



**Bible Readings**

John 18: 1-12, John 18:13-19:15  
 John 19: 16-42, John 20: 1-18  
 Colossians 3: 1-4



**Response after Bible Readings**

**Leader:** *In this we hear the word of God*  
**Response:** *Thanks be to God who speaks to us as spirit.*



**twitch.tv**

**Livestreaming at**  
**8am, 9.30am and**  
**9am in January each**  
**year**

**Remember to put your clocks back.**



**Join us for Hot Cross Buns after both morning services.**

**8am—Worship**  
*Includes communion*  
 Led by Jon Humphries

**9.30am—Worship**  
*Includes communion*  
 Led by Jon Humphries  
 Followed by morning tea

KUCA in Recess for school holidays

**6.45pm—Worship**  
 Led by Jon Humphries

**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**

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

**MONDAY 6 APRIL**

**PUBLIC HOLIDAY**

**7.30pm—Christian Meditation**

**TUESDAY 7 APRIL**

**9am-2pm—Op Shop**

**9.30am-11am—Christian Meditation**

community room and church

**11.30am—Care & Prayer**

community room & church

**WEDNESDAY 8 APRIL**

**9am-2pm—Op Shop**

**10am-12pm—Women's Fellowship**

Upstairs hall & church

**THURSDAY 9 APRIL**

**9am-2pm—Op Shop**

**FRIDAY 10 APRIL**

**No Scheduled Activities**

**SATURDAY 11 APRIL**

**No Scheduled Activities**

**SUNDAY 12 APRIL**

**8am—Worship**

**9am—Worship @ the Willow's**

**9.30am—Worship**

followed by Morning Tea

KUCA in Recess for school holidays

**6.45pm—Worship**  
**Community meal**



**MINISTER**

REV JON HUMPHRIES

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

**PASTORAL CARE WORKER**

SARA WIENAND  
 SUNDAY am , MONDAY, TUESDAY  
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 TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY

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MIKE UNDERWOOD  
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# Something to think about

5 April

## Easter Sunday

Revised Common Lectionary Readings:

Acts 10:34-43

Psalms 118:1-2, 14-24

Colossians 3:1-4

John 20:1-18

### The Wrath of God

The wrath of God is not very popular in some Christian theologies. Some ministry leaders avoid songs which mention it or remove reference to it from songs or change lyrics to avoid mentioning it. The reason for its avoidance often has to do with what is known as Penal Substitution Soteriology. Soteriology is the big theological word for talking about and understanding about how God saves us. Penal Substitution is the theory or theology which basically states that Jesus died to take the punishment we deserved at the hands of the wrath of God. In doing so, Jesus as a human satisfied God's wrath and we are saved from experiencing it. This is not a theology that I personally revere anymore, even though it is very prominent in many churches – particularly those which consider themselves evangelical – and so it is one of many soteriologies to be considered.

What is the wrath of God? Or what is wrath in general? According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary wrath is “an intense emotional state induced by displeasure.” Other words associated with wrath are ire, rage, and fury. Wrath means extreme, intense anger, fury, or deep indignation, often accompanied by a desire for vengeance. It describes violent, large-scale rage rather than minor annoyance. It is commonly

used in contexts of divine punishment or severe personal fury. It is therefore understandable why Christian theologies which emphasise God's love, grace, mercy and peace tend to avoid talking about the wrath of God. It seems to be inconsistent and incompatible with such theology. Yet, the wrath of God is a part of our faith tradition and theology, and it is therefore worth exploring.

The wrath of God is the holy, righteous, and necessary reaction of God against sin, rebellion, and evil. It is not a capricious or uncontrollable anger, but a just judgment against those who suppress the truth and violate God's moral order. It manifests in both present consequences and future, eternal judgment. Given the degree of evil in the world and how far and how often we as humans have fallen and still continue to fall short of God's will, way and glory, it is quite understandable that God holds a righteous degree of wrath.

The understanding that Christ died in our place to satisfy the wrath of God makes sense in one logic and it is sort of to be found in the Scriptures.

