



st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together



Weekly Newsletter

23 August 2026

Pentecost 13

Bible Readings

Matthew 16: 13-20



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



twitch.tv

Livestreaming at

8am, 9.30am and
9am in January each
year

8am—Worship

Led by Sara Wienand
and Dean Drayton

9.30am—Worship

Led by Sara Wienand
and Dean Drayton
Followed by morning tea

KUCA Preschool,
Years K-2 & Years 3-8

5pm—shine Offsite

6.45pm—Worship

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 24 AUGUST

9am—garage sale sorting &
pricing
lower hall

7.30pm—Christian Meditation

TUESDAY 25 AUGUST

9am-2pm—Op Shop

9.30am-11am—Christian
Meditation
community room and church

WEDNESDAY 26 AUGUST

9am-2pm—Op Shop

7.30pm—Church Council meeting

THURSDAY 27 AUGUST

9am-2pm—Op Shop

FRIDAY 28 AUGUST

No Scheduled Activities

SATURDAY 29 AUGUST

No Scheduled events

SUNDAY 30 AUGUST

9am—Combined Worship

Followed by morning tea

10.30am—Church AGM

KUCA—Preschool

Years K-2 & Years 3-8

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

OFFICE : 9686 3003

Email: office@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

CHURCH COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON

MIKE UNDERWOOD

Email: mikeu@nswact.uca.org.au

CHAIRPERSON OF ELDERS

HELEN OLLEY

Email: helen.olley@optusnet.com.au

LOCATION:

CNR CHARLES & EDGAR STREETS
BAULKHAM HILLS

POSTAL ADDRESS:

BAULKHAM HILLS UNITING CHURCH
PO BOX 773 BAULKHAM HILLS 1755

WEB SITE: www.stmatthewsuniting.net.au

Weekly newsletter available on website

FACEBOOK:

@stmatthewsunitingchurchbaulkhamhills

PRE-SCHOOL DIRECTOR 9639 8570

SONALI WANIGESEKERA

PO BOX 321 BAULKHAM HILLS 2153

EMAIL: director@stmatthewsps.net.au

Something to think about

23 August

Pentecost 13

Revised Common Lectionary Readings:

Exodus 1:8-2:10

Psalms 124

Romans 12:1-8

Matthew 16:13-20

Mercy

Last Sunday we explored mercy as a theme and the challenge that it presents to us. Mercy is a continuing work. A lot of the time we might think that it is momentary or situational (that is mercy is needed in a particular situation) and sometimes can be. However, mercy is really also a state of being. It is a continuous work which flows out of our deep understanding of love. Mercy is a faith and grace practice. It is part of our call in living out discipleship. It is rooted deeply in both Old and New Testaments. Michah 6:8 states famously locates mercy with love and as part of the threefold requirement that God asks of us: "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to **love mercy** and to walk humbly with your God."

The primary Greek word for mercy is **ἔλεος** [eleos], which means pity, compassion, or active kindness toward someone in need. It is active compassion, not just a feeling of pity, but a loving and caring response to someone who is hurting or in misery. There is a related

Greek term **οἰκτιρμός** [Oiktirmos] emphasizing tender pity or the emotional feeling of compassion arising from another's grief or distress. The primary words for mercy in Hebrew are **חֶסֶד** [chesed] which is steadfast, loyal, covenant love and **רַחֲמִים** [rachamim] which means deep womb-like compassion.

חֶסֶד [chesed] describes active, faithful, and unconditional love shown through deliberate commitments and merciful actions. It is mercy in action: Going far beyond basic duty to help someone in need or give them unearned grace. It is a deep, enduring love that does not change over time. It keeps promises and stays faithful within a relationship even when the other person fails. Thus, we use it to describe God's love/mercy/loving-kindness towards us.

