



st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together



Weekly Newsletter

13 September 2026

Pentecost 16

Bible Readings

Romans 14: 1-12
Matthew 18: 21-35



Response after Bible Readings

Leader: In this we hear the word of God

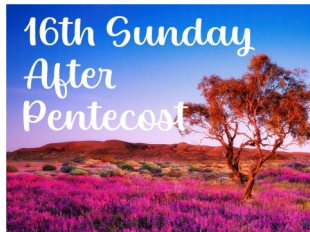
Response: Thanks be to God who speaks to us as spirit.

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

16th Sunday
After
Pentecost



twitch.tv

Livestreaming at

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

8am—Worship

Led by Jon Humphries
and Thomas Smith

9.30am—Worship

Led by KUCA
and Jon Humphries

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

Followed by morning tea

6.45pm—Worship

Community Meal

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 14 SEPTEMBER

9am—garage sale sorting & pricing
lower hall

7.30pm—Christian Meditation

TUESDAY 15 SEPTEMBER

9am-2pm—Op Shop

9.30am-11am—Christian
Meditation

community room and church

WEDNESDAY 16 SEPTEMBER

9am-2pm—Op Shop

10am-12pm—In Stitches
upstairs hall

10am-12pm—Men's morning tea
Mickel's café Norwest

7.30—Elders meeting

THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER

9am-2pm—Op Shop

2.15pm—Op Shop volunteers
meeting upstairs hall

FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER

5.30-7.30pm—Fusion Youth
"Mini Golf" Swing city

SATURDAY 19 SEPTEMBER

No Scheduled Activities

SUNDAY 20 SEPTEMBER

8am—Worship

9.30am—Worship
Followed by morning tea

KUCA—Preschool

Years K-2 & Years 3-8

11am—Leading in Services
Seminars

Praying with people—leading
intercessory prayer

5pm—Shine

Set up from 4pm

6.45pm—Worship



MINISTER

REV JON HUMPHRIES

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PASTORAL CARE WORKER

SARA WIENAND

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TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY

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Something to think about 13 September *Pentecost 16*

Revised Common Lectionary Readings:

Exodus 14:19-31

Psalms 114

Romans 14:1-12

Matthew 18:21-35

Not Every Sin Can Be Forgiven

Not every sin can be forgiven. This might sound a bit heretical, and perhaps it is. Yet, I think there is good theological grounds for this and examples in real Church life where it is held to be so. God forgives us our sin, but the sin itself is not forgiven, at least in essence. By this I mean that God forgives people for the sin, but where our sin has to do with great wrongdoing, then the nature of that wrongdoing is not able to ever be let go. God may not hold us or our sin against us, but such sins as murder, child abuse, sexual assault etc are not forgivable. For such sin we are held to account, even as we are offered forgiveness. A person may find forgiveness after such grievous sin, but the sin itself is never tolerable or forgivable for there is no circumstance where it fits in the way of God.

The Biblical Greek word for 'forgive' is ἀφίημι / aphīēmi. This verb means "to send away," "to let go," "to release," or "to cancel a debt". When used regarding sins, it means letting go of the fault or

freeing someone from the obligation of a moral debt. With serious sin like sexual assault, I don't think it is as straightforward as that sounds.

In the Uniting Church 'persons of concern' may find welcome in a congregation, but this welcome comes with conditions. A person of concern refers to an individual who may pose a risk of harm to children, young people, or vulnerable adults, and for whom the church implements a formal Safety Agreement to manage their engagement with congregations. They may be forgiven by God. The victim/s may in their own time and own way find themselves able to forgive. However, the sin and offence is unforgivable and, whilst not held against them, they are held to account for it so that people are safe and they are themselves kept safe from re-offending. The sinner is forgiven, but the sin itself is not, and we formally remember it in order to keep people safe.

There is a well-known film from the 1990's called, 'Dead Man Walking' which starred Sean Penn and Susan Sarandon as Sister Helen Prejean, which is based on 1993 best-selling non-fiction memoir by Sister Helen Prejean about her work as a spiritual advisor to death row inmates. There was also a lesser-known book by Debbie Morris, called 'Forgiving the Dead Man Walking.' Debbie and her boyfriend Mark Brewster were abducted, she was raped and abused. For over 30 hours. Mark was beaten and tortured and left for dead in the woods. He did survive, but with permanent disabilities. There was a film based on Debbie and Mark's and other people's stories.

Continued next page

Debbie's book details the agonizing years of PTSD, broken relationships, fear, and emotional fallout that followed being shunned by her community, and having to go through the trial as well as the memories of what was done to her. She writes about how legal justice and even the execution of the perpetrator did not automatically heal her inner wounds. She grappled with anger toward her attackers, God, and even Sister Helen Prejean's for her focus on ministering to Robert Lee Willie, her attacker, when he was on death row. Ultimately, she writes about her profound spiritual journey toward healing, choosing to transition from viewing herself as a permanent victim to a survivor through her faith and the power of forgiveness.

