



Welcoming

On our website at St. Matthew's Uniting Church one of the first things people read is the statement, "We are a welcoming, friendly Christian community that proclaims and bears witness to the love of Jesus in service to the local and wider community." We are a welcoming Church, or at least hopefully we are. It is good to evaluate things that we seek to be to see if we are being as effective as we aim to be. So, what is welcome and welcoming?

Welcome is always a relational activity. Welcoming someone is more than just saying 'hello.' It is about creating a space where a person feels seen, valued, and safe. Essentially, it is the intentional act of making a stranger or a guest feel like they belong there. There are marks or checks which help us understand and evaluate what welcome is and how well we are doing it.

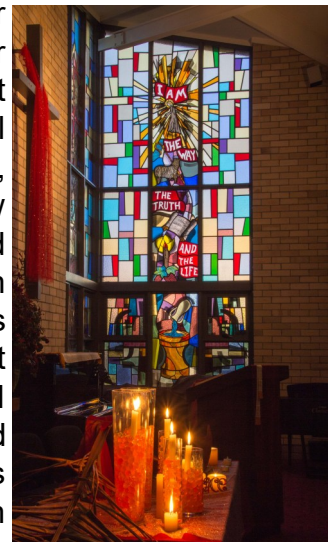
According to various perspectives on hospitality, the marks of a true welcome usually involve a few key elements. Firstly, welcoming goes beyond just having greeters at the door. One major mark of welcome is recognition, which means noticing the new face and making a move to connect without being overwhelming. There is nothing that makes a person feel unwelcome as the feeling of being unnoticed and unattended to, where they end up standing awkwardly by themselves.

A mark of welcome which isn't always thought about is preparation or showing that you have

actually made room for the person. Whether that is a physical seat at a table or just the mental space to listen to them, it is about expecting new people or strangers and being able to offer them hospitality which conveys that expectation so that the person doesn't feel awkward or embarrassed when extra space needs to be made to fit them in. In a practical sense,

this translates to marks like accessibility and consistency. Accessibility means making sure there are no physical or social hurdles for a newcomer, like confusing signage or "insider" language. Consistency means the welcome doesn't end at the front door; it continues through the entire service and even into the following week with a follow-up that isn't high-pressure.

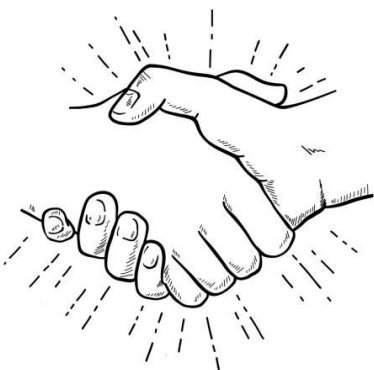
A mark of welcome which flows from preparation is orientation. This is about helping people navigate the unspoken rules of the service, or our space, like where to go for coffee, where the toilets are, where they can sit, or how the kids' programs work, so they don't feel like outsiders. It is about seeking to politely and subtly enquire if they have needs such as hearing or visual issues, or mobility issues and asking how we might help them so that they can have the best possible experience of being a part of the community.



Then there is the invitation, which is the initial outreach that says there is a place for you here. This is about inviting people to sit with us and not alone. It is about welcoming them into circles of conversation or going to them to talk with them if they are standing alone. Deeper welcome involves, at an appropriate time and stage of joining the community, inviting people to our activities, groups, and even our homes.

Welcoming therefore involves warmth, which shows up through genuine eye contact, a smile, or a kind tone of voice. Welcoming also involves the mark of protection, where the host ensures the person feels comfortable, safe and secure in the environment. This is why in the Uniting Church we have Safe Church training. This is not just physical safety, but emotional and psychological safety, where people feel that they can be who they are without judgement, criticism or comments about them which makes them feel uncomfortable, out of place or worse, unwelcome.

