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



Let us pray for the church and for the world.
Faithful God, as we begin Advent, renew Your
church in hope. Strengthen us to be watchful for
Your presence and faithful in Your service.
Lord, in Your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Sunday Services

8am–Worship
includes morning tea
Led by Jon Humphries and Dean Drayton

9.30am–Worship
includes morning tea
Led by Jon Humphries and Dean Drayton

6.45pm–Worship
Led by Jon Humphries

KUCA Preschool,
Years K–2 & years 3–8

Bible Reading
Isaiah 64: 1–9
Mark 13: 24–37

Advent 1

Something to think about

29 November

1st Sunday in Advent

Revised Common Lectionary Readings:

Isaiah 64:1–9
Psalm 80:1–7, 17–19
1 Corinthians 1:3–9
Mark 13:24–37

A New and Living Hope

We are entering into a new liturgical season. This is the season of Advent which is the preparatory season to lead us towards the celebration of Christmas. The word liturgy, from which liturgical is based on, means the work of the people. Each liturgical season, like each liturgy for our services on Sunday, gives us work to do. This work is effectively faith training and discipleship strengthening, because coming to Church is coming along to a faithnasium where we do our strength and cardio training to build up our spiritual fitness so that we can live a healthy life of faith and witness.

The first Sunday in Advent is traditionally symbolised by hope. We have an Advent wreath where we light a special candle each week and name the four themes of hope, peace, joy and love. Hope is a powerful force and aspect of faith. Hebrews 11: 1 states, “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” Faith, hope and love are deeply and inextricably intertwined.

A study of biblical hope reveals a rich, active hope rooted in faith. In Hebrew, the word תִּקְוָה (tikvah) has its root meaning in a cord stretched taut. This is a hope strong enough to hold onto, and to pull us toward your promised future which God lays before us. Another Hebrew word for hope is קָוָה (qavah) which is related to תִּקְוָה (tikvah) and its root meaning a cord or rope, representing a strong bond that holds tight under tension. Our bond with God holds us tight even when we are in a state of tension between what is now and the hope of what's to come. It is the effortful, hope-fuelled struggle to bear hope. Then there is the word יָחַל (yachal) which a hope that highlights patient endurance while waiting on God's promises. So, far from passive wishful thinking, biblical hope is an expectant, resilient trust in God's faithfulness.

This is a truth powerfully captured in Jeremiah 29:11, where God promises His people a future filled with tikvah. The prophet writes, “’For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’” New Testament writers describe living out hope as a active, transforming force that produces endurance, holiness, and joyful service. They connect hope directly to daily life through practicing love, staying steadfast in trials, and living with a clear purpose rooted in Christ.

A new and living hope-continued

Romans 12:12 urges believers to be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer. Additionally, 1 John 3:3 explains that having this hope leads us to purify ourselves and live lives of love and holiness. Another key passage is First Peter 1:3, which speaks of a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus. Hebrews 6:19 also describes hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.

Whilst Advent points us to the celebration of the coming of the Christ Child, we know and remember that we have just celebrated Christ the King Sunday and reflected on the Kingdom/Reign/Rule/Realm of God in Christ which is near, at hand, amongst us, around us, within us and upon us. Advent and Christmas is not looking to a future hope that is yet to come, but a real and present hope that is a reality now. The future aspect that the tension that we experience, the קָוָה (qavah) and תִּקְוָה (tikvah), is that the Kingdom of God is still resisted in this world, and even in us. This is the work of Adventish hope. We need to push against the temptation to see ourselves as simply accepting יָחַל (yachal) as a patient endurance waiting on God's promises which are yet to be realised. Our work of Advent hope is to take up the hope that is real and present now, whilst accepting that more is yet to come.

At the heart of hope is God. It is God in whom we hope and place our faith. It is God who holds our hope, even when it is something we cannot hold for ourselves. It is God who is the source of hope. Both the Old Testament and New Testament ground hope in God's own character and past faithfulness rather than human optimism or wishful, favourable circumstances. While the Old Testament anchors hope in God's covenant promises, the New Testament centres that same hope in the person and resurrection of Jesus Christ who is the fulfilment of such promises.

