



st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together

Weekly Newsletter

5 February 2023

Epiphany 5

Bible Reading

9am and 6.45pm



Isaiah 58:1-9a

Matthew 5:13-20

Response after Bible Readings

Leader: Hear the word of the Lord

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 worship services

8am, 9.30am and 6.45pm

8am—Worship
includes Communion
Led by Shamali Perera
and Clive Pearson

9.30am—Worship
includes Communion
Led by Albert Olley
and Clive Pearson
KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8

6.45pm—Worship
includes Communion
Led by Alexander Lawless
and Clive Pearson

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 6 FEBRUARY

9am-Sorting and Pricing
for Op Shop lower hall

TUESDAY 7 FEBRUARY

9am-2pm—Op Shop

9.30-11am—Christian Meditation

in the Church

7.30pm—Bible Study "Reading
Matthew" Week1 In the church

WEDNESDAY 8 FEBRUARY

9am-2pm—Op Shop

10am-12pm—Women's Fellowship

upstairs hall and church

7.30pm—Church Council Executive
Meeting at the church

THURSDAY 9 FEBRUARY

9am-2pm—Op Shop

7.30pm—Bible Study "Reading
Matthew" Week1 **ZOOM**

Zoom link:

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

FRIDAY 10 FEBRUARY

No Scheduled Events

SATURDAY 11 FEBRUARY

No Scheduled Events

SUNDAY 12 FEBRUARY

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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5 February

Epiphany 5

Who do you think you are? Righteous?

Isaiah 58:1– 9a Matthew 5:13-20

Relevancy

Every gospel has its own distinctive way of organizing its material. One of the distinguishing marks of Matthew is that it is the only gospel in which the word 'church' occurs. It comes much later in proceedings than our reading for this morning. The sermon on the mount (which runs from the beginning of chapter 5 through to the end of chapter 7 is addressed to the crowd. That may be so but perhaps one might reflect on how this 'you' which features in the call to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world invites us to consider the place of the church in today's world. It invites us to consider the whole business of relevancy.

Once upon a time that was not such an issue. The surrounding host culture had a basic disposition that understood the Christian story. But that is no longer so. Our society is much more complicated – and becoming increasingly so. That this should be the case is reflected in the very frequent use of the word mission now: it no longer refers to what is happening overseas but concerns itself with the life of the church and how it intersects with the neighbourhood and its community in which the local church is set.

The word 'relevant' is surprisingly modern. It was not widely used until the eighteenth century. It came into English from the French in the 1550s. It comes from a Latin stem meaning to 'lessen or lighten', hence to help, assist, comfort, console. Our current usage has much more to do with being pertinent and able to be applied to the matter at hand.

There has been much work been done on seeking to render the church pertinent or relevant for the current period in which we find ourselves. There has been a lot of talk about 'fresh expressions' (that is, new ways of 'doing' church), the 'emerging' church', even a 'mixed economy' which means offering services for a traditional congregation as well for those who gather in alternative ways around their distinctive interests.

The ever-present temptation is for the church to look to programs that will somehow 'click' with the wider community. That is probably not going to happen. The changes in our society have to do with worldviews as much as what people 'do'. One of the great Christian thinkers of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century is Jürgen Moltmann. It his core conviction that the focus should fall on what he calls 'the therapeutic relevance of the gospel'. The gospel (rather than the church) needs to speak and it needs to proclaim good news.

It is into this kind of context that these images of salt and light. They presume a modest presence in a larger world but one which nevertheless has a creative, indeed 'relevant' function in living out the gospel. These two images can, of course, apply to our contemporary culture and the local congregation. We might say, first of all, that our society becomes the equivalent of Matthew's 'crowd'. In that case one might ask how is this country perceived beyond ourselves? Now that we have passed Australia Day, might we ask a question or two: Is it reckoned to be like light or salt' within the context of the wider world?

And what about the church? The position of the church in the current Australian landscape is not like it once was. The way in which a congregation seeks to relate to its neighbourhood has altered. Rather than lying close to the heart of things, the church is now more on the edge—and, in some cases, on the receiving end of rather dismissive comments. Should it then seek to see itself as 'salt'—in other words, adding some seasoning and healing to the neighbourhood? Should its members seek to be a 'light to the world' and what might that mean?

