



st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together

Weekly Newsletter

27 November 2022

Advent 1 Hope

Bible Reading

8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm



Isaiah 2:1-5

Matthew 24:36-44

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 . 6.45pm
services

8am—Worship

Led by Pamela Leslie
and Clive Pearson

9.30am—Worship

Led by Sharon Underwood
and Clive Pearson

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

**Followed by
Slice Morning Tea**

6pm—Worship

Please note new time

Led by Alexander Lawless
and Clive Pearson
**Includes New Year
Advent Feast**

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 28 NOVEMBER

9am—Sorting & pricing for

Op Shop lower hall

12pm—Upstairs hall in use by Preschool

TUESDAY 29 NOVEMBER

9am-2pm—Op Shop open

9.30am-11am—Christian Meditation
offsite

11.30am-12:30pm—Preschool Nativity
in the church

12pm—Upstairs hall in use by Preschool

WEDNESDAY 30 NOVEMBER

9am-2pm—Op Shop

10am-12pm—In Stitches
upstairs hall

THURSDAY 1 DECEMBER

9am-2pm—Op Shop

9am-2pm—Mini Mart lower hall

10am-12pm—Coffee and Discovery

Guest Musician: David Short

in upstairs hall and church

12pm—Upstairs hall in use by Preschool

FRIDAY 2 DECEMBER

11.30am-12:30pm—Preschool Nativity
in the church

7pm-9pm—ALIVE -Youth Group
upstairs hall

SATURDAY 3 DECEMBER

9am-12pm—Op Shop open

9am-12pm—Mini Mart lower hall

SUNDAY 4 DECEMBER

**ELECTION OF ELDERS
AT ALL SERVICES**

**Also includes Communion
at all services**

8am—Worship

9.30am—Worship

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

6.45pm—Worship



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:

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PO Box 773 BAULKHAM HILLS 1755

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27 November 1st Sunday in Advent: The coming (again) of Christ.

Christmas Bowl: Candle of Hope.

Isaiah 2:1-5 Matthew 24: 36-44

O come, O come, Emmanuel For over 1200 years that refrain from the well-known Advent carol is sung. Our version dates from 1851; originally the text was in Latin and was sung in monasteries 7 days out from Christmas Eve. There are many versions of this familiar carol these days – from formal cathedral choirs, through to the Cambridge Singers and their John Rutter version, to Chris Tomlin, semi-jazz versions – and The Piano Guys on piano and cello.

O come, o come, Emmanuel ... It is particularly apt for us to sing this carol this year as we change scripts, leaving behind Luke and placing ourselves in the care of Matthew. Only in Matthew is there any reference to this name / title Emmanuel which has been taken from Isaiah.

There is a common default position that occurs at this time of year: sometime Advent and Christmas begin to collapse into one another. That is a pity as the two seasons are really quite distinct. It can be helpful then to notice the readings that are set down. They can help keep us 'honest'. It is rather strange in some way that every year our readings for Advent come from towards the end of the gospel for the year rather than the beginning. That is because Advent is a season when we approach (again) the Christmas stories and also because Advent has to do with the expectation that Christ will come again.

The spirituality of the Advent season is often signified by the call to be 'watchful', to expect, to hope. Our Matthew reading for this week likens the coming of the Son of Man (Jesus) to the days of Noah. In the early church the Noah cycle played a more prominent role in understanding the gospel than it does today. In a way the Noah imagines a – 're-set': in these stories from the early chapters of Genesis God begins again with a new humanity and a rainbow covenant with 'all flesh'. The second coming of Christ presumes the fulfilment of hopes that the kingdom of God that he proclaimed will be fully realized. The Noah saga nevertheless carries words of warning: Noah's advice to his fellows is ignored; he prepares for the floods that will come but they disregard these gloomy prophecies and do not turn away from their wrongdoing and turn again to God.

Our reading from Matthew captures something of that apocalyptic mood when the purposes of God break in unexpectedly on a seemingly unprepared humanity. Life, like it was in the time of Noah, was carrying on 'normally' ... But the apocalyptic breaks in ... We might say that the way in which the shops make ready for Christmas, the end of the year, the prospect of preparing for holidays and the like is our equivalent of going things 'as in the days of Noah'.

It is a standard convention for the Advent New Testament readings to be accompanied by verses from the book of Isaiah. This book is written over an extended period of time and falls into three parts. The Advent / Christmas readings tend to come from the first part, the Easter readings from the second, the season of Pentecost from the third. In this reading from (first) Isaiah there is an expectation of people 'from all nations' (an Isaiah trait) seeking out the ways of the Lord and the prospect of an end to war. The Isaiah reading presents a counterbalance to the apocalyptic urgency found in Matthew. In days of impending difficulty the prophet bids the people to 'come, let us walk in the light of the Lord'. There is here the hope for a worldwide rule of God, but – for the moment – the people of Israel will need to negotiate defeat at the hands of the Assyrians.