Thus, like most things to do with faith, it gets back to our relationship with God. God is the one who first reaches out and reveals Godself. We are the ones who then respond. To have hope is to know God. To know God is to know love. To know love is to live love, and last week we learnt in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats what living love to our neighbour as ourselves looks like in practical ways. Our spiritual practices help us stay connected with God, and then we work to be disciplined in our discipleship to live out the love of God is real and practical ways, because we can't love God without loving our brother, sister, person, neighbour.

Advent is about moving towards Christmas. Christmas is about the incarnation of the Word and Love of God as the person of Jesus. Jesus is the King of the Kingdom, but also the shepherd who becomes the lead sheep amongst us who are the flock. Jesus leads us into and in the love of God. We are called to follow, and what that means and looks like can be shaped by the work of our liturgy and liturgical seasons.
Like anything to do with faith and discipleship, we have our own agency. God leads us like a horse that is lead to water, but in the same way as you can't make a horse drink, God can't make us choose to think, believe or have faith, or to act in accordance to God's will and way which we know in Christ. We have to choose to take up God's call. We have to choose to take up Christ's yoke. We have to choose to be the Church as the Body of Christ, and we have to choose to do the work of living God's love. Let us not see it as a grinding chore, but as that which gifts life in abundance, fullness of meaning and purpose and a deep wellness in our souls.

What will we choose to be more intentional about in each week of Advent, with this week being about hope? That is something to think about.

God bless

Jon

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

MONDAY 30 November

9am
sorting & pricing op shop
& garage sale
lower hall
7.30pm- Christian Meditation

TUESDAY 1 December

9am-2pm Op Shop

9.30-11am- Christian Meditation
community
room and Church

12pm- Preschool using upstairs hall

WEDNESDAY 2 December

9am-2pm Op Shop

10-12pm-In Stitches
upstairs hall

THURSDAY 3 December

9am-2pm Op Shop
10am-12pm
Coffee & Discovery
12.15pm Preschool using upstairs hall

FRIDAY 4 December

No Scheduled Activities

SATURDAY 5 December

9am-12pm Op Shop
9am-12pm Garage Sale
lower hall
9am- Upper hall in use

SUNDAY 6 December

8am- Worship
Includes Communion

9.30am- Worship
Includes Communion

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

6.45pm-Worship
Includes Communion





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

PEOPLE NEWS



Pamela Leslie
Roderick Schuster

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

Weekly SYNOD SPOTLIGHT
Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter For (20 November 2026) Please see link to Synod Weekly:
https://comms.nswact.uca.org.au/v/47004/2485980/email.html?k=1,ZqLNzijUjrHGCiuqzl9P85CF1GhQQrDEPqdd75VNfB4



New Worship Rosters For December 2026 & January, February 2027

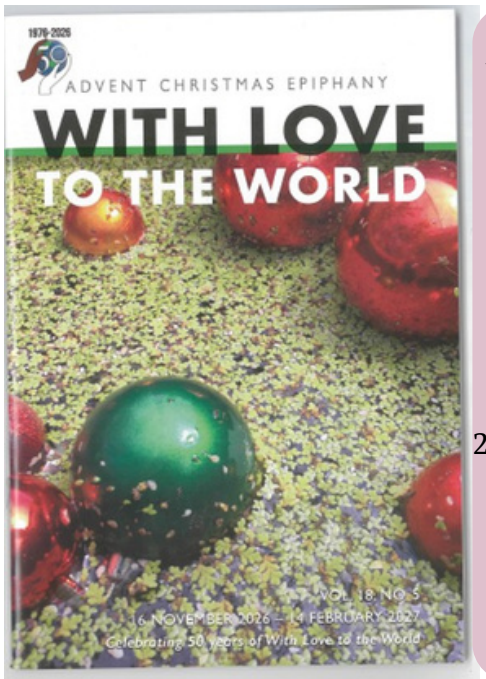
Have been emailed.
If you can help in anyway with either multimedia/sound, door stewards of maybe prayers, please let me know.
Copies available in the foyer.

