



st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together



Weekly Newsletter

19 July 2026

Pentecost 8

Bible Readings

Romans 8: 12-25

Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43



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

8th Sunday
After Pentecost



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

Followed by morning tea

KUCA in recess for school holidays

6.45pm—Worship

Led by Jon Humphries

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 20 JULY

9am-garage sale sorting &
pricing
lower hall

7.30pm—Christian Meditation

TUESDAY 21 JULY

9am-2pm—Op Shop

9.30am-11am—Christian
Meditation

community room and church

WEDNESDAY 22 JULY

9am-2pm—Op Shop

THURSDAY 23 JULY

9am-2pm—Op Shop

FRIDAY 24 JULY

5.30-7.30pm—Fusion Youth
"Commonwealth Games"

SATURDAY 25 JULY

No Scheduled Activities

SUNDAY 26 JULY

8am—Worship

Followed by morning tea

9.30am—Worship

Followed by morning tea

KUCA—Preschool
Years K-2 & Years 3-8

5pm—Shine
Set up from 4pm

6.45pm—Worship

Includes communion



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

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MIKE UNDERWOOD
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Something to think about

19 July

Pentecost 8

Revised Common Lectionary Readings:

Genesis 28:10-19a
Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24
Romans 8:12-25
Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

In Christ We are Called to Unity and Harmony

With the recent debate following the controversial comments from Senator Pauline Hanson about her belief that Australia needs to be a monoculture, there is some need to unpack some of the complexity of the issues. It is important for us to do this in the Uniting Church because of our call in Christ and what that means for what we should stand for. In our 1977 Statement to the Nation we affirmed that, "We will work for the eradication of poverty and racism within our society and beyond." Last year the UCA celebrated the historic declaration by Uniting Church National Assembly Statement (1985) that "The Uniting Church is a Multicultural Church."

Race is a social classification of humans based on shared physical, cultural, or social qualities. Modern science and the American Psychological Association recognize that race is not a biological or genetic fact, but rather a societal construct that groups people into distinct hierarchies. (Wikipedia) Race can be defined by some in more narrow terms to those of physical characteristics. So, like most things or depends on who's talking

and how they define things as to what they mean and how we should respond.

Ethnicity refers to a shared cultural identity in which a group of people feels connected based on common ancestry, language, history, society, religion, or traditions. It is a learned social identity rather than a biological one, and it defines how individuals connect with their heritage and community. (Encyclopaedia Britannica)

Racism is the belief that a person's race or ethnicity determines their traits or abilities, inherently making one group superior to another. This belief fuels prejudice, discrimination, and the systemic oppression of marginalized groups through policies, institutions, and cultural norms. (Merriam Webster) In this definition racism is not just about race but can involve discrimination based also on ethnicity. There is no specific term for discrimination based on ethnicity. Such prejudice is therefore named as racism.

Culture refers to the shared beliefs, values, customs, languages, and behaviours of a group. Culture forms the unique identities of individuals and groups. Culture is a human construct and evolves as a shared way of being understood and agreed to by groups of people.

Multiculturalism is the societal framework or philosophy that promotes the peaceful coexistence, recognition, and equitable treatment of multiple distinct cultures within the same geographical boundary, celebrating diversity rather than forcing assimilation. In a multicultural society, culture isn't just about nationality or ethnicity. It encompasses a wide variety of social identities, including religion, language, family and generational heritage. Multiculturalism is built on acknowledging and respecting the differences that these various cultures bring to a community.

The term cultural refers to the accumulated customs, values, beliefs, languages, and behaviours of a specific group. In relation to multiculturalism, the "cultural" aspect describes the distinct identities and traditions that a society acknowledges, respects, and integrates into its broader social fabric. This can be understood as a social contract, which people ascribe to for the greater and common good.

Monoculturalism is a social, organizational, or political system where a single cultural perspective, identity, or set of norms is dominant while others are excluded, marginalized, or pressured to assimilate. It contrasts with multiculturalism, which actively values and embraces diversity. It often involves a dominant group preserving their heritage while filtering out external cultural influences.

