



st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS 
growing together

Weekly Newsletter

3 July 2022

Pentecost 4

Bible Reading



8am & 9.30am:
Galatians 6: 7-16
Luke 10: 1-11,16-20

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

Includes Communion

Led by Clive Pearson

9.30am—Worship

Includes Communion

Led by Daniel Gibb and Clive Pearson

KUCA in recess

5pm—Shine

6.45pm—Worship

Includes Communion

Led by Daniel Gibb and Clive Pearson

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 4 JULY

7am-5pm—Preschool roof building work begins
9am—Sorting & pricing for Op Shop lower hall

TUESDAY 5 JULY

9am-2pm—Op Shop open
9.30am-11am—Christian Meditation in the church
10.30am—Clive's workshops
Week 1 "Who do you say that I am?" in the church
7.30pm—Thrive lower hall
7.30pm—Clive's workshops
Week 1 "Who do you say that I am?" in the church

WEDNESDAY 6 JULY

9am-2pm—Op Shop
10am-12pm—In Stitches upstairs hall
7.30pm—ZOOM
Clive's workshops week 1
"Who do you say that I am?"
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3602745736>

THURSDAY 7 JULY

9am-2pm—Op Shop
10am-12pm—Coffee & Discovery
Guest Musicians: David & Noeleen Neideck
in the upstairs hall and church
7.30pm—Caring Focus Group
meeting at the church

FRIDAY 8 JULY

No Scheduled events

SATURDAY 9 JULY

No Scheduled events

SUNDAY 10 JULY

8am—Worship
9am—Worship @ the Willow's
9.30am—Worship
KUCA in recess



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
PO Box 773 BAULKHAM HILLS 1755

WEB SITE: www.stmatthewsuniting.net.au

Weekly newsletter available on website

EMAIL: office@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

FACEBOOK:

@stmatthewsunitingchurchbaulkhamhills

PRE-SCHOOL DIRECTOR 9639 8570

SONALI WANIGESEKERA
PO Box 321 BAULKHAM HILLS 2153

EMAIL: director@stmatthewsps.net.au

For the Good of All

The timing of this week's readings is intriguing. It coincides with the first release of data from the 2021 census and Tuesday's rather explosive headlines in *The Sydney Morning Herald* concerning how Australia is 'abandoning God'. The sub-heading read 'Christianity plummets' as Australia apparently becomes 'more godless'. Back in 2011 61% of the population declared themselves to be Christian; by 2016 the figure had declined to 52% and now it is 44%. To some extent these percentages reflect the increasing cultural and religious pluralism of Australia but the most striking feature in this initial data was the surge in 'nones' – that is, those who say they have 'no religion'. That number now lies at 39% - in the mid-1960s less than 1% of Australians said they had no religion. It seems as if 2.7% identified themselves as Uniting Church - compared with 2.7% Hindu and 3.2% Muslim. In terms of Christian denominations Roman Catholics stand at 20% and Anglican 10% (both of which were significant declines).

There is plenty of food for thought here.

Throughout Christian history there has been an ebb and flow in the number of people who have been 'church-going'. For much of its early history the Christian faith was a small minority on the margins of empire. Talk of such and such a country being a 'Christian country' would have seemed odd. Our situation is very different: we now find ourselves living in a time where many have never been exposed to the Christian faith (or any religion and are thus 'secular' which can cover terms like nones, atheists and agnostics); we also carry with us the 'fate' of having been a faith that has been tried by many and who, for diverse reasons, now find that the call to follow Christ does not resonate within them – or they may have been hurt by the church along the way. There is an issue of trust buried away here.

What are we to do?

The issues are certainly big and very complex. Into this setting comes last week's reading about 'not taking one's hand off the plough'. This week's reading from Luke has to do with Jesus sending out seventy-two 'others' to every town where they are to pro-

claim that 'the kingdom of God has come near you'. The harvest is deemed to be plentiful even if the labourers are few. But success is not guaranteed. Jesus is well aware that in some towns and villages will not welcome the seventy-two: they are then to shake the dust of feet. We may not think of our neighbours who do not share our faith as 'wolves' amongst whom we are sent as 'lambs'. It is a rather frightening image! There is, nevertheless, a deep-seated realism here: Jesus himself realized that whole communities may not receive the gospel despite how it is presented.