NEW ROSTER
HELPERS WELCOME

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

29 November–5 December

Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore



Advent Christmas Epiphany
With Love to the World
A daily bible reading guide based on the Revised common Lectionary
Volume 18, No. 5
6 November 2026– 14 February 2027
is available in the church foyer.
Please place $7 in the offering bag to help cover costs.

Thank you

Rosemary and Thomas' would like to thank the church members and local residents who supported their Open Garden and Art Studio. People were quite generous with their donations for the Parramatta Mission. It was an important means of strengthening friendships and meeting new neighbours whilst discussing beautiful plants and paintings.

Rosemary and Thomas

Christmas Bowl

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT


Joel Pratley/Act for Peace

PREPARING FOR DISASTER IN INDONESIA

In flood-prone Indonesia, being prepared before disaster strikes can make an enormous difference.

Act for Peace's local partner works alongside communities to strengthen disaster preparedness. With training, equipment and clearly defined roles, local people are better able to share warnings, coordinate evacuations and support their neighbours when disaster strikes.

Your gift this Christmas can help communities like Musdalia's (left) prepare for what's ahead, standing alongside people who are already doing the work of caring for their neighbours.



ACT FOR PEACE
CONFRONTING INJUSTICE TOGETHER THROUGH THE actalliance

PRAYER

God of hope,

Strengthen those preparing their communities for times of uncertainty. May they work together with courage, wisdom and care.

Amen.

PEACE MATTERS.

This Christmas, add your gift to the Bowl. Continue the legacy. Act for Peace.
Call us: 1800 025 101 **or visit:** actforpeace.org.au/christmasbowl

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Church Working Bee

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 United Church Baulkham Hills growing together

St Matthew's HAPPY HOUR!



With a Twist
Come to our house
9 Attlee Place, Winston Hills

27 NOVEMBER | **5:30 PM 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



st. matthew's UNITING CHURCH BAULKHAM HILLS growing together

New Website

Has been launched .
Please log on and familarise yourself.
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 Lam
or Jon it interested



JOIN OUR NEW
SPIRITUALITY LEADERSHIP MINISTRY TEAM
Nurturing, growing and encouraging Christian spirituality

Talk to Katherine Pedersen
or Jon if interested



Coffee and Discovery

Thursday 3 December

10am-12pm Final for 2026



Guest Musician: DAVID SHORT

Music with David

"From relaxing to Grand"

Come along and enjoy.

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

**********ALL WELCOME**********

Parramatta Mission's 'Plate for a Mate'

supports the annual Parramatta Mission Christmas lunch on 18th December.
Every plate donation also helps keep *Meals Plus* open throughout Christmas and New Year, providing meals, practical support and a place to turn during a difficult time.

$25 helps provide a full Christmas Day meal, incl breakfast and lunch, for someone in need.
To donate, go to the Parramatta Mission website.

St. Matthew's Social Action Ministry Team

How doing little things makes a big difference.

Topic: Climate Change - What we have learned from COP31

From Nic O'Malleys article in the Syndey Morning Herald on 23 November 2026, 12.40am

UN Global climate talks led by Chris Bowen end in discord and recrimination.
https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/un-global-climate-talks-led-by-chris-bowen-end-in-discord-and-recrimination-20261123-p61gbh.html

'Global climate talks led by Climate Change and Energy Minister Chris Bowen have failed to secure an agreement in Türkiye after a standoff between oil producing nations led by Saudi Arabia and nations seeking more ambitious action on climate change, including Europe.

Mr Bowen described the outcome as "very disappointing" and said disagreements over fuels and climate finance were the dealbreakers. He commended delegations for pulling all-nighters to try to reach a deal but said "the situation coming into this COP was the most complicated and fraught geopolitical environment in living memory".