In Romans, Chapter 5, Paul writes, “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!” That does seem to suggest that Christ died for our sin, and in fact Paul clearly seems to state this in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 where he writes, “For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures and that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures.”

However, God is just. No one can justly die in place of another to satisfy righteous punishment. One might pay another's fine, but it is not right and just that someone good dies in place of a perpetrator sentenced to death. To suggest that God's wrath demands death in punishment for our sin makes sense. However, to say that Christ who we say was sinless, died in our place, is to suggest that God is rigidly implacable in the need for God's righteous wrath. To say that God demands death has some sense of justice, but to suggest that God is satisfied with an innocent suffering to pay for the sin of the world is to both suggest that God is not sovereign and God's justice is not just.

Jesus shows that God, who is sovereign, needs no punishment to be carried out to forgive sins. In the story of the paralysed man lowered through a roof to Jesus, Jesus declares and demonstrates that the authority of God is in him to both heal and forgive sin. No sacrifice is needed. [Mark 2: 1-12 & Luke 5:17-26] Jesus can forgive sins because Jesus was God, and God can simply, like any sovereign forgive sin. This point is also made in the Parable of the Unforgiving/Unmerciful Servant [Matthew 18:21-35] where the king simply forgives the debt and the sin of the servant – at least the first time. The King and master has the power to forgive. No sacrifice has to be made. No penalty has to be satisfied. Christ did not have to die to forgive the sin of the man. God can forgive with mercy. Christ can forgive with mercy, because Christ is God-incarnate.

However, the Parable of Unforgiving/Unmerciful Servant does suggest that the wrath of God falls on those whom having received mercy do not then have mercy, just as those who judge others will be judged by the same standard. [Matthew 7:1] God's wrath is righteous. Yet, maybe it is not satisfied or expressed in the way that we simply understand. For me the wrath of God was poured out in Christ on the cross. Christ experienced the fullness of human suffering and death, and also in the process experienced the fullness of human cruelty, evil and injustice.

The response from God is not to punish or destroy. Jesus noted that he could have fought and punished injustice when one of the disciples in wrath at the arrest of Jesus struck out with a sword at the servant of the high priest. He said, "Put your sword back in its place, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on my Father and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way? ...But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled." [Matthew 26:52-56]

The wrath of God for me is satisfied, that is expressed ironically in grace and compassion. It comes in the cry, "It is accomplished." [John 19: 28-30] It is like the fury of God, like a raging fire, is extinguished in compassion and understanding and is undone by grace and mercy. The wrath of God is poured out in Christ, not on Christ. Jesus doesn't die in our place. Jesus dies because the love of God does not let wrath be the end of the story or dictate the action of God. God forgives sin and pays the cost of the pain of forgiveness by forgoing wrathful vengeance, and instead suffers the sin of the world that we and all the world might be redeemed.

Thus, like much to do with Jesus, the wrath of God is something to think about, but probably in a way which reframes our normal understanding of how things work in the world.

*A happy and blessed  
Easter to all.*

*Jon*

PEOPLE NEWS

HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY



Marion Bindley

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

## Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

5 — 11 April

*Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia*

## Weekly SYNOD SPOTLIGHT

Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter

For (27 March 2025) please see link to Synod weekly:

[Synod Weekly Spotlight 2026 - 27 March | Resurrection](#)



Please pick up the latest

*insights*

Magazine for

Autumn 2026

From the church foyer

### *Green and White fresh flower arrangement for Easter Sunday*

Katherine Pedersen is asking for someone to help to have a turn at doing a fresh white and green floral arrangement for the front of the church for the Easter Sunday services. You will need to prepare the arrangement on the Saturday for the following Easter Sunday morning services.

You will be reimbursed for the cost of the flowers.

Katherine is also looking for someone to look after the gardens on the perimeter of the entire church property from Saturday 25th of April until the 1st June.

Please contact Katherine or the church office.

Please join us after both morning services 8am

and 9.30am this ***Easter Sunday*** ***5 April*** for Hot X Buns.

Thank you to Sara for organising this.