In a church context, welcoming is often described as radical hospitality. This is about not just welcoming others like us or our group. This involves the mark of belonging before believing as part of being missionally welcoming. This is the idea that a community makes space for someone to be part of the group and feel cared for before they ever have to commit to a specific set of doctrines, beliefs, groups or rituals. Essentially, it is about lowering the barrier to entry so that people feel at home the moment they walk in. Welcoming is about belonging.



Our relationships as the Church should be transformative for the individual as they find their place and discover ways where their gifts,

skills and talents are valued by them being able to find ways to use them. We are welcomed when people feel that they not only belong because they are accepted, but they belong because they can play a part in the community through their ministry as part of the community. However, true welcome not only is transformative for the new people or stranger as they find their place in the Church. It should also be transformative for the faith community which grows and takes on a different shape as each person contributes their unique identity which becomes part of the identity of the whole community.

Because we are the Church, we should have a theology of welcome and welcoming. That is, we should be thinking of welcome in relation to who God is and what God calls us to be and do. Theology really informs the practice of welcome and welcoming. From a theological standpoint, church welcome is often rooted in the concept of "Imago Dei," which is the belief that every person is made in the image of God and deserves honour regardless of their background. It mirrors the biblical idea of how God welcomes humanity.

The scriptural foundation for hospitality usually starts with stories such as Abraham at Mamre (Genesis 18:1-8) which is one of the most famous examples of welcome and hospitality in the Bible. Abraham eagerly ran to welcome three passing strangers, offering them water, rest, and a lavish feast. These guests were later revealed to be the God or the angels of God. The Law of Moses/Torah (Leviticus 19:33-34) have the Israelites being commanded to treat the foreigner residing among them as a native-born citizen and to "love them as yourself". This ethic was rooted in their historical memory of being strangers in Egypt.



In the New Testament the Greek word φιλοξενία [philoxenia] is used for welcome. It literally means love of strangers. It combines *philos*, "friend" and *xenos*, "a stranger." A major explicit call to love and welcome strangers is Matthew 25:43, where Jesus says that when you welcome a stranger, you are actually welcoming him. Jesus welcomed the outsider in the case of Zacchaeus [Luke 19:1-10] and Matthew [Matthew 9:9-13] who were both tax collectors and shamed and shunned by their communities. These are examples of belonging before believing and point to the transformative power of welcome and inclusion.

We also see this in Romans 15:7, which tells believers to welcome one another just as Christ welcomed them. It sets the bar pretty high because it implies our welcome should be as gracious and unconditional as God's to us and all. Another famous example is Hebrews 13:2, which reminds people to show hospitality to strangers because some have entertained angels without realizing it. Practically speaking, the early church in Acts 2 is often the go-to model. They shared meals and opened their homes, showing that welcome is about radical inclusion and shared life, not just a polite greeting. 1 Corinthians 12 and Paul's use of the analogy of the Church being the Body of Christ is about welcoming which is linked to belonging.



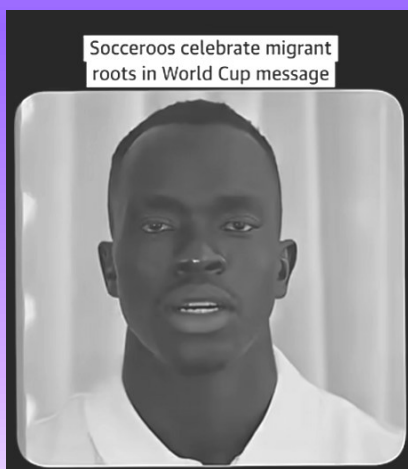
So, we are a welcoming community or seek to be. We, that is each of us, not just those who are rostered on as 'welcomers' need to be thinking about welcome and how we can play our part in helping all feel welcome, whether they be long-time members, newcomers or strangers.

Welcome is for everyone and something to truly continue thinking about.



