruit. [John 15:4]

In our journey of redemption we are called again and again to live anew. We are called to metanoia – that radical changing of mind, heart and being – which is about repentance as we believe the good news that the Kingdom of God is at hand. Resurrection and living anew gives us much to think about.

*God bless*

*Jon*

PEOPLE NEWS

**HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY**



Dennis Bell  
Barbara Brookes  
Judy Lance  
Amanda Manson

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

## Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

22-28 March

*Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania*



# Combined MORNING TEA

9AM



22  
MARCH  
2026



PLEASE TELL SARA IF YOU CAN  
BRING SOMETHING TO SHARE

## Weekly SYNOD SPOTLIGHT

Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter

**For (13 March 2025) please see link to Synod weekly:**

[Synod Weekly Spotlight 2026 - 13 March | Resurrection](#)

## St Matthew's

# HAPPY HOUR!

## NEW TIME!

At NBC

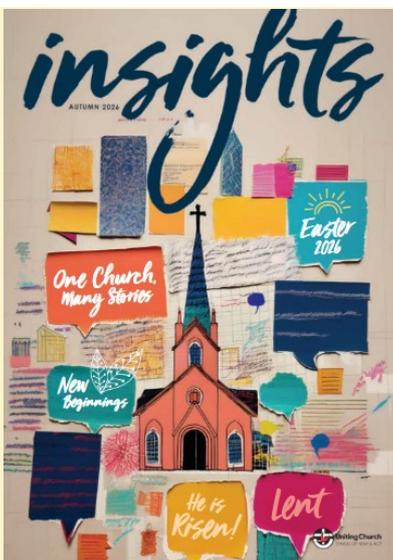
166 Windsor Rd, Northmead

**20** | **5:30 PM**  
**MARCH** | **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](mailto: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](mailto:98002215746@zoomcrc.com)

Join instructions

<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](http://www.stmatthewsuniting.net.au)**

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

# Help Support the library

Supporting the library at Near East School of Theology, **Beirut**.

How can you help?

Read about the support the Camden Theological Library and Friends of the Middle East are providing for staff and students in the ecumenical theological college in Lebanon.

Even a small donation of just a few dollars can help us keep this service going. In a way that is not always realised here in Australia Lebanon is home to significant percentage of Christians, is a biblical land, and, through history, has been the site of much Christian life and witness.

Follow the link below:



Library Support — FME  
[fmeorg.au](http://fmeorg.au)



**Thursday 2 April 2026**

**10am—12noon**

**Guest speaker: Colin Elliot**

**“Bush Poetry”**



Colin will present a range of poems he has written, which includes some of his bush poetry as well as others of his interesting and ‘amusing’ life’s experiences.

*These informal morning gatherings include devotions, morning tea and guest speakers which cover a large range of interesting and informative topics.*

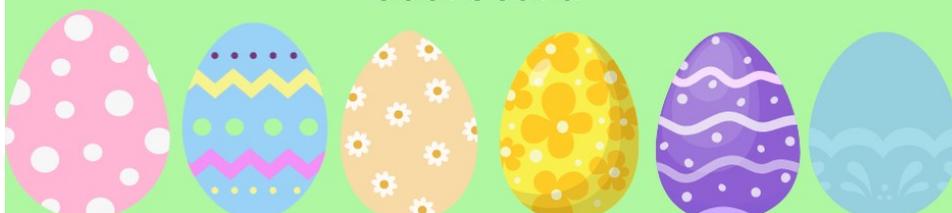
\*\*\*\*\* ALL WELCOME \*\*\*\*\*

## Be Slavery Free

when you buy chocolates this Easter or at any time, you can check the chocolate scorecard. Use this QR code or the link below to find the website:

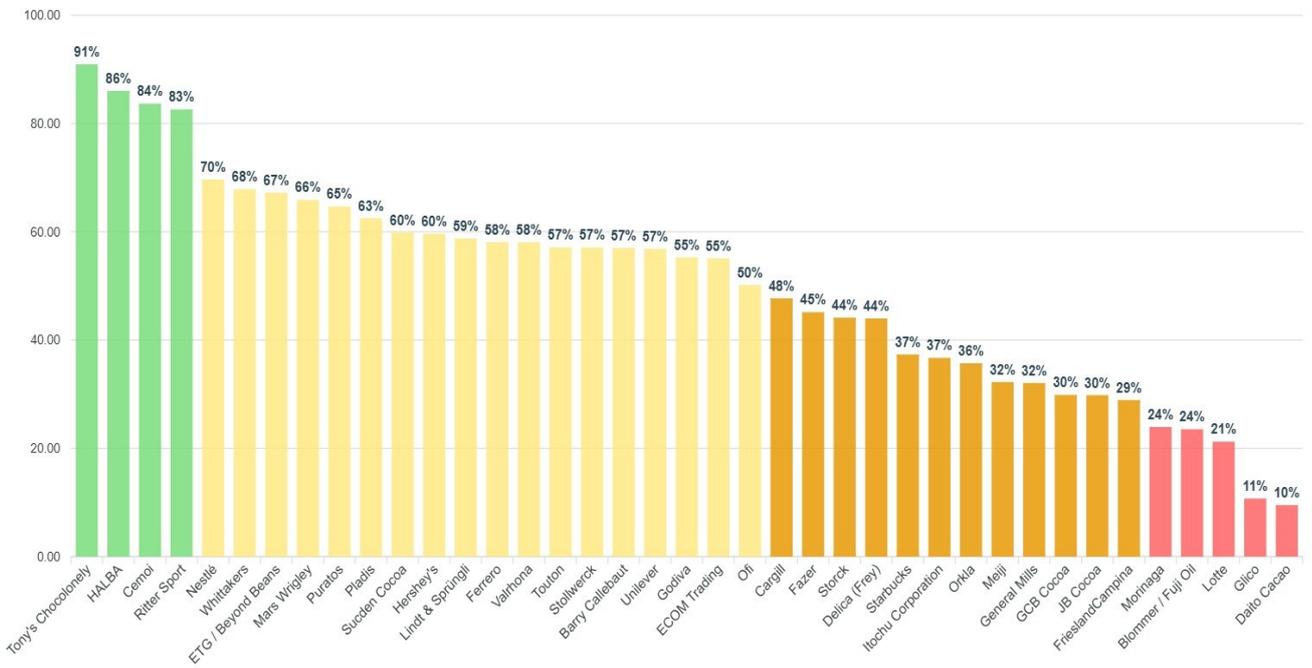
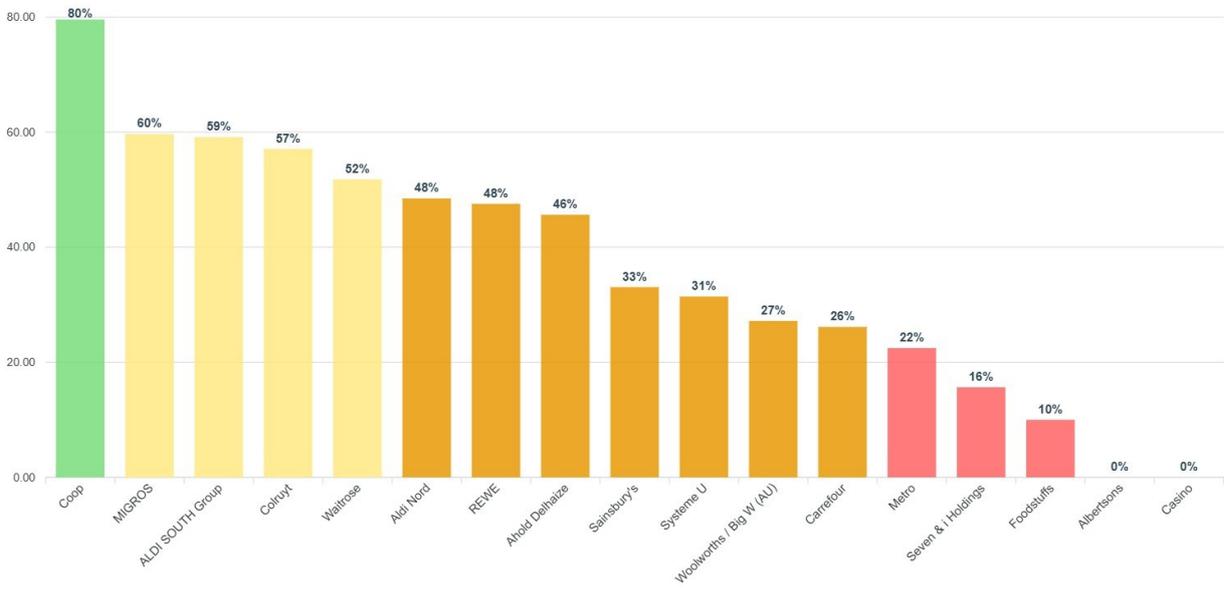
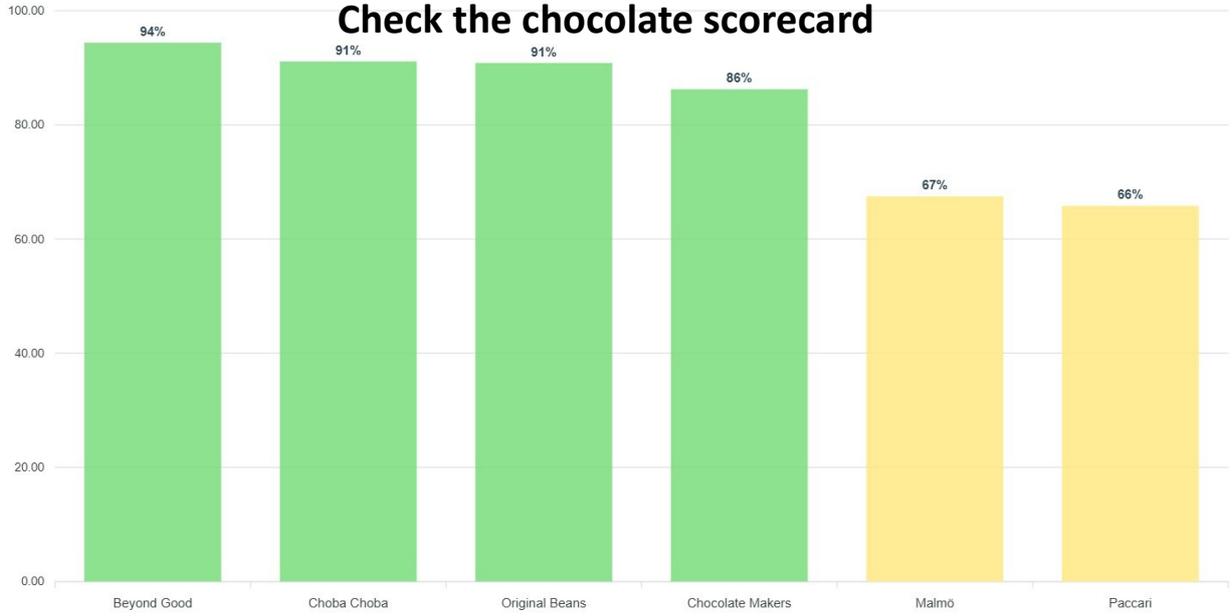