An Advent Calendar:

Rowan Williams,

Advent Call to Prayer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iffdsEICGoU>

Advent Poem

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQBPBhQCsxE>

Concordia 'What is Advent?'

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8_lah83UYO

Norwich Cathedral, 'Lo, he comes with clouds descending'.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RdRhPh7SNvg>

Hillsong 'O come, Emmanuel'.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h00XV84D7gc>

Fellowship on Broadway 'O come, o come, Emmanuel'.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JfsTkFI7JU>

Kezia M'Clelland 'Light in the darkness'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndyupsOSnlg>

'Lift up your hearts'.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UurZJaOiSGg>

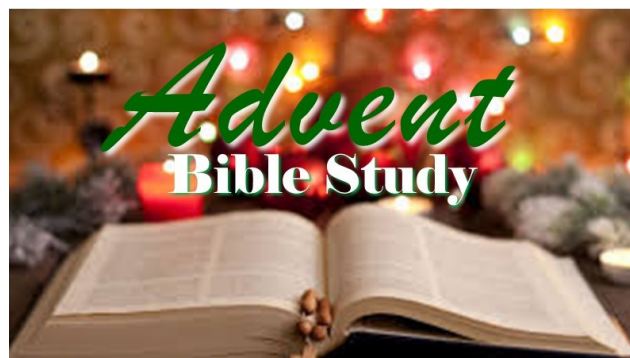
Yours in Christ,

Clive

Voting of Elders

Nominations have now closed

The election of elders will take place on site next Sunday 4th December - If you are not at Church on that Sunday, you may vote in the week from 4th December through to Thursday 8th December. If you are not able to get to church during this week please contact the office and we will make sure that your vote will count and be recorded.



Advent Studies for this year

The coming Season of Advent in the Christian calendar commences on Sunday 27th November. We traverse from a gospel year in Luke into a year featuring Matthew. This means that we move from a year featuring gentiles and the needy to a focus on Jewish people, the chosen people of God as viewed by Matthew.

We will be engaged in Three studies this advent, at weekly intervals.

The first will be led by Clive Pearson who will provide us with much food for thought. He will draw comparisons between the Advent story of Christmas as presented by both Matthew and Luke and provide some clues about what will follow in Matthew as we explore this Gospel in 2023.

Drawing on the information provided by Clive, the following two weeks of the study will be led by Michael Strong and will first involve reflections on the events leading up to the birth of Jesus. The second will consider the entry of Herod and horrid actions he inflicted on male children in Bethlehem and the flight of Jesus and his family to Egypt. This exploration will continue through to the exchanges between John the Baptist and Jesus.

The studies advertised above will be held at the following times:

Onsite at the church at 10.30am

Tuesday — 29 November

Tuesday — 6 & 13 December

Or ZOOM online 7.30pm

Wednesday — 30 November

Wednesday — 7 & 14 December


Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3602745736>

Anyone that will be participating in Clive and Mike's study via Zoom Online and would like a copy of the study, please contact the Church office and a copy will be sent to you.

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS/EPIPHANY

WITH LOVE TO THE WORLD



VOL. 17, NO. 1
14 NOVEMBER 2022 – 12 FEBRUARY 2023

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS/EPIPHANY

WITH LOVE TO THE WORLD

a daily Bible reading guide based on the Revised Common Lectionary

Volume 17, Number 1

14 November 2022 to 12 February 2023

is available in the church foyer.

Please place \$5 in offering bag to cover costs.

A Sydney Alliance-Parramatta Mission forum

will be taking place at the Fellowship Centre on

Wednesday 30 November, 6 - 8pm.

Matt Kean, the NSW treasurer, will be special guest. The evening will include information/discussion on topics such as inequality & cost of living, affordable housing/ renter's rights, affordable and renewable energy, and climate change. A team of congregation helpers is being organised.

If you would like to help, please let us know.

NB: Attendees (inc. congregation volunteers and general participants) need to register in advance:

<https://events.humanitix.com/parramatta-assembly-with-nsw-treasurer-matt-kean>



PEOPLE NEWS

Bruce MacWilliam

Pamela Leslie

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

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle 27 November—3 December

Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore

**The St. Matthew's Uniting Church weekly
Newsletter is available to view at the end of
each week for the upcoming Sunday
on the St. Matthew's website
www.stmatthewsuniting.net.au
Click on the metal dove image / publications.**

Being prepared for next week's worship:



4 December 2022
Advent 2 Peace

Theme:

'Prepare the way of the Lord'.

