



Wholeness

We are in the season of Lent. The Church, that is us who are Nothing we do as the Church Lent centres us in the ministry of God, in the person of Jesus, on the way of the Cross. This is part of the Mission of God through Jesus proclaiming and living out the Kingdom. Lent prepares us for remembering Easter and Easter reminds us of the work of God to make the Kingdom of God our priority. Easter is the culmination of God's mission to show us the depth of God's love. "For God so loved the world that he sent [i.e. became] his son, so that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." [John 3: 16]. Yet, that love, and believing in it, is only truly expressed in us giving of ourselves and Christ, who is God as a human, gave of himself. "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters." [1 John 3: 16]

The Church, that is us who are the Body of Christ together and individually, are called to live out God's mission. We are called to join in God's mission by joining in the work of God. Mission is at the heart of our purpose.

Nothing we do as the Church has any meaning if it is not intentionally serving God's mission. If any of our activities lose their missional focus then they have become redundant. Mission needs to be intentionally part of all we are and do.



What is God's mission, again? It is not just evangelism in the sense of telling people about God or encouraging them to believe in God. The Good News aka the evangel [because the word evangel comes from the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον (euangelion) meaning "good news" or "good message," derived from eu ("good") and angelia ("message" or "news")] is as Jesus proclaimed, "The Kingdom of God is at hand." [Matthew 3:2; Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:15] The good news is that God is at work for good in all things, because that is what the Kingdom of God is about, God redeeming all things and all people. This is why we need to be changed – engage in metanoia and repentance.

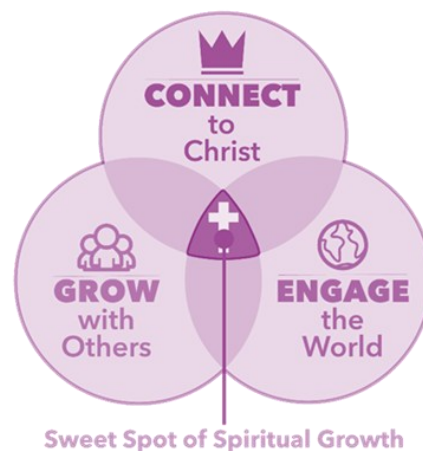
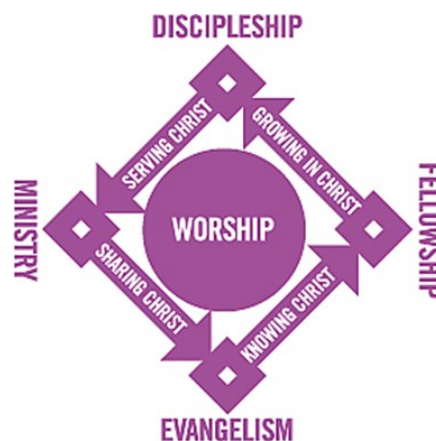
Our core mission is to join God in God's work, to be God's people as we use our gifts and talents to lay down our lives in love for others as God, as Christ, laid down his life for us. God is love and when we live love to others we live in God and God lives in us. This is what we are called to be and do, and as part of this life and witness, we are called to be a channel through which others come into right relationship with God and are invited to join God in God's mission.

Thus, our whole life as the Church is about God's mission. We seek to be disciples through being in ministry through using the gifts from God and the gifts of opportunity to use them, to serve others in love and then in the process disciple them that they might know God and become disciples who join in God's mission.



We do this through our worship, witness and service, which are not three separate aspects of faith and discipleship but are actually three parts of an integrated whole. Worship is not just about our Church services, but serving as the Church, and our serving is not just doing good in God's name but

intentionally helping people to know God who is the 'why' behind why we care.



Having prepared in our liturgical year in Advent for the remembering that God is Christ, the son of God who is God and is the Word of God made flesh – that is celebrating Christmas – we then have sought to grow in hope, peace joy and love in After Epiphany. We now enter Lent, to do some discipline in remembering the mission of God, which culminates in celebration of Easter. WE then will go on to remember our call as the Church at Pentecost and our empowerment by knowing that God is always present and at work in us and with us as the Holy Spirit. The reset of the year is then actively trying to join in God's mission and grow the Kingdom of God. The liturgical cycle each year is about centring us in missional mindfulness that we might be truly alive and effective as the Church. The mission of God is wholly what we should be thinking about all the time.

God bless
Jon



Thursday 5 March 2026

10am—12noon

Guest speaker:

Gary Raymond APM OAM

“Danger is my Business”

Chief Inspector Gary Raymond performed duties with the NSW Ambulance for 5 years. He then joined the NSW Police Force for 34 years.

