



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



## Weekly Newsletter

20 September 2026

Pentecost 16

### Bible Readings

**Jonah 4: 1-10**  
**Matthew 20:1-16**

#### Response after Bible Readings

**Leader:** *In this we hear the word of God*

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



twitch.tv

**Livestreaming at**

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

### 8am—Worship

Led by Jon Humphries  
and Sara Wienand

### 9.30am—Worship

Led by Jon Humphries  
and Sara Wienand

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

*Followed by morning tea*

### 5pm—Shine

Set up from 4pm

### 6.45pm—Worship

Led by Nicola Lawless  
And Alexander Lawless

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**

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

#### MONDAY 21 SEPTEMBER

**9am-garage sale sorting & pricing**  
lower hall

**7.30pm—Christian Meditation**

#### TUESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER

**9am-2pm—Op Shop**

**9.30am-11am—Christian  
Meditation**

community room and church

#### WEDNESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER

**9am-2pm—Op Shop**

#### THURSDAY 24 SEPTEMBER

**9am-2pm—Op Shop**

#### FRIDAY 25 SEPTEMBER

**No Scheduled Activities**

#### SATURDAY 26 SEPTEMBER

**No Scheduled Activities**

## SUNDAY 27 SEPTEMBER

**8am—Worship**

**9am—Combined morning tea**

**9.30am—Worship**  
KUCA in Recess for School  
holidays

**11am—Leading in Services  
Seminars**

*Todays session  
Leading Liturgy*

**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 20 September *Pentecost 17*

## Revised Common Lectionary Readings:

Exodus 16:2-15  
Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45  
Philippians 1:21-30  
Matthew 20:1-16

## Can I Be Forgiven?

Last newsletter I controversially stated, “Not every sin can be forgiven.” I wish to offer an apology if that led you or others to think that God doesn’t forgive sins or sin. I affirm the Christian doctrine of the forgiveness of sin and mean what I say when I state each week when I say in the affirmation of forgiveness that, “If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Know then that your sin is forgiven.” I can see that may have I crossed a line and am sorry in sharing thoughts which maybe should have just been my own reflection. Yet, I felt led to share what I shared, but maybe could have explained things better.

God forgives sin. That is the Christian understanding from Scripture, and I affirm it and uphold it. What I was trying to look at was the complexity of how that works. I was seeking to be a little provocative in order to get us to question the simplicity in which we often understand this as Christians. I want to question such things as is sin the act or the intention? What does forgiveness mean in practical terms, and given the more serious the sin, the harder it is for us as humans to forgive it, how do we forgive sin and how do

we communicate the need for forgiveness to victims who may be traumatised and may be in no mental or spiritual space to forgive sin? How does Christian doctrine and dogma get translated into pastoral reality?

As I shared last week, 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. I believe that God releases us from our sin. We are set free from the law of sin and death. Yet, with serious sin like traumatic abuse or sexual assault, I don't think that forgiveness is as straightforward as that sounds when we try to live it and put it into practice. It is not easy to let go of deep wrongdoing, even if that might set us spiritually and emotionally free as victims.

The key point I was trying to make was that forgiveness is complicated and religion oversimplifies it too often. Grace and mercy are always present and available in God. God is at work to redeem all people, even those who commit the greatest of evils. The reading in the Gospel in Matthew last week has the parable of the Unforgiving Servant where forgiveness is given for one thing but then effectively taken away when he fails to be forgiving as he was forgiven. Mark 3:28-29 and Matthew 12:31-32 speak about 'unforgivable sin.' Jesus explains clearly, “Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven.” So, some sin cannot be forgiven, and I was trying to explore this. I hope that I can be forgiven.

Continued next page

The story of Danny Abdullah's forgiveness of Samuel Davidson who killed three of his children and a niece is a powerful example. Samuel is forgiven. His sin is forgiven by God and by Danny. However, he holds to the sin he committed, even though he accepts forgiveness and faith. Danny has forgiven Samuel, but the truth is that Samuel did something terrible and children are dead. He is in prison for that. Danny talks about Samuel being a part of his life, whether he wants it or not. Samuel's actions in driving drunk killed four children. That is not right and not to be let go of in terms of it being wrong. However, instead of holding onto bitterness, rage and anger, Danny lent into forgiveness and in a remarkable act of grace has actually established a relationship with Samuel. Due to the events of the past is in connection through the sin of Samuel, but through forgiveness the sin is let to be in the past and they seek to build a better present and future. I should make very clear, as inspiring and real as this is, that this is not what God requires all people, at least not in this specific way.

