



Amen



Continued Amening

Let it be. Let it Go. So be it.

These are all aspect of amening. The Hebrew word for "amen" is אָמֵן (ah-MEN). It comes from the root which means to be firm, trustworthy, or faithful. It is a declaration that a statement is solid, reliable, and true. When used as a response to prayers or blessings, it means "so be it" or "may it be fulfilled". It shares the same Hebrew root as אֱמוּנָה [emunah]. This is the Hebrew word for "faith" or "belief". However, unlike the English concept of simply accepting ideas as true, as אֱמוּנָה [Emunah] denotes active steadfastness, unwavering trust, and faithfulness. It describes a reliable, ongoing relationship built on action and fidelity (faith or trust). Saying "amen" can mean staking yourself on the reliability of what was just said. That is why in some Christian traditions people shout out "amen."

Amening can be a way of peace and peacefulness. It can bring peace to us and into a situation when we let things be or let them go without holding onto what is said with angst, anger, fear or

judgement of the person. The Beatles used this idea in their song, 'Let It Be.' Amening can lead us into a greater sense of peacefulness when it reminds us that God is present and at work for good. It does not mean that we will not feel worry or fear, but we then give these feelings and ourselves to God, centre ourselves in faith in God, and then rest in trust that God may lead us into what needs to be done next. It probably doesn't need to be said that this kind of amening is not easy. Yet it is powerful and does work.

Amening is a centring ourselves in God, who is present in us, in others and in all things, and is at work for good. [Romans 8:28] It is letting things be as they are. This is an important first thing because it is an accepting of truth. Things are as they are, and they may not be as we want or wish them to be, but it is what it is. Accepting this takes away a bunch of worry, because worry is often centred in our desire for control. The truth is that we cannot often control things outside of our control. This seems

obvious. Yet so much of the time we worry about what we cannot do anything about or change in that present moment.

The next stage of amening is opening ourselves up to God and how God might be working or leading us. Things may be as they are, but that is just the starting point. God accepts things as they are as a beginning, but then works to transform, heal, change things as God brings the Kingdom



of Heaven to bear. This kind of amening we see in Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane when he asks God if there is any other way then to change it. However, having shared his heart with God, he amens by stating, "Yet not my will, but yours." [Luke 22:42]

Continued next page

The work of God may lead us through the valley of the shadow of death, just as it might lead us to green pastures. Of course we would rather just have the green pastures, but that is not always the way of God. Amening accepts that God will lead us in the right paths and that his rod and staff will comfort us in the difficult times.

Having accepted things are as they are to begin with, then centring ourselves in God and opening ourselves to what God might be leading us to, we then need to be an amen. This is about actually stepping out in faith to follow as God is leading. However, there is also a likelihood that we might not have a strong sense of where God is leading. In this case, like when we find out that we have some significant illness or find ourselves in the face of grief when we have lost someone we deeply love, we need to amen by just stepping out in faith and hope that God will bring us to green pastures eventually. This is being an amen because we make the move to walk forward and let things be as God will work them. There is a peace in this, because we give any worry which comes from needing to control what is uncontrollable to God, and we then just take up the yoke of faith and push on.

I believe this kind of amening and the peace that comes with it is

related to what Jesus is talking about when he says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." [Matthew 11:28-30] Amening, in giving ourselves to God, whom we know as Christ, brings rest for our souls, strength for our spirits and nerve to our heart, will and being. As Jesus implies with the reference to a yoke,



we will still have work to do, but in this effort, we are yoked to Jesus who helps us pull through, and yoked with others as the Body of Christ who are there to help and work with us.

Finally, amening also reminds us of our call to be an amen to God. As Christ's, call to the ministry of love, grace and reconciliation, we are called to help make this so as we are able with the help of God. Having received love, we can work to love. Having received grace, we can work to share grace. Having received hope, we can then work to bring hope. Having received peace, we can

then work for peace. Knowing the Kingdom of Heaven is near and amongst us, we can work with God to bring it further into being.

This being an amen to the will and way of God, brings peace because we are empowered in our agency. Much worry and stress comes from a feeling that we don't know what to do or that we aren't able to do anything to change things. When we centre ourselves in God, who is able to do more that we can imagine, then we become empowered to do what we can as we join with God in God's working for good. This leads to the kind of thinking where we might not be able to change what is happening to us, but we can change our attitude to be one of hope, and that in whatever we find ourselves we can share kindness, care, love and compassion with others, and thus be an amen to the Kingdom of Heaven.

So, amening and letting things be is not a giving up. It is never usually easy, for we are with Jesus on the way of the Cross. Amening is a placing ourselves in hope, truth and faith in God who we know loves us and is for us. Amening may not change things into the way that we want them, but it can change us so that we find peace, and even joy, even in the most difficult of circumstances. How we continue to amen and be an amen to the way and will of God which we know in Christ is something to deeply think about.