# Holy Week

Services  
@ St. Matthew's

*Maundy Thursday*  
— **2 April**  
7.30pm

*Good Friday*— **3 April**  
9am

*Easter Sunday Services*  
— **5 April**  
8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm

Looking forward to sharing the journey with you all.



**A reminder that there will be NO Garage sale or Op Shop open this Saturday 4 April as it is Easter.**

**Please join us on Saturday 2 May for our next garage sale located in our lower hall.**

**Due to a large amount of donations which is wonderful, we have reached our storage limit. Please keep your donations until after the 12th May.**

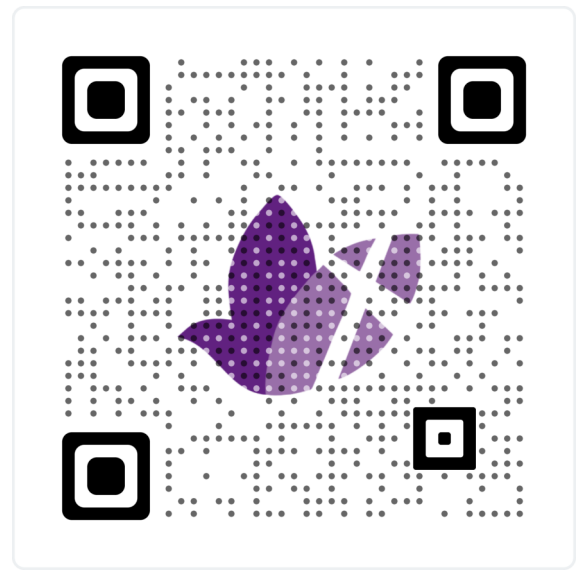
**Thank you**

**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.**

Please see QR Codes for YouTube, Facebook & Twitch



# 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)

# *St Matthew's Social Action Missional Ministry Team*



How doing little things makes a big difference.

## **Topic: Friends of the Middle East (FME) Theological Library Support**

<https://www.fmeorg.au/librarysupport>

The Friends of the Middle East (FME) are members of the Uniting Church in Australia who share an interest in nourishing the relationship between the Uniting Church and churches in the Middle East. The origins of the 'Friends' lie in the wake of visits made to Armenia and Lebanon. Armenia was the first nation in the world to declare itself Christian (in 301); Lebanon is a biblical land with a strong Christian presence through time.

During a visit by members of FME to the Near East School of Theology (NEST) in Beirut, it became apparent that although the theological library contained a very rich print collection, it was now struggling to purchase new books. Their power to do so had been hard hit by the impact on Lebanon through Covid, repeated conflict, port explosions and a collapsed economy. It was recognized that the most viable way ahead would be through the purchase of e-books.

The Camden Theological Library (CTL) Manager was provided with information about the texts in high demand. It became apparent that the majority were included in a collection of e-books called the Digital Theological Library (DTL2). The cost of an annual subscription fee for NEST was US\$7000. The initial cost for 2025 was covered jointly from an appeal for tax deductible donations and a contribution from the CTL trust funds.

In response to the donation, the President of NEST, Martin Accad wrote: "DTL2 has been a wonderful resource. Compared to what it would cost to get anywhere near equivalent resources in hard copies for our library, there is not even a conversation to be had! It is a privilege for us to offer ecumenical support. It enriches us as well." Martin also stated "we continue to be deeply grateful for all the support we get from friends all over the world. God is blessing the ministry of NEST and it is a joy to partner with many across the world in serving our region for the advancement of God's Kingdom and presence through his church!"

### **How Can We Help?**

It will be necessary to renew the licence for DTL2 in the early part of 2026. While CTL will provide 50% of the cost, the other half needs to be raised by the FME. If you would like to consider offering some financial assistance, please email: [library@nswact.uca.org.au](mailto:library@nswact.uca.org.au) with the subject 'NEST'. No matter how small, every donation counts. In the midst of so much upheaval where we can do so little, this is one thing we can do – to make a difference. It is much appreciated.

Also please pray for the Near East School of Theology as well as the churches and people in the Middle East.

*Blessings,  
Clive Pearson & Amanda Manson*