

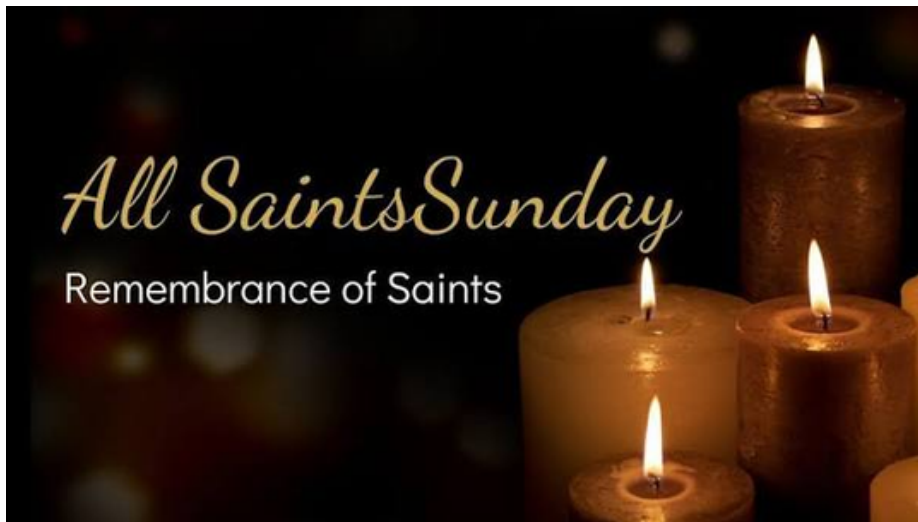


st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together

Thank you for worshipping with us today

Twitch.tv, livestreaming at 8am, 9.30am and 9am in January each year

Let us gather as a community to celebrate the blessings that surround us



Sunday Services

8am-Worship

Includes Communion

Led by Jon Humphries

9.30am-Worship

Includes Communion

Includes morning tea

Led by Jon Humphries

6.45pm-Worship

Includes Communion

Led by Jon Humphries

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

Bible Reading

Matthew 23: 1-12

1 John 3: 1-3

Something to think about

1 November

Pentecost 23

Revised Common Lectionary Readings:

Revelation 7:9-17

Psalm 34:1-10, 22

1 John 3:1-3

Matthew 5:1-12

Halloween: Trick or Treat?

Happy Halloween. Trick or treat?

Halloween can be a problematic celebration for some people – especially Church people. Is it a trick or a treat? Most people don't know its roots, and in Australia it has become a cultural import from the USA which seems ever more popular – at least if we gauge such things by the amount of consumer options we can see in stores. It has become a time where some decorate their houses in a spooky fashion and where there is dressing up and kids going around door-to-door and collecting lollies. In many circles in Australia there is some lamenting that it is another American import which is largely centred on consumerism. So, is Halloween a trick of capitalistic consumerism or does it offer us a treat in the form of celebration, community connection and strengthening, and a chance for us as the Church to lean into our life and witness?

The Encyclopedia Britannica describes Halloween as a 'holiday' celebrated on October 31 that marks the evening before the Christian feast of All Saints' Day, blending ancient Celtic harvest traditions, Christian remembrances of the dead, and modern secular festivities. In modern society it is largely non-religious.

The name 'Halloween' is Christian, or at least Christian in origin. Hallow is an old English word for "saint" or "holy person." The Christian roots of Halloween are centred around "Hallowtide" (or Allhallowtide), a three-day triduum dedicated to remembering the dead, which includes saints (hallows), martyrs, and all the faithful departed. Originally, early Christians commemorated martyrs in the spring. However, in the 8th century, Pope Gregory III moved the celebration to November 1st when he dedicated a chapel in St. Peter's Basilica to all the saints. In 835, Pope Gregory IV officially extended this November 1st feast to the entire Western Church.

It is too easy to get sanctimonious as the Church about traditions with Christian roots such as Halloween and others which have moved away the root of the celebration and in their evolution to become little more than times of fun, often centred around, or driven by, the veneration of consumerism. We who are the Church can get all judge-y or take offence at the portrayal of witches and other profane characters or be morally outraged at the skimpiness of some costumes and the over-sexualising of people in such celebrations. That is we can see it as a trick (even a trick of the devil). However, we can see it as a treat. We can see it as a moment to love our neighbour and strengthen our life and witness in grace and generosity and discipling.

continued next page

If we want to get all judge-y about things like Halloween, then we probably need to apply the principles of Just Culture to ourselves. Just Culture differentiates how mistakes are handled by looking at the intent and context behind an action. If Halloween has departed from the Christian roots, we probably need to think about how our lack of life and witness, along with the way the Church has too often alienated ourselves from society through moral judgementalism, has meant that we have not proclaimed the goodness, cultivated the tradition and the meaning behind it, or taken the lead in the celebration. We should not blame those who participate not knowing the meaning because we haven't taught them or proclaimed it.