In the Police, Gary was stationed in General duties, Police rescue squad, Criminal Investigation Detectives, Royal Commission senior investigator, Asian crime, Olympic games venue co-ordinator, Terrorism risk assessor, crime scene & emergency management duty officer.

Gary is now the Chaplain to the Police Post Trauma support group NSW, chaplain NSW Ambulance & Chaplain RSL veterans sub-branch Blacktown city.

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

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



World day of Prayer

Friday 6 March

2026 @ 7.30pm

**St. Matthew's is hosting this year's
World day of prayer event.**

Focus Country: Nigeria

All Welcome.

From the St Matthew's Social Action Missional Ministry Team

'Doing little things can make a big difference'.

Topic: Uniting in Christ: Flourishing Faith – Thriving Communities – Liberating Justice.

Link: <https://uniting.church/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Assembly-Strategy-Final-One-Pager.pdf>

In 2026, the National Assembly will commence its new strategy for the period 2026–31 centred on the vision 'Uniting in Christ: Flourishing Faith – Thriving Communities – Liberating Justice'. This newly released document includes the 'road map' for the church response to social issues. These reflect the values of hope, justice, compassion, respect, integrity and innovation. Below is a summary of the new Uniting Church National Assembly Strategy for 2026 to 2031. The PDF of the outline is on the following page and is available from the link above.

GOAL 1: FLOURISHING FAITH

We extend the table to everyone, inviting them to follow Jesus with courageous faith.

1. A redesigned and revived Covenant with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (Secretariat)
2. Reach rural & remote communities (Frontier Services)
3. Deepen collaboration on theological education (Secretariat)
4. Theological culture work on mission, evangelism, discipleship and diaconal communities (Secretariat)
5. Liturgy renewal of our authorised services (Secretariat)

GOAL 2: THRIVING COMMUNITIES

We work together so that we can be truly national and local communities can thrive.

- Improving local regulatory environment for communities of faith (Secretariat)
- Feasibility of 3 or 4 council model and other ways of deepening collaboration (Secretariat)
- A contemporary standard for ministry agents (Secretariat)
- Purposeful and strategic international engagement with the global church (Secretariat)
- Strategic change in communications to leaders (Secretariat)
- Building strategic and productive collaboration between Assembly, Synods & Agencies (Secretariat)
- National and international discipleship opportunities for building young leaders (Secretariat)

GOAL 3: LIBERATING JUSTICE

We use our voice and our actions to confront injustice in Australia and the world.

- Gain stature as influential player in faith-based climate adaption (UnitingWorld)
- Extend engagement and support from UCA and adjacent communities (UnitingWorld)
- Advocacy for justice for First Peoples (UnitingCare)
- Advocacy for ageing to our full potential (UnitingCare)
- Advocacy for economic equality & inclusion (UnitingCare)
- Advocacy for Remote Australians (Frontier Services)
- Reduce carbon emissions to Zero by 2040 (Secretariat)
- Assembly wide Advocacy (Secretariat)
- Becoming an anti-racist Church (Secretariat)

Blessings, Alexander, SAMMT

UNITING CHURCH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY STRATEGY 2026-31

Our Vision: **Uniting in Christ**
Flourishing Faith – Thriving Communities – Liberating Justice



Cultivating our theological culture <i>We will deliver national resources for theological, discipleship and worship renewal.</i>	Reviving our Covenant commitment <i>We affirm and will enact in our law and life the sovereignty and self-determination of Congress.</i>	Accompanying the global church with purpose <i>We will purposefully deepen our relationships with the global church.</i>	Ordering our life for God's mission <i>We will change our internal structures to better serve the mission of the church.</i>	Promoting mission from the margins <i>We will listen to and make our churches more inclusive for all cultures and ages.</i>	Speaking prophetically in the world <i>We will create a unified advocacy voice which is stronger and more impactful.</i>
STRATEGIC MEASURES	A. 90% of strategic initiatives are completed or on track	B. Increasing response to "We are a truly national church"	C. Increased engagement with strategic communications	E. On track to reach net zero by 2040	F. One Church wide advocacy activation per annum

STRATEGIC GOALS, INITIATIVES & WORKING GROUPS

VALUES	HOPE	JUSTICE	COMPASSION	RESPECT	GOAL 2: THRIVING COMMUNITIES	GOAL 3: LIBERATING JUSTICE
					We work together so that we can be a truly national church and local communities can thrive.	We use our voice and our actions to confront injustice in Australia and the world.



**1st Saturday of the month
9am-12pm**

Upcoming dates

- **7 March**
- **No Sale in April**
- **2 May**

*Pre-loved
Household items,
Electrical, Toys & Books
(Fiction, Non-fiction & children's books)*

St. Matthew's Lower hall

**St Matthew's
HAPPY
HOUR!**

NEW TIME!