*God bless
Jon*

St .Matthew's AGM

30th August 2026

As we reflect on the past year, we were reminded recently of Paul's words that the Church is one body with many members, each gifted by God to serve in different ways. St. Matthew's is the faithful, caring, and vibrant community it is today because so many people generously share their time, talents, and hearts in Christ's service.

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to our ministry team, Jon and Sara, for their faithful leadership, wise guidance, and loving pastoral care. They lead us with humility and dedication, and we are truly blessed by their ministry among us.

My sincere thanks also go to Lynn in the office. Her quiet efficiency, willingness to help, and tireless work behind the scenes keeps so much of the life of our church running smoothly. Much of what she does goes unnoticed, but it is deeply appreciated.

I also want to thank our Church Council, Elders, and all their committees for the prayer, wisdom, and countless hours they invest in the stewardship of our congregation. In particular, I want to acknowledge our Finance and Property teams. Preparing budgets, managing our finances with integrity, and caring for our buildings are significant responsibilities that often happen quietly in the background. Their faithful service provides a practical foundation that enables our ministries to flourish.

Thank you, too, to everyone who gives so generously of their time and financial resources. Your faithful stewardship is an act of worship and a tangible expression of your commitment to God's work through this congregation and the community around us. Your generosity supports not only our ministries but also the ongoing care of our church buildings and the manse, which require considerable time, effort, and resources to maintain.

Finally, thank you to every person who serves in ways both seen and unseen. Whether you lead, teach, play, sing, welcome, pray, visit, maintain our property, serve on a committee, prepare morning tea, or quietly lend a helping hand, your service matters. Every act of faithfulness strengthens the life of our congregation and bears witness to God's love.

May we continue to encourage and support one another, serve one another with joy, and give thanks to God, who has so richly blessed our church through the faithfulness of His people.

Yours in Christ's service
Mike Underwood
Chairperson
St. Matthew's Church Council



Coffee & Discovery Year in Review Report 2025/2026

With the completion of almost of 26 years and 362 sessions, the Coffee & Discovery Seniors' Group began another year of being a welcoming and meaningful mission activity for the senior people of St. Matthew's and the surrounding community. Some attendees have joined with us as a result of being invited by their St. Matthew's friends and on occasions, others have visited because of a particular speaker or topic on the day.

During the past year with an average attendance of 25, Coffee & Discovery has continued to provide a valued time of getting together on a monthly basis which includes a welcome and devotion segment in the church presented by either Warren Arthur, Michael Strong or Jon Humphries, followed by a great morning tea and a social chat time in the hall. Back into the church for the speaker presentation, there is the opportunity for times of learning, discovery, interest, humour and entertainment with the varied speakers. Since July last year six of the speakers/entertainers have been from our St. Matthew's community which has been most helpful and their support much appreciated. As I am always on the lookout for speakers, any offers or recommendations of a speaker are appreciated.

A highlight in August last year was a special morning of celebration in acknowledgement of 25 years of Coffee & Discovery, with the pleasure and privilege of having Rev Nicholas Fried address the group.

Also present were four people who attended the first meeting in August 2000 as well as David Short who delighted everyone with his wonderful music.

Coffee and Discovery is very much a team effort which includes a welcomer in the foyer, welcomer/devotion leaders, multimedia technician, sandwich makers and cooks, helpers with setting up and clearing up, all very much appreciated and which enables this ministry to function in a warm and caring way.

There is always a welcome to all, to attend this relaxing and friendly activity.

Dulcie Duncum
Group Coordinator



Thursday 6th August
10am-12pm



Guest Artists: "LINNET SINGERS"



The choir will present a program of music featuring fun pieces, songs from musicals, classical and modern favourites as well as a couple of community songs.

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

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

st. matthew's
BAULKHAM HILLS
UNITING CHURCH
growing together

AGM

Annual General Meeting

Sunday
30 August
10.30am

Following the
9am combined
Worship service



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

WEEK 5

21 Aug

LEGO MASTERS

**Swing City -
Norwest**

st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together

For more information contact Jon Humphries
jon@stmatthewsuniting.net.au 0432940847

PROPERTY COMMITTEE REPORT

JULY 2025 – JUNE 2026

The Property committee had a busy year and many jobs were covered.

Bruce was always on hand to fix many items and Katherine, George and their team continued to look after the beautiful gardens which is a credit to them.

