



st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
growing together

Weekly Newsletter

2 June 2024

Pentecost 2

Bible Readings

8am and 9.30am

Mark 2:23-3:6

2 Corinthians 4:5-12

Response after Bible Readings

Leader: Hear the word of the Lord

Response: Thanks be to God



2nd
Sunday
After
Pentecost

8am—Worship

Includes Communion

Led by Jon Humphries

9.30am—Worship

Includes Communion

Led by Jon Humphries

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

Followed by Morning Tea

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 and 9.30am only

6.45pm—Worship

Includes Communion

Led by Alexander Lawless
and Jon Humphries

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 3 June

9am—Sorting & Pricing
for Op Shop & Garage Sale
lower hall

7.30pm—Christian Meditation
NEW GROUP
All Welcome

in community room and church

TUESDAY 4 June

9am-2pm—Op Shop

9.30am-11am—Christian Meditation
community room

11.30am—Care & Prayer
community room

WEDNESDAY 5 June

9am-2pm—Op Shop

10am-12pm—In Stitches
upstairs hall

THURSDAY 6 June

9am-2pm—Op Shop

10am-12pm—Coffee & Discovery
Guest Speaker: Tom Ware
"A Medley of Stories"
upstairs hall and church

FRIDAY 7 June

5pm-7pm—Fusion Youth Group
"Gameshow Night"

5pm—Happy Hour @ The Winston

SATURDAY 8 June

No Scheduled events

SUNDAY 9 JUNE

8am—Worship

9am—Worship @ the Willows

9.30am—Worship

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

Followed by morning tea

6.45pm—Worship

Community Meal



3rd Sunday
After
Pentecost

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

CHURCH OFFICE SECRETARIES:

ROBYN MORRALL AND LYNN SAMUEL

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS 9AM-3PM MON-FRI

OFFICE : 9686 3003

Email: office@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

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

FACEBOOK:

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PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR 9639 8570

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Thank you to all who have
contributed to this publication.

Something to think about

2 June

2nd Sunday after Pentecost

Lectionary Readings:

1 Samuel 3:1-10
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
2 Corinthians 4:5-12
Mark 2:23-3:6

Religion Can Be a Weapon of Mass Distraction

In the Gospel Reading for this Sunday, as set by the Revised Common Lectionary, Jesus is breaking the rules and the disciples are breaking rules. The disciples grab some grain as they are walking through a field and eat it. The problem is that they do this during שַׁבָּת [Sabbath] where the rules state that know one may do work, and taking grain is harvesting which is work. Then at another time, in a synagogue on the Sabbath, Jesus heals a man with a withered hand. This is a provocation to the religious leaders who are charged with teaching people the Way of God and the Law of Moses. In the תורה [Torah]. Jesus transcend the Law, or at least as it is interpreted.

In Exodus 20 Moses receives the Ten Commandments, amongst which is the command that states, "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God.

On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy." (Exodus 20: 9-11) Given the way the religious leaders plot against and treat Jesus, it is easy to develop a bias against them and perhaps even see them as evil. However, they were people like us trying to do their best to understand what is right and good in the way of God.

In terms of the literal application of the commandment, Jesus and the disciples are in breach of the explicit directions that it contains. What we are learning in the Gospel is that it is easy to reduce our following of God to that of a religion of rules and rituals. Jesus declares himself "Lord of the Sabbath," which is a pretty extraordinary claim – declaring that he is either God or equal to God, for only God is Lord of the Sabbath. It is understandable that the religious leaders are sceptical about such a claim, and even antagonistic to it if it mean people start breaking the rules as they feel like.

However, at the start of Mark, Chapter 2, Jesus makes the similar implied claim when he heals a man who couldn't walk. We often overlook the provocative nature of this event. The man has some faithful friends who vandalise someone's house by breaking through the roof (hopefully they fixed it afterwards) and lowering the man down. Contrary to their expectations that Jesus would heal the man, Jesus forgives his sins. The religious leaders note to themselves that only God can forgive sins. Jesus then offers the challenge as to which is easier – to forgive sins or make a paralysed person to walk?

Continued next page

He again pretty much declares that he is God, or equal to God, by saying, "I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins," and then telling the man to get up and walk, which he does. Jesus is God, incarnate, and thus Lord of the Sabbath, Son of Man, and Son of God. His works of power demonstrate this. God set the rules, and Jesus as God and human can bend or break them.

Rules aren't made to be broken, despite the common saying. Rules are usually given for a reason, and the reason is usually to protect and keep people safe and society functioning in an ordered way. God set the commandments and rules and knows the why for them. We aren't God and don't always understand the 'why' and thus aren't really normally in a position to interpret them in ways to bend or break them in certain situations or circumstances. However, it seems that Jesus wants us to understand the why. He wants us to comprehend the guiding principles for the way of God so that we can have some flexibility in making ethical choices when the literal letter of the rules conflict with the application of the guiding principle.