God bless
Jon

On Sunday 14 June we wove into our services Refugee Sunday as advocated by Act for Peace. On 21 June, the eve of the anniversary of the inauguration of the Uniting Church in Australia, we remembered what it was to be the Uniting Church which shared a statement to the nation in 1977 proclaiming our aim to work against injustice and inequity as we uphold basic Christian principles such as loving our neighbour as ourselves. As we were doing these things the World Cup was being played for Football/Soccer. The Socceroos, our national team, have addressed growing anti-immigration sentiment in a powerful video message before the World Cup, speaking of their pride in their heritage and playing for the national team. In the YouTube video the Socceroos talk about where they come from. Several were born in refugee camps. They talk how proud they are to play for Australia, because of their pride in being Australian. The video is centred on the message, 'Football is for everyone,' to share the message of inclusion and welcome, of course not only for football/soccer but as a symbol also for Australia – Australia is for everyone.



Link to the video: <https://youtube.com/shorts/2JsquVPXjd8?si=CykQvi8De7VNrCiO>

Anti-racism is one of the points from the National Assembly's Strategy for 2026 to 2031. The third Strategic Goal is Liberating Justice. It says, "We use our voice and our actions to confront injustice in Australia and the world". Since 1977 we have been a Church committed to justice. In our Statement to the Nation we said, "We pledge ourselves to seek the correction of injustices wherever they occur". As a national Church we have sought to live out that commitment throughout our history. This new strategy renews that pledge.

Andrew Johnson, Assembly General Secretary, writes, "The deep-seated roots of racism continue to plague our life as a Church despite our commitment to "the eradication of poverty and racism in our society and beyond" almost 50 years ago. While our prophetic voice is likely to be coming from a more marginal place in this post-Christendom era it need not be any less impactful. Locating ourselves alongside the most vulnerable and marginalised is always where the Church should be. Further, working together as a Church can make our voice stronger and more impactful. The voice of our national Church should be joined with local communities of discipleship, active across the breadth of our country." <https://uniting.church/assemblys-new-strategy-for-2026-31-third-strategic-goal-explained/>



Youth @ St Matts

Term 3. 2026

5.30-7.30PM

FORTNIGHTLY ON FRIDAYS

Upper Primary -

\$10

High School

(includes supper)

WEEK 1

24 Jul

Commonwealth Games



WEEK 7

4 Sep

MUSIC NIGHT



WEEK 3

7 Aug

Board Games



WEEK 9

18 Sep

Mini-Golf

Swing City -

Norwest



WEEK 5

21 Aug

LEGO MASTERS



st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together

For more information contact Jon Humphries
jonestmatthewsuniting.net.au 0432940847

St Matthew's

HAPPY HOUR!

At Baulkham Hills

Sports Club

11 Renown Rd, Baulkham Hills

21

5:30 PM

AUGUST

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





Thursday 2nd July
10am-12pm

Guest Speaker: John Nichol

“THE PYRENEES – A DRAW CARD FOR THE AGES”



Where long forgotten armies traversed, refugees limped in fear and danger, modern hikers complete 50,000 metres up and down in 30 days, super athletes madly race each other day and night, cyclists pump their legs to achieve on the greatest prizes in sport...And yet, just a few metres off the road, mighty peaks overlook placid lakes & timid flowers to the gentle tune of the cowbells.

Meet the people on the track, be astonished by the achievements and bathe in the beauty.

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

*****ALL WELCOME*****

Garage



1st Saturday of the month
9am-12pm

Upcoming dates

- **4 July**
- **1 August**
- **5 September**

Pre-loved

Household items,

Electrical, Toys & Books

(Fiction, Non-fiction & children's books)

St. Matthew's Lower hall

st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together

OP SHOP

**Open Tuesday, Wednesday
& Thursday 9am-2pm
and**

1st Saturday of the month 9-12pm

**Pre-loved clothes & accessories,
Books, Haberdashery,**



Jesus said,
“Come to me,
all you who are
weary and
burdened,
and I will
give you rest.”

A small, quiet group
are here to pray for
your needs.
Whatever your faith,
you are truly welcome.

Care and Prayer

All Welcome

11.30am

**on the first Tuesday
of each month
at St. Matthew's**

February to November

Next Date: 7th July

From the St Matthew's Social Action Missional Ministry Team

'Doing little things can make a big difference'.