- ♦ 2 new first aid kits were installed, downstairs and upstairs
- ♦ The peeling hall ceiling was stripped right back and repainted.
- ♦ In July 25 an air-conditioning unit was installed to replace the radiator in the op shop making the room very cosy for the workers and clients.
- ♦ We had two working bees which were poorly attended but we were able to do many jobs.
- ♦ The Tradie Ladies were rebooked to complete the upstairs garden during the Christmas holidays.
- ♦ After close to 50 years the carpets were changed to a more modern carpet which is a vast improvement to the old carpet. Stair nosing was added a couple of months later to complete the job.
- ♦ The continuation of work to the manse pool has been nearly completed. New paving around the pool, fixing of a large crack in the pool and surface recoated.
- ♦ The window in Sara's office was upgraded with glazed glass for more privacy

ST. MATTHEW'S WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP



On the second Wednesday of each month our group of ladies meet in the upstairs hall and church from 10am to 12 noon. We have an average attendance of 11 ladies each month, and there are currently 18 members on our monthly email list. The ladies organise a varied program for the year and so far this year we talked about our childhood memories, had a quiz where everyone brought along 5 questions each, joined together for an early lunch just after mothers day, had a fun fitness morning, and auctioned goodies where we raised \$300 towards post-

age for the Philippines, packed things for the mothers at the hospital in the Philippines, and collected tinned food for the Bill Crews foundation. We plan a table games morning and guest speakers before concluding the year with a special Christmas morning in December. Each meeting starts with morning tea, and includes a devotion prepared by someone who is comfortable sharing a message. The ladies enjoy the fellowship and caring for one another, and remembering birthdays. We strive to assist the church by supporting missions and outreach organisations. The group caters for thanksgiving services and helped to provide supper after the World Day of Prayer in March.

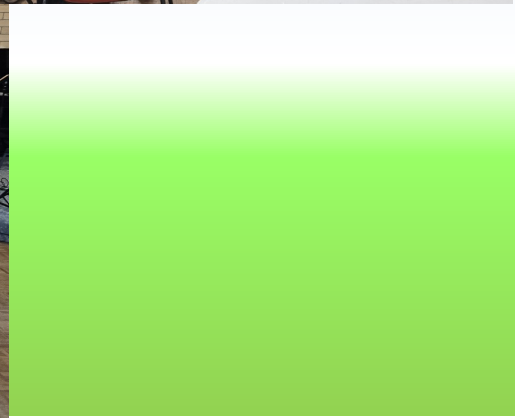
Any ladies who would like to join with this Women's Fellowship group will receive a warm and friendly welcome.

Margaret Gray
Secretary



Report to the AGM 2026

Fusion continues to hum along. We have 5 great dedicated leaders and 6-7 young people. Fusion meets fortnightly on a Friday night. We have an activity time, a time for devotion and then supper. You may have seen the program fliers in the foyer and in the newsletter. Our activities range from active games, to fun challenges, Lego nights, video game nights, board game nights, games in the park, to quieter nights and even Master Chef cooking challenges where they cook they own supper. The young people have an input into the program with their ideas and are also encouraged to lead activities at times.





Report for AGM August 2026

Kuca has run pretty much every week during school term. We average between 4-7 young people from year 4 up to year 8 each week. We have the support of the young peoples family helping which keeps Kuca running. Each week we study a verse in the bible and talk about what we think it means. This year we have had the Arthur's come to talk about what the Church was like when St Matthews first started and what Sunday School was like.



We have talked about The Lords Prayer and wrote our own prayers of the people. This year we have created multiple videos to share with the congregation such as Easter and Christmas. We have cooked morning tea to share at 9:30am. At Christmas we gave each of the young people a gift from the congregation and had a end of year party. Overall this year has been a busy year, we are trying to have the young people involved within the service while still allowing their own space to grow and be creative. The confidence and bible knowledge of the young people have improved significantly and we are hoping to do more in the coming year.



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



Garage

SALE

1st Saturday of the month
9am-12pm

Upcoming dates

- **1 August**
- **5 September**
- **3 October**

Pre-loved
Household items,
Electrical, Toys & Books
(Fiction, Non-fiction & children's books)

St. Matthew's Lower hall

From the St Matthew's Social Action Missional Ministry Team

'Doing little things can make a big difference'.

Topic: Gambling Reform: The Biggest Losers

When it comes to gambling, Australians have earned the reputation of being world's Biggest Losers. We lose more money per person than any other country. Australian gamblers lose \$32 billion dollars annually. Australia has the highest per capita annual gambling loss of AUD \$1635 in the world (*Australia Institute and the Grattan Institute, 2024*). In contrast, the fifth largest loss per capita was \$809 annually. Gambling expenditure is highly concentrated among a small proportion of gamblers. Many gamblers tend to live in poorer postcodes.

HILDA (*Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia & Australian Gambling Research Centre (AGRC, (2024) National Gambling Participation and Harm Study, (2017)*) found that the top 20% of gamblers accounted for almost 80% of gambling expenditure. who account for the 20% of gamblers, tend to live in the poorest postcodes.

The same research has shown that the closer you live to a gambling facility, the more likely you are to go there regularly. There are more poker machines in lower socio-economic areas than in higher-income postcodes, which is more likely to account for risk of gambling harm, as they have less income.

The AGRC (2024) survey showed that gambling harm is common: 20% of people experience harm from their own or another person's gambling and 7.8% are harmed by their own gambling. Women and people who live with children, and Indigenous people, are more likely to experience harm from someone else's gambling. This survey also revealed that gaming machines (pokies) handle 54.8% of gambling harm in NSW (an increase from 2019), while sports and race betting are responsible for 16.5% of gambling harm, as well as casino table games for 7.7%.