However, if we step into the character of God, who came to us as Christ then we might see the mission potential to love our neighbour with the love of God and offer grace and hospitality in the way we have received it from God through such celebrations as Halloween. There is a thought-provoking quote from Steve Garnaas-Holmes. "Halloween: A day when we get it right. Strangers come to us, beautiful, ugly, odd or scary, and we accept them all without question, compliment them, treat them kindly, and give them good things. Why don't we live like that?" Steve Garnaas-Holmes is a retired United Methodist pastor, poet, songwriter, and retreat leader. He is widely known for writing *Unfolding Light*, a daily series of poems and contemplative, creation-centred reflections rooted in the Christian tradition. Over a 40-year ministry, he served congregations across New England and Montana.

Steve's quote spins Halloween for us. He takes what happens as the modern tradition as an observation of practice and then asks why we don't do that as the Church better or more consistently as part of our life and witness? Surely part of our life and witness as the People of God is to love our neighbour as ourselves [Matthew 22:39 – which we explored in last Sunday's services] Wouldn't it be amazing and more like the Realm of God amongst us if when strangers come to us, beautiful, ugly, odd or scary, and we, who ourselves are beautiful, ugly, odd or scar and broken, accept them all without question, compliment them, treat them kindly, and give them good things?

A year ago I preached on the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector and suggested that we face a challenge from God much of the time to change our thinking to align with the reality of the Kingdom of Heaven. Halloween can be a time of religious Grinchianity [Grinch-ism (see Dr Seuss) + Christianity] or we can see it as people coming to us in a way that expands our life and witness and allows them to experience God who is at work in us and through us as Holy Spirit. Halloween is a time for connection, and we have an opportunity to embrace what it is with a mindset of welcome and then give witness to what we understand it to mean through our word and action.

Of course maybe we should also be more intentional and put more effort into All Hallows / All Saints Day and revive and evolve the tradition into a time that helps people celebrate and be grateful for the Church of the past and the great work with God that our past members have faithfully done, whilst at the same time celebrating the Church of the present and the good things God is doing through us, and then also remembering those who have lost people and continue in grief.

Halloween is something which gives us much to think about and how we can turn any trick into a treat in the name of God.

God bless.
Jon

PEOPLE NEWS



Sara Wienand

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

Leading Worship at the Willow's

Would you like to help out and lead worship @ the Willow's in 2027. Have you picked up some new skills from the leading in worship courses. The services are usually 35-40 min. The Hymns used are from either the Salvations Army book of the Australian Hymn Book.

Please contact the church office if you can help.

Church Diary for 2027

A note to all group leaders- If your group is planning to use a part of the church property, please ensure the area is available before finalising your program.

This includes all areas. The church worship centre, upstairs hall, small meeting area in the downstairs hall, community room.

All bookings must go through the church office.

Thank you.



Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter
For (23 October 2026) Please see link to Synod Weekly:

<https://one.uca.org.au/>

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

1-7 November

Canada, United States

St Matthew's

**HAPPY
HOUR!**



With a Twist

Come to our house

9 Attlee Place, Winston Hills

27 | **5:30 PM**
NOVEMBER | **FRIDAY**



PLEASE BRING A SALAD OR DESSERT AND
YOUR OWN DRINKS. WE'LL SUPPLY MEAT.

Please RSVP to Belinda for catering
belinda.schuster0709@gmail.com



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

MONDAY 2 November SATURDAY 7 November

9am
sorting & pricing op shop
& garage sale
lower hall

7.30pm- Christian Meditation

TUESDAY 3 November

9am-2pm Op Shop

9.30-11am- Christian
Meditation

community
room and Church

11.30am- Care & Prayer

community
room and Church

WEDNESDAY 4

November

9am-2pm Op Shop

10am-12pm- InStitches
upstairs hall

7.30pm-Finance meeting

THURSDAY 5 November

9am-2pm Op Shop

10am-12pm- Coffee &
Discovery

Speaker: Jon Humphries

7pm-10pm-Netball AGM
upstairs hall

FRIDAY 6 November

No Scheduled Activities

9am-12pm-Op Shop
9am-12pm-Garage sale
lower hall

SUNDAY 8 November

8am- Worship

9am- Worship @ the
Willow's

9.30am- Worship
KUCA Preschool
year K-2 & years 3-8
followed by morning tea

6.45pm-Worship
Community meal



MINISTER

Rev Jon Humphries

Email: jon@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

Jonh@nswact.uca.org.au

MINISTERS

Everyone

PASTORAL CARE WORKER

Sara Wienand

Sunday am, Monday, Tuesday

Email: saraw@nswact.uca.org.au

CHURCH OFFICE SECRETARY

Lynn Samuel

Email: 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

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PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR 9639 8570

Sonali Wanigesekera

Po Box 321 Baulkham hills 2153

Email: director@stmatthewsps.net.au



New Website

We plan to launch the revamped website
around 21st November.