The way in which these images are tested should be seen in the light of their content in Matthew's gospel. The preceding beatitudes are assumed—and so we might say the act of being a peacemaker, those who hunger and thirst after what is right in spirit, those willing to endure being misrepresented etc. The immediate context then passes into a fulfilment text—in this instance to the law and the prophets. This reference is to the first two sections of the Hebrew Bible to become canon (in the words, accepted). There is no attempt here to undo the law because the kingdom of heaven has drawn near. The reading closes with a reference to righteousness—one of Matthew's key recurring words first used of Joseph and then found in the Beatitudes. We may not like the character of some whom we may describe as self-righteous: there are many negative overtones but Matthew uses the word with approval: what might it mean for the congregation to be 'righteous'?

The lectionary has placed this reading alongside one taken from Third Isaiah. It is a challenging text inasmuch as 'the house of Jacob' imagine that they are following the way of the Lord 'as if they were a nation that practised righteousness'. The oracle is incisive: 'they want God on their side'. The 'house' perform the rituals of faith, especially that do with fasting, bowing the head, dressing in sackcloth and ashes—but they do so only in order 'to serve your own interest'. The word of YHWH interprets the true fasting to be one that 'loose[s] the bonds of injustice, ... undo[es] the straps of the yoke. ... let[s] the oppressed go free'. The true fast is one that shows concern for the homeless and the hungry.

How might such a 'fast' be practised today? Is it the case that being like salt and light means life together being one that seeks to do practical acts of mercy, compassion, care? What does it mean to day to live out being salt and light? John Chrysostom (one of the early church fathers) wrote: "If you cannot find Christ in the beggar at the Church door, you will not find him in the chalice."

Online resources:

Richard Bauckham on Jürgen Moltmann
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vUcCoP9EPY4>

Samuel J Young Bauckham on Jürgen Moltmann
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dYMdew5yU4>

Music:

Hillside Community Church
You are salt for the earth, O people
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cwo9a13bhLw>

Yours in Christ,

Clive



PEOPLE NEWS

Margaret Bell

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

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

5 — 11 February

Andorra, Italy, Malta, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Vatican City

FEBRUARY SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

at the church

5 February - 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm
includes Communion

12 February - 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm

19 February - 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm

26 February - 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm

Live streaming continues for all services

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.



2 week study
Reading
Matthew

1) *Matthew loses 'priority':*

Why is it no longer regarded as the first gospel to be written down.

2) *Matthew's account of Jesus teaching:*

How does it differ from other gospels?

What are the main ideas/themes?

What are the implications for us today?

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

Onsite at the church at 7.30pm

Tuesday — 7 and 14 February

Or

ZOOM online at 7.30pm

Thursday — 9 and 16 February

Zoom link:

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

Anyone that will be participating in Clive'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. Thank you

Church Council Congregation Representatives

Positions for Representatives from 9.30am and 6.45pm worship congregations are required for Church Council. These positions are for a two-year period.

Please contact Barbara Gibb if you are interested in representing your worship community, for more information.

Please prayer consider being involved.



\$100 / PLAYER
Active Kids Vouchers welcome

NETBALL

PLAY LOCAL - PLAY SOCIAL



REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

SATURDAY AFTERNOON COMPETITION
GOODEN RESERVE BAULKHAM HILLS
www.stmatthewsnetballclub.com

St. Matthew's Netball Club

Registration for 2023 season now open.

Will close on Friday 5 February.

Competition games available for girls from Year 2 above at school. Women's comp for 18 & over age group.

FunNet which is a program where children learn fundamental netball skills and is for children in Kindergarten & Year 1 at school.

For further information or to complete your registration, go to club website

www.stmatthewsnetballclub.com

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

12 February

**Theme:
Epiphany 6**

***"Making
Choices"***

Sunday

**12 February:
9am and 6.45pm**

Bible Readings:

**1 Corinthians 3:1-9
Matthew 5:21-37**



In the background to our readings for this morning lies Deuteronomy 30:15-20. YHWH invites us 'to choose life'. Through that lens we might say that Paul's epistle invites the deeply divided members of the church in Corinth to consider how they might overcome their differences and become a life-giving community. It is not straightforward: they are a deeply divided community. Some see themselves as a spiritual elite and look down on those they regard as spiritual 'clodhoppers'; a few are wealthy and prefer their own food over the community options; there are differences of conviction over what to believe. And then there is the notion of congregational party politics: who baptized whom? Was it Apollo or was it Paul? They are quarrelling.

Paul does not always enjoy such a good press these days: he deserves better because he has a keen eye on how to nurture and edify congregational life. He does this not by some special program but by seeking to feed the body of the church. In other words, he is inviting them to leave behind the idolatry of poor decision-making, poor choices that are 'all too human'. The Corinthians are not as mature in the faith as some of them might believe: Paul has been feeding them 'milk' rather than on 'solid food' as if they are infants.