High-risk gambling harm is associated with higher prevalence of cognitive, behavioural, and mental health conditions, as well as higher rates of intimate partner violence and financial hardship. Gambling harm included stress, borrowing money, skipping meals, or selling items to fund gambling. Almost 1 in 3 people who gamble once a week or more experience moderate-or high-risk gambling. There is a higher gambling harm to online gamblers who are five times more likely to experience moderate or high-risk gambling harm.

Not all Australians are diehard gamblers. The above survey showed that ~ half of the population choose not to gamble at all. While NSW accounts for around 0.15% of the world's population, it has 37% of the world's poker machines that are not located within casinos or other gaming establishments; a statistic that highlights the state's unusually high concentration of gambling opportunities. This raises alarm bells about the considerable risk of gambling-related harm.

Continued next page

Gambling develops into an addiction by taking over the brain's natural reward pathway and altering its physical structure, while functioning in a manner identical to substance abuse. Gambling triggers an unnaturally massive flood of dopamine, which spikes during the anticipation of an outcome more than the reward itself. The brain is stimulated by uncertainty, creating a positive "reward prediction error," that sends the brain into overdrive. As the behaviour repeats, it becomes habituated while dopamine release slows. A person's behaviour escalates, leading them to take bigger financial risks, and take longer periods to escape the numbing emotional state brought on by gambling. Eventually, there is a profound shift where gambling moves away from a conscious choice and becomes compulsive.

Often, gambling problems are hidden for extended periods as there is no straightforward evidence or tell-tale signs; it is a behavioural addiction, different from alcohol or substance abuse. Gambling disorder is a chronic, relapsing, and remitting condition. There are terrible consequences for the gambler and their families. The driving force is focussed on their next win, i.e., thrill of the chase; not how much money is lost, while at the same time preoccupied with their potential 'big win.'

Although the Bible does not directly prohibit gambling, it consistently warns against greed, the love of money, and the pursuit of quick wealth. Instead, Scripture encourages a living relationship with God rather than risk. The next article will focus on distinctive styles of gambling and a breakdown of their appeal to specific age groups. There will be a case study on a club that banned pokies and the success that resulted.

1 Timothy 6:9–10

"But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs" (ESV)

*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](mailto:alexander.lawless7@gmail.com)

The next meeting of SAMT will be on Tuesday 18th August 2026 at 7pm in the lower church hall.
If you would like to receive the weekly SAMT email newsletter which is a weekly summary of all of
the social issues that SAMT are following, please email Amanda on agcm1960@gmail.com

Annual Report from Social Action Ministry Team (SAMT)

Report for AGM August 2026

SAMT have been working on social action since December 2024 and are focused on calling attention to and acting on social issues in our broader community, so that St Matthew's can be a church of faith in action. We communicate with congregations via the weekly church newsletter, monthly In Focus and Alexander's SAMT talks in church services. There is also a weekly SAMT newsletter that summarises information on the issues that we are following that church members can subscribe to by emailing Amanda.

The current issue areas we are following are:

1. Climate Change & Climate Adaption
2. Gambling Reform
3. Fair Treatment Drug Reform
4. First Nations & Reconciliation
5. Domestic & Family Violence
6. Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking
7. Palestine & the Middle East with PIEN and FME
8. Uniting World & Act for Peace

In addition to raising awareness within St Matthew's congregations of the above issues, in the last 12 months members of SAMT engaged with Uniting Advocacy and community groups on the following:

- ◇ In December 2025 SAMT members attended a meeting with Alex Hawke MP, along with representatives of other local Uniting Churches, on Climate Change and Climate Adaption.
- ◇ In April organised the signing of a banner on maintaining the funding of Australia Aid that was part of the Micah Women's Network campaign and presented it to Alex Hawke's Office.
- ◇ In May 2026, marched in the 'March for Change – Domestic & Family Violence' at Castle Hill, along with members of Wesley Uniting Church at Castle Hill and also attended the DFV Vigil evening at Wesley UC.
- ◇ Encouraged congregants to sign online petitions for climate action and gambling reform.
- ◇ On a monthly basis we engage with online webinars to educate and update ourselves on the issues we are following.

Shine



Report for AGM August

Now in its 26th year, SHINE, a friendship group for those with additional needs, has had a great year.

Welcoming Sara to the SHINE family has been a great addition for all.

SHINE celebrated well this year. The 50th anniversary at the 6:45 service handing out "Button Prayer" cards they had made.

Partying at the Hills Bowling Club to celebrate everybody's birthday in one go!

Painting, baking and creating all sorts of wonders.

The main focus of the group is their ministry to the Philippines.

The year begins with them packing toiletries for their Filipino friends and remembering their motto "Be Kind".

Later in the year a BBQ and Box night sees them pack, usually, about 30 boxes to be sent to one of the schools they support.