"An obvious issue is the transition away from fossil fuels, where some parties insisted that must be mentioned, other parties insisted that if it was mentioned they would veto. "

After more than two weeks of negotiations that spilled two days into overtime – making it the longest COP on record – Turkey's conference president Murat Kurum said at the closing plenary that he could see there was no agreement and confirmed he would not advance any new text.
The Saudi-led bloc backed by Russia rejected on Sunday a final agreement – known as a cover decision – that reiterated calls for a transition away from fossil fuels. The European Union said it could not support an agreement that would take backwards steps by refusing to address the need to do so.

Further objections were raised by other nations over the inclusion of a call to increase the use of controversial climate capture and storage technology, also championed by the Saudi-led bloc, and by the failure of developed nations to pledge more financial support for poorer nations hardest hit by climate impacts.

Cover decisions at UN climate talks can only be adopted by consensus of all parties.'
The result of COP31, where consensus was not reached, now increases the importance of the Second Conference of the Santa Marta Process in July 2027. This will be co-chaired by Tuvalu and the Republic of Ireland. The 'Santa Marta Process' is a bloc of 30 countries that plan to advance a formal negotiating mandate for a Fossil Fuel Treaty and create a roadmap for the phase out of fossil fuels.

To find out more about the Fossil Fuel Treaty, their website is: https://www.fossilfueltreaty.org/

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
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

Sunday
29th November

Clive will be selling copies of his new book on the missionary Walter Lawry. They cost $40 each. All profits will go to the building of a commemorative site in Tonga. Payments can be made by cash, debit card or credit card on the day.



Uniting World Christmas Cards

Christmas cards that fight poverty.

UnitingWorld



https://donate.unitingworld.org.au/shop/viewitem/christmascardpack

St Matthew's Op Shop

Important Dates

7th November 2026 – Garage Sale
5th December 2026 – Garage Sale

Last day of trading 2026:
Thursday 17th December 2026

First day of trading in 2027
Tuesday 19th January 2027

st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
OP SHOP

Revesby Uniting Church Aged Care Petition to UnitingCare:

Revesby Uniting Church have launched a Change.Org petition to UnitingCare about the new fee structure for Uniting Care aged care facilities. The link is in this QR code.

They are appealing directly to Uniting NSW/ACT to reconsider the proposed arrangements and ensure that all residents, regardless of their financial circumstances, are treated with dignity and compassion.

Local Fair Trade Markets 2026

Choose to buy fair trade products to help create a brighter future for millions of farmers, workers, and their families around the world.

Saturday 28th November 2026, 10am-3pm
Centenary Uniting Church, corner of Sorrell & Fennell Streets, North Parramatta

Saturday 5th December 2026, 9am-2pm
North Rocks Uniting Church,
132–136 North Rocks Road, North Rocks



CHANGE IN COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL FUNDING

St Matthew's Preschool is one of many NSW community preschools. Community Preschools are not-for-profit and all profits returned to the centre, and the educators.

In October 2026, community preschools were told the whole funding package was changing, and not only are most centres getting less funding, but they are also not allowed to increase fees, and they need to increase all wages by 5% above award. This new package is called Universal Funding, the previous was called Starting Strong.

St Matthew's Baulkham Hills will have a negative impact of approximately $155,000 from this new funding. They will be receiving approximately $98,000 less in 2027 than in 2026 but having to increase wages and not fees. Community Preschools cannot function for the long term under these conditions.