Here's a link if you are not familiar with the story or need a refresher. <https://youtu.be/gzc9VAKfCbl?si=bMV3U8CtulRsMXcO>

In the book 'The Shack' by William Paul Young, the main character Mack after a long and difficult and painful journey of healing and redemption is led by God to a next step which is to begin to forgive the man who abducted his daughter and killed her. This doesn't happen until towards the end of the book/movie. In the movie version God says, "Forgiveness doesn't establish a relationship [with the perpetrator]. In the novel God says, "Forgiveness is not about forgetting, Mack. It is about letting go of another person's throat." — The Shack (p. 225) God doesn't expect victims to be in an active relationship with the perpetrators of their suffering. Too often women in domestic violence situations are told by well-meaning Christian people that they need to forgive those who abused or assaulted them. This kind of thinking causes ongoing trauma, and can be spiritually abusive. It can even place a stumbling block for such women in accessing the grace and

help of God.

So yes, God forgives us our sins. That's the language we use. But it is good to note that God forgives us. We are forgiven. The sin is forgiven, in that it is let to be in the past. Yet, the sin is still sin. Evil is still evil, even when perpetrators are redeemed and offered forgiveness. The sin I believe is let go of being held against us, but it is still held in truth. We get to leave it in the past and move into the future with hope.

As a sinner, I hold onto forgiveness and I cling to grace. Yet, I try to carry my sin. I don't hold to it or hold on to it. It does not define me. God's grace and forgiveness, and God's love tells me who I am, who I can be and who I should be. However, even as I have let go of my sin, I do carry it. I have it packed at the back of my mind so as to not forget its lamentable part in my life. I am forgiven. I don't wear the guilt and shame, but it is in my past, not as something for me to keep bringing to the present, but as a continuing reality in my story to motivate me in repentance and redemption.

So, yes. I am forgiven. God forgives my sin. God forgives us all our sin. The Scriptures state that Jesus died for our sin. Yet, in some way my sin remains, not stuck to me, but as part of my story in the past just as it is for those who are the victim of my sin. In this way I can let go of it and I can move on from it and leave it behind. I am forgiven my sin. As Paul writes, we are set apart from sin and death and set free in the "Law of the Spirit of Life. [Romans 8:2]

Can, you forgive me my sin? If I have offended, upset, confused or taught the wrong thing; if I have failed in my duty as an ordained Minister of the Word, and failed in my pastoral duty by suggesting something that is theologically incorrect, can you forgive me? Can I be forgiven? I believe that God knows me and loves me. I believe God redeems my sin as God works to redeem me. So, I believe that I can be forgiven. What do you think of this? What questions do you have about forgiveness of sin, even though we might all affirm that God forgives us our sin. That is something to think about.

*God bless.*

*Jon*

PEOPLE NEWS

HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY



Enid Clifton  
Doug Mathewson

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

## Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

20 —26 September

*Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay*

## SYNOD SPOTLIGHT

weekly

Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter

**For ( 11 September 2026) please see link to  
Synod weekly:**

[Uniting Church and PNG leaders meet on climate change](#)

## Leading in Services Seminars

11am after morning services

13 September – Thinking About  
Preaching

20 September – Praying With the  
People – Leading  
Intercessory  
Prayer

**NEW TIME**

27 September – Leading Liturgy

## **Week 3: The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty & Multifaith Letter Signatures**

Fossil fuels have only recently appeared explicitly on the agenda of multilateral climate negotiations. The Paris Agreement and subsequent international agreements do not address the international phase out of the use of the fossil fuels that are driving the heating of our atmosphere.

Managing the transition away from fossil fuels while expanding alternative sources of power, safely decommissioning existing infrastructure, and ensuring workers and communities are supported, requires unprecedented levels of international cooperation.

This week during church services, you will have the opportunity to sign the multifaith letter that is a call to action for our country to sign the international Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. The signed letters will be sent to the Uniting Climate Action Network for the purposes of advocating to all federal Members of Parliament.

### **The Multi-Faith Call for a Fossil Fuel Treaty states that:**

‘We stand united as people from many faiths and spiritual paths. The Earth is given in sacred trust for all living things - not as a commodity but as a gift to be honoured. Our traditions speak clearly that we have a sacred duty to defend the integrity of creation, and to protect human rights into coming centuries.

Our sacred texts call us to protect the Earth and all communities who are already suffering the effects of climate change. And yet, despite the clarity of science, we are failing our responsibility. Many governments, and vast financial interests, push back on the Paris Agreement’s goal of a 1.5°C maximum by 2050, paying no heed to the stream of climate calamities that we witness daily. They place profit above life, stealing from our children and coming generations.

While the cost of action will be expensive, the cost of inaction will be astronomical on life and property over coming centuries. It is short-sighted and foolhardy to enrich the few at the expense of the many.

The transition towards renewable energy is a matter of survival. To continue expanding fossil fuels is to act without integrity. We therefore call on every government to act with courage equal to the crisis and to negotiate a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty that will:

- Immediately stop approvals of new fossil fuel projects
- Rapidly phase out existing fossil fuel production, ensuring impacted workers are treated with dignity
- Finance a global just transition to safe and affordable renewable energy for all people
- We plead with the leaders of every nation: Choose courage over complacency, protect our common home and act with urgency.’