In times gone by when the church found itself in a threatened or indifferent space the Christian life and its spirituality mattered a great deal. So much can depend upon how we seek to understand our faith in a changing social context: so much can depend upon how worship expresses words and sentiments that relate to the world beyond the four walls of the church and give off 'signals' of who we are; so much can depend upon the exemplary nature of the Christian life and its sense of being a community. Is it a 'holy huddle' – or is it something else?

The epistle reading was addressed to a set of churches that was struggling to relate to its neighbourhood. The reason lay partly in their understanding of the gospel which was, at best, partial and represented a falling back into ways that did not grasp the freedom to be found in their baptism into Christ. They were harking back to practices of an old faith that was marked by dietary laws and circumcision. Paul is impatient with them throughout the body of his letter but today's reading encourages them to live in the spirit and do 'good to all'. We might add, 'For Christ's sake'.

That word 'good' is one of the most commonly used in Scripture but it often slips by under the radar. It is scarcely noticed. It seems to suggest that Galatians should recover the integrity of their faith, practise the fruits of the spirit, and nourish the well-being of the society around them – their neighbours – the common good – even if and when their faith in Christ is not welcomed.

Yours in Christ,

Clive



PEOPLE NEWS BIRTHDAYS

Jacinta Bell
Callum Wood
Peter Sexton

Julie Kolosowski
Kathryn Longmuir

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

Thank you. Rev Bill Crews Exodus Foundation would like to very much thank all at St. Matthew's for the large donation of food supplies they recently received. It will be used to feed the many disadvantage people of the community. ***Along with the usually food donations they would now especially like to receive donations of UHT milk.***

Save the Date

Coffee and Discovery 10am Thursday 7 July

Guests Musicians

Noeleen & David Neideck

Please come along and enjoy a concert filled with the music of Noeleen and David.

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

3—9 July

Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda

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 **ALWAYS** turn off all lights, close windows, **turn off air-conditioners and fans.**

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



Donations of fresh flowers

Katherine Pedersen is asking the church for donations of fresh flowers and foliage from members of the congregation who have excess to their needs. Katherine uses the flowers and foliage to make up arrangements to sell at the Op shop, and also to give to people we know who would benefit from receiving a gift from the church community. Please contact Katherine Pedersen on 0437 772 011

Preschool - Raising money for Kids Cancer and supporting one of our own community

We would like to bring to the Church Communities attention the case of Demi, one of the Preschool students (and also daughter of Marly, a member of teaching staff)

Demi was recently diagnosed with a rare & incurable, inoperable brain tumor.

This has obviously been a very difficult time for her and her family. They are fortunate though to have amazing support within family and friends and have requested that instead of support for themselves that support be focused towards fundraising.

Donations raised so far will go to The Kids Cancer Project.

So far \$2483.95 has been raised. A great effort!

For anyone who'd like to donate, please donate via the below link.

<https://www.pirateday.com.au/unitingcarestmatthewspreschool>

Another fundraiser is also being planned for Term 3 – Beanie's for brain cancer. This one could give an opportunity to support in a more practical sense potentially. Once plans are finalised the Preschool will advise details which will be shared.

Anyone who would also like to support the family can contact the Preschool office.

Please hold Demi and her family in your prayers.

More Church Property News

The first site meeting with Skope Constructions was held this morning to discuss the commencement of the project and a draft program for the work. It was opportune to have this meeting, because the Preschool will close for a two-week period starting 4th July. During this period shutdown, the roof over the Preschool will be the first area to be refurbished with Colour bond roofing. This will minimise the effect of the work on the operation of the Preschool.

Like all programs this a draft and is subject to weather and change for many reasons. Safety inductions are carried out by the Builder for his staff and contractors. If someone needs access to a work area then the Builder will need to give that person a Safety Induction, to be arranged through our Project Manager, Derek Lee.