Debbie Morris's story, like others who have found a way to forgive those who perpetrated horror and suffering on them is about forgiveness, but in this way forgiveness is not about the offender. It is not so much about forgiving the perpetrator their sin, and certainly not forgiving the sin, but finding forgiveness which helps the survivor let go of anger or need for revenge or whatever traps them in the event/s of their suffering so that they can find their way into healing and new life. Forgiveness might involve the perpetrator in name, but is profoundly about the survivor. The sin of the perpetrator is not forgiven, but forgiveness is enacted so that the survivor can let go of holding tightly to the event of the past, so that they might embrace healing and new life in the present and future.

Jesus died to forgive us of our sins. We are called to forgive our brothers and sisters as we've been forgiven. However,

victims who are traumatised at the hand of the sins of others should never be told that they must forgive or need to forgive the perpetrator/s of their suffering. Some sins are not forgivable, and even if theologically they are, it is God who will work through compassion and healing who might help victims in their own time and own way to find forgiveness. It is not our place to tell people in their suffering what to do. It also rarely is effective, even if we think that it should be. People who have been traumatised need our love and compassion. God will lead them to what they need and help them do what they need to do to find wholeness.

So, as important as forgiveness is, it is also complex. Forgiveness has to do with that which is profoundly spiritually, emotionally and psychologically impactful, especially in the case of grievous sin. Forgiveness for victim/survivors may be an important part of their journey, but it will happen in God's time and with God's leading. It is not for us to try to impose a simple understanding of forgiveness into complex situations. Not every sin can be forgiven. God is at work in all things for good and seeks to redeem our suffering, but often in mysterious and complex ways. God even works to redeem the sinner, even those who commit heinous crimes against others, but the sin is not what is forgiven. Not every sin can be forgiven, even though grace and forgiveness are an essential part of God's love for all people including our enemies and the perpetrators of evil. We need to be careful, being compassionate and upholding justice for victim/survivors, who need to be our first priority, even as we seek to offer grace and love to those who have greatly fallen short of the way of God. The fact that forgiveness is complex and complicated is something to think deeply about.

God bless.

Jon

PEOPLE NEWS



Noni Medcalf
Janet Goodman

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

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

13 —19 September

Ghana, Nigeria

SYNOD SPOTLIGHT

Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter

**For (4 September 2026) please see link to
Synod weekly:**

[Reflecting on Developing Healthy Team Workshop](#)

Leading in Services Seminars

11am after morning services

13 September – Thinking About
Preaching

20 September – Praying With the
People – Leading
Intercessory
Prayer

27 September – Leading Liturgy

NEW TIME

Season of Creation – Week 2: Prayer Card Writing

This week, for the Uniting Climate month of action for the Season of Creation, we are inviting people to write a short prayer either during or after church services. The prayer cards will be provided at the start of the service. They will be sent to the Hon Chris Bowen MP Minister for Climate Change & Energy. The prayer cards will also be scanned and shared with Hon Alex Hawke MP Member for Mitchell.

Australia will play an important role in the United Nations climate talks, working in partnership with Pacific nations to host the Pre-COP meeting. Mr Bowen will be the President of Negotiations at the Pre-COP31 meeting in Tuvalu and Fiji in October and at COP31 in Türkiye in November. We want to pray for the Minister for Climate Change and Energy, and for all those carrying responsibility in this year's talks.

Examples of what you could put in your prayer are:

- for wisdom and courage for our leaders,
- for Pacific communities dealing with the dire effects of climate change
- for workers and communities experiencing climate and economic changes
- for healing for creation

We will be asking willing participants to gather for a photograph holding up their cards, but this is completely voluntary. These photos will be forwarded to the UCAN office to use in their promotions and will also give UCAN feedback from this activity.

UCAN have monthly online meetings called the 'Online Community of Practice' (OCoP) which focuses on climate change advocacy and includes a short bible study. It is an Australia wide group. The OCoP meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at 7:30pm. If you would like to attend these online meetings email: advocacy@uniting.org for the details of the zoom.

To know more about the Uniting Climate Action Network, you can ask Jon or any of the SAMT team members or contact UCAN via their website:

<https://www.unitingclimate.org/take-action/uniting-climate-action-network/>

Leading in Services Seminars

7.30pm Wednesday Nights in October

14 October – Leading Liturgy

21 October – Thinking About
Preaching

28 October – Praying With the
People – Leading
Intercessory
Prayer



ZOOM
Link
QR Code

In October Jon is offering some short seminars to help people who lead in services or are interested in thinking about leading in Church services - particularly in the areas of leading liturgy, preaching and prayers of intercession.