# 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



**Thursday 1 October**  
**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\*\*\*\*\*

## **Smart debit regular giving**

### **Do your own direct debit direct to St Matthew's**

1. Login to your online banking
2. Create a schedule to 'Pay Anyone' from your acct
3. Create St Matthew's as a payee  
BSB 634-634  
Acc 1000 25924
4. Use reference :  
Offering 8.00 or 9.30 or 6.45
5. Set the amount and frequency as you wish – weekly/monthly
6. Done!

- ✓ Similar to Pushpay but uses your savings accounts not credit card
- ✓ More flexible than a direct debit form lodged at a branch
- ✓ Start/vary/stop as you choose
- ✓ No fees
- ✓ Regular recurring gifts allows St Matthew's to budget more accurately

**Thankyou to all St Matthew's regular  
givers whatever method – cash,  
envelopes, direct debit and Pushpay!**

**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](http://www.stmatthewsuniting.net.au)**

**Click on the metal dove image / publications or find in recent posts.**



**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**

0:00 13:42

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](#).



**Meditatio**  
TALKS SERIES 2009 C - JUL - SEP

### 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."



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

Building foundations for children's futures

# Tell us your story

## Do you care for a child or young person under the age of 25?

We want to hear about the hopes you have for these children and the steps you take to prepare them for the future.

This will form a part of the next Uniting Families Report, that seeks to better understand the different experiences of families across Australia.

You're invited to take part in a one-hour online interview with us. You will receive a \$50 voucher to thank you for your time.

The study is being run by the University of NSW (UNSW) and Uniting. It has ethics approval from UNSW (IRECS11677).

What you tell us will be private. We will not use your name or identify you in any reports about the research.

Taking part is your choice. Choosing whether or not to do an interview will not affect your relationship with Uniting or UNSW.

If you're interested, please contact us. We can tell you more about the research and answer your questions so you can decide if you'd like to take part.

Please scan the QR code and complete the short form, or contact:



**Anna Jones**  
Senior Research Officer, UNSW  
[families.report@unsw.edu.au](mailto:families.report@unsw.edu.au)  
02 9348 3571



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25-IMPACT-141.2\$EP26

# *St Matthew's Social Action Missional Ministry Team*

How doing little things makes a big difference.

## **Topic: Climate Action – The Fossil Fuel Treaty Petition**

### *What is the Fossil Fuel Treaty Initiative?*

The Fossil Fuel Treaty Initiative is an alliance of nation states and a global network of civil society organisations advocating for a new binding international legal instrument to drive a fast and fair global transition away from oil, gas and coal. The call for a treaty was first endorsed by the Pacific Island nations of Vanuatu and Tuvalu and has the support of 17 national governments, the World Health Organization, the European Parliament, Nobel laureates, academics and researchers.

This treaty would complement the Paris Agreement by tackling the supply side of the climate crisis and fill a critical gap. Today's climate agreements focus on emissions but do not regulate fossil fuel production, even though extraction is the root cause of the current climate crisis. Instead, many global leaders continue to push for increased fossil fuel production which has put global warming on course to permanently exceed the target of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

### *The proposed Fossil Fuel Treaty is centred around three pillars:*

1. **Just Transition:** Accelerate a fair shift to diversified, accessible, renewable energy, where those most environmentally and economically vulnerable will be considered and assisted.
2. **Non-Proliferation:** Create the conditions to ensure the end of the expansion of oil, gas and coal.
3. **Equitable Phase-Out:** Wind down existing fossil fuels to safe levels with wealthy countries leading and supporting others to join.

The treaty is being built on the principles of non-discrimination, participation, transparency, inter-generational equity and accountability. It will align with the International Court of Justice's Advisory Opinion on legal duties of states to protect the climate for people's rights to be realised.

What's next for the Fossil Fuel Treaty? The Second Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels in Tuvalu in 2027 will bring together governments, academics, private sector representatives and experts to identify ways to achieve a phaseout that is legally, economically and socially fair.

This week during church services, you will have the opportunity to sign the multifaith letter that is a call to action for our country to sign the international Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. The signed letters will be sent to the Uniting Climate Action Network for the purposes of advocating to all federal Members of Parliament.

Further reading: <https://www.amnesty.org.au/fossil-fuel-treaty/>

*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](mailto:alexander.lawless7@gmail.com) Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2026 at 7pm in the Lower Church Hall. To receive a copy of the weekly SAMT News email Amanda at [agcm1960@gmail.com](mailto:agcm1960@gmail.com)

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.

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

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Why Is Love A Fruit Of The Spirit?



⋮ What Is The Fruit Of The Spirit? ⋮

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