



st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together



Weekly Newsletter

16 August 2026

Pentecost 12

Bible Readings

Matthew 15:10-28



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

12th 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 Preschool,
Years K-2 & Years 3-8

6.45pm—Worship

Led by Jon Humphries

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 17 AUGUST

9am-garage sale sorting &
pricing
lower hall

7.30pm—Christian Meditation

TUESDAY 18 AUGUST

9am-2pm—Op Shop

9.30am-11am—Christian
Meditation

community room and church

7pm—SAMT meeting

WEDNESDAY 19 AUGUST

9am-2pm—Op Shop

10am-12pm—In Stitches

Upstairs hall

10am-12pm—Men's Morning tea

Mckel's café Norwest

THURSDAY 20 AUGUST

9am-2pm—Op Shop

FRIDAY 21 AUGUST

5.30-7.30pm—Fusion Youth
"Lego Masters"

SATURDAY 22 AUGUST

No Scheduled events

SUNDAY 23 AUGUST

8am—Worship

9.30am—Worship

Followed by morning tea

KUCA —Preschool

Years K-2 & Years 3-8

5pm—shine
Offsite

6.45pm—Worship



MINISTER

REV JON HUMPHRIES

Email: jon@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

jhumphries@nswact.uca.org.au

PASTORAL CARE WORKER

SARA WIENAND

SUNDAY am, MONDAY, TUESDAY

Email: saraw@nswact.uca.org.au

CHURCH OFFICE SECRETARY

LYNN SAMUEL : lynns@nswact.uca.org.au

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS 8AM-2.30PM

TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY

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Email: office@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

CHURCH COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON

MIKE UNDERWOOD

Email: mikeu@nswact.uca.org.au

CHAIRPERSON OF ELDERS

HELEN OLLEY

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LOCATION:

CNR CHARLES & EDGAR STREETS

BAULKHAM HILLS

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PO BOX 321 BAULKHAM HILLS 2153

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Something to think about

16 August

Pentecost 12

Revised Common Lectionary Readings:

Genesis 45:1-15
Psalm 133
Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32
Matthew 15: 10-28

The Power of Prayer

Prayer is an act of faith. It has benefits which can be shown from some scientific studies and limited or no power for healing in others. This might be a surprising thing for me to draw attention to given my faith and my role and vocation. However, let's not hide from what science might have to say, but engage with it and reflect upon it.

What is most important is not whether or not intercessory prayer changes things, but what prayer is and why we pray. Prayer, at least in the Christian tradition, is about connection with God. It is relational, not transactional or functional. It is more about our relationship with God than what God can do for us and others. Nor is it about what works and doesn't work because we think, say or ask things of God. Sadly, we can forget this. People lose faith because they come to believe that God does not answer their prayers, or they see suffering and sad outcomes despite them praying for healing and believe that God either does not care or is

not there. This is sad, because my experience and faith is founded on the reality that God works for good in all things, but not always for the good we want or the way that we want it.

A broad summary of the research into the efficacy of prayer is that intercessory prayer (praying for another person's physical healing) has no proven supernatural effect on medical outcomes, but personal prayer offers measurable psychological, emotional, and physiological stress-reduction benefits for the person who is praying. Chittaranjan Andrade and Rajiv Radhakrishnan in their paper, *'Prayer and healing: A medical and scientific perspective on randomized controlled trials'* in the Indian Journal of Psychiatry state the following: "For a multitude of reasons, research on the healing effects of prayer is riddled with assumptions, challenges and contradictions that make the subject a scientific and religious minefield. We believe that the research has led nowhere, and that future research, if any, will forever be constrained by the scientific limitations that we outline." Prayer is not simple.

Prayer has been shown to have physiological, neurological, psychological and Social benefits.

<https://www.templeton.org/news/what-can-science-say-about-the-study-of-prayer>

Continued next page

Physiological and Neurological Effects

- **Stress reduction:** Personal prayer acts as a form of self-soothing, lowering cortisol levels, heart rate, and blood pressure similarly to meditation.
- **Brain activation:** Functional neuroimaging shows that prayer activates the prefrontal cortex and areas associated with focus, emotional regulation, and empathy.

Pain and anxiety management: Clinical trials examining short-term spiritual practices or structured prayer note temporary decreases in reported pain scores and acute anxiety.

Psychological and Social Benefits

- **Coping mechanism:** Prayer provides a psychological buffer against trauma, grief, and chronic life stress by instilling a sense of control and calm.

Interpersonal behaviour: Research tracking couples and social groups suggests that praying for others reorients the praying individual toward cooperative goals, leading to less vengeful behaviour and stronger relational bonds.

