



st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together

Weekly Newsletter

17 December 2023

Advent 3

Bible Readings

Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11

1 Thessalonians 5: 16-24

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—Carol Worship Service

Led by Mike Strong
and Jon Humphries

9.30am—Carol Worship Service

Led by Sara Wienand
and Jon Humphries

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

5pm—Shine
Christmas Party

6.45pm—Carol Worship Service

Led by Daniel Gibb
and Jon Humphries

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 18 DECEMBER

Pest spraying

whole church & Preschool

9am—Sorting & Pricing

for Op Shop lower hall

TUESDAY 19 DECEMBER

9.30am—Christian Meditation

in the church

7.30pm—Thrive Bible study

OFFSITE

WEDNESDAY 20 DECEMBER

10am-12pm—In Stitches

upstairs hall

10am-12pm—Men's Morning Tea

Mckels Café Bella Vista

THURSDAY 21 DECEMBER

10am—Advent Studies

in the church

7.30pm—Advent Studies

in the church

22 DECEMBER

No Scheduled Activities

SATURDAY 23 DECEMBER

No Scheduled Activities

SUNDAY 24 DECEMBER



9am—Combined Service

KUCA in recess

5pm—Family
Christmas Eve Service

11.15pm—Late
Christmas Eve Service



MINISTER

REV JON HUMPHRIES

Email: jon@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

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PO BOX 321 BAULKHAM HILLS 2153

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Thank you to all who have
contributed to this publication.

Something to think about

17 December
3rd Sunday of Advent

Lectionary Readings:

Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11
Psalm 126 or Luke 1: 46b-55
1 Thessalonians 5: 16-24
John 1: 6-8, 19-28

Joy

Joy like love and hope is a complex word. We all sort of know what it is, but when we have to define it or describe what it actually is, then it is not as easy as we assume it to be.

Joy and happiness are often used interchangeably. However, happiness technically refers to the pleasurable feelings (emotions) that result from a situation, experience, or objects, whereas joy is a state of mind that can be found even in times of grief or uncertainty. In the sermon this week I quote a young person who describes joy as, "the combination of peace and happiness."

In Biblical Greek there are several words for joy.

χαρά (chara) joy

χαίρω (chairō) joyful

εὐφροσύνη (eufrosunē) glad joy

ἀγαλλίασις (agalliasis) great joy

In Hebrew there are three main words for joy

שִׂמְחָה (simcha), joy, gladness, mirth, is one of the most prevalent words in the Bible.

שִׂמְחָה (sameach [saw-may' akh]) glad, joyful, merry

שִׂשׁוֹן (sasson), exultation, rejoicing, The English word, 'sassy' is said to be derived from this.

There is also חֵדְוָה (chedvâh, [khed-vaw]) gladness, joy, This word is only used twice in the Bible and is directly connected with knowing God.

It is not easy to untangle the idea of joy from happiness. However, there is something deeper about joy than happiness. The idea that is about being connected with God is important as that comes both from the Hebrew word and the notion that joy is a fruit of the Spirit.

For me there is a flow-on pathway from hope to peace and to joy. Joy is perhaps peace combined with happiness. At least if one has no sense of peace, it is almost impossible to experience joy. To have any sense of peace, even in the hardest of times, we need hope. To have hope requires faith, and faith is that trust that God is present as a source of comfort and support as well as being at work for good, even if it isn't the miraculous transformation of our suffering or hardship.

In our readings, there is the Magnificat – Mary's song of joy. She sings of joy, and we who are religious might just nod our heads and think that she is saint and that is the sort of things saints do. However, Mary was deeply troubled at first. She was likely stressed and worried. How do you get people to believe that you have the Son of God in you? How do you fend off claims of immorality and shame? She was almost divorced by Joseph, and then as her time came to give birth she had to travel a long way and away from her family and the women who would normally midwife for her. Yet, in knowing the truth and in trusting God and the hope that the angel spoke of, she had a sense of peace and could sing with joy.

Then we have, alongside of John the Baptist assuring people that he was just a prophet and messenger for the One to come, we have Paul exhorting the Church of Thessalonica in Greece to "rejoice always" and to "give thanks in all circumstances." Paul who himself was not a stranger to hardship, knew this was not an easy thing. Again, this points to joy being a mindset rather than simply an emotion. Paul links this with the work God is doing in us. That is why in another letter he describes it as being an element of the 'fruit of the Spirit.' This fruit is not just something God simply imbues or manifests in us, but are disciplines that we take up in order to better manifest God and demonstrate our synchronicity with God's will and way which we know in the teaching of God in the person of Jesus.