There will be no change to the
website address, that will remain the same.

www.stmatthewsuniting.net.au

JOIN OUR NEW LIVING LOVE MINISTRY TEAM

(Name yet to be finalised)
Showing God's Love
to others through
community service,
charity fundraising
and practical giving

Talk to Jane Cole or Jon if interested



JOIN OUR NEW CARING MINISTRY TEAM

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

Talk to Sara if interested



JOIN OUR NEW YOUTH & YOUNG PEOPLE MINISTRY TEAM

(Name yet to be finalised)
Exploring and
encouraging ministry
with those in the first
third of life

Talk to Erin Matthewson
or Jon if interested



JOIN OUR NEW SPIRITUALITY LEADERSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

Nurturing, growing
and encouraging
Christian spirituality

Talk to Katherine Pedersen
or Jon if interested





Thursday 5 November
10am-12pm

Guest Speaker: Jon Humphries

'Jon and Lynda's Alaskan Adventures'



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



The property committee will be holding the
next working bee on

Saturday 28th
November
8am to 11.30am



Please come along for a little while or
the whole time. Many hands make light
work and would be most appreciated.

St. Matthew's Social Action Ministry Team

How doing little things makes a big difference.

Topic: Sweltering Cities – Heat Awareness Week 2nd to 8th November

Heatwaves kill more people in Australia than all other environmental disasters combined. The coming summer is expected to be extremely hot, and the rising cost of living means many people are worried about their electricity bill. It's more important than ever to check-in on people on hot days, especially the most vulnerable – older people, people with young children, people living with disabilities and chronic illness, people who live in hot homes, and people who are socially isolated.

The Sweltering Cities 'Check-in Week of Action' is 2nd–8th November 2026. Isolation can be deadly in the heat, but checking in on people is an easy step to keep people safe. Just a phone call to vulnerable neighbours, friends and family on hot days and giving encouraging advice on how to keep cool, especially when they don't have access to air conditioning, could prevent harm. This is especially important for the elderly and the parents of babies and young children.

In this week, Sweltering Cities is asking us to identify the people in our lives who we should be checking in with during extreme heat events and how we can have conversations with them to make sure they keep safe.

What should I do?

1. Pick up the phone – do you have a family member, a neighbour or friend who could be at risk during a heatwave? Send them a text or give them a call to ask how they are doing.
2. Share health advice – not everyone knows the most effective ways to keep cool and they might not recognise heat exhaustion or heat stroke. You can share advice on how to keep cool and the need to keep hydrated, especially for people with babies and older people. For more heat health advice go to the NSW Health 'Beat the Heat' page <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/beattheheat/Pages/default.aspx>
3. Drop by – if you haven't heard from someone, or you haven't seen a neighbour when it's been hot, you can drop by and knock on the door to check in. Remember to keep yourself safe and don't go anywhere you don't feel comfortable.
4. Encourage others – if it's hot and you're talking to people about the weather, you can remind them that it's a good idea to check-in on people and send them the resources from this page.

Link to resources <https://swelteringcities.org/1457-2/heatwavecheckin/>

Blessings
Alexander
SAMT

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

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 16 February 2027 @ 7pm in the lower hall.

To receive a copy of the weekly SAMt enews into your email inbox
email Amanda at agcm1960@gmail.com

Spirituality Leadership Group been offered to the congregation and the wider community

These 15 minute talks will be played in the first 30 minutes of the ***Christian Meditation*** sessions held at St. Matthew's on Monday evenings @ 7.30pm and Tuesday mornings @9.30am. People do not need to know how to meditate to attend and listen to the talks.

The talks are for peoples information and are a part of a spiritual practice that St. Matthew's offers to all. The sessions are freely offered, however a gold coin donation weekly would be appreciated.