As Chittaranjan Andrade and Rajiv Radhakrishnan note, "Prayer is a special form of meditation and may therefore convey all the health benefits that have been associated with meditation. Different types of meditation have been shown to result in psychological and biological changes that are actually or potentially associated with improved health. Meditation has been found to produce a clinically significant reduction in resting as well as ambulatory blood pressure, to reduce heart rate, to result in cardiorespiratory synchronization, to alter levels of melatonin and serotonin, to suppress corticostriatal glutamatergic neurotransmission, to boost the immune response, to decrease the levels of reactive oxygen species as measured by ultraweak photon emission, to reduce stress and promote positive mood states,[10] to reduce anxiety and pain and enhance self-esteem and to have a favourable influence on overall and spiritual quality of life in late-stage disease. Interestingly, spiritual meditation has been found to be superior to secular meditation and relaxation in terms of decrease in anxiety and improvement in positive mood, spiritual health, spiritual

experiences and tolerance to pain." <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2802370/#sec1-6>

Intercessory is but one type of prayer. Christian meditation is another type of prayer. There are many other forms which we use in our services and religion and spirituality, including singing of hymns and songs as well as explicit prayers offered by individuals and groups. However, if we simply engage in prayer to get something out of it, and this becomes what our faith is based around, then we miss the purpose of prayer which is to be in relationship with God.

Prayer helps us grow in faith and to trust God – and not just trust based on what God can do for us. It does have measures of wellbeing that can be shown to increase in those who practise prayer. Scientific research links spirituality to better mental health, emotional strength, and physical wellness. Studies show that practices like prayer, meditation, and connecting with nature lower rates of depression, anxiety, and stress while building life satisfaction and social support. Yet are we spiritual for what we get out of it, or is spirituality about being well in relationship to God and others, and any empirical benefits are a secondary plus?

We can ask things of God, and truly God can deny giving us what we ask for as much as God can provide us with it. This is a true relationship. When we know God, and know God in prayer, then we can ask for things, complain about things, be thankful for things, talk about things such as our thoughts and feelings and listen to what God might be saying to us about things or what things we should be doing.

As we come to know God more, then our faith and trust in God grows, broadens and deepens and we also have a better sense of what to pray for and a wider range of ways of being in prayer. Much of this is mystery and that is why it is about faith rather than empirical evidence. What prayer is, what it is about, what it is for, how we go about it and how it works is therefore something to really think about.

*God bless.
Jon*

PEOPLE NEWS



Earl Gray
Don Dixon

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

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

16-22 August

Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger

**HELP
WANTED**



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

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR
9:30 SERVICE

PLEASE CONTACT SARA

SYNOD SPOTLIGHT

Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter

For (7 August 2026) please see link to Synod weekly:

Synod Weekly

St Matthew's

HAPPY HOUR!

At Baulkham Hills

Sports Club

11 Renown Rd, Baulkham Hills

21

AUGUST

5:30 PM

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



st. matthew's
BAULKHAM HILLS
UNITING CHURCH
growing together

AGM

Annual General Meeting

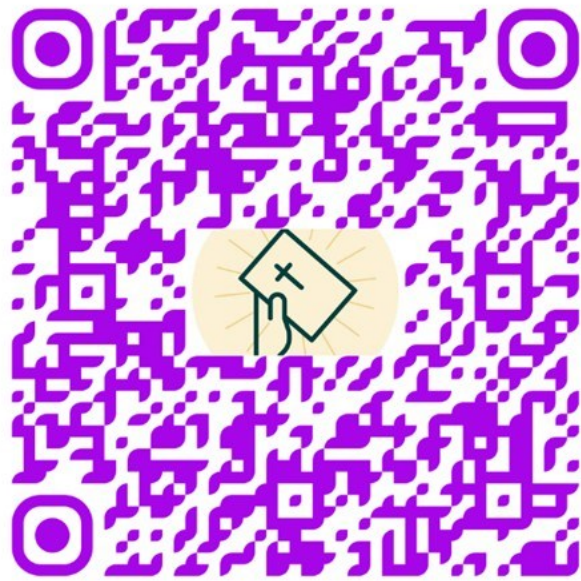
**Sunday
30 August
10.30am**

Following the
9am combined
Worship service

We Would
Love You



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



Thursday 3 September
10am-12pm

Guest Speaker: Ross Abraham



“CONSTRUCTION OF THE
SEA CLIFF BRIDGE
WOLLONGONG”

*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 Social Action Missional Ministry Team

How doing little things makes a big difference.

Topic: What is advocacy?

The National Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia has announced that it is delighted to welcome Hannah Jackson as Director, Advocacy & Justice. Hannah brings to the role almost two decades of experience across advocacy, public policy, communications and government affairs, alongside a lifelong commitment to the Uniting Church. Throughout her career she has sought to build coalitions, shape public debate and amplify the voices of people whose lived experience should inform public policy.

Reflecting on the journey that has brought her to the Assembly, Hannah sees a clear thread running through her career. "For almost 20 years I have worked in roles where I can build coalitions, shape public debate and highlight important social justice issues."

Advocacy as Discipleship

For Hannah, advocacy is about much more than influencing decision-makers. It is about creating opportunities for people of faith to live out the Gospel through action. Hannah stated that "In this new role I am looking forward to creating pathways for people to engage in advocacy as part of their own discipleship journey. I'm excited to see how God can use our collective work as a prophetic witness to bring about important change."