It's been great for the team to have fun with such amazing men and women.

New members always welcome.

MEN'S MORNING TEA



Report
for AGM
August

As previously reported, this Group meets every month at an external location in Bella Vista and the consensus is that the location and informal nature of the meetings are more conducive to swapping news, stories, the inevitable 'man jokes' and essentially solving the problems of the world, than one with a more formal agenda as was the case in the Church lower hall.

We have met continuously here since Covid, usually seated outside due to numbers attending – typically 16 but recently 20+ - even during winter, but stoicism abounds in the Group!

We currently have 30 registered members - only two not being members of St Matthews - an increase of 8 since the beginning of the year.

About 50% of our regular attendees continue to support the MMT at West Epping Uniting Church each month, a more formal meeting with guest speakers.

New members are always welcome.

Alan Wright

Meeting details:

Venue: McKel's Café, 1 Circa Boulevard, Bella Vista

Date: 3rd Wednesday of each month

Time: 10.00am – 12 noon

St Matthews Preschool – Year in Review Report for 2026

It's been another solid 12 months for the Preschool. We have an excellent team of staff who are capably led by Sonali Wanigesekera.

We continue to receive glowing feedback about the team from the Preschool families. The settled and stable staff have energy, enthusiasm and there is a great structure for the future. Even with a couple of staff changes this year, the new team members have fitted in seamlessly.

Our preschool continues to be endorsed & sort after. Pleasingly we continue to have full enrolments and looking to next year, the enrolments are attracting strong demand. There continues to be a diverse group of cultural backgrounds that attend and with that comes varying religious backgrounds.

Jon's regular interactions are very well received, and are much appreciated by the staff.

Financially the Preschool is in a solid position with reserves of over \$530,000. It contributed \$79,000 to the church by way of occupancy fee for last year. It is wonderful to continue to contribute to the life of the church from this perspective as well as others.

Pleasingly the Preschool was also able to contribute to the new electronic sign in the lane way and also undertook a substantial renovation of the top playground with refreshed play equipment, new synthetic grass and rubber including a bike path, plus a new storage shed.

A brief word on structure and why having a preschool is important. Aside from the financial contribution of the occupancy fee, it is an important outreach for the church. The Shared Governance model is important for the continued vibrancy of the Preschool, having a Management Committee enables autonomy over local decisions and we control our own finances.

We have a supportive committee which is very important to this.



I'd like to acknowledge our church committee members- Hugh Darling, Amanda Manson, Jon Humphries, and Marijke Prinsloo.

I'd also like to thank Helen Olley & Belinda Schuster for their hard work and continued dedication. Particularly nice in recent months was the acknowledgement for Helen of 30 years of service.

We look forward to a bright future and continue to look for ways to keep improving our service and we continue to think of ways to continue and build the strong connection between the church & preschool.

David Porter

Chairperson St Matthews Preschool

(Attached photos show playground upgrade, Helen Olley being acknowledged for 30 years service and a photo of the team)



Christian Meditation



the scripture passages are now saying to us in a gentle,

Was started at St. Matthew's Baulkham Hills Uniting Church by Betty Carmody in 2003.

A couple of us who were introduced to the discipline in the first group have continued attending and are now facilitating the groups facilitating the groups. Betty held many Introductory sessions throughout Sydney and is still a shining light to the Eremos group of 12 members who meet with her monthly to study a different book each year related to the spiritual journey. All of the members also meditate in the Christian tradition reintroduced by John Main in the early 1970s.

There is a certain power and presence of the Holy Spirit whenever individuals meditate each day alone or online and then when we meet together, a community of love, respect and compassion develops.

On the first Tuesday of each month the Prayer and Care Group meet at 11.30am and many from the meditation group stay on to share the devotions and then request prayers or express thanks for the help they received from prayer and being truly listened to.

In 2024 an evening group was commenced for workers on Mondays from 7.30-8.30pm. Jon Humphries, the Minister of the Word has been setting up, attending, sometimes leading and promoting both groups. We give our thanks to him for his explanations of words and ideas expressed in the passages we read and talks we listen to before the time of meditation.

Several people who have experienced meditation here are now attending church, Op Shop, Garage sales, outings, volunteering for St. Matthew's and have a new way of being in community.

Focusing on the silence, stillness and poverty of meditation has enabled us to recognise personally what Jon is teaching us and what

healing, compassionate way. Peace, hope and the natural desire to share Gods love to others seems to flow on.

The people who attended this week were asked why they came and practiced leaving their own agenda behind day after day, week after week, year after year.

Two answers follow.

"If I didn't have the group, I'd lose my way"

"I believe it is important to call time out everyday from a task driven mentality, from the many aural and visual stimulations in today's environment and from devices of distraction.

I have an inner life distinct from my material needs and perceived priorities. I appreciate cultivating this inner life through simple principles involved in meditation. It's healthy. Joining with like minded people is uplifting".

