



st. matthew's  
UNITING CHURCH  
BAULKHAM HILLS  
growing together

## Weekly Newsletter

4 December 2022

Advent 2 Peace

### Bible Reading

8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm

**Isaiah 11: 1-10**

**Matthew 3: 1-12**

Response after Bible Readings

Leader: Hear the word of the Lord

Response: Thanks be to God



### ELECTION OF ELDERS AT ALL SERVICES

#### 8am—Worship

Includes Communion  
Led by Shamali Perera  
and Clive Pearson

#### 9.30am—Worship

Includes Communion  
Led by Daniel Gibb  
and Clive Pearson

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

#### 6.45pm—Worship

Led by Nicola Lawless  
and Alexander Lawless

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

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

#### MONDAY 5 DECEMBER

9am—Sorting & pricing for  
Op Shop lower hall  
12pm—Upstairs hall in use by Preschool

#### TUESDAY 6 DECEMBER

9am-2pm—Op Shop open  
9.30-11am—Christian Meditation  
in the Church  
10.30am—Advent Studies  
with Mike Week 2 in the church  
11am-6pm—Setup for Preschool  
Concert upstairs hall  
6pm-10pm—Preschool Concert  
upstairs hall  
7.30pm—Thrive Bible Study  
lower hall  
7.30pm—Community Engagement  
Focus Group Meeting

#### WEDNESDAY 7 DECEMBER

9am-2pm—Op Shop  
10am-12pm—In Stitches  
upstairs hall FINAL for 2022  
6pm-10pm—Preschool Concert  
upstairs hall  
7.30pm—Advent Studies  
with Mike Week 2 on ZOOM  
Change to Zoom link. Please contact office  
for details.

#### THURSDAY 8 DECEMBER

9am-2pm—Op Shop  
12pm—Upstairs hall in use by Preschool  
6pm-10pm—Preschool Concert  
upstairs hall

#### FRIDAY 9 DECEMBER

9am—Post Concert clean up  
by Preschool upstairs hall  
5pm-7pm—Fusion Youth Group  
“Christmas Pool Party” offsite

#### SATURDAY 10 DECEMBER

No Scheduled activities

#### SUNDAY 11 DECEMBER

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:

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

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@stmatthewsunitingchurchbaulkhamhills

**PRE-SCHOOL DIRECTOR** 9639 8570

SONALI WANIGESEKERA

PO Box 321 BAULKHAM HILLS 2153

**EMAIL:** director@stmatthewsps.net.au

## 4 December 2nd Sunday in Advent:

### 'Prepare the way of the Lord'

#### Christmas Bowl: Candle of Peace

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

It all feels a bit unusual. All of a sudden John the Baptist appearing in the wilderness breaks into our Advent preparation. We are much more used to this scene to do with John the Baptist in the wilderness featuring as a lead-in to the baptism of Jesus. It is not too difficult, though, to see why this message of 'preparing the way of the Lord' features in the second week of Advent.

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 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.

#### Online

Rowan Williams

Advent Reflection

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

#### Music

Bifrost Arts

'Come Light'

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

Ordinary Time,

'All Shall Be Well'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybRAzJ7h89w>

Chris Tomlin

Come, thou long expected Jesus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WWj9sDXITOA>

Adore

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=br-Q1zVcUc>

St John's College Choir

Come, thou long expected Jesus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEE0uWnDGs>

The Priests

'O holy night'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OX8NkTERktI>

*Yours in Christ,*

Clive

## Voting of Elders

*Nominations have now closed*

The election of elders will take place on site on 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.

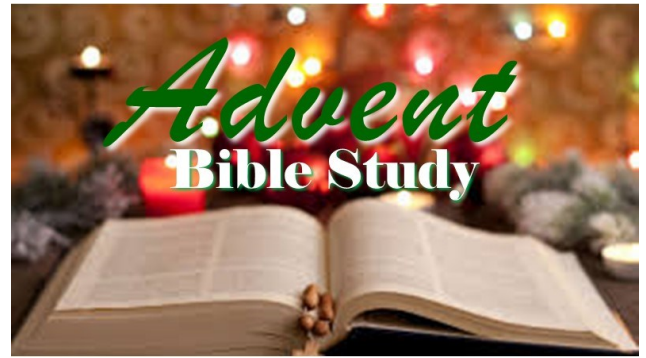
## JNC update - November 2022

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. Matthew's (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

**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](http://www.stmatthewsuniting.net.au) Click on the metal dove image / publications.**



## Advent Studies for this year

The coming Season of Advent in the Christian calendar commences on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> 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 [NewZoomLink](#)

**Please contact the Church office for new ZOOM link details and study notes. We will email them to you.**

*Thank you*



## PEOPLE NEWS

Dulcie Duncum

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

## 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

## Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

4—10 December

*Myanmar, Thailand*



West Epping  
Uniting Church

**WEST EPPING  
UNITING CHURCH  
LEISURE MINISTRY**

Bookings are now open for a Coach Trip on Tuesday 17th January 2023.