The Hebrew word **רַחֲמִים** [rachamim] translates to **mercy**, **compassion**, or **tender love**. The word derives from the root **רָחַם** [rechem], meaning womb. It evokes the deep, unconditional, and protective love a mother feels for the child she carries. Even though it refers to a quality or feeling, rachamim is grammatically plural in Hebrew, suggesting that compassion has many layers and expressions. In terms of being the people of God it represents an active moral responsibility to treat vulnerable people with empathy and kindness, balancing out strict justice.

Continued next page

Mercy is a therefore a spiritual practice and is thus also a spiritual discipline. When we meet people in this world in person or by circumstance (that is we hear about their circumstance but may never meet them in person – e.g. victims of war or natural disaster) our first reaction should be like Jesus and to feel compassion. Compassion is not just a feeling. The Greek word which Dean Drayton introduced to us and which I've also talked about is **ἐσπλαγχνίσθη** (*esplanchnisthē*) means to be moved with deep, visceral compassion or pity. Coming from *splanchna* (meaning the inward parts or internal organs like the heart, lungs, and liver), it literally describes feeling an emotional reaction deep down in your guts.

Mercy then is our acting out in love. Sure, prayer is a good first step, but should never be the end of our living discipleship. A few weeks ago we had the story of Jesus feeding 5000+ people. Matthew 14: 14-16 tells it. "When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had **compassion** on them and healed their sick. As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food." Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." The disciples didn't know what to do, but Jesus took the little that they had and made it more than enough to serve the needs of the people.

Mercy calls us to be moved either by compassion or by command, that is "Love your neighbour as yourself," [Matthew 22:39] to act. We may not be able to do everything. We may that the little we have to offer or the little that we can do won't be enough. However, it is enough for Jesus to use. We act in faith and trust in God to do what God will.

Mercy calls us to act for the good of others as part of our love for them as our neighbour and out of our love for God. Yet, the opposite of mercy is to be

merciless. In fact, anything less than mercy is mercy-less. God calls us to be mercy-full, but anything less that offering mercy is merciless. This is a truth that is not meant for us to be received in fear, but as a reminder that at times we will fall short of the glory of God – i.e. being full in mercy – because all fall short of the glory of God. [Romans 3: 23], but at the same time "all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." [Romans 3: 24] Our call in Christ is to truth, way and life. So, when we encounter the truth that we are not living the way we are called to – i.e being merciful – then we accept the truth and look to the way that we are supposed to live and then live it, not out of fear, guilt or shame, but in our love for God who is love and who is mercy.

The challenge of mercy is that it is not just situational or circumstantial. We don't just do an act of mercy through charity etc in response to a situation or circumstance and think that we have fulfilled what God requires. Compassion calls us to engage with such situations. Mercy drives us beyond a token response, however generous it might be, to seek to work for change and justice and equity. All of this is part of our joining God in God's mission to bring the Kingdom of Heaven more fully into being. Our life and witness as a congregation is to seek to bring meaning and purpose to our faith and discipleship through joining in the work of God to bring lasting change to the world. This is the key to mercy. It is lasting change, not simply a short-term action which bring little change.

In the light of the challenge of mercy, we should have much to think about, and it may mean that there needs to be a change that comes to our faith and discipleship. There is always much to ponder with God.

*God bless.
Jon*

PEOPLE NEWS

**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY**



Colin Stoner
Robyn Burn
Lynda Humphries
Elaine King

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

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

23-29 August

Liberia, Sierra, Leone

SYNOD SPOTLIGHT

Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter

For (14 August 2026) please see link to Synod weekly:

Synod Weekly

HELP WANTED



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

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR
9:30 SERVICE

PLEASE CONTACT SARA

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



st. matthew's
**BAULKHAM HILLS
UNITING CHURCH**
growing together

AGM

Annual General Meeting

Sunday
30 August
10.30am

Following the
9am combined
Worship service



*Thursday 3 September
10am-12pm*

Guest Speaker: Joslene Abboud Fortitude Minds

Fortitude Minds is a trauma-informed wellbeing and education initiative founded by domestic and family violence survivor and advocate Joslene Abboud. It provides evidence-informed resources that build emotional regulation, resilience and healthy, respectful relationship skills, while supporting recovery from trauma and DFV.