Topic: The Earth Mourns-Faith, Climate Change, and Responsibility in Australia

Isaiah 24:4 *"The earth mourns and withers; the world languishes and withers; the highest people of the earth languish"*

This is Isaiah's judgment when Israel broke its covenant with God.

This passage connects spiritual unfaithfulness with harm to creation, including climate change. Climate change is not only an environmental issue; it is also a Christian social justice issue because it disproportionately affects vulnerable people. Caring for creation is part of loving our neighbour and addressing environmental harm. Our response is shaped not by fear but by faith, compassion, and hope. Christian hope is not passive; it inspires faithful action.

Australia is experiencing climate risks that affect different parts of the country now and into the future. Identifying these risks creates opportunities to monitor conditions, support planning, and strengthen best-practice decision-making.

Australia's climate is changing and will continue to do so. The country is likely to face more intense hazards, sometimes in places unaccustomed to them. These events are expected to differ from the past in timing, duration, intensity, and spread, and to occur more often. Past observations alone are therefore unlikely to predict future risk accurately. Australia and the surrounding islands are already experiencing compounding and cascading hazards, and these are likely to increase.

Climate change poses risks to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These communities are likely to face distinct impacts, including threats to the health of Country, reduced access to land and resources, and harm to physical, social, and emotional wellbeing. Their deep connection to Country reflects generations of knowledge, respect, and care for the land. While Christian and Indigenous traditions are distinct, many churches are finding opportunities to listen, learn, and deepen their understanding of responsible stewardship. Addressing underlying disadvantage can also help reduce the impacts of climate change.

Extreme heat, floods, bushfires, poor air quality, and disease are likely to worsen health risks. People with pre-existing physical or mental health conditions are especially vulnerable, along with young children, older adults, and outdoor workers. Climate change also raises the risk of food insecurity and water shortages, especially in rural and remote areas. Northern Australia is likely to face growing challenges as temperatures rise, while outer urban areas remain particularly exposed because of their location, demographics, and hazard exposure. Remote communities are also at risk because of limited power, telecommunications, and fragile supply chains.

Continued next page

Extreme weather events may also drive domestic migration and disrupt social networks, local economies, cultural heritage, and traditional identities.

Australians are also likely to be affected by the loss of ecosystems and species. Ecosystems support clean air and water, food security through pollination, and raw materials for medicines. They also offer protection from natural disasters and help regulate local climates. Extreme weather will place greater pressure on infrastructure, emergency responders, and defence resources, while also affecting water quality and supply. By reducing waste and energy consumption, we can support food security and encourage programs that use climate-smart techniques.

The Cocos (Keeling) Islands face an uncertain future. Located 2900 km north-west of Perth, this remote external Australian Territory was settled in the 1820s by English traders who brought Malay workers to harvest coconuts and produce copra. Home Island, the permanent settlement, had 448 residents at the last Census and has no mobile reception. In the past decade, climate change has caused the loss of 10–15 metres of beachfront, prompting the construction of seawalls. Rising seas have also raised the groundwater table, slowing drainage during persistent rain. A 2021 Coastal Vulnerability Study found that sea levels around Home Island have risen by about 4 mm a year since 1992. If this continues, sea levels could be 14–18 cm higher by 2030 and 40–44 cm higher by 2070. Within 50 years, the island may become uninhabitable, forcing domestic migration.

Tuvalu, a small Polynesian nation of nine coral islands, is also losing land to climate change. This crisis threatens its identity, way of life, and relationship with God. Rising waters continue to damage the islands and endanger their future. Recently, the Uniting Church renewed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Tuvalu Church, reflecting its commitment to “walking together in faith, solidarity, justice, and hope”. The Uniting Church has pledged to continue advocating, praying, and acting alongside its Pacific neighbours.

