



st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together

Weekly Newsletter

20 March 2022

Lent 3

Bible Reading

8am & 9.30am:

Psalms 63:1-8, Luke 13: 1-9

Response after Bible Readings

Leader: Hear the word of the Lord

Response: Thanks be to God



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 9.30AM

Livestreaming

| | |
|----------|----------|
| at all | • 8am |
| three | • 9.30am |
| worship | |
| services | • 6.45pm |

8am—Worship

Led by Vivienne Strong and Clive Pearson

9.30am—Worship

Led by Hugh Darling and Clive Pearson

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



5pm—Shine

6.45pm—Worship

Led by Abby Sim and Clive Pearson

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 21 MARCH

9am—Sorting and Pricing
for Op Shop lower hall

SATURDAY 26 MARCH

No scheduled events

TUESDAY 22 MARCH

9am-2pm—Op Shop
9.30am—Christian Meditation
in the church
10.30am—Lenten Studies
in the church
7.30pm—Lenten Studies
in the church

SUNDAY 27 MARCH

8am—Worship
9.30am—Worship
KUCA Preschool, Years K-2
& Years 3-8

6.45pm—Worship

WEDNESDAY 23 MARCH

9am-2pm—Op Shop

THURSDAY 24 MARCH

9am-2pm—Op Shop

FRIDAY 25 MARCH

5pm-7pm—FUSION
Youth Group at the church



MINISTERS - EVERYONE

SUPPLY MINISTER

REV. CLIVE PEARSON 0409 523 024
Email: minister@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS MINISTRY WORKER

DANIEL GIBB Part Time
Email: daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

SENIORS PASTORAL CARER

MICHAEL STRONG Part Time
Email: mike@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

CHURCH OFFICE SECRETARIES:

ROBYN MORRALL AND LYNN SAMUEL

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS 9AM-3PM MON-FRI

OFFICE : 9686 3003

LOCATION:

CNR CHARLES & EDGAR STREETS
BAULKHAM HILLS

POSTAL ADDRESS:

BAULKHAM HILLS UNITING CHURCH
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Whatever happened to sin?

We live in a time where the word 'sin' is seldom mentioned in everyday life. It is most commonly used these days with reference to football matches – such and such a player is sent to the 'sin bin' for a high tackle, a dangerous tackle, a professional foul. Out comes the yellow card and off the player is sent for ten minutes to cool his / her heels! Now and then this little three-letter word is used in a rather trivialized way. I remember driving up James Ruse Drive some years ago. On one of the overpasses there was some kind of chocolate bar accompanied by the words 'it is so good that it seems a sin to eat it'. Temptation!!

Once upon a time sin was rather more commonly used than either of those two examples. It sometimes attracted a rather unfortunate sense of moralism and harsh judgement: certain sins seemed to be identified (often of a sexual nature) and metaphorical fingers were pointed at the guilty party or the one who was presumed to be responsible (though that was not always the case). This kind of history left sin with a bad press! It has not travelled so well into our present – and yet the Christian faith remains bound to a gospel where Jesus proclaimed 'the forgiveness of sins'.

Some years ago I led a workshop down in the Riverina Presbytery. It was very well attended. Its title was something like 'Sent to the Sin Bin'. We talked about how sin was once a 'majestic word' that described something about our humanity. Yes, we are made in the image of God, but as individuals, as societies we are far from perfect. Our little word masks a wide number of words in Hebrew and Greek for sin: it can mean to act wrongly and meanly but it can also mean to miss the mark through ignorance. Sometimes theologians today speak of sin as being 'alienated' (is that the right word?) from God; from the person we are called to be; from our neighbour and then from the well-being of God's good creation. It is a part of being human.

We did not try and dwell on individual sins or point fingers but rather we talked about sin as being part of the human condition. We reflected on sin from a number of different angles because – as I said at the time – there were a lot of good things happening in the Christian understanding of sin in the present time. There were new questions arising – like: is sin in our genes? (are we predisposed to act in particular ways and what kind of freedom

do we have?); how do we deal with the sins of past generations? (should we say 'sorry' even if and when we were not alive at the time but can see the ongoing impact of some deeds on the lives of others?); and, do men and women sin differently? For that discussion the women met in one group and the men in another.

There was a lot of energy and laughter along with serious discussion in the course of the workshop. We concluded the day with a reflection on the advice of the great reformer, Martin Luther, to 'sin boldly'. It sounds odd: it needs to be understood in the light of Luther's own attempt to live a godly life through all sorts of ascetic disciplines. He then came to understand the gospel in a new exciting way which allowed him to accept his full humanity and know that he was justified through Christ – and that his sins were forgiven. The language of sin should always be held in a close embrace with talk of grace and forgiveness.