The seminars are about Living Liturgy: Leading in Services and will run on Wednesday nights in October at 7.30pm (Australian Eastern Standard Time AEST) and will cover:

- Leading Liturgy
- Thinking About Preaching
- Praying with People: Leading Intercessory Prayer

They will be about 45-60min long. They are not designed to be full courses, but intro and refresher seminars - of course heavily weighted with his own learning and ecclesial/theological bias, drawing heavily on the Uniting Church in Australia's ethos as laid down in the Basis of Union.

Zoom Link: <https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/96316299798...>

Meeting ID: 963 1629 9798

Passcode: 290565

**Combined
Morning tea
@9am**

**Sunday
27
September**

Please let Sara know if you can
bring something to share



**JOIN OUR
NEW
CARING
MINISTRY
TEAM**

Help us care for our
community and share God's
love through practical
support, kindness and prayer.

Please speak to Sara
if you are interested



**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.

*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



Parramatta Nepean Presbytery
The Uniting Church in Australia NSW & ACT Synod

Closure Service & Celebration

Join us as we celebrate nearly 50 years of Parramatta Nepean Presbytery, give thanks for our shared story, and look ahead together with hope.



Sat 19 Sept 2026 | 10am

**Centre for Ministry
16 Masons Drive, North Parramatta**

4:23 pm Tue 25 Aug

67%

Meditatio Talks Series

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[TRANSCRIPT](#)

Meditatio Talks Series 2009 C - Release date 1 September 2009

In Times of Anxiety by John Main OSB

06 The Path to Truth

meditation as practised by the early Desert monks and
from all walks
of economic crisis. In Fr John's words:
of many men and women are discovering that their spirit
is stifled. Meditation is the way of making contact with our
own spirit, and in that contact finding everything in our
experience coming into harmony, judged and aligned on
God. The stresses, the challenges, all remain, but they are
powerless to defeat us. We learn in our stillness in God that
in him we have all things that are necessary."

0:00

In Times of Anxiety
JOHN MAIN OSB
John Main OSB (1926-1982) a Benedictine monk of Ealing Abbey, London, rediscovered the Christian tradition of meditation as practised by the early Desert monks and taught it as a spiritual discipline for people from all walks of life. This selection of talks addresses the human predicament in a time of economic crisis. In Fr John's words: "So many men and women are discovering that their spirit is stifled. Meditation is the way of making contact with our own spirit, and in that contact finding everything in our experience coming into harmony, judged and aligned on God. The stresses, the challenges, all remain, but they are powerless to defeat us. We learn in our stillness in God that in him we have all things that are necessary."

In Times of Anxiety by John Main OSB
Meditatio Talks Series 2009 C Jul-Sep

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 tradition as passed on through the teaching of John Main OSB, please [contribute here](#).

01 Spiritual Growth

02 Making Contact with our ow...

03 In Reverence in our Hearts

04 Commitment to Reality

05 Peace

06 The Path to Truth

2026 SEASON OF CREATION

September, marks the beginning of [the 2026 Season of Creation](#), as Christians around the world gather in prayer, reflection and action to celebrate God's gift of creation and renew their commitment to care for our common home.

To mark the beginning of the season, Uniting Church President Rev Charissa Suli has released a video message inviting the Church to respond with faith, justice and hope.

[President's Season of Creation message – Uniting Church Australia](#)

This year's Season of Creation is centred on the theme 'Living Water', inspired by Ezekiel 47:9 and 12. In the prophet's vision, a river flows from God's sanctuary, bringing healing, restoration and new life wherever it goes.

For Rev Suli, this vision speaks powerfully into a world experiencing environmental degradation, climate change and displacement.

"Amid devastation and displacement, Ezekiel sees a river flowing from the presence of God, bringing healing, renewal, and life," Rev Suli says.

She also invited the Church to hold in prayer communities affected by environmental disasters, including the people of Nepal and Tibet following devastating floods, as well as communities across Asia, the Pacific and around the world living with the realities of a changing climate.

The season's symbol, 'Immersion in Living Water', encourages Christians to step into God's life-giving river and depend fully on God's grace. As recipients of this living water, Christians are called to become channels of hope and renewal, allowing God's love to flow through them into the world.

Rev Suli highlighted the particular responsibility of the Uniting Church in Australia, where care for creation is closely connected with the Church's commitment to First Nations justice.

"Here in Australia, our response begins on country," she says. "Our covenant with Congress reminds us that justice for creation and justice for First Nations people are inseparable."