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

Delay in Volunteer Rosters

**Please note the Rosters for the next quarter
September, October, November, 2026, will be
emailed out on Tuesday 25 August and hard
copies will also be available from the church
foyer on this day.**

Thank you

**The St. Matthew's Uniting Church weekly Newsletter is available to view every
Thursday 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.**

Leading in Services Seminars

11am after morning services

6 September – Leading Liturgy

13 September – Thinking About

Preaching

20 September – Praying With the

People – Leading

Intercessory

Prayer



THE HILLS

FAIR TRADE

market

10am–2pm

ST PAUL'S CASTLE HILL – 421 OLD NORTHERN RD

gifts - clothing - food - toys - homewares - jewellery

Sat 5th
Sep

*Together we walk.
Together we change lives.*

WALK TO BREAK THE SILENCE. WALK FOR CHANGE.

COMMUNITY WALK TO SUPPORT

RUN AGAINST VIOLENCE

In 2026, the Hills Domestic Violence Prevention Network is walking alongside hundreds of teams across Australia in the **Run Against Violence challenge** – inspired by Kirrily Dear's 1,300km run from Broken Hill to Sydney. Every step helps raise awareness, support **NAPCAN** and stand united against **domestic and family violence**.



IN SUPPORT OF



WALK
TOGETHER



STAND AGAINST
DOMESTIC &
FAMILY VIOLENCE



MAKE A
DIFFERENCE

COMMUNITY WALKS – EVERYONE WELCOME!



SATURDAY
5 SEPTEMBER 2026



SUNDAY
13 SEPTEMBER 2026



4:00PM START
Walk takes less
than 1 hour



PEEL ROAD, CRESTWOOD
Adjacent to the
Guides Hall



APPROX. 3KM
Flat, off road
& family friendly



**YOUNG & OLD
ALL WELCOME**
Bring your family,
friends, school,
workplace or group.



**NO REGISTRATION
NO COST
JUST TURN UP**
No obligations – just
your support.



**TOGETHER,
WE CAN MAKE
A DIFFERENCE**
Let's take a stand
for a safer, kinder
community.



**WEAR PURPLE
OR YOUR
RAV MERCHANDISE**
Show your support
and stand together.

**BE PART
OF THE
CHANGE.
SEE YOU
THERE!**

Want to join our team for
the full 19-day challenge?
Or have questions?

✉ hillsagainstdv@gmail.com
✉ admin@fortitudeminds.com.au

Want to start your own team or
learn more about Run Against Violence?

Visit the Broken Hill to Sydney
Team Challenge website:
🌐 www.runagainstvviolence.com

St Matthew's Social Action Missional Ministry Team

How doing little things makes a big difference.

Topic: Act for Peace – Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel

The ongoing, long-term conflict in Palestine has resulted in decades of violence, military occupation and failed peace negotiations. The Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) was created by the World Council of Churches in 2002 in response to a request from 13 Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, calling for a unified, impartial presence in the region. EAPPI brings international monitors to the West Bank to serve as Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs) who witness life under occupation and engage with local Palestinians and Israelis to pursue peace.

EAPPI utilises the internationally recognised strategy of 'protective accompaniment' to uphold the human rights of those affected. At the invitation of local communities, Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs) accompany local communities for three months, in East Jerusalem and the West bank, offering a protective international presence, monitoring and documenting human rights violations and helping ensure local voices are heard beyond their communities.

James* is a volunteer EA who had a three-month deployment with EAPPI and was based in East Jerusalem. He spent his days accompanying community members to safely access schools and homes, monitoring access to sites of worship, listening to people's stories and documenting violations of human rights and international law.