Monoculturalism refers to the circumstance in which the defining features and views of one group dominate the other groups within the culture to the point of mass homogeneity. In monoculturalism there is a strong belief in the superiority of one group's cultural heritage, including its history, traditions, and values. At the same time, there is an implied parallel belief in the inferiority of the cultural heritage of other groups. While both may be true in any culture, in order for monoculturalism to become a reality, it is also essential that the group perceived as the dominant cultural force have the power to impose its beliefs or will on the groups perceived to be culturally inferior.

Nationalism is an ideology based on the premise that the individual's loyalty and devotion to the nation-state surpass other individual or group interests. It elevates one nation or nationality above all others and that places primary emphasis on

promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations, nationalities, or cultural or ethnic groups. Nationalism can echo with monoculturalism.

In Christ we, who are the Church, are called to unity and harmony. This is unity is conformity to the way and will of God, expressed in the principles of the Kingdom of Heaven as preached by Christ, who was the Word of God and God-incarnate. This is founded on love, for God is love and we know this in Christ who laid down his life as an at-one-ing sacrifice. As the Uniting, for 40 years we have committed ourselves to being a multicultural Church. For over 49 years we have committed ourselves to "the correction of injustices wherever they occur, including working for the eradication of racism within our society and beyond. This arises from our commitment to the way and will of God to do justly, love with mercy and walk humbly with God [Micah 6:8] through the call to unity and harmony we have in Christ.

This call to unity and harmony comes through Scripture. Paul writes, "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism," [Ephesians 4: 1-6] "And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony." [Colossians 3:14]

He also writes, "So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding." [Romans 14: 19] "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." [Galatians : 28] in fact he and other epistle writers have much to say on unity and harmony. You can read more verses about this using this link. <https://www.openbible.info/topics/unity>

Unity is not conformity to culture or religion: Religion being the forms in which we practise our faith and spirituality. It is having a like-mind with Christ. As Paul writes in Philippians 2: 5-8, "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross!" Jesus welcomed human being, crossing the divine and human boundary.

We are a multicultural Church, just as the early Church was. We are united in Christ and conform ourselves to the Kingdom of Heaven. We seek to advocate therefore for a continuing multicultural Australia. In loving our neighbour as ourselves we allow them to be themselves and we seek unity with them around shared values as well as our multicultural identity. This requires us to be also both cross-cultural and intercultural, where we value the cultures of each other and weave them into a common shared identity. As humans it is natural to be more comfortable with our own race, ethnicity and culture. However, in Christ we are called out of our comfort zones into the richness of the Kingdom of Heaven and the work of loving each other.

In an article titled 'Diagnosing Racism in Multicultural Australia,' Grace Lung writes the following words which are hard to hear but important to listen to if we are to let the truth set us free and be better at being multicultural, cross-cultural and intercultural as the Church. She writes, "Non-white Christians are not Pokemon to be collected to prove how successful (or 'biblical') [or multicultural] we are. When racial minorities are expected to assimilate to Anglo-centric Christianity, we are implicitly insisting on the monoculture that Hanson explicitly promotes." Here's a link to her full article to better understand her point of view. <https://bit.ly/4wqPkwX> This is also true for migrant communities which might try to hold their traditional culture to the exclusion of other cultures.

Multiculturalism is an effort to live in grace and harmony with a shared common purpose. This is the same whether we are talking about the Church or wider society. In the Church it is more than just a tolerating of people from different races, ethnicities, or cultures. It is certainly not about saying to one part of the Body of Christ, because you are not... [insert whatever monocultural identity you will] you cannot be part of the Body. In Christ, we are each together members of the Body of Christ. We are called to unity in Christ but not conformity to one [or more] particular dominant culture. We are a multicultural Church, and should be striving to be cross-cultural and intercultural in the process of being on the way to the promised end in Christ. How we go about celebrating our own culture and not losing the good in that, whilst also welcoming, learning from and integrating the cultures of others gives us much to think about. What is something to think about more than anything is why this is important as people of faith.

God bless.