At NBC

166 Windsor Rd, Northmead

**20
MARCH**

**5:30 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
belinda.schuster0709@gmail.com



Jesus said,
"Come to me, all
you who are weary
and burdened, and
I will give you rest."

*Care and Prayer
All Welcome
11.30am on the first Tuesday
of each month.
February to November*

**Lent Studies will take
place
EACH TUESDAY IN LENT
7.30pm
In person in the church
space
and online via Zoom**

**Tuesday 24
February
To
Tuesday 31
March**

Silence and stillness in every season

Daily readings with John Main



One of the things that we must clearly understand is that meditation , this pursuit of wisdom and love, must take place in an entirely ordinary, natural way. Meditation must be built into the ordinary fabric of everyday life. We must learn to see the whole of life shot through with the divine. We must also understand that it is our destiny to enter this divine harmony, to be in harmony with God. It is not a question of trying to fit a bit of spirituality into our lives. The spiritual quest, the permanent spiritual invitation is getting our lives, ourselves, into permanent focus with ultimate truth, ultimate goodness. Not in any self-important or exploitative way but in a very simple, childlike way. It is by being still, by paying attention and by becoming mindful of the one who loves us.

To be fit for the great tasks in life we must learn to be faithful in humble tasks. Meditation is a very simple and very humble pilgrimage that prepares us for this focusing of our lives on the divine centre. Our lives are nourished by the spiritual sap, the energy rising from the root of all being. The invitation that each of us has received is to find out who we are, to discover the destiny that we have, to go beyond the limitations of our separate selves and to be united with the One who is all in all. In that going beyond ourselves, we find ourselves, And we find our unlimited capacity for development, for liberty, for love.

The Heart of Creation



Parramatta Mission



In April, we will be collecting beanies and scarves to be distributed to disadvantaged people at Parramatta Mission. A collection tub will be available at the top of the stairs.



Thanks everyone who knitted and crocheted items last year. Our donations were greatly appreciated.

Christine Haines 0401344800

Mission to the Philippines



Over the last few months The Philippines have experienced some extreme weather events. Although our friends have endured some flooding and property destruction, thank God there has been no loss of life or serious injury.

The backpacks continue to allow the children the dignity of such a possession and the recipients have been showing an increase in their marks at school, merely by having the necessary tools with which learn at their disposal.

The local government hospital paediatric ward in Iloilo continues to care for the children of the impoverished local people, most of whom are illiterate.

Hygiene continues to be a problem with dental care top of the list. A dentist does visit schools once a year but toothbrushes and paste are too expensive for them, added to the fact that

there is no fluoride in the water.

Heart disease and sepsis in children and new born have increased, hence the call out for hygiene supplies.



The school box delivery is complete for 2025 and packing is underway for the end of this year.

Massive thanks to St Matt's for all the help, the donations, the encouragement and prayer.

Special mention to the SHINE participants who work hard doing their part packing boxes and living up to their motto... Be Kind.

As our Filipino friends tell me all the time at the end of each communication...

To God be the Glory.

Op-shop News

March 2026

St. Matthew's Uniting Op-shop has begun the year with great energy. Our community has been incredibly generous with donations, so much so that we are now looking for additional storage space. We are truly grateful for every donation. If we are unable to sell an item, we are usually able to pass it on to support another worthwhile cause.

We recently held a very successful "\$10 per bag" clothing sale, where customers filled a paper shopping bag with as much as they could for \$10. Our next event will be a "Rummage Sale", where customers can search through boxes of goods and fill a bag for just \$5. We look forward to seeing how this is received.

Our monthly Garage Sales continue to be very popular community events. In February, nearly 80 people were lined up at the door by 9:00am, and the air conditioner in the lower hall was working hard. Many customers now look forward to the first Saturday of each month. However, these events require a great deal of organisation. We would love to find an energetic, able-bodied person to coordinate the Garage Sales. Experience in sales or marketing would be helpful, along with a willingness to work with the Op-shop team.

The Garage Sale team meet every Monday morning from 8:30am to 12:00pm to sort and price donations, and during the week of the sale we

spend an additional eight hours preparing. With the right leadership, this time could be reduced. For more information, please speak with Pamela in the Op-shop or call M: 0404 023 588.



We are also fortunate to have a dedicated Auction Team. Jeff and Colin take higher-value donated items to auction and have achieved excellent results. Kylie has recently joined the team and is successfully selling selected items online through Marketplace.

Our number of volunteers continues to grow, which is a blessing given the increase in donations. We now have 26 regular volunteers across our three trading days. Each volunteer is greatly valued, and we thank God for such a generous and committed team. If you are thinking about volunteering, please do not hesitate – there is always room for another helping hand.