In the case of the man with the withered hand, loving the neighbour and doing good to others, such as bringing healing, transcends such things as not doing work on certain days or at certain times. Following rules is usually easier than trying to understand their meaning and interpreting them – possibly with good reason sometimes. However, when our religion departs from a spirituality which is centred on knowing God; when knowledge of God and the Bible trumps knowing God who we can know through the Bible; when religious rules and rituals become our worship rather than worshipping God through loving our neighbour as ourselves then our religion becomes a distraction from what and who we should be.

Sabbathing is a helpful practice, for if our busyness becomes our business then we have lost connection with the true meaning of life and are less likely to be resourced in our wellbeing. It is good to gather as a community of faith to build each other up in faith and encourage each other towards love and good works. Yet, if our gathering stops being a helpful discipline and becomes a rule-bound duty which serves its own purpose, then we have lost the way of Christ.

Many lament how people no longer come to Church on Sundays and instead go bike riding or walk their dog or spend time with loved ones in a café. Are these people sometimes not sabbathing better than those of us who come to Church out of a sense of duty and who feel that it is sometimes more of a chore than a life-giving community-building experience? We need to be careful that our religion doesn't become a weapon of mass distraction, where it leads us into judgement of others. Perhaps sitting in our houses of worship lamenting the decline in the number of people who come to Church, maybe we as the Church need to consider ways in which we might go out to others and connect with them and connect them with God who is love.

If God is love and those who live in love live in God and God in them, then is not part of sabbathing validly expressed in loving others in real and practical ways as a break from our regular employment to resource us in our daily living. After all religion that is pleasing to God is caring for widows and orphans and to keep ourselves from being polluted by the world. (James 1:27) What constitutes that pollution, in the light of Jesus' teaching, is something to think about.

God bless.

Jon

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

2 — 8 June

Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Eswatini

JUNE 2024 SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES at the church

2nd June - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm
Includes Communion

9th June - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm
Community Meal

16th June - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm

23rd June - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm

30th June - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm

Live streaming at morning services

SYNOD SPOTLIGHT

Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter
for last week please see link :

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

St Matthew's HAPPY HOUR!

At The Winston

170 Caroline Chisholm Drive, Winston Hills

7
JUNE

5 PM
FRIDAY



COME AND SHARE IN SOME HAPPY
CONVERSATION, A DRINK AND SOME FOOD
WITH FRIENDS FROM ST MATTHEW'S.

RSVP to Belinda or just come along
bdschuster@optusnet.com.au



PEOPLE NEWS

Lachlan Fear
John Kolosowski

Barbara Mallyon

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



WCCM
MEDITATION & COMMUNITY



CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

Weekly Sessions

@ St. Matthew's Uniting Church
Baulkham Hills

Cnr Charles and Edgar Street, Baulkham Hills

MONDAY EVENINGS

7.30pm

Starting 20 May

TUESDAY MORNINGS

9.30am-10.30am



Christian Meditation Books

If you have borrowed any Christian
Mediations booked from the table in the
church please return ASAP.

Also if you have taken any of the books for purchase,
please give the money to Katherine. **Many thanks**

A message to all groups and individuals using the Church property

When using any part of the Church property at any time, please
ensure that when you leave, you turn off all lights, fans, air con's
and properly lock and alarm the premises if required.

Please ensure you correctly turn off the automatic door when you
leave, it is easy to set it to the wrong setting and it has been left
open a few times lately. If you have used the automatic door for
your group, you are responsible for ensuring that it is locked when
you finish. *Thank you*



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growing together

Op Shop Support Needed

People to help with:

- Sorting and Pricing 'trash and treasure'
for the Garage Sales
- Washing pre-loved 'treasures'
- Sorting & Pricing second hand clothing
- Serving customers
- Creating shop displays



For more Information please contact the church office.



Thursday 6 June - 10am to 12pm

Guest Speaker

Tom Ware

“A Medley of Stories”

Everyone welcome
to come and hear
the stories Tom will
be presenting to us.



These informal morning gatherings include devotions, morning tea and guest speakers which cover a large range of interesting and informative topics.

***** ALL WELCOME *****



st. matthew's
UNITING CHURCH
BAULKHAM HILLS
OP SHOP

Presents

Say Yes to the Dress Sale

- New Bridal Gowns • Pre-Loved Bridal Gowns
- Evening • Special Occasion • Formal Occasions
- Mother of the Bride • Groomsmen • Accessories

Sale Starts: Saturday 15th June 9am-12noon

Tuesday 18th June 9am-2pm, Wednesday 19th June 9am-2pm, Thursday 20th June 9am-2pm

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 or find in recent posts.