That vision closely reflects the Assembly's understanding of advocacy as an expression of Christian discipleship in listening deeply and speaking faithfully into the issues shaping Australia's future. As Director, Advocacy & Justice she will help strengthen the Assembly's advocacy ministry, work collaboratively across the Church and encourage more members to see advocacy not simply as the work of specialists, but as an expression of faithful discipleship.

The Assembly looks forward to welcoming Hannah and to the wisdom, leadership and vision she will bring as the Church continues to bear witness to God's justice, hope and transforming love in the world.

Hannah will commence in the role in late September.

To read the full media release go to: <https://uniting.church/meet-hannah-jackson/>

Best wishes

Amanda

Social Action Ministry Team (SAMT)

To ask about joining the Social Action Ministry Team at St Matthew's
email Alexander on alexander.lawless7@gmail.com

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 18th August 2026 at 7pm in the Lower Church Hall

To receive a copy of the weekly SAMT emailed newsletter email Amanda at agcm1960@gmail.com

Wesley Mission's urgent call to action:

Wesley Mission is asking people to **email** their local federal members of parliament and NSW senators **today** about their concerns on the current proposed 'watered down' gambling legislation, that is being reviewed in a current Senate inquiry. The inquiry has heard evidence from victims of the damage that the predatory actions of the gambling industry is causing in communities all over Australia.

Wesley have identified the following as **essential** components of the legislation:

- ☑ Ban gambling inducements such as bonus bets, cashback offers and VIP programs
- ☑ Create a clear pathway to a **full** gambling advertising ban
- ☑ Close the streaming and live sport advertising loopholes
- ☑ Replace online opt-out gambling advertising with an opt-in model
- ☑ Strengthen consumer protections and place greater responsibility on gambling companies to prevent harm
- ☑ Make prevention the priority and mandate deposit limits and affordability check to stop harm before it escalates.
- ☑ Create an independent national regulator to ensure consistent regulation and stronger accountability.

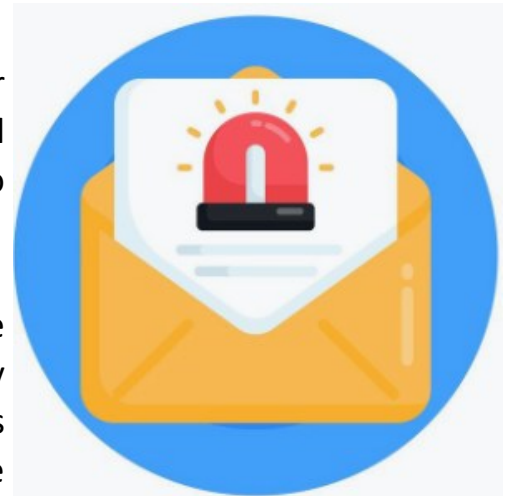
This week, MPs will decide whether to push for stronger gambling reforms. Hearing from their constituents will help them realise that this is a very important issue to voters. Your email could help tip the balance.

Wesley have made it easy for us to do this. If you click the link below and select your local federal member, Wesley will forward your email to them and all 12 NSW senators for you. They have provided a standard email that can be edited and personalised.

<https://wesleymissionadvocacy.good.do/Gutfulofgambling/strengthengamblingreformsnow>

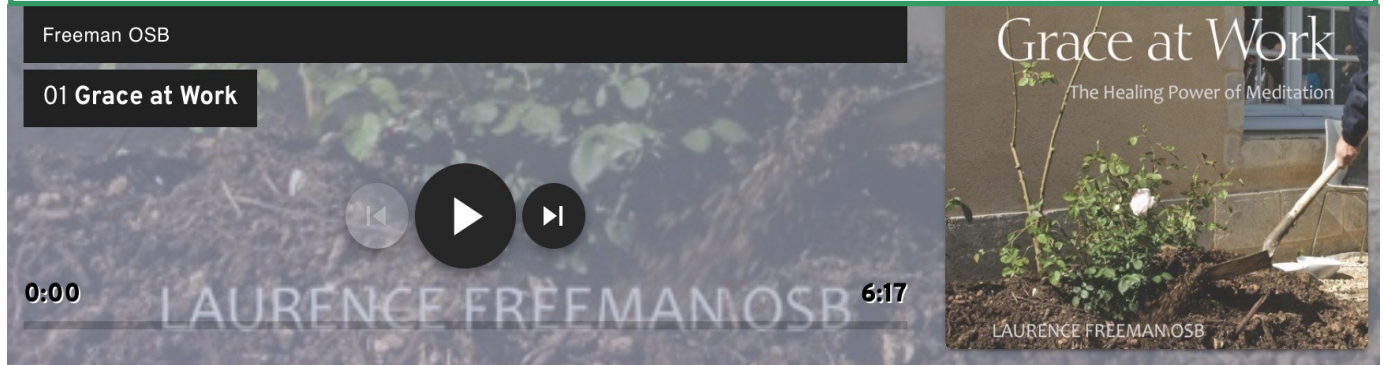
regards

The SAMT Team



Christian Meditation Series .

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



QR CODE TO
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UPDATES



QR CODE
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**



On The Way with Ness and Jon

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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? ⋮

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Facebook & Twitch