With love,

Pamela

Cyril Serhiy Hovorun

Cyril Hovorun is one of the most celebrated of contemporary Ukrainian theologians; he stands inside the Orthodox tradition. His areas of expertise lie in ecclesiology, international relations and peacemaking, political and public theology and the relation of science to religion. He has presented lectures in many of the world's leading theological schools and univer-

sities. More than 500 pieces of his research and journalism have been published in 30 different languages. He is fluent in several languages.

Professor Hovorun is one of the most highly respected theologians on the Russian invasion of Ukraine. On account of his stans, Professor Hovorun was defrocked by the Patriarch of Moscow.



It is a great honour for the United Theological College to host two seminars by Professor Hovorun at the

 **Centre for Ministry**
16 Masons Drive North Parramatta NSW 2151

6 March 2026

1:30pm – 5:00pm

1:30 pm *Orthodox political theologies*

2:45 pm Refreshments

3:15 pm *Putinism and Trumpism*



Register now!

Registrations close
Monday 2 March 2026



For more information about the seminar, please contact Clive Pearson

 cpearson@csu.edu.au

Register via the link or QR code

nswactuca.eventsair.com/cyril-serhiy-hovorun/reg



Charles Sturt University is an Australian University, TEQSA Provider Identification: P8162018. Charles Sturt University CROGS Provider 00505F

Calendar of Events for March 2026

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

<p>30</p> <p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall</p> <p>7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room</p>	<p>31</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>9.30-11am Christian Meditation Community Room</p> <p>7.30pm FINAL Lenten Studies in the church & online via Zoom</p>	<p>st. matthew's UNITING CHURCH BAULKHAM HILLS growing together</p>				<p>1</p> <p>LENT 2</p> <p>8am— Worship Includes Communion</p> <p>9.30am—Worship Includes Communion</p> <p>KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 followed by Morning Tea</p> <p>6.45pm Worship Includes Communion</p>
<p>2</p> <p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall</p> <p>7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room</p>	<p>3</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>9.30-11am Christian Meditation Community Room</p> <p>11.30am Care & Prayer Community room & church</p> <p>7.30pm Lenten Studies in the church & online via Zoom</p>	<p>4</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>10am-12noon In Stitches Upstairs hall</p>	<p>5</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>10-12pm Coffee & Discovery Speaker: Gary Raymond</p>	<p>6</p> <p>5pm-7pm Fusion Youth Group</p> <p>'Race Night'</p>	<p>7</p> <p>9am-12pm Op Shop</p> <p>9am-12pm Garage Sale lower hall</p> <p>Garage SALE</p>	<p>8</p> <p>LENT 3</p> <p>8am— Worship</p> <p>9am—Worship @ the Willow's</p> <p>9.30am—Worship KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 followed by Morning Tea</p> <p>6.45pm Worship Community meal</p>
<p>9</p> <p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall</p> <p>7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room and Church</p>	<p>10</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>9.30-11am Christian Meditation Community Room</p> <p>7.30pm Lenten Studies in the church & online via Zoom</p>	<p>11</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>10am-12noon Women's Fellowship</p>	<p>12</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p>	<p>13</p> <p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>14</p> <p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>15</p> <p>LENT 4</p> <p>8am— Worship</p> <p>9.30am—Worship Followed by morning tea KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship</p>
<p>16</p> <p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower</p> <p>7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room and Church</p>	<p>17</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>9.30-11am Christian Meditation Community Room</p> <p>7.30pm Lenten Studies in the church & online via Zoom</p>	<p>18</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>10am-12noon In Stitches Upstairs hall</p> <p>10am-12noon Men's Morning Tea Mickels Café Bella Vista</p> <p>7.30pm—Elders meeting</p>	<p>19</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p>	<p>20</p> <p>5pm-7pm Fusion Youth Group</p> <p>Chill NIGHT</p>	<p>21</p> <p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>22</p> <p>LENT 5</p> <p>8am— Worship Followed by morning tea</p> <p>9.30am—Worship Followed by morning tea KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8</p> <p>5pm—Shine setup from 4pm</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship</p>
<p>23</p> <p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall</p> <p>7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room</p>	<p>24</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>9.30-11am Christian Meditation community room</p> <p>7.30pm Lent Studies in the church & online via Zoom</p>	<p>25</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p>	<p>26</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p>	<p>27</p> <p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>28</p> <p>8am-11am Working Bee</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Palm Sunday</p> <p>8am— Worship Followed by morning tea</p> <p>9.30am—Worship Followed by morning tea KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship</p>