One of the experiences that stayed with James was witnessing the impact of restrictions on children trying to get to school. James recalled seeing a teenage Palestinian boy searched and detained. The boy was held behind a metal barrier while armed soldiers went through his bag. After finding a phone, they called his mother, and both mother and child were taken away by Israel Police and Border Police. According to James, it's likely they were arrested simply for having Palestinian school materials. "It was just outrageous," says James, reflecting on the experience of seeing an innocent child treated this way.

James also witnessed the aftermath of a home demolition by the Israeli Civil Administration, where a four-storey building, home to around 90 people, had been destroyed. The family had been given only seven minutes to leave before their home was demolished. "There were people there who were supposed to be helping them move their stuff out," James recalled. "And as you can appreciate, there wasn't a lot of support being provided for the Palestinians who were harassed and beaten." According to Human Rights Watch around 587 Palestinians have been displaced by house demolitions, in East Jerusalem, since 7th October 2023.

*Name changed to protect privacy

Link to read the full article on page 6 of the Act for Peace magazine Winter 2026 edition <https://actforpeace.org.au/app/uploads/2026/07/AfP-link-magazines-202607-AFP117-LINK-Winter26-Newsletter-FA-WEB-551.pdf>

Blessings, Amanda

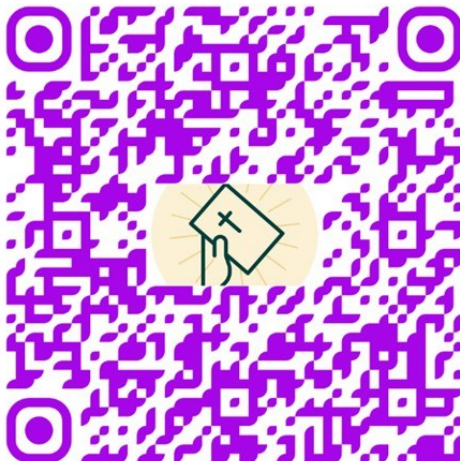
Social Action Ministry Team (SAMT)

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 27th October 2026 at 7pm in the Lower Church Hall. To receive a copy of the weekly SAMT News email Amanda at agcm1960@gmail.com

We Would Love You to SIGN UP



To Preach or Lead the liturgy



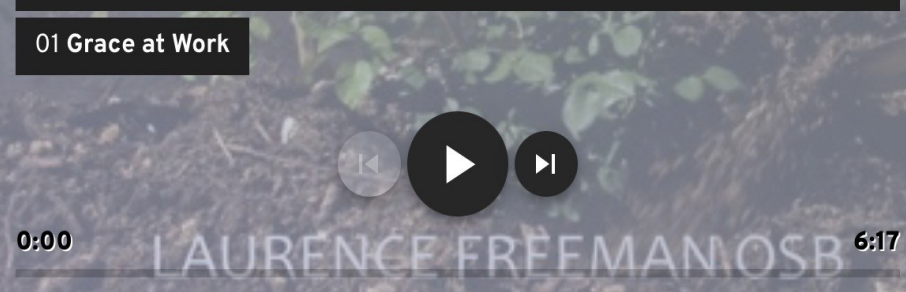
Please let Jon know that you have signed up if you have not led before
jon@stmatthewsunting.net.au

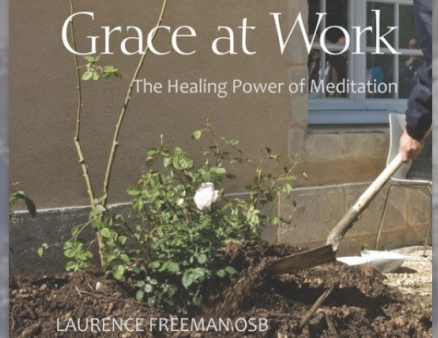
Christian Meditation Series .

Grace at Work - the healing power of meditation/ contemplation

Freeman OSB

01 Grace at Work





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
REGISTER FOR
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

@OnTheWaywithNessandJon • 7 subscribers • 10 videos

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

 Subscribed 



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

