



st. matthew's  
**UNITING CHURCH**  
**BAULKHAM HILLS**  
growing together

## Weekly Newsletter

7 July 2024

Pentecost 7

### Bible Readings

8am and 9.30am



2 Corinthians 12:2-10  
Mark 6:1-13

#### Response after Bible Readings

Leader: *In this we hear the word of God*

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 and 9.30am only**

#### 8am—Worship

Includes Communion  
Led by Jon Humphries

#### 9.30am—Worship

Includes Communion  
Led by Jon Humphries  
**KUCA** in recess for school holidays  
Followed by Morning Tea

#### 6.45pm—Worship

Includes Communion  
Led by Nicola Lawless  
and Jon Humphries

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

#### MONDAY 8 July

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

7.30pm—Christian Meditation  
All Welcome  
community room and church

#### TUESDAY 9 July

9am-2pm—Op Shop

9.30am-11am—Christian Meditation  
community room and church

7.30pm—Thrive Bible Study  
lower hall

#### WEDNESDAY 10 July

9am-2pm—Op Shop

10am-12pm—Women's Fellowship  
"Auction with Adele"  
Proceeds from Auction  
for postage for Philippines.  
Please bring tinned food for  
Bill Crew's Foundation box.  
upstairs hall

#### THURSDAY 11 July

9am-2pm—Op Shop

#### FRIDAY 12 July

No Scheduled Events

#### SATURDAY 13 July

No Scheduled Events

### SUNDAY 14 JULY

8am—Worship

9am—Worship @ the Willows

9.30am—Worship  
KUCA in recess for School holidays  
Followed by morning tea

6.45pm—Worship



#### MINISTER

REV JON HUMPHRIES

Email: jon@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

#### CHURCH OFFICE SECRETARIES:

ROBYN MORRALL AND LYNN SAMUEL

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CNR CHARLES & EDGAR STREETS  
BAULKHAM HILLS

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Thank you to all who have  
contributed to this publication.

# Something to think about

## 7 July

### 7th Sunday after Pentecost

#### Lectioary Readings:

2 Samuel 5: 1-5, 9-10

Psalm 48

2 Corinthians 12: 2-10

Mark 6: 1-13

#### What is a Sermon and Are they all That They are Made Out to Be?

Sermons are helpful in our faith and discipleship – or should be. In the Protestant Tradition we have placed a lot of emphasis on them. Up to 50% or more of the time spent in a service can be allocated to a sermon. A lot of thought and effort goes into preparing them – or should. Much of the preacher's preparation time during the week preceding is taken up with reading the Scriptures, prayer, reading Bible commentaries, spending time in reflection and using other resources to prepare the sermon. Then a good chunk of time is dedicated to writing the sermon, or crafting it if one doesn't use written notes. Is it all worth it?

Perhaps, first we should think about what a sermon is. There are many ways of understanding what a sermon is. Some simply say it is proclamation – that is proclaiming the Word of God. Some, say it is teaching the Word of God. Wikipedia has the following explanation "Sermons address a scriptural, theological, or moral topic, usually expounding on a type of belief, law, or behaviour within both past and present contexts."

You can do your own research into the large field of Christian theology called homiletics.

Here is a simple explanation in video form: 'What is a Sermon?' by Southern Seminary in the USA. (*under 4 minutes watch*)

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

The video ends with the following description. "A sermon is a Christ-centered, Church-building, gospel-proclaiming, truth-driven, biblically-grounded proclamation, for the purpose of God-glorifying transformation." That seems a fairly comprehensive way of understanding a sermon. It also includes a reason for having them by describing their purpose – that is [God-glorifying transformation.](#)

That brings us back to the question of whether or not they are worth all the focus and effort. Do they actually result in "God-glorifying transformation?" The video is helpful in not pinning the effectiveness on just the sermon itself or the preacher preaching it. The video makes clear the point that, "a sermon isn't really a sermon until it's applied." This is an important point. You can have the best preacher and the best sermon, but if we in the congregation or Church don't listen – and that is listen in the way of Biblical understanding of listening which is שמע[shema], meaning to not just hear, but pay attention and put it into practise or obey – then it is not the sermon's fault but ours. If we have heard truth as the Word of God is proclaimed and we are led into better understanding of the Gospel and its/God's call on our lives, but we do nothing, even if we think the sermon was good and we agreed with the message, then we are like the different types of ground that Jesus talks about in the Parable of the Sower where the seeds which fall on hard ground, in shallow soil or amongst thorns don't grow to bear fruit or more seeds (See Matthew 13:1–23, Mark 4:1–20, Luke 8:4–150)