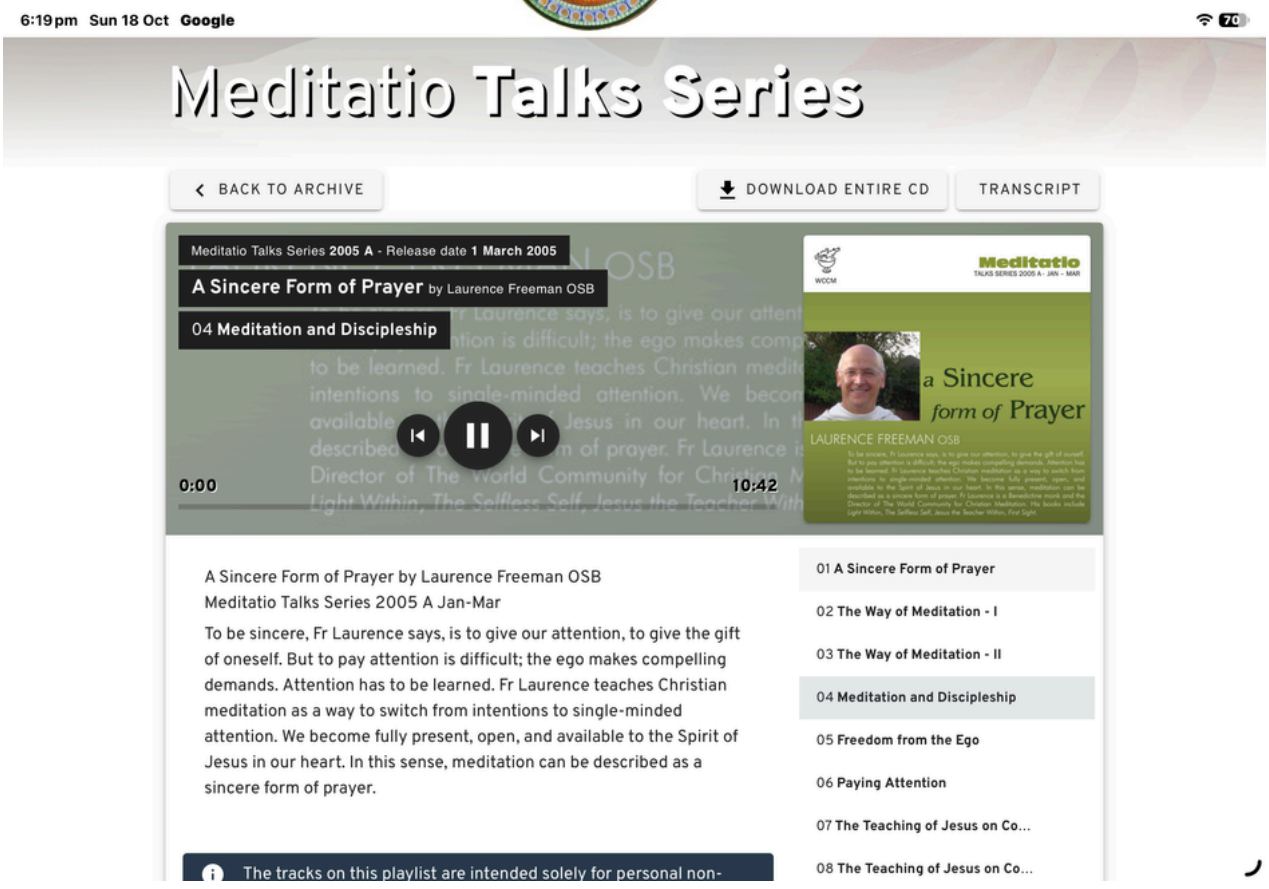
Community preschools are a vital choice for parents to give their children the best start in life. Approximately 75% of community preschools rate at Exceeding Expectations. They have a very relevant part to play in the Early Childhood education of NSW children.
If you would like to assist in letting the Government know you are unhappy with the change to Universal Funding, please sign this petition so it can go to Parliament this week for the last week of sitting, the final two weeks of sitting for this year.
https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/parliamentary-business/petitions/sign-epetition?epetitionId=905&ref=10902

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

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



WCCM AUSTRALIA (NSW)
MEDITATION & COMMUNITY

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.

Please see QR Codes for links for YouTube, Facebook & Twitch