<https://www.beslaveryfree.com/chocolate-scorecard>



See next page

# Check the chocolate scorecard





# 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: Gambling Reform: How Can We Respond?**

On Sunday, I presented about two different campaigns for gambling reform in Australia. I also shared some shocking statistics which illustrate the harmful impact the gambling industry has on Australians.

- Australia has about **18% of the world's poker machines**, roughly **200,000 machines**.
- Nearly **half of them (around 87,000)** are in **New South Wales**.
- Most countries restrict gaming machines to casinos, but in Australia **183,000 machines are located in pubs and clubs**. This is very much not the norm across the world.
- In the third quarter of 2025, Australians lost **\$2.3 billion on poker machines in NSW pubs and clubs**. That's about **\$24.8 million every day**, and more than **\$1 million every hour**.

Looking closer to home, in the same quarter, the **Hills LGA** alone recorded **\$33 million in net poker machine profits** from **920 machines across just 15 venues**.

Australians also lose more money to gambling than any other country in the world. We are "the world's biggest losers" in that regard. The research consistently shows that gambling harm is linked to financial hardship and debt, mental health crises, increased criminal activity, and family breakdown and relationship stress, including domestic and family violence.

We all likely know someone affected by gambling harm. But that's not the end of the story. We can be involved in campaigning in favour of gambling reform, and we have the power to pressure the government to act.

The first campaign we can support is the **Put Pokies in Their Place** campaign run by Wesley Mission in NSW. Their goal is not to ban gambling outright, but to introduce stronger protections to reduce harm. Key proposals include:

- **Shutting poker machines between midnight and 10am**. Late-night access is strongly linked with harmful gambling behaviour.

**Introducing cashless poker machines**. This would help people set limits on spending and also reduce the use of machines for money laundering by organised crime.

The **You win some, you lose more** national campaign is calling for a nationwide ban on all gambling advertising, including tighter controls on online gambling, which is a huge risk area for high-risk gamblers.

You can support these reforms by:

- **Signing the Wesley Mission campaign petition, found here:** <https://www.wesleymission.org.au/get-involved/advocate-with-us/petition-on-poker-machines/>

**Writing to your local MP** to express support for stronger gambling protections, and to ask for the government to vote on banning gambling advertising once and for all.

There are **12 senators in NSW** who will vote on these issues if they return to Parliament. Contacting representatives helps show that this is an issue people care about. ***A template for you to send to both your State MP and your Federal MP is shared at the end of this article.*** The contacts for the 12 NSW senators can be found at this link: [https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators and Members/Parliamentarian Search Results?q=&sta=NSW&sen=1&par=-1&gen=0&ps=12](https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Parliamentarian_Search_Results?q=&sta=NSW&sen=1&par=-1&gen=0&ps=12)

**Contacts for State and Federal MPs are below:**

**Federal Members of Parliament near St Matthew's**

Alex Hawke MP

Member for Mitchell

Email: [alex.hawke.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:alex.hawke.mp@aph.gov.au)

Dr Andrew Charlton MP

Member for Parramatta

Email: [Andrew.Charlton.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Andrew.Charlton.MP@aph.gov.au)

Julian Leeser MP

Member for Berowra

Email: [Julian.Leeser.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Julian.Leeser.MP@aph.gov.au)

**State Members of Parliament near St Matthew's**

Mark Hodges MP

Member for Castle Hill

Email: [castlehill@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:castlehill@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

Mark Taylor MP

Member for Winston Hills

Email: [winstonhills@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:winstonhills@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

The Bible calls us to live out our faith in action. These are just a few small actions we can take that have big consequences for the good of our communities.

*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](mailto:alexander.lawless7@gmail.com)  
Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2026 at 7pm in the Lower Church Hall

Continued next page

*A sample email to your federal member of parliament (federal MP or NSW senator) 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)

*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)