Hopefully, there will be little interference with Church programmed activities until we need to close the Hall to replace the windows or accommodate Preschool activities that may need to be held in there from time to time when that area is closed. As much notice will be given as possible and we thank you for your cooperation during this period.

The following time table was discussed to commence the work.

1. Access to the site – during working hours 7:00am to 5:00pm – from 4th July until completion of work. Builders will have their own construction toilet in a fenced-off area of the Preschool.
 2. Roof over the Preschool – The western end, up to the gable, will be replaced starting 7th July and completed by 14th July, depending on weather.
 3. Stage 1 of Preschool work – 1st August to 30th September – Staff rooms etc – Minimum disruption to the Preschool operation. Preschool staff will liaise with the Project Manager at all times.
 4. Stage 2 of Preschool work – 1st October to 29th October – Handicapped Toilet and New Entry pathway.
 5. Roof over the Church – No date at this time, but likely in late July starting from the Church (eastern) end and working towards the Preschool.
- Repair to the water damaged areas of the Church – This area will be cordoned off while work is in progress – no date at present.

Colour of the Roof – Several people were asked and provided input. Thank you for your suggestions and choice of DUNE colour. This is the colour of the Church Front Door and Windows.

Undated information will be circulated as and when available.



***Being prepared for
next week's worship:***

10 July 2022

Pentecost 5

***"Who is my
neighbour?"***

10 July 2022 Sunday:

**8am, 9:30am &
6:45pm**

Bible Readings:

Colossians 1: 1-14

Luke 10: 25-37

Imagine if there had been no parable of the good Samaritan in the Christian tradition. It is hard to comprehend such a possibility because this parable is probably the best known and most appealing of all the parables Jesus tells. It exists and its effect are to be found well and truly outside the church through organizations like the Samaritans and the commendation 'you are a good Samaritan'.

This parable is only found in Luke. In its original setting its power lay in the suspicion and conflict between Jew and Samaritan. They were, of course, neighbours. On his way from Galilee to Jerusalem Jesus would either have to pass through Samaria or go around its territory. And they were more than neighbours. The Samaritans were descendants of Ephraim and Mannaseh, two of the sons of Joseph. In other words, they belong to the original twelve tribes of Israel and the name Samaritan is derived from a Hebrew word meaning 'guardians or keepers of the Torah / the Law). In terms of the geopolitics of the Hebrew Bible / the Old Testament they belonged to the northern tribes of Israel: when the Assyrians destroyed the Kingdom of Israel they were not deported but remained in the land. It would lead to a difference in the understanding of faith. For the Samaritans the holy mountain was Mt. Gerizim; for the leaders of the tribes who would return the holy mountain would be Zion and the focus of true worship would become the Temple.

Luke refers favourably to the Samaritans on two occasions. The other instance has to do with the healing of the ten lepers: only one returns to give thanks to Jesus and that is the lone Samaritan. In the parable Jesus is faced with a

trick question from an 'expert in the law'. It is provoked by the question 'who is my neighbour?'. The lawyer posing the question would not have expected the answer Jesus gave. The priest and Levite (icons of the Jewish faith) do not stop to help the man who has been set upon by robbers. That failure to give assistance is not due to their hard-heartedness or indifference – or fear that the robbers may still be lurking. It is much more likely that the wounded man represented a breach of the codes of purity and holiness. They do not stop because their understanding of God prevents them from doing so. By way of comparison the Samaritan stops, provides time (several days) and resources, and embodies an example of compassion / mercy - one of Luke's favourite themes. This is the only parable Jesus tells which ends with him saying 'Go, and do likewise'. The parable invites us to consider who is our neighbour. In the example Jesus gives it is the one who sees beyond the constraints of culture and discerns the needs of the person who is in the most vulnerable of situations. The parable stands inside Luke's concern for an inclusive gospel that crosses cultures – and here it is the culture about which we might be most suspicious that does 'the right thing' (as per Galatians last week). The reading from the epistle to the Colossians presumes that spread of the gospel. Its introduction follows the normal pattern of a Greek letter in as much as it spells out who is writing, to whom, and then proceeds to a greeting and a word of thanksgiving.