Jon

PEOPLE NEWS



Chris Bunn
Elaine Cater

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

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

19-25 July

Djibouti, Somalia

Help Required

Rod Schuster is edging the garden around the St. Matt's sign at the front of the church and needs 7 more blonde pavers- like the ones that edge our lawns on the lower side. If anyone has some spare to offer us please contact Katherine Pedersen.

Weekly SYNOD SPOTLIGHT
Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter

For (10 July 2026) please see link to Synod weekly:

[From Five Loaves to Faith Across Generations](#)

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



Reminder To all group Leaders

Please send your year in review group reports to the church office by Tuesday 22 July.

This report should be a couple of paragraphs to half a page in length. This will be added to the August In Focus and will be in lieu of the Annual Congregational report.

If any groups have photos, please include these as well.

Thank you

Message from the President

This year, as I have joined Christians from across Tonga and around the world to mark 200 years of Christianity in Tonga, I have been reminded that the Church is at its best when people from different cultures, languages and traditions realise that, in Christ, we belong to one another as the Body of Christ.

That is the vision at the heart of Intercultural Neighbouring Sunday.

Paul reminds us that *"we are one body with many members"* (1 Corinthians 12). Our diversity is not a problem to overcome; it is a gift through which the Holy Spirit continues to shape, challenge and renew us. Each culture, language, generation and community reveals something of God's richness that none of us can reveal alone.

As the Uniting Church, we have long affirmed that the Gospel calls us beyond cultural, racial and national boundaries to a life of reconciliation and shared discipleship. Our Basis of Union reminds us that we are called to bear witness to a unity of faith and life in Christ that transcends cultural, economic, national and racial boundaries. As we continue to grow as a multicultural and intercultural Church, we are learning to receive one another as gifts and to grow together in Christ. We begin by listening to and learning from First Peoples, whose wisdom continues to shape who we are becoming as the Body of Christ.

This year's theme, *"Belonging: One Body, Many Members,"* invites every congregation to reflect: *Who belongs? Whose gifts are waiting to be discovered? Whose voices might help us hear Christ more clearly? Who is still waiting to know they truly belong?*

Belonging is more than welcoming people through our doors. It means making room for one another in our worship, leadership, decision-making and shared life together. It means allowing Christ to reshape us as we listen deeply, learn humbly and serve alongside one another. When we help one another belong, we bear witness to Christ, who first welcomed us.

My prayer is that wherever the Uniting Church gathers and serves—in our congregations, schools, agencies and councils—we will continue weaving Christ's love across cultures and boundaries, becoming communities where every person knows they belong, every culture is honoured, every gift is welcomed, and every generation finds its place within the Body of Christ. In doing so, may we bear faithful witness to the reconciling love of Jesus Christ in our world today.

Ofa lahi atu,

Rev Charissa Suli

President of the Uniting Church in Australia



WESLEY CASTLE HILL

TRIVIA NIGHT

Saturday, August 8, 5pm

32 Showground Rd, Castle Hill

Adults \$15, Families \$40



HELP WANTED



**CAN YOU DRIVE A COUPLE
TO CHURCH FROM NEAR
JASPER RD?**

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR
9:30 SERVICE**

PLEASE CONTACT SARA

Please return completed forms by 26th July

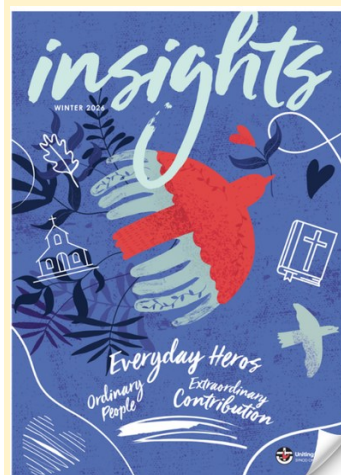
Volunteer Form
Assisting with Morning Services
for
**September, October,
November 2026**

Have been emailed or collect a copy from the foyer.

NEW HELPERS WELCOME



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



Please pick up
the latest
insights
Magazine
for
Winter 2026
From the church
foyer

St Matthew's Social Action Missional Ministry Team

How doing little things makes a big difference.