So, yes, joy is an emotion and a deep one at that. However, it is also a mindset as well as a state of mind that we can work to put ourselves in. It is furthermore a work for us to do, not only for ourselves, but for others.

The active discipleship and applied learning activities for this week's service provide some encouragement to take up this work of joy. It is both about being joyful and about sharing that joy, even if only like Mary does to God – of course as biblical eavesdroppers, we get to benefit from.

Joy is therefore something to very much think about.

God bless

Jon



PEOPLE NEWS

Harry MacWilliam

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

SYNOD SPOTLIGHT

Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

For Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter for 8 December 2023 please see link :

[New Insights \(uca.org.au\)](http://uca.org.au)



**Help Required
to teach SRE
at Jasper Road
on Tuesday
Mornings
in 2024**

Speak to Daniel Gibb for more details

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

17 – 23 December

P.R. China, Hong Kong, Macau

DECEMBER SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

at the church

3 December – 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm
includes Communion

10 December – 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm
Community Meal

17 December – 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm

24 December – 9am (combined)

31 December – 9am (Summer)

Live streaming morning services only

st. matthew's Advent Studies



We'd love you to come and be involved as we not only learn more about Advent, but also learn more about each other and encourage each other in faith and discipleship. **Come for one or come for all.**

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Wed 29 Nov @ 10am	Wed 6 Dec @ 10am	Thur 14 Dec @ 10am	Thur 21 Dec @ 10am
Thur 30 Nov @ 7.30pm	Tues 5 Dec @ 7.30pm	Thur 14 Dec @ 7.30pm	Thur 21 Dec @ 7.30pm

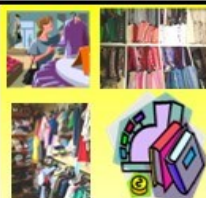
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St Matthews Op Shop

We want to thank all of the members of our community for their generous donations in 2023. However, we will soon have our summer break and we will also be having renovations done in the church building.

Therefore we **will not** be able to accept any donations from 4th December until the end of January 2024

St. Matthew's O P - S H O P
9am—2pm
Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday
& First Saturday of the month
9am—12pm



**Please note that St. Matthew's
Op Shop closes over the
Christmas and New year period.**

The **last shopping day** for 2023
is **Thursday 14 December.**

Re-opens Tuesday **30 January 2024**
at 9am to 2pm.

**Please hold on to
your donations
until we re-open.**

St Matthews Uniting Church Op Shop Baulkham Hills

Wishing our customers & volunteers a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year

Our last day of trading for 2023 is
Thursday 14th December 2023 and we will
reopen on **Tuesday 30th January 2024**

The downstairs foyer and hall are getting a makeover.

New floors, a bit of paint and the removal of the compactus storage unit from the kitchens. The new floor will be laid on 16 January so the old floors need to be removed before this can be done.

SATURDAY 6 JANUARY will be the start of the demolition and then we move onto to the painting.

If you are free anytime during this week to help, please contact David Porter.

This will give St. Matthew's downstairs foyer a welcoming and update look and feel.

Thank you in advance of your support and help.

Barbara Gibb

Third Sunday of Advent



Finding Joy in resilience

Twelve long years have passed since Rima* and her family fled their beloved home in Syria as the devastating civil war unfolded. Forced to leave everything behind, they sought refuge in Jordan, carrying with them only the essentials. With your kind gift to the Christmas Bowl, you can support Act for Peace's local partner, the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees, continue to provide vital food packages, hygiene kits, and the long-term support that refugees need to rebuild their lives. **Please give today.**

*Name changed for safety reasons



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



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

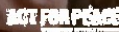
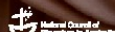


Share God's love so refugees
are not forgotten this Christmas

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

Please
give
today

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



Extra ways to give to Christmas Bowl 2023.

A St. Matthew's page Just for us at

[Mycb.link/45881](https://mycb.link/45881)

Check it out!

Envelopes will be available as usual at each service.



COMMUNITY CONTACT LIST 2023

The community directory is now available - those that have entered their family details are welcome to have a copy by email (please request from the church office by email) OR get a printed copy by calling into the office. The information will not be published on any website or sent out in bulk.

Need to update, fix an error or add your family? Version 1.2 is now open – please click [HERE](#) .

