



st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together

Weekly Newsletter

19 March 2023

4th Sunday in Lent

Bible Readings



1 Samuel 16:1-13

John 9:1-41

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

8am & 9.30am only

8am—Worship

Led by Vivienne Strong
and Clive Pearson

9.30am—Worship

Led by Dean Drayton
and Clive Pearson

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

10.45am—Congregation Meeting

Followed by light lunch

5pm—Shine

6.45pm—Worship

Led by Daniel Gibb
includes

Lenten Study Week 2

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 20 MARCH

9am—Sorting and Pricing
for Op Shop lower hall

TUESDAY 21 MARCH

9am-2pm—Op Shop

9.30-11am—Christian Meditation

in the Church

11am—Lenten Bible Study Week 3
at the church

7.30pm—Thrive lower hall

WEDNESDAY 22 MARCH

9am-2pm—Op Shop

THURSDAY 23 MARCH

9am-2pm—Op Shop

7.30pm—Lenten Bible Study Week 3
on ZOOM

[https://us02web.zoom.us/](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3602745736)

[j/3602745736](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3602745736)

FRIDAY 24 MARCH

No Scheduled Events

SATURDAY 25 MARCH

No Scheduled Events

SUNDAY 26 MARCH

8am—Worship

9.30am—Worship

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

6.45pm—Worship

includes

Lenten Bible Study Week 3



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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4th Sunday in Lent

Truth to Power

1 Samuel 16:1-13 John 9:1-41

It can be very difficult to make a stand for what is right and declare truth to power. It takes courage: there are risks aplenty. That is especially the case when there is a regime change in place; the same is true when those who hold power are faced with an alternative voice and vision.

In the case of Samuel he is confronted with the withdrawal of the Lord's support for Saul, the first king. Samuel had anointed Saul. As king Saul had embarked upon many victorious campaigns but he then failed to perform the necessary rites and lost God's favour. The focus is on Samuel: he is to oversee, in a manner of speaking, a change in kings (as is indicated through the command to fill his horn with oil). He knows only too well that there is potential here for Saul to have him put to death. The elders of Bethlehem are well aware of how dangerous the time is: they ask whether Samuel comes 'peaceably'. Samuel sets in place the steps by which David will replace Saul.

In the gospel of John we have another 'sign' and another one of those 'I am' sayings—this time, 'I am the light of the world'. It is another one of those extended and very intricate stories in John there is frequent misunderstanding before the man born blind emerges as an exemplary believer. The man born blind undergoes a journey not simply from being blind to seeing: he starts off by not knowing who it is who has healed him, the presumes the one who has healed him is a prophet; he needs to negotiate his way through a hostile interrogation before he eventually worships and believes. The comparison can be made his parents who are fearful of 'the Jews' They are intimidated.

There are seven discrete scenes in the encounter. The actual healing through spitting, smearing with mud and washing is very briefly told. From the perspective of the Pharisees Jesus has broken the Sabbath. The controversy with the Pharisees arises out of the healing of man blind from birth. The default understanding that is current, it seems, is that either the man or his parents must have sinned. Jesus refutes that understanding in favour of a reading whereby God's healing works (rather than that of judgement) can be seen in the man regaining sight. The sign allows for a 'revealing'. The evidence of the man being able to see is now before his neighbours but they are unsure if it is him, or 'someone like him'. They had known him as a beggar.

The complaint against Jesus is intensified because this healing took place in the Sabbath. The issue at stake becomes one of whether 'this man' (Jesus) is from God or not: some argue that he cannot be because he does not properly observe the Sabbath. Under questioning the man born blind has to make a stand for what he believes to be right, despite the scepticism of some neighbours and the inquest of the Pharisees. He believes Jesus must be a 'prophet'; his parents testify to the Pharisees that the man had been born blind. The parents are under

pressure and are fearful that if they say Jesus is the Messiah, then they will be 'put out of the synagogue'. The blind man is of age and must speak for himself. More pressure is brought to bear upon him but he does not relent on what he knows. He concludes that 'this man' must be from God; he pays a price for the Pharisees 'drive him out'. They justify their actions on the ground that the man was born entirely in sin) witness his blindness and the common understanding) and he now tries to teach those well versed in Scripture and the law.

Jesus hears what happens: he seeks the man out who confesses that he believes Jesus to be 'the son of man'. Some of the Pharisees are at hand: they hear the conversation between Jesus and the blind man. It concludes with the warning that some who see may be blind and remain in sin.

The pressure that is brought to bear upon the man born blind is extraordinary. It is sustained. The neighbours have some power through their knowledge of him as a beggar, someone in need and their knowledge of the 'system' and what is conventional thinking: they marginalize the man (and his parents) through their recourse to his blindness being a consequence of sin. The Pharisees / Jews have the power of the full weight of the religious system they represent: they are sure of their ground. It takes courage for the man born blind to remain true to what has happened to him and then to believe who Jesus is.