Paul exposes one of the great obstacles to the Christian life: the tendency to make choices that are 'fleshly'—that is, according to party and personal interest. What the reading hints at lies beyond the text itself but in this epistle Paul is asking the church in Corinth to think through what their service of the word of the cross (the gospel) should look like.

In the gospel reading Matthew lists a raft of practical and ethical issues that require choices, decisions to be made. Some reflect the cultural and religious expectations of the day. On a surface reading they can create the impression that God keeps a moral register – you do this and this is what you should expect. What might be the case, though, if we read these injunctions as if they were seeking to address the question of how we can live together as God's people and be a blessing to others?

In some ways the list does represent an intensification of the: 'you have heard it said in ancient times ... I say unto you'. The list of issues covers anger, potential court cases, adultery, divorce, and oaths. There is underlying concern for integrity in this line up – both for the person concerned and for the quality of relationships.

What is rather noticeable in the Uniting Church is how in matters to do with sexuality the emphasis has become placed in the quality of the relationship with a due awareness of how complicated matters can be. In the past the call to settle grievances at the altar lest a matter goes to court has also been placed under scrutiny. In a rather notable article by a Samoan lecturer the Corinthian correspondence was examined from the perspective of how sometimes it might be necessary to take the church to court in order for it to be more truly the church. There have at times been instances where a church has failed to live up to its own polity or has breached the principles of human rights which the law extends to citizens.

Used stamps

We are still collecting used stamps for Synod.

Please bring in your old stamps precut with a 2cm border around the stamps. There will be a box available in the cupboard in the foyer to place your stamps. Or you can drop them in to the church office.

Eulalie has very kindly volunteered to take them to Synod for us.

In January 2022, the stamp room was reopened to volunteers and customers and to receive many donations of private stamp collections and material from congregations. To all the volunteers who have collected, trimmed and sorted stamps has enabled the stamp committee to give away \$31,200 from the sale of used pieces of paper. A total of \$31,200 was distributed to forty six congregations in NSW and ACT to assist volunteers to provide resources for community projects.

Calling all plant lovers

If you enjoy propagating plants and would like to have some fun as an individual or group of people creating potted plants to sell in the Op Shop, please speak with Pamela Leslie, Katherine Pedersen or call the office on T: 9686 3003.

Thank you to Earl Gray, David Porter, Chris Kurukulasooriya and George Haines for trimming the May Bush hedge near the garden shed on 24 January. The clippings were mulched with the mower and set aside to be used in the garden.

Recycled Christmas tree project update

"Thank you to everyone who has participated in The Recycled Christmas tree, it was a huge success! We raised \$83.60 so far!!

We will get in contact with the charity to make sure that they receive the donation.

For the next year, it would be great if we could continue this initiative!"

Please note:

For the plastic bottles and cans, please make sure that they are not squashed, this makes it hard for the bar code to be scanned and sometimes we miss out on a can or bottle for that reason.

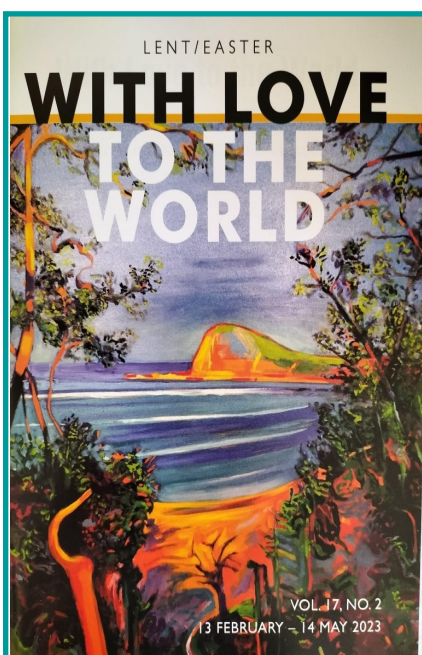
Could the labels also be kept on the plastic bottles, if we get water bottles without the labels we won't be able to use them.

Please, no wine bottles or glass jars are excepted, only cans, plastic water bottles, glass bottles and juice boxes with 10c printed on the back.

Please feel free to get in contact if you need any large amount of bottles/ cans to be collected. Otherwise please leave them in the top half of the church in the plastic container.

Thank you,

Marijke Prinsloo



LENT/EASTER

WITH LOVE TO THE WORLD

a daily Bible reading guide based on the Revised Common Lectionary

**Volume 17,
Number 2
13 February
to
14 May 2023**

is available
in the church foyer.

**Please place \$6
in offering bag
to cover costs.**