We can accommodate 12 people in the Community Room , especially nice in winter. Summer and when more people and space is needed we set a circle in the church space. There is room for 100 and of all ages.

For more information see WCCM.org and the Australian site also.

Thank you to Rosemary and the other members who are qualified to lead and assist over 51 weeks of each year.

We have some more ideas for the future.

Peace and love,

Katherine Pedersen



Services at St. Matt's

Most will know we have three services each Sunday at St. Matthew's. They are not radically different in content, but each has a different flavour or atmosphere. Our 8am service is the more formal of our services – at least the music is predominantly hymns and songs from the Together in Song II hymn book. Our 9.30am service is a little more casual and is the one where families are more likely to come to. Alongside the services during term time, there is KUCA (Kids in the Uniting Church [in] Australia). KUCA do activities and learning, and regularly these are about preparing videos for special seasons or preparing to lead parts of our service. Our 6.45pm service is the most casual and informal, with the most contemporary music and a laid-back atmosphere. After the service there is usually supper.

We are blessed at St. Matthew's to have so many gifted people who are willing to share their gifts and talents to enrich the life of our community. This includes the area of our services. We have dedicated musicians, of which we are truly blessed to have organists, pianists, guitarists, drummers, singers, percussionists, clarinetists and more. We have dedicated welcomers and those who assist with the practical elements such as collecting and counting the monetary offerings, running the sound systems and operating the visual elements such as our slide presentations and online live-streaming. We have a diversity of people who lead our services through liturgy and preaching.

We have a team who do creative things with flowers and material to help us get into the mood of different liturgical seasons and special days and times. Thank you to all who volunteer and help make coming and gathering as a community a special time where we can connect with God and each other. It is also important to know that we have many regular people who are a part of our services, and whilst they might not be physically present, are very much an active part of our congregation.

Over the past year we have followed the pattern of the Revised Common Lectionary. Jon and others such as Clive and Albert and others have used art and other creative elements to liven up our services and help us stay engaged with the Word of God. We have had guest preachers, pulpit swaps with Uniting Heart and Soul in Woollahra, and guest presenter who have led our all-age learning. We have seen new people come, and some people go. The activity corner continues to help people feel welcome and engaged and able to be in the community in different ways.

Thus, our Sunday services, as well as our special event services, continue to be an important aspect of our life and witness as a faithful community and congregation of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Thank you again to all who help these things be as effective as they are.



Thrive Bible Study

Report to AGM August

The Thrive Bible Study meets on a Tuesday night on a fortnightly basis. At the moment, we have seven people that regularly attend, and we usually rotate hospitality at our homes.

Over the years we have completed a number of different studies. In the past twelve months, we have used the Filthy Hope Podcast series "Into the Word" to go through the Book of Acts. We also read a book by Rachel Held Evans called "Inspired", which led to many interesting discussions about society and the Bible. We have talked about faith in action, connecting to nature, and also examined births in the Bible.



We have a lot of fun with our studies, and are always learning new things about the Bible. The community we share is a valued part of our lives, and we particularly enjoy exploring God's word in a casual and friendly setting, often with many sweets, and a meal or two along the way.



Pastoral Care Update



Over the past year, I've found few Mondays or Tuesdays look alike. Monday mornings find me following up on anyone who might need a phone call or visit that I found out about on Sunday and preparing the nametags for the following week. With only 16 hours a week to play with, a lot of the contact I have with people is over the phone, although I try to meet with people face to face at the church or in their home, especially when they are unable to attend church.

25/26 saw a number of St. Matthew's members in hospital at different times and when I have been able, I have visited to sit with, chat and pray together with them. Similarly, some of our congregation have moved into care and I've been able to bring them news of their St. Matthew's family.

Since completing sacraments training in 2025, I have been taking communion to church members who are not able to be at church to celebrate with the congregation as a whole. This has been a blessing for some who have not been able to celebrate communion in a while.

Over the course of the past year I have had the privilege to support several families through the passing of a loved one and to officiate at three funerals. This was a steep learning curve and I am grateful for Jon's assistance and support in this.

I love spending time with the people of St. Matthew's and speaking God's love to you all. Thank you for welcoming me into your lives and allowing me to be a part of what is happening for you. But as well as speaking, what cannot be underestimated is the power of praying with someone. Whether in the church, the home, the hospital or even over the phone, through prayer, we can connect with God, no matter what the circumstances.

Sara Wienand

ST. MATTHEW'S CRICKET CLUB

Report for AGM August 2026



Overall as a Club it was a Successful Season that we can be proud of with the Huge Improvements that occurred by both the A Grade & D Grade Teams.

The A Grade had Finished Last of 8 Teams the previous Season , with only 3 Wins & this season managed 8 Wins, 10 Losses & a Draw to Finish 4th on the Ladder of 6 ,in a very competitive & strong Competition.