Christmas Bowl:

Candle of Peace

Sunday

4 December:

8am, 9:30am &

6:45pm

Bible Readings:

Isaiah 11:1-10
Matthew 3:1-12

In the gospel of Luke the births of John the Baptist and Jesus run in parallel to one another. That is made plain most especially in Mary's visitation to Elizabeth – but that is not the case in Matthew. The first appearance of John is in the wilderness of Judea proclaiming repentance: he is described as the one who is fulfilling the prophecy of (second) Isaiah (with a little bit of Malachi and Exodus thrown in): in its original setting (several hundred years before the time of Jesus) that voice in the wilderness would not have imagined this description being applied to John the Baptist. The leaders of Israel have been carried away into exile in Babylon: the (first) Temple is in ruins. Now the hope of new beginning is dawning. By way of an aside Handel made use of the King James' Version's reading of Isaiah 40:1-5 in *The Messiah*.

The first century Jewish historian, Josephus, makes mention of Joseph (who was a 'good man and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue'. John is also held in high regard in Islam (under the name of Yahya) where he is told to hold fast to the Scriptures and received wisdom while still a child. He was 'kind to his parents and neither arrogant nor disobedient'.

In the gospel of Matthew John's ministry is one of baptism for repentance and a forerunner of 'the one coming after me'. It is anticipating

Thank you

"A Huge thankyou to everyone that supported our Trivia night which took place last Saturday (19th November). With your help and support, we were able to raise \$2037.35 that will go towards the roof fund.

It was an amazing night that wouldn't have been possible without your prayer and support."

Daniel

Christmas Services At St. Matthew's

Remembrance & Thanksgiving Service

* Monday 12 December 7.30pm

Carol Services

* Sunday 18 December 8am & 9.30am

Children's Christmas Eve Celebration

* 24 December 5pm

Christmas Eve Late Service

* 24 December 11.15pm

Christmas Day Worship

* 25 December 9am

the coming of the as yet not. Named Jesus. There is a divisive edge to this account, however, that warns the reader of the impending conflict between 'the one who is to come' and the Pharisees and the Sadducees. This is the first reference to them in this gospel. Why the Sadducees especially came out to John in the wilderness feels a little unusual as they were more bound to the Temple, Jerusalem, and something of an elite. John describes them as a brood of vipers, perhaps a reference back to the serpent in the garden of Eden.

The Isaiah reading set down for this week is taken from (first) Isaiah. In the midst of this talk of wilderness, repentance and vipers the Isaiah text provides a shoot for something rather different – the possibility of a peaceful kingdom that embraces the whole of nature. The 'stump of Jesse' refers to David – and, by extension due the way in which the term the son of David is applied in the gospels becomes a reference to Jesus. There is no equivalent in Matthew of Luke's account of 'the spirit of the Lord' being upon Jesus as he reads from the synagogue in his town: this Isaiah passage nevertheless has the spirit of wisdom, understanding, counseling, might, knowledge and fear of the Lord. It fulfils a somewhat similar purpose.

JNC update - November 2022

The JNC are pleased to report some progress, as ACOMP have provided the JNC with the ministry profile of a potential candidate who they believe may be a suitable match for St Matthews (and also provided that candidate with our church's profile). The JNC are currently reviewing this profile and if the candidate is interested, we will have an initial exploratory conversation with them. We would greatly appreciate your continued prayers for patience, perseverance and discernment, and that the Lord will send the right minister to us at the right time.

Yours in peace

JNC

First Sunday of Advent



Hope for families forced to flee their country

Eugene and her family were forced to make the heartbreaking decision to flee their country Ukraine when the fighting escalated. They are just one of the millions of families who have been forced to flee their home in recent months. Your gifts through the Christmas Bowl can help local partners, like HIA, respond immediately to emergencies, giving families like Eugene's safety in exile – and hope for the future – when they need it most. **Please give today.**



CALL: 1800 025 101 VISIT: actforpeace.org.au/christmasbowl



The Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. ABN 86 619 970 188

Give Hope



Share God's love with a refugee going hungry this Christmas

Please give today: 1800 025 101
www.actforpeace.org.au/christmasbowl

The Christmas Bowl is the Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. ABN 86 619 970 188



Christmas Bowl envelopes are available as you enter and leave the services from Sunday 27 November.

There are three simple ways to give;

1. Go to the website and donate directly.
2. If you want to give by cheque or credit card, please fill in the details in the envelope and **PUT IT IN THE POST**.
3. Cash to Christmas Bowl person at the back of the church. (if you want a receipt – put the cash in the envelope, fill out the form inside and hand it to the Christmas Bowl person so that a receipt can be mailed to you).



VISIT: actforpeace.org.au/christmasbowl



international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. ABN 86 619 970 188