Enquiries to Katherine Pedersen
kathped56@gmail.com



6:19 pm Sun 18 Oct Google

70

Meditatio Talks Series

< BACK TO ARCHIVE

DOWNLOAD ENTIRE CD

TRANSCRIPT

Meditatio Talks Series 2005 A - Release date 1 March 2005

A Sincere Form of Prayer by Laurence Freeman OSB

04 Meditation and Discipleship

0:00

10:42

A Sincere Form of Prayer by Laurence Freeman OSB
Meditatio Talks Series 2005 A Jan-Mar

To be sincere, Fr Laurence says, is to give our attention, to give the gift of oneself. But to pay attention is difficult; the ego makes compelling demands. Attention has to be learned. Fr Laurence teaches Christian meditation as a way to switch from intentions to single-minded attention. We become fully present, open, and available to the Spirit of Jesus in our heart. In this sense, meditation can be described as a sincere form of prayer.

The tracks on this playlist are intended solely for personal non-



Meditatio
TALKS SERIES 2005 A - JAN - MAR



a Sincere
form of Prayer

LAURENCE FREEMAN OSB

To be sincere, Fr Laurence says, is to give our attention, to give the gift of oneself. But to pay attention is difficult; the ego makes compelling demands. Attention has to be learned. Fr Laurence teaches Christian meditation as a way to switch from intentions to single-minded attention. We become fully present, open, and available to the Spirit of Jesus in our heart. In this sense, meditation can be described as a sincere form of prayer. Fr Laurence is a Benedictine monk and the Director of The World Community for Christian Meditation. His books include Light Within, The Selfless Self, Jesus the Teacher Within, First Light.

01 A Sincere Form of Prayer

02 The Way of Meditation - I

03 The Way of Meditation - II

04 Meditation and Discipleship

05 Freedom from the Ego

06 Paying Attention

07 The Teaching of Jesus on Co...

08 The Teaching of Jesus on Co...



The Blackheath Community invites you to a
Community Day on 5th December 2026

Reverend Linda Chapman OAM is our guest and will
present:

*The Hidden Language of Nature: when
the Trees say Nothing*

*These talks are in part based on the nature writings of Thomas
Merton and address the 'language' of nature hidden in silence and
how we might listen and engage.*

During the day we will meditate together, share periods of silence and
times of reflection

When: Saturday 5th December 2026 from 10am to 2pm

Location: Sacred Heart Catholic Church Hall, 167 Wentworth Street,
Blackheath

Books will be for sale and Community CDs will be available for free

Donation as you wish

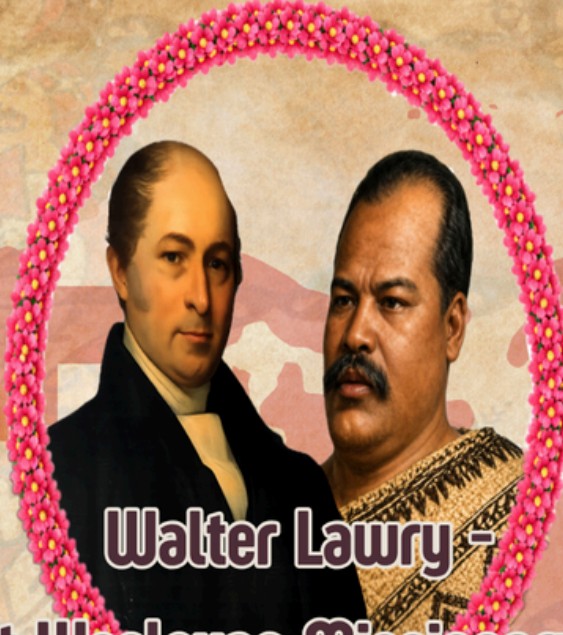
BYO lunch, tea/coffee and morning tea provided

If you plan to attend please email Marilyn Jones –
marilyn.jones5@bigpond.com or phone – 0401 637 759

The World Community for Christian Meditation Australia (NSW)
wccmaustralia.org.au

**You can make your own way there or contact
Katherine for car sharing or even make a
weekend of it in the mountains.**

Book Launch:



Walter Lawry -

The First Wesleyan Missionary to Tonga

Written by: Rev. Dr. Clive Pearson, based on an idea
by Rev. Dr. Kamaloni Tu'iono (with a foreword)
Published by: Twinnies Brand.

Date: 3rd November 2026

Time: 5pm - 7pm

**Location: Leigh Memorial Church,
119 Macquarie Street, Parramatta**

...'Lawry's expedition to Tonga would not have taken place if he had not spent some years in Parramatta beforehand. The two are interwoven.

**Please join us to celebrate the Faith, Journey and
Legacy of the First Missionary to Tonga.**

Limited Books available for purchase!

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fight
poverty.



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