The D Grade was Last of 11 Teams in 2024/25 with only 2 Wins, but this Season with the acquisition of some C Grade players from the previous Season, were much Better in Strength & Numbers, so Finished the Normal Competition in 3rd place from 7 Teams with 9 Wins & a Tie. Unfortunately, they were missing a few elite players in their Semi Final & Lost fairly convincingly to the SPTSCC who won the Final.

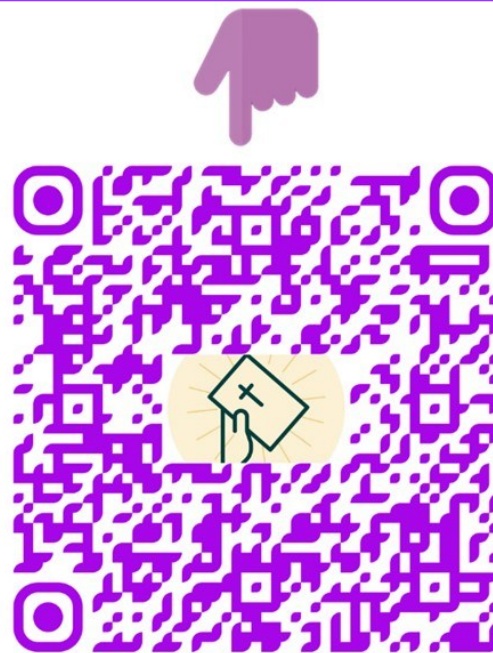
Our C Grade Team was a Basic Unit obtained from the Gen X Warriors cessation as a

Club ,& we Welcomed them Onboard for the season. Unfortunately , after a Fairly Successful Start with 4 Victories (One by Forfeit) in the First 10 Rounds , they were unable to Win another Game due mainly to Lack of Numbers. They finished in 10th position overall from a Ladder of 12 , but were competitive in quite a few Matches.

Regards Paul Chambers – Secretary



We Would
Love You
to
SIGN UP
To Preach or
Lead the liturgy



Please let Jon know that you have signed up if you have not led before
jon@stmatthewsunting.net.au

Op shop

Report, 2026



When the Op Shop was established in May 1993, it was open from 9:30 am to 11:30 am on Tuesdays. Its original mission was to provide low-cost clothing and a friendly welcome to the local community. Today, the Op Shop is open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm, and on the first Saturday of each month from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. While our opening hours have expanded significantly, our mission has remained unchanged.

Pamela Leslie has been the Coordinator since June 2020. During this time, our volunteer team has grown to 30 people. Some are members of St Matthew's Uniting Church, some are friends of existing volunteers, and others first came to us as customers before joining the team. We are also delighted to have two school students volunteering as part of their Duke of Edinburgh's Award program.

The Op Shop offers a wide range of pre-loved clothing, shoes, bric-a-brac, jewellery, books, and toys. Our garage sale includes kitchenware, electrical items, small furniture, sporting equipment, books, and many other treasures. Recently, instead of packing away the garage sale items after the monthly Saturday sale, we have made them available in the lower hall during regular Op Shop trading days. This has reduced the workload for volunteers while giving shoppers extended access to a wider variety of goods. More recently, an art sale held in the upper hall provided an excellent opportunity to display and sell larger works of art.

In addition to raising funds for the church, the Op Shop continues to support a number of community projects, including Parramatta Mission, Philippine Villages Ministry, The Sanctuary (a refuge for women experiencing domestic violence), Ukrainian refugees both in Australia and overseas, and Ronald McDonald House.

Pastoral care has always been an important part of the Op Shop's ministry. There are many opportunities to talk with people who are going through difficult times. Those bringing donations have often experienced the death of a loved one or another family tragedy. We make a point of getting to know our customers, many of whom have been shopping at St Matthew's for up to 30 years. Some of our original volunteers have watched their customers' children grow up.

Through these relationships, we share in both the hardships and the joys of people's lives. Sometimes all it takes is asking a simple question, listening with compassion, and, where appropriate, offering prayer. Several customers have told us that their visit to the Op Shop is the only opportunity they have during the week to have a meaningful conversation with someone.

The volunteers themselves also receive enormous encouragement and support through their service. Over the years we have become a close-knit family, enjoying each other's friendship and working together every week. As a team, we have introduced many positive changes in recent years. We now welcome male volunteers, use a modern cash register and electronic point-of-sale system (with our sincere thanks to Barry Gregory), and continue to look for ways to improve our service.

As we look to the future, we are confident there will be many more changes and opportunities. Whatever lies ahead, we will continue to move forward together, trusting in God's grace as we serve our church and the wider community.

*Pamela Leslie
and Christine Haines*

Bible Study Group

For almost forty years, our Bible Study Group has met regularly for fellowship, learning and mutual support. We may even have the distinction of being the longest-running small group at St Matthew's.

The group was originally formed in response to a challenge from one of our Elders to have one hundred people from St Matthew's actively involved in Bible study groups. From those early beginnings, our group has continued to thrive.