Total Cost of \$60 includes comfortable coach travel, Morning tea and admission to Alison Homestead Museum and Central Coast Zoo and Amazement Farm & Fun Park.

Departure time at West Epping Uniting Church 8.30am. BYO lunch

Bookings - M. & J. Ross 9873 3713

## Being prepared for next week's worship:



11 December 2022

## Advent 3 Joy

### Theme:

"Who are we waiting for?"

Christmas Bowl Theme:

Candle of Joy

Sunday 11 December:

8am, 9:30am &

6:45pm

Bible Readings:

**Isaiah 35: 1-10**  
**Matthew 11: 2-11**

The Advent season is a theme of waiting. The reading from Matthew for this week is intriguingly relevant in a contemporary society like ours. The season of Christmas is observed by all and sundry. It is unavoidable given the marketing pressure that now accompanies Christmas. Were those who were living at the time of Jesus' birth now with us, imagine their response to Christmas trees, Santa Claus and assorted reindeer, the way in which supermarkets are decked out. That is surface stuff, in a way. We come to Christmas in a society that is increasingly indifferent to the Jesus story and the claims associated with him. 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?' It becomes an interesting question in today's world of many faiths and no faiths. For Muslims the answer is clear: Jesus (Isa) is held in high regard as is John the Baptist (Yahya ibn Zakariya): nevertheless, Islam was waiting for Muhammad. In our secular society we often find ourselves waiting for a strong leader, in effect a secular messiah.

The reply to John the Baptist's messengers mimics (in a way) the

reading of Jesus from the scroll of Isaiah in the synagogue in Luke. Is Jesus the messiah (the anointed one / the Christ in Greek). In the Hebrew tradition it is a prophet or a king who is anointed. Unlike Luke Matthew does not establish a family relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus. It is through the Isaiah text (Isaiah 40) that the two are bound together. The disciples of John are invited to consider what they notice about Jesus' ministry – what do they see and hear; Jesus asks the crowds what did they observe with regards to John: the messianic link to a political and courtly kingship is denied as is the expectation of the messiah being merely a prophet. John is 'more than a prophet' and is preparing the 'way': the first Christians would, of course, be known initially as the followers of the way.

The reading from Isaiah 35 establishes a bridge between John the Baptist in the wilderness and his message of repentance with the return of the people to Jerusalem. The desert rejoices, becomes a place of joy and hope made possible by the coming of God.

## Second Sunday of Advent



Karen McGrath/Act for Peace

## Peace through food rations

It's been 11 years since the civil war broke out in Syria with thousands of families still living in neighbouring countries like Jordan. But as the cost-of-living increases, many refugee families are struggling to earn enough money to put food on the table.

Act for Peace's local partner, the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR), supports Syrian refugees by providing vital food rations along with psychosocial care. **Please give today.**



Christmas Bowl



**CALL: 1800 025 101 VISIT: [actforpeace.org.au/christmasbowl](http://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](http://www.actforpeace.org.au/christmasbowl)

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).



Christmas Bowl

**VISIT: [actforpeace.org.au/christmasbowl](http://actforpeace.org.au/christmasbowl)**



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

YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE

# Induction of

**REV. DR ROB McFARLANE**  
Presbytery Relations Minister

**REV. JENNY DUCKER**  
Safe Church Resourcing Minister

**TUESDAY 6 DECEMBER 2022**  
5.00pm

**Wesley Mission**  
220 Pitt St Sydney

RSVP by 2 December 2022

**Register Here:**  
<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/induction-service-tickets-464776728707>

**Zoom:**  
Meeting URL: <https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/93420227043?from=addon>  
Meeting ID: 934 2022 7043



# Just in time for Christmas presents! Twilight Markets

**Thursday 8th December 2022**

**4:00pm - 7:00pm**

**Bidwill Uniting Hall & Grounds**

over 20 awesome stalls  
sausage sizzle drinks tea/coffee

**26 Bidwill Square, Bidwill T: 9835 2970**