Thanks

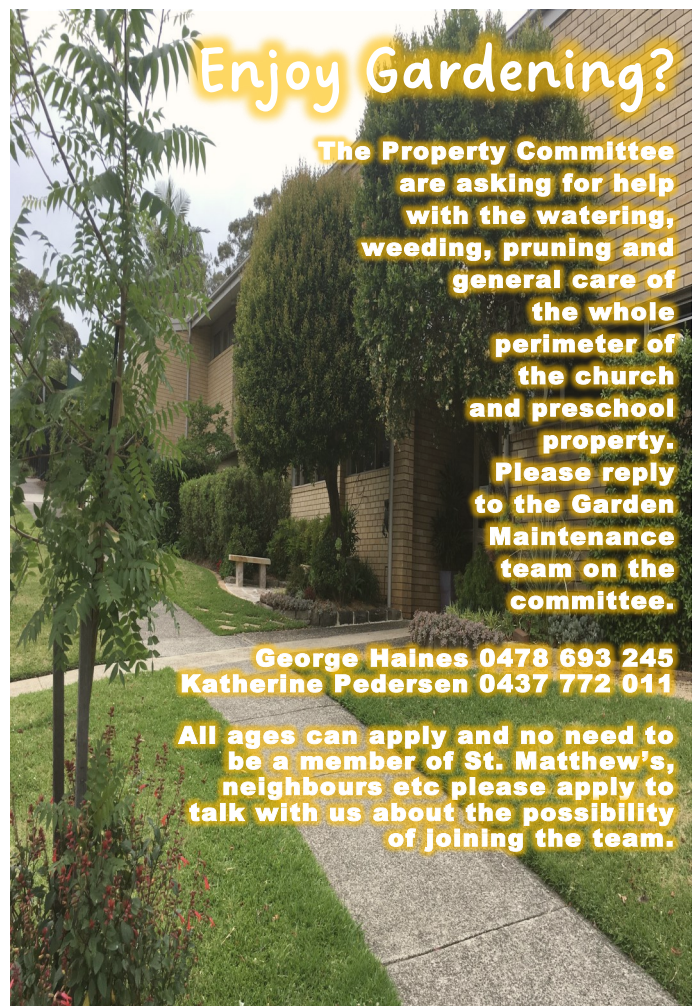
David Neideck

The Church Council and Elders are working with Jon to gather some feedback about how we can continue to grow ways nurture people in faith and discipleship. There is a survey that we are asking you to complete. It also asks for feedback about some of the new things that Jon has introduced in recent times.

You can scan the QR code below or use the link below.



<https://forms.office.com/r/EV8b6YqQmY>



Calendar of Events for January 2024

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1 Church Office Closed No scheduled events	2 Church Office Closed 9.30–11am Christian Meditation in the Church or Community Room	3 Church Office Closed 10am–12pm In Stitches upstairs hall	4 Church Office Closed No scheduled events	5 Church Office Closed No scheduled events	6 Demolition starts Flooring in Lower hall, kitchen & foyer	7  9am Summer KUCA in recess 6.45pm—Worship
8 9am Church office reopens	9 9.30–11am Christian Meditation in the Church or Community Room	10 No scheduled events	11 No scheduled events	12 No scheduled events	13 No scheduled events	14  9am—Summer Worship includes Communion KUCA in recess 9am—Worship @ the Willow's 6.45pm—Worship includes Communion
15 Laying new Flooring in Lower hall, kitchen & foyer	16 9.30–11am Christian Meditation in the Church or Community Room	17 10am–12pm In Stitches upstairs hall	18 No scheduled events	19 No scheduled events	20 No scheduled events	21  9am Summer Worship KUCA in recess 5pm—Shine 6.45pm—Worship
22 9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop lower hall	23 9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop lower hall 9.30–11am Christian Meditation in the Church or Community Room	24 9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop lower hall	25 No scheduled events	26 Australia Day Public Holiday	27 No scheduled events	28  9am Summer Worship KUCA in recess 6.45pm—Worship
29 9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop lower hall 9.30am–12pm KYB upstairs hall & church 7pm–9.30pm KYB upstairs hall & church	30 9am–2pm Op Shop RETURNS 9.30–11am Christian Meditation in the Church or Community Room	31 9am–2pm Op Shop 10am–12pm In Stitches upstairs hall		st. matthew's UNITING CHURCH BAULKHAM HILLS growing together		