In conclusion, climate action is about more than environmental protection; it is an expression of justice, compassion, and faithful care for others. We can respond by reducing waste, using energy wisely, supporting local conservation efforts, advocating for policies that protect vulnerable communities, and engaging in education, prayer, and community action.

*Blessings,
Dr Sandra Morell
Social Action Missional Ministry Team (SAMT)*

Thanks everyone who has contributed to our June delivery to Parramatta Mission.

There were 30 beanies, seven scarves, three pairs of gloves, one jumper and one blanket plus many cakes of soap and two tubes of tooth paste.

Thank you for the many hours of knitting and crocheting that went into creating these beautiful tokens of caring.



Parramatta Mission

We will be collecting beanies and scarves until **September** to be distributed to disadvantaged people at Parramatta Mission. A collection tub will be available at the top of the stairs.

Thanks everyone who knitted and crocheted items last year. Our donations were greatly appreciated.

Christine Haines 0401344800



Silence and stillness in every season

Daily readings with John Main



The way of meditation is not a way of escape. Above all, it is not a way of illusion. We neither try to escape the real world of untidy ends and chaotic beginnings, nor do we try to construct an alternative, illusory reality of our own. What Jesus promises us is that if we do hold him in reverence in our hearts, if we believe in him and believe in the one who sent him, his father and our father, then all the chaos and all the confusion in the world can have no ultimate power over us.

The stresses, the strains, the challenges, all remain but they are powerless to defeat us when we have founded our lives on the rock who is Christ. This is the real task. This is the real challenge that each of us must face, to enter into the reality that is Christ, the rock on whom we can build our lives with the absolute assurance that he will love us through all our mistakes, through all our changes of heart and mind and through every moment of our lives until the last moment of our life, because he is supreme love.

The love of Jesus has made us one with him. By becoming open through silence to his reality we become open in wonder to the reality of God. That is why the way of prayer is a way of ever deeper, ever more generous silence. It is not enough just to think about silence or to talk about silence we must embrace it! To learn this silence, to be open to the gift of it, we must learn to say our mantra.

Our regular times of meditation immerse us in this silence and we emerge from the silence refreshed, renewed and re-baptized in the power of the spirit. What each of us discovers in our prayer is that simply to be in his presence is all sufficing. In that presence we are healed, In that presence we find the courage to live our lives through him, with him, in him and for him. Once we begin to be open to this power, everything in our lives is charged with meaning. The meaning comes out of the silence. All our talking, all our living, all our loving find meaning from this silence and flow back into it.

Moment of Christ



JUNE 13 – SEPTEMBER 21, 2026
EVERY EVENING · 9.00PM - 9.15PM AEST

A NATIONAL CONTEMPLATIVE INITIATIVE

100 DAYS OF PEACE

*One hundred voices. One hundred days.
One shared moment of stillness each evening.*

100
COMMUNITY
VOICES OF PEACE

3 MIN
CONTEMPLATIVE
REFLECTION

10 MIN
COLLECTIVE
SILENCE

FREE
NO REGISTRATION
NEEDED

CONTRIBUTING VOICES INCLUDE

FAITH & SPIRITUAL

Archbishop Thabo Makgoba: Cape Town
Fr Laurence Freeman OSB
Archbishop Ric Thorpe: Melbourne
Sister Jayanti & Sister Shivani
Satguru Uday Singh Ji
Rabbi Ralph Genende
Rev Sandy Boyce

RESEARCH & WELLBEING

Professor Craig Hassed
Professor Mark Williams
Professor Sara Lazar
A/Professor Nicholas van Dam
A/Professor Tilman Ruff AO
Dr Ian Gawler OAM
Pauline McKinnon OAM
Dr Tami Roos
Asher Peckman

CIVIC, BUSINESS & COMMUNITY

Simon McKeon AO
The Hon Bob Carr
Commissioner Vivienne Nguyen AM
George Savvides AM
Hugh Mackay AO
Sister Brigid Arthur
Martin Hosking
Dr Hyppolite Ntigurirwa

SPORTS & ARTS

Justin Langer AM
Paul Roos
Dr Hannah MacDougall
Cody Weightman
Simon Tedeschi
Caroline Sharpen OAM
David Jones
Carmen Warrington

And many more across faith, arts, civic and community life - see website details.