Topic: The biggest losers: Part 1-Gambling and women

Carolyn's story: *"I only realised that I had an addiction when I went to prison."*

"It got to the point where I didn't care whether I won or lost; I just had to be there. I had to be in front of those machines."

Unable to control her impulses, Carolyn stole \$400,000 over seven years. She started gambling poker machines (pokies) in her early fifties. She was released from prison when she was 64 years old. Her experience in prison saved her life after a counsellor helped Carolyn. She reformed her habits, stopped gambling, and repaid all her debts. Unfortunately, her relationship broke up. Her relationship with her children is strained at present.

There is a toxic but disturbing relationship between gambling and women. The popularity of smartphone allows online sports betting to expand access to women. The lack of regulations or safeguards has allowed unrestricted gambling among women and other demographic groups. Online betting is the fastest-growing sector of the market, including both offshore (unregulated) and onshore bets. Online betting participation is similar between men and women. Overall gambling participation also differs modestly by gender. In terms of total gambling, 51% of women gamble each year (compared to 56% of men) in Victoria whilst 48.5% of women gamble (compared to 58.7% of men) in NSW.

It is a small but significant proportion of women who are at risk of gambling harm. Gambling harm describes any negative consequence caused by gambling. It exists on a spectrum—from mild stress and feelings of regret to severe crises like bankruptcy and family violence—and impacts not just the gambler, but also on their loved ones.

While sports betting online alone profited by a staggering \$42 billion from the estimated total volume of bets and gambling turnover, land-based gambling uncovered a record loss of \$9.3 billion on pokies. This was the highest annual loss ever recorded in NSW (*Wesley Mission Media Release, 2026*). Online betting, including sports betting, has evolved into an invisible and more pervasive form of gambling. Also, younger women are particularly vulnerable to gambling harm.

As online gambling is unrestricted and easily accessible, women, despite commencing gambling later in life, tend to progress more rapidly than men from recreational gambling to gambling harm. Gambling essentially "compresses" or speeds up the timeline of addiction development; described as the phenomenon of telescoping effect. Yet, women gamblers are more likely to gravitate more toward chance-based, continuous forms of gambling, particularly electronic gaming machines (pokies/slots), as well as lotteries and bingo. Pokies are widely available in licensed clubs, pubs, and hotels, increasing their accessibility. The rapid, repetitive nature of these games accelerates the conditioning of reward pathways in the brain, which may contribute to the development and persistence of gambling-related harm.

Continued next page

Pokies are a drawcard because they reward players with small wins, just enough to hold their attention (without focusing on the amount of money lost). It requires active, aggressive decision-making, mathematical calculations, and psychological awareness. The near misses make the player think that they are close to a win. There are noises, music, and affirmations to spur the player on. The bright lights give the impression of a playground, triggering expectations that produce a state of hypervigilance.

This behaviour appears self-soothing. Women often gamble to escape negative moods, loneliness, or severe stress, which can create a self-reinforcing cycle. The attraction of discount dinners and/or drinks by the clubs is inviting. More recent research has identified that women are now diversifying their product use by also gambling on other active skill-based activities, such as multiple bets, putting themselves at risk of greater economic loss. The range of gambling options and the ease of access to available products are contributing factors. The increasing 'normalisation' of gambling within communities has resulted in an increase in gambling. It also considers how products such as sports betting, previously assumed to appeal to men, appeals to, and influences, women's gambling behaviours.

Gambling advertising has played a significant role in normalising gambling. New gambling products are created to appeal to women; betting markets now appear on popular reality shows, e.g., *Married at First Sight*. Celebrities and social media influencers are most appealing to women, especially girls. The recognition of women influencers on social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram promotes betting as a normal extension of social activities.

Another sport that has targeted women is horse racing. It has become the essence of style, class, fashion, beauty, and gambling. Not all gambling is meant to fleece women. Women also play Bingo in clubs; it requires skill and offer recreation, without exploitation.