Music:

Carl Ellis and 200m bagpipes, Berlin Amazing grace
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKQULTTnaI8>

Gurumul and Paul Kelly Amazing grace
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MVORrx9jliE>

Ioan Gruffuyd Amazing grace
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9_RQsl-ygc

Amazing grace (my chains are gone) Chris Tomlin (live)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KKo3T0j9qqo>

Lord, let me see
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8z8roH9ocFM>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ocPvWHIM550>

Open my eyes, Lord
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLWYXpJirjg>

John's gospel:

Yale Divinity School The Man Born blind
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdJcsab-bGg>

Yours in Christ,

Clive



PEOPLE NEWS

Yee-Cheng Eldridge

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.

Sympathy to David Leckie and family on the death of Margaret Leckie. A funeral service for Margaret will be held at Garden Chapel, Castlebrook Memorial Gardens, 712-746 Windsor Road, Rouse Hill on Thursday 23 March at 2pm.

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle 19—25 March

Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania

MARCH SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

at the church

12 March - 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm

19 March - 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm

26 March - 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm

Live streaming for 8am and 9.30am services only

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.

Congregation Meeting

Join us for a congregation meeting on **19 March at 10.45am** following the 9.30am worship service.

This is a great opportunity to catch up with friends from all worship services and to keep up to date with what is happening at St. Matthew's.

Following our meeting will be a time of sharing with a meal. If you are interested in staying for lunch, please provide a plate of ready to serve finger food to share.

Looking forward to seeing you all there.

Barbara Gibb

EASTER WORSHIP SERVICES

at the church

Maundy Thursday — 6 April @ 7.30pm

Good Friday — 7 April @ 9am

Easter Sunday — 9 April
@ 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm

Live streaming at 7.30pm, 9am, 8am, 9.30am services only

Coordinating our 'Welcome to Newcomers' approach across St. Matthew's.

Newcomers like to be made feel welcome, accepted and appreciated as they settle into any new church community.

Can we make sure we are doing this well here at St. Matthew's.

Clive has asked Judy Mann (a recent newcomer) and a small group to take a look at how we welcome all newcomers here at St. Matthew's. We are interested to know two things:

- What was your own experience like when you first came to St. Matthew's?
- Would you like to help us welcome newcomers in future?

Please – reply to Judy Mann at judyruhmanna@gmail.com or ring, text or voice message mobile: 0414 591 548

Judy will also be outlining this initiative across the three services on Sunday 19 March.



The days, location and times are:

Tuesday in the church at 11:00am

Thursday on line (ZOOM) at 7:30pm

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

Please contact church office for study notes

Sunday in church during the 6:45pm service

The dates in March are:

Tuesdays 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th

Thursdays 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th

Sundays 12th, 19th, 26th and 2nd April

The Passion of St Matthew

Our Lenten study this year will take place throughout March. This is an important season in the church's life as we make ready for Easter. There will be three different times in which you can participate.

The studies will be led by Clive Pearson and Mike Strong; they will include works of art as well as musical references.

We will be following through on Matthew's account of the passion and resurrection.

1. Setting the Stage (Matthew 26:1-46)
2. Trials and denials (Matthew 26:47-27:31)
3. Crucified (Matthew 27:32-66)
4. Risen (Matthew 28:1-20)

A Guide to St Matthew's Passion (Bach)

James Gilchrist

King's College Choir

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=591fCQvRjmo&t=112s>



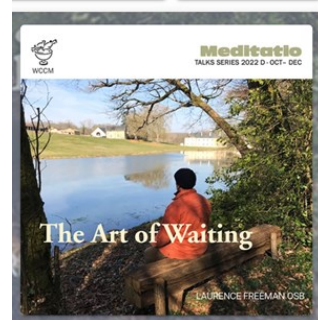
Meditation Talks Series beginning on the first Tuesday in April

Tuesdays at 9.30am—11am at the church

All are welcome

"The Art of Waiting"

By Laurence Freeman OSB



These talks invite us to understand patience as an essential condition for spiritual growth. The ability to be fully present to the moment that we are in, without the need for answers or control, is the poverty of spirit that allows God's power to manifest in our lives. In a culture accustomed to speed and instant outcomes, this insight presents a challenge. Laurence Freeman says we need to relearn the art of waiting through the practice of meditation. The twice-daily discipline of reciting the mantra without expectations teaches us gradually to just be in the present moment, giving God the space to do his transforming work in us.