With Australia holding the COP31 presidency, Rev Suli also reflected on the importance of listening to Pacific neighbours and advocating for climate justice. She will journey with Pacific churches in Tuvalu and Fiji in the lead-up to COP31, listening to their leadership and calls for climate justice.

Across the Uniting Church, work is already underway through the Assembly, synods, agencies, congregations and communities to strengthen commitments to care for creation, including action towards net zero emissions and solidarity with vulnerable communities.

Season of Creation runs from 1 September to 4 October, incorporating the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, the Feast of Creation and the Feast of St Francis of Assisi.

Rev Suli invites the Church to use this season to "pray, learn, act, and advocate", trusting that the living water of Christ will renew us and flow through us, bringing healing and hope to all creation.

Season of Creation 2026 Prayer



LIVING WATER

Holy God, whose Spirit hovered over the waters at the beginning, we gather as part of your community of all creation, thirsty for your grace. We give thanks for the gift of water, the veins of our common home, that sustains the cedar and the whale, the pasture and the city. We are grateful for the local waters that nourish our homelands and our fellow creatures. We give thanks that in your well-watered garden, every drop is a sacred testament to your love.

Yet, we confess that we have treated this gift as a mere commodity. We have choked the seas with our waste and watched the warming tides rise in judgment.

We lament the cracked earth of the drought-stricken and the salty tears of the climate refugee. Melt our frozen hearts, O God, and let the waters of repentance flow.

Lord of all Life, you promised that wherever the river flows, everything shall live.

Stir in us a calling to care for the waters — to protect the watershed, defend the rights of water, and honor the dignity of the thirsty. May your Word be a spring within us, gushing forth for the healing of the nations.

May God our Father who brought water from the rock sustain us in the desert. May Christ our Lord who is Living Water refresh us for the work of restoration. And may the Holy Spirit carry us on currents of grace until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Amen.

DISCLAIMER: This version of the Season of Creation Prayer Card is a non-official translation by Uniting Church in Australia. For any further questions or concerns regarding translations, please contact [Insert contact information of the organization or person that translated]. The Season of Creation Steering Committee is not responsible for issues with translation.

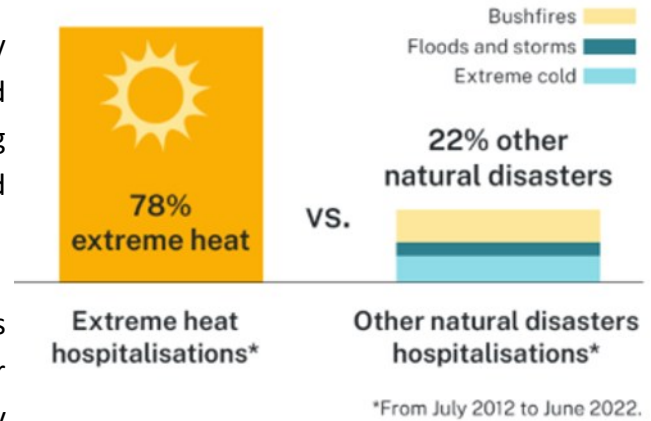
St Matthew's Social Action Missional Ministry Team

How doing little things makes a big difference.

Topic: Topic: Climate Change - Preparing for Heat Stress Next Summer

The NSW Net Zero Commission's second Spotlight Report has analysis into the impact of extreme heat and humidity in NSW.

The report has found that extreme heat and humidity events will become more frequent, intense and disruptive to daily life. Heat stress will place increasing pressure on health systems, workplaces, housing and infrastructure across the state.



The urban heat island effect, where urban areas become significantly hotter than surrounding rural or coastal areas, mean some parts of Sydney regularly record temperatures 10-17°C higher than others. Older people living alone, infants, people with chronic illness, residents in poorly designed government housing, outdoor workers, factory workers and north-west inland areas face higher exposure to heat stress. These vulnerabilities are shaped by urban form, housing quality and workplace environments, meaning with the right policy settings, a significant proportion of heat related illnesses and deaths could be prevented.

What we can do in our own homes to prepare for the increase heat events:

Identify the coolest area in your home (important especially if there is an interruption to the electricity supply that stops air conditioning working). This will usually be the bathroom or an area with tiled floors.

Ensure that you have a good supply of food and medications.

As with any nature disaster planning, have a battery operated radio handy to follow any important emergency alerts.

Check the NSW Ambulance website for heat warnings so you can plan ahead <https://www.ambulance.nsw.gov.au/in-the-community/warnings>

Link to the Net Zero Commission Report: <https://www.netzerocommission.nsw.gov.au/publications/heat-stress-spotlight-report>

Link to the Net Zero Education Sheet:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vPaeYQqrOmHmMBzDXZQ-uOBGiT3dYkka/view?usp=drive_link

Blessings,

Alexander

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

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

 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