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**What is a Sermon and Are they All That They are  
Made Out to Be?**

**Continued**

Here we get to the real importance for faith and discipleship, which is God-glorifying transformation. We are called to change our way of thinking and being (i.e. repent in the sense of [μετάνοια](#) [metanoia] that we might live God's love more fully to all people, join God in bringing closer the Kingdom of God, and in doing so connect people with God that they might experience the same. Sermons can be helpful for this, but if we are radically honest, they may not be the most effective way of doing so – at least not in the form of long didactic monologues which can be longer than fifteen minutes, and are often read rather than proclaimed. There is a stack of research on learning and remembering, and how the brain works to do this. Coming from an education background I know that we as teachers have been taught over the years that long teacher-monologues (this style is often referred to as chalk-and-talk) are the least effective means of helping people learn – the purpose of which is also arguably transformation.

Here is an interesting introduction to this kind of thinking by Fia Fasbinder the CEO of Moxie Institute which is focused on helping people in their effectiveness in public speaking <https://www.moxieinstitute.com/social-neuroscience-in-public-speaking-and-presentations/> or you can catch a video about the same material <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Awl6kZb8fA4&t=1s>

Jesus didn't really preach. The 'Sermon on the Mount' is arguably not a sermon. It is God in the person of Christ directly instructing people through a whole series of small lessons. Jesus mostly used stories, often in the form of parables, and symbolic actions which prompted people to think and learn about the Kingdom of God.

The article links memory and retention with emotion and story. "Stories are data with a soul," Fia Fasbinder declares. Jesus knew this way of getting his message across long before we had any fancy research about brains and learning.

So, are sermons worth the effort of preparation and the time to listen to them? There is no simple answer to this, but in the end if they help us be transformed and lead us deeper into faith and more effectively into discipleship and ministry, then, yes, they are. If their format and the way the preacher preaches them consistently does not result in God-glorifying transformation in the congregation or Church, then we probably need to ask questions about what is going on for the preacher and for the community.

In the end, if it is a sermon, prayerfulness, meditation, Bible study or singing, or whatever aspect of our life as a gathered community called the Church, if it awakens faith in us which moves us into ministry as we more actively join God in God's mission to bring the Kingdom closer, then that is good. If our life as the Church is not experiencing that, then maybe we need to look at the various elements of our life together and see how we can better connect with God and God's call, especially as we attend to the Word of God in Scripture. What are sermons and are they all that they are often made out to be? That is something to think about.

*God bless.*

*Jon*





## PEOPLE NEWS

Kathryn Longmuir  
Jeff Cuff

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

## Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

7—13 July  
Eritrea, Ethiopia

## Weekly SYNOD SPOTLIGHT

Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter  
for last week (28 June 2024) please see link :

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

## Giving Envelopes

The Giving Envelopes for the next financial year are now ready to collect from the church foyer.

## JULY 2024 SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES at the church

7th July - 8am, 930am, 6.45pm  
includes Communion

14th July - 8am, 930am, 6.45pm  
Community Meal

21st July - 8am, 930am, 6.45pm

28th July - 8am, 930am, 6.45pm

Live streaming at morning services



Please pick up the latest **insights magazine** for Winter 2024 from the church foyer.



Request for donations of used floral bowls.



If anyone has any of these floral bowls, would you please bring them in and leave them with the Op-shop. They will be used for a special project later in the year.

Thank you



# Op Shop Morning Tea



**All Welcome**

**Saturday  
27th July**

Starting at 10:30am

**St. Matthew's  
Uniting Church**  
lower church hall

*Come and join our  
friendly volunteers and  
Op Shop customers for  
a special morning tea  
get-together.*

*Everyone is asked to  
bring a small plate of  
food. Tea and coffee  
will be provided.*

*To follow us on **Facebook** search: 'St Matthews Op Shop Baulkham Hills'*

*To follow us on **Instagram**, search: StMatthewsOpShopBH*

*To contact Op Shop by email, go to: [stmatthewsopshopbh@gmail.com](mailto:stmatthewsopshopbh@gmail.com)*

*Coffee  
and  
Discovery*

## celtic regions

**-facts  
and  
other  
stuff**

**Thursday  
1st August  
10am - 12pm**

Guest Speaker: **Alan Wright**

**The history of Celtic regions  
in Northern Europe dates  
back over many hundreds of years.  
Each has a unique set of traditions,  
some ancient, some relatively modern.**

**This presentation is a look at some of the  
customs and practices of six of these  
regions and includes a wee bit of history  
and some other stuff.**



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

\*\*\*\*\* ALL WELCOME \*\*\*\*\*

**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 or find in recent posts.**