Like the woodsman's axe, the group has changed over the years. As members have moved away or faced the challenges of age and ill health, others have joined us, bringing fresh perspectives and friendships. Through all these changes, the group has remained strong. Two members, Adele and Sandra, have been part of the group since its inception.

Although we are not a large group, we continue to meet faithfully twice each month in the welcoming home of Adele and Warren Arthur.

Over the years, we have explored a wide variety of resources, including DVDs, online courses and traditional Bible study guides. Together we have studied almost every book of the Bible, as well as topics such as prayer, the life of Paul and the women of the Bible.

While Adele Arthur serves as our coordinator, leadership is shared among the group, with members taking turns to lead our studies. This collaborative approach has worked exceptionally well and encourages everyone to participate and contribute.

Our Bible Study Group continues to be a place where faith is strengthened, friendships are nurtured, and we encourage one another in our Christian walk. We thank God for His faithfulness over the past four decades and look forward to continuing this journey together for many years to come.

Report for AGM August 2026

Thanks everyone who is contributing to our Parramatta Mission donations.

The latest delivery was forty-three beanies and three scarves.

We will collecting Beanies & Scarfs until September 2026.



Silence and stillness in every season

Daily readings with John Main



Perhaps the reason too why people so often misunderstand this way of simplicity is because of the patience that is required. We need patiently day after day, to return to this path of selflessness and silence. It may take people months, even years, just to come to a clear point of beginning, that first degree of unconditional commitment which starts the journey. Yet once you have begun you will find that your daily meditation becomes the great integrating power in your life. It will give depth and perspective to everything you are and everything you do. The simple reason for this is that you are beginning to live from the prime source of integrity, of wholeness, the God who alone is holy. You begin to live out of the power of this love of God that is one, that is the creative origin of all that is and that unifies all with itself.

The power in all its immensity and simplicity is present in our hearts in the consciousness of Jesus. The integrating of power of meditation affects every part of our life. Every part is reconciled to the whole. All our life is aligned on Christ, and his presence makes itself felt in every part. The way to this is the way of humility and self-acknowledge, of simplicity and silence, the way of the mantra.

Ephesians 4: 2-3

Be humble always and gentle, and patient too. Be forbearing with one another and charitable. Spare no effort to make fast with bonds of peace the unity which the spirit gives.

Word Made Flesh

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
Saguru 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



QR CODE TO
REGISTER FOR
UPDATES



QR CODE
TO JOIN
ONLINE



Calendar of Events for August 2026

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

31 9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall 7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room	st. matthew's UNITING CHURCH BAULKHAM HILLS growing together				1 9am-12pm Op Shop 9am-12pm Garage Sale lower hall Garage SALE	2 10th Sunday After Pentecost 8am— Worship Includes Communion 9.30am—Worship Includes Communion followed by Morning Tea KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 6.45pm Worship Includes Communion
3 9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall 7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room	4 9am-2pm Op Shop 9.30–11am Christian Meditation Community Room 11.30am Care & Prayer Community room & church	5 9am-2pm Op Shop 10am-12noon In Stitches Upstairs hall	6 9am-2pm Op Shop 10-12pm Coffee & Discovery Guest Artists "LINNET Singers" LINNET CHOIR OF SYDNEY	7 5pm-7pm Fusion Youth Group Board Games BOARD GAME NIGHT	8 No scheduled events	9 11th Sunday After Pentecost 8am— Worship 9am—Worship @ the Willow's 9.30am—Worship followed by Morning Tea KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 6.45pm Worship Community meal
10 9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall 7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room and Church 7.30pm Finance meeting	11 9am-2pm Op Shop 9.30–11am Christian Meditation Community Room	12 9am-2pm Op Shop 10am-12noon Women's Fellowship 7.30pm—Church Executive meeting	13 9am-2pm Op Shop	14 No scheduled events	15 No scheduled events	16 12th Sunday After Pentecost 8am— Worship 9.30am—Worship Followed by morning tea KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 6.45pm—Worship
17 9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall 7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room and Church 7.30pm—Finance Meeting lower hall	18 9am-2pm Op Shop 9.30–11am Christian Meditation Community Room 7pm—SAMT lower hall	19 9am-2pm Op Shop 10am-12noon In Stitches Upstairs hall 10am-12noon Men's Morning Tea McKels Café Bella Vista	20 9am-2pm Op Shop	21 5pm-7pm Fusion Youth Group LEGO MASTERS	22 No scheduled events	23 13th Sunday After Pentecost 8am— Worship Followed by morning tea 9.30am—Worship Followed by morning tea KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 5pm—Shine Offsite 6.45pm—Worship
24 9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall 7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room	25 9am-2pm Op Shop 9.30–11am Christian Meditation community room	26 9am-2pm Op Shop 7.30pm—Church Council Upstairs hall	27 9am-2pm Op Shop	28 No scheduled events	29 No scheduled events	30 AGM 9am Combined Worship KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 Followed by morning tea 10.30—AGM