This reflection on sin arises out of a rather obscure passage in Luke's gospel. The most common tendency with this text is for preachers to hurry on to the parable of the fig tree. The first part of the reading seems to require an X rating! In the background lie a couple of tragedies that are lost in history to us. There are no records of these two incidents in any writings from the period outside of Luke. Was it the case that Pilate had some pilgrims from Galilee to the Temple in Jerusalem massacred? It seems as if Jesus was also recalling the time when a tower in the wall around Jerusalem had collapsed and crushed 18 innocent bystanders.

The temptation was to imagine that such folk had got what was their due. Jesus disagrees and opens up a rather different kind of discussion about sin. It is bound to repentance – the Greek word is *metanoia* which presumes a change of heart. In the gospel, though, talk of sin cannot be separated from forgiveness and grace. It presumes our coming to our selves in the sight of God. These tragedies are followed by the parable of the barren fig tree. It is given another chance.

The readings for the evening service tonight will be Romans 8:18-25 and Luke 10:25-37. The theme will be Christ and Climate Change

Yours in Christ,

Clive



PEOPLE NEWS BIRTHDAYS

Dennis Bell
Barbara Brookes

Judy Lance
Amanda Manson

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

All Group Leaders and Others

Please remember to **ALWAYS** lock and activate the security alarm at the conclusion of your gatherings at the church.

Please also turn off all lights, close windows, turn off air-conditioner and fans.

And leave the space neat and tidy ready for the next group. *Thank you.*

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

20-26 March

Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania

st. matthew's
BAULKHAM HILLS
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Volunteers needed!

St. Matthew's play
group

The St. Matthew's play group would like to start back soon and we would appreciate having some volunteers to help oversee the running of the group. If there is anybody who would like to volunteer within this group or require more information, please contact Marijke Prinsloo. The play group has been a great asset to the wider community and we would like to see it grow again!

Currently we are looking at a Thursday group that will run between 9:30 - 11:30.

Email: marijkeprinsloo@gmail.com

Mobile: 0423641477



A reminder to everyone if you would like to attend the Lenten Studies.

Beginning on **Tuesday 15 March at 10.30am and 7.30pm**, and continuing on **Tuesday 22 and 29**. It is preferable to register with the church office so that we can plan how many copies of the study to provide. Even if you do not register, you can still attend and bring a friend from outside St. Matthew's.

Please see the March In Focus for more details.

Being prepared for next week's worship:

Lent 4

2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Luke 15:1-3; 11b-32.

Theme: Excess

The present age is one in which some people are able to acquire huge profits and live a life of excess. In extreme situations like those represented in the television series, *Billions* and *Succession*, it can be marked by disreputable behaviour that is exploitative of others. The prodigal son in this parable is not quite in this category, but he does ask for his inheritance in advance and lives out a dissolute self-centred life. In his case it leads to his 'coming to his senses' while in a pigsty. This language of 'coming to one's senses' has featured in recent theology to do with climate change. The prodigal son becomes 'us' and we are faced with choices to do with lifestyles. Is excess an abundant life? In the parable the father welcomes back the son with a party – despite the grumblings of the elder son. The father saw his son from a distance and ran and filled with compassion welcomed him home. Forgiveness and joy do not depend upon excess.

POST LINKS DINNER

Banquet meal at the **Thai Garden House**,
526 Church Street, North Parramatta.
(Cnr Factory Street).

I have made a tentative booking for
Saturday 2nd April, at 7.00 pm
in the courtyard. Restaurant is BYO Wine.
Nothing too spicy but always tasty.

Due to the monorail being built you will need to turn into Ferris Street, right into Castle Street where it is best to park near the top of Factory Street.

Please advise me by the 19th March if you wish to attend so that I can give an indication of numbers to the restaurant. I haven't worked out the price yet but should be between \$30.00 and \$35.00/head.

Will advise prior.

Jane Jenkyn 0422149530

Summary of Church Council Meeting of 23rd February 2022

The following matters were reviewed and approved by the Church Council.

- The latest COVID-19 Rules for the Church,
- Church Finances to 31st December 2021,
- Current Mission Planning,
- Members of the JNC panel,
- The new Church Website to go live,
- Maintenance and issues with the Church Roof and Preschool,
- Baptism of Rory Christopher Rollins
- Correspondence, reports and other matters including restarting morning teas and the roster for lawn mowing.

ST. MATTHEW'S BAULKHAM HILLS

CHURCH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

AS AT 1 DECEMBER 2021.

CHAIRPERSON: Barbara Gibb

SECRETARY: Terry Oliver

TREASURER: Alastair Burn

ELDERS Chairperson: Helen Olley

ELDERS Secretary: Melissa Gibson-Darling

Co-Opted members: David Neideck

Karen Vandenberg (Staff HR Liaison/support)

**To Contact CC Executive: please email Barbara -
barbara.gibb@bigpond.com**