We have a responsibility to oppose gambling because it is a system that harms the vulnerable.

Proverbs 14:31

"Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honours God."

If you or anyone you know needs help, contact:

- National Gambling Helpline on 1800858858
- Lifeline 13114
- Headspace on 1800650890

Blessings,

Dr Sandra Morell

Social Action Missional Ministry Team (SAMT)

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 18th Aug 2026 at 7pm in the Lower Church Hall



Parramatta Mission



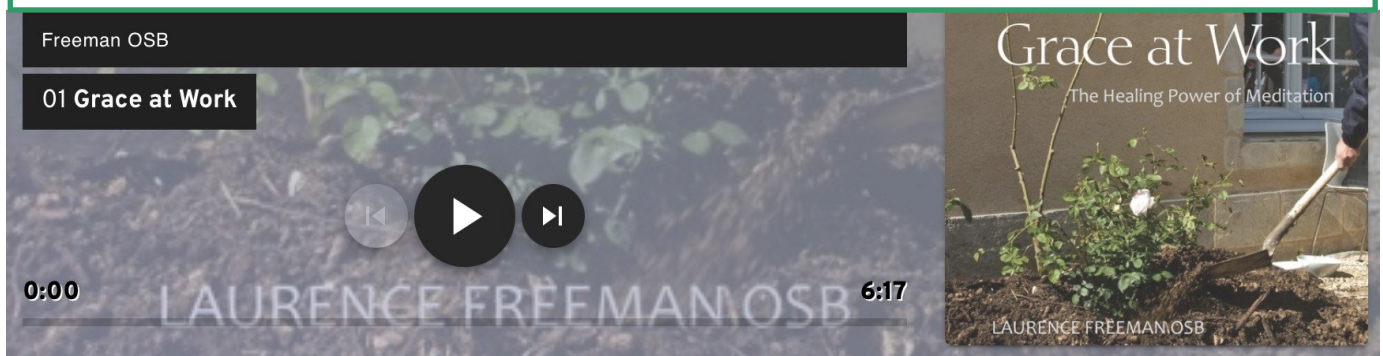
We will be collecting beanies and scarves until **September** to be distributed to disadvantaged people at Parramatta Mission. A collection tub will be available at the top of the stairs.

Thanks to everyone who have knitted and crocheted items so far this year. Your donations are greatly appreciated.



Christian Meditation Series beginning next week.

Grace at Work - the healing power of meditation/ contemplation that we will be starting next Monday 13th and Tuesday 14th of July .



Grace at Work - The Healing Power of Meditation by Laurence Freeman OSB

Meditatio Talks Series 2019 D Oct-Dec

Laurence Freeman presents meditation as a simple way to gain freedom from addiction. Compulsive behaviour develops when our search for happiness becomes fixated on a single desire that brings temporary satisfaction. In meditation, we shift our attention from our desires and place it on the mantra. This gentle discipline opens us to the work of grace which restores us to wholeness.

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

01 Grace at Work

02 From Desire to Addiction

03 The Prayer of the Heart

04 Paying Attention

05 Joy is Deeper than Desire

06 The Nature of God

07 The Parable of the Prodigal ...

08 God is Love

09 What is Sin

10 Meditation and the 12-Step P...

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 Packman

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.calminthecity.org.au/100daysofpeace
FREE · OPEN TO ALL · tiny.cc/100Days2026



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TO JOIN
ONLINE



Ness Williams-Henke and Jon are back with their all-age / intergen podcast, 'On the Way with Ness and Jon.' It has a new look to make it more appealing to all ages. This has taken some time to get set up. The latest season is ready for Pentecost and After Pentecost, looking at the Fruit of the Spirit.

Watch on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/@OnTheWaywithNessandJon>

or listen wherever you listen to podcasts

LET'S CHAT ABOUT LIFE AND FAITH



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On The Way is all about having great conversations about life and faith. Jon and ...more

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Why Is Love A Fruit Of The Spirit?



What Is The Fruit Of The Spirit?

Please see QR Codes for links for YouTube,
Facebook & Twitch



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.