*"Now more than ever, we must focus on peace."
— Clover Moore AO, Lord Mayor of Sydney*

Join us each evening from June 13th — no registration needed
www.calmthecity.org.au/100daysofpeace
FREE · OPEN TO ALL · tiny.cc/100Days2026



QR CODE TO
REGISTER FOR
UPDATES




QR CODE
TO JOIN
ONLINE



Calendar of Events for July 2026

School Holidays

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

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|--|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| <p>st. matthew's UNITING CHURCH BAULKHAM HILLS growing together</p>  | | <p>1</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>10am-12noon In Stitches  Upstairs hall</p> | <p>2</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>10-12pm Coffee & Discovery  Speaker: John Nichol</p> | <p>3</p> <p>No scheduled events</p> | <p>4 </p> <p>9am-12pm Op Shop</p> <p>9am-12pm Garage Sale lower hall </p> | <p>5 </p> <p>6th Sunday After Pentecost</p> <p>8am— Worship Includes Communion</p> <p>9.30am— Worship Includes Communion followed by Morning Tea</p> <p>KUCA in Recess for school holidays</p> <p>6.45pm Worship</p> |
| <p>6</p> <p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale  lower hall</p> <p>7.30pm Christian Meditation  Community Room</p> | <p>7 </p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>9.30-11am Christian Meditation  Community Room</p> <p>11.30am Care & Prayer  Community room & church</p> | <p>8</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>10am-12noon Women's Fellowship </p> | <p>9</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> | <p>10</p> <p>No scheduled events</p> | <p>11</p> <p>No scheduled events</p> | <p>12 </p> <p>7th Sunday After Pentecost</p> <p>8am— Worship</p> <p>9am— Worship @ the Willow's</p> <p>9.30am— Worship followed by Morning Tea</p> <p>KUCA in Recess for school holidays</p> <p>6.45pm Worship Community meal</p> |
| <p>13</p> <p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale  lower hall</p> <p>7.30pm Christian Meditation  Community Room and Church</p> | <p>14</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>9.30-11am Christian Meditation  Community Room</p> | <p>15</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>10am-12noon In Stitches  Upstairs hall</p> <p>10am-12noon Men's Morning Tea  McKels Café Bella Vista</p> <p>7.30pm— Elders meeting</p> | <p>16</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> | <p>17</p> <p>No scheduled events</p> | <p>18</p> <p>No scheduled events</p> | <p>19 </p> <p>8th Sunday, After Pentecost</p> <p>8am— Worship</p> <p>9.30am— Worship Followed by morning tea</p> <p>KUCA in Recess for school holidays</p> <p>6.45pm— Worship</p> |
| <p>20</p> <p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale  lower hall</p> <p>7.30pm Christian Meditation  Community Room and Church</p> <p>7.30pm— Finance Meeting lower hall</p> | <p>21 </p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>9.30-11am Christian Meditation  Community Room</p> | <p>22</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> | <p>23</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> | <p>24</p> <p>5pm-7pm Fusion Youth Group "Commonwealth Games" </p> | <p>25</p> <p>No scheduled events</p> | <p>26 </p> <p>9th Sunday After Pentecost</p> <p>8am— Worship Followed by morning tea</p> <p>9.30am— Worship Followed by morning tea</p> <p>KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8</p> <p>5pm— Shine setup from 4pm</p> <p>6.45pm— Worship Includes Communion</p> |
| <p>27</p> <p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale  lower hall</p> <p>7.30pm Christian Meditation  Community Room</p> | <p>28</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>9.30-11am Christian Meditation  community room</p> <p>7.30pm— Property Committee meeting</p> | <p>29</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>10am-12noon In Stitches  Upstairs hall</p> | <p>30</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> | <p>31</p> <p>No scheduled events</p> |  | |