- Week 1—Conditions for Breakthrough
- Week 2—The Art of Waiting
- Week 3—God is waiting for us
- Week 4—Conversion
- Week 5—Fruits of the Spirit & Divinisation
- Week 6—Unified Consciousness
- Week 7—State of Assurance
- Week 8—The last stage of saying the Mantra
- Week 9—Beatitudes; The new way of Being

Enq: Katherine Pedersen 0437 772 011, Rosemary Sexton

Blankets for Refugees

We are collecting blankets for Ukrainian refugees, some who have arrived in Australia and some who are in Poland. A lady whose family in Poland is supporting the refugees is organising a shipment of clothes and would like to include blankets. Her group is also supporting refugees who have arrived in Australia.



If you have any spare woolen blankets that you would like to donate please drop them in to the Op Shop. They can be in any condition as they can be washed and mended if needed.

Contact Pamela Leslie 0404 023 588 or Amanda Manson 0407 221 374

*Being prepared
for next week's
worship:*

26 March

**Theme:
Lent 5**

**Power
Plays**

Sunday

26 March:

8am

9.30am

6.45pm

Bible Readings:

Ezekiel 37:1-14

John 11:1-45



The death and restoration to life of Lazarus is a key moment in the unfolding of John's gospel. There is a Lazarus in Luke's gospel but that is not the same character: there he lies at the gate of the rich man in a parable. This Lazarus is brother to Mary and Martha; he lives in Bethany and he is loved by Jesus. He is ill; on hearing the news that his friend is unwell Jesus remains where he is for two further days: Lazarus died. On arrival in Bethany, Jesus is told by Martha had Jesus come, then her brother would not have died. In the interval between Jesus heading the news of Lazarus' illness and his arriving in Bethany 'many Jews' had come from Jerusalem to console the sisters. Lazarus has been in the tomb for four days: the stage is set.

The raising of Lazarus is one of the seven 'signs' to be found in John's gospel. A sign is not simply a miracle: it is designed to bear witness to who Christ is and how 'the Son of God may be glorified through it'. This sign is the last one to be performed in Jesus' public ministry in John. Jesus had told his disciples that Lazarus had 'fallen asleep'.

On arrival in Bethany Jesus weeps and engages in an exchange with Martha about the resurrection. As is often the case in John the one with whom Jesus speaks frequently misunderstands the tenor and implications of his words. Martha assumes that Jesus is speaking about being raised at the end of time. Jesus responds with one of his 'I am' sayings that resonate with the name Moses received from the burning bush: 'I am' or 'I will be who I will be'. Jesus declares himself to the

'resurrection and the life'. Jesus proceeds to raise Lazarus from the dead: he tells the bystanders to remove the stone and summons Lazarus to 'come out'.

The dying and raising of Lazarus anticipates the death and resurrection of Jesus. It will lead to the leaders of the Jews to initiate the plot to have Jesus put to death: Caiaphas declares that 'one man must die for the sake of the nation'. The become fearful that this sign will lead to the crowds (in Jerusalem) into following Jesus and the Romans will see this as a threat and put the nation down. They will seek to have Lazarus also put to death.

The raising of Lazarus should then be seen not in a way that is detached from the passion of Christ. In John's gospel it is the very act that sets into motion the specific intention to kill Jesus. It is a sign which bears witness to Jesus as being 'I am' and 'the resurrection and the life'. It takes place against the pressures brought to bear upon a small nation by an occupying imperial power.

The restoration to life is likewise modelled in Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones. It is through the agency of the Lord that breath enters the bones and they live. The four winds blow and the slain are knit together and form a 'vast multitude'. The bones represent the 'whole house of Israel': it becomes a vision of how those who have been 'cut off completely; will live, on their own soil and they will know that the Lord has spoken and will act. Israel is to be restored after its defeat by the Babylonian empire and its people having been carried into exile.

Katherine Pedersen Open Garden

Dates for March 2023

Thursdays from 10am-12noon. 16th, 23rd, & 30th

Saturdays from 2pm - 5pm. 18th, 25th.

Dates for APRIL 2023

Wednesday mornings of 19, 26, at 9.30- 12 noon

Saturday afternoons of 1st, 22, 29 at 1.30-3.30.pm.

Up to 8 people can visit on any open day.

\$10 adults 18 years and over includes drink and sweet or savoury offering of the day.

\$5 school children to 18 years includes drink and sweet or savoury offering of the day.

(Children must be constantly supervised by their parents or carers and follow the Instructions for their safety.)

Cash is required for payment and some extra as there are plants for sale

Visitors must be physically able to walk down 100 metres including a couple of hills. There is Water, steps, trip hazards, wildlife in the garden .

The garden will be open at various times each month of this year, sometimes on other days of the week.

For bookings and enquiries, please contact the owners, Gary and Katherine Pedersen, kathped56@gmail.com

This initiative is a fundraiser to assist with the cost of replacing the St. Matthew's roofing.