



Bible Readings

John 10: 1-10
 Acts 2: 42-47



Response after Bible Readings

Leader: *In this we hear the word of God*
Response: *Thanks be to God who speaks to us as spirit.*

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 9AM



twitch.tv

Livestreaming at
8am, 9.30am and
9am in January each year

8am—Worship
 Led by Jon Humphries
 Followed by morning tea

9.30am—Worship
 Led Jon Humphries
 Followed by morning tea

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

5pm—Shine
setup from 4pm

6.45pm—Worship
 Led by Jon Humphries

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 27 APRIL

Anzac day Public Holiday

7.30pm—Christian Meditation

TUESDAY 28 APRIL

9am-2pm—Op Shop

9.30am-11am—Christian Meditation

community room and church
7pm—Property meeting
 Lower hall

WEDNESDAY 29 APRIL

9am-2pm—Op Shop

10am-12pm—In Stitches
 Upstairs hall

THURSDAY 30 APRIL

9am-2pm—Op Shop

FRIDAY 1 MAY

5-7pm—Fusion Youth Group

SATURDAY 2 MAY

9am-12pm—Op Shop

9am-12pm—Garage Sale
 lower hall

SUNDAY 3 MAY

8am—Worship
 Includes Communion

9.30am—Worship
 Includes Communion
KUCA —Preschool,
Years K-2 & Years 3-8
 followed by Morning Tea

6.45pm—Worship
 Includes Communion



MINISTER

REV JON HUMPHRIES
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Something to think about

26 April

Easter 4

Revised Common Lectionary Readings:

Acts 2:42-47

Psalm 23

1 Peter 2:19-25

John 10:1-10

Belief and Doubt

The other week when the Revised Common Lectionary set the story of Thomas and his doubt, unbelief and belief to be read, I wrote a prayer of confession which I titled "We Confess Belief and Doubt." Here is the prayer.

We confess to you, God,
Our belief and doubt.
We know you as Christ,
Who lives
Who died,
Who was resurrected.
We confess our belief
But confess that sometimes we struggle.
We know you to be risen,
Wounded Messiah,
Compassion of God,
Yet, we confess that we would know this better,
We would your hand in ours,
Touch the scars you bear,
That we might know your love more really.
We confess that we believe the witness of others,
But we also confess that we would like to see with our own eyes,
And experience your miracles ourselves.
We believe.
Help us in our unbelief.
in your grace,
Release us from guilt.
In your mercy,
Forgive us our failing and falling short.
In your love,
Raise us in faith anew.
This we confess.
Amen.

Belief and doubt-cont'd

Sometimes I think we have been taught either directly or through implied teaching that belief and doubt are opposites. Logic might seem to suggest that they should be. Yet are they meant to be?

I'm not sure that belief and doubt are opposite and it wasn't my intention to put them as opposites in the prayer, just as realities. Belief and doubt sit together at the table of our being. They are part of our human condition. Yet, often reduce our understanding of belief to being an intellectual assent to an idea or concept.

The primary Koine Greek word for "belief" or "faith" in the New Testament is πίστις, [pistis pronounced pis-tis]. It carries a strong, active meaning encompassing trust, confidence, fidelity, and reliance, rather than just intellectual assent. Belief and faith are a deeply integrated part of life and are both active parts of our living.

This active knowing of both belief/faith and doubt is our reality as followers of Jesus. It is embedded into our liturgy as we praise in one moment and then offer confession in another. We try to love and live in faith as believers. Yet, fall short in fallibility failing to live and love as we seek to. It is even recorded in Scripture in the desperate prayer plea of a man for Jesus to help his son who had an unclean spirit in him. The man asks Jesus, "if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." The man responds by saying. "I believe; help my unbelief." [Mark 9:17-27]

Too often we do see faith and doubt as opposites and intellectualise them as such. The reality is that they are functions of human being. We believe and have doubt. We try to be faithful. Yet, we often fail to achieve that as a consistent holistic way of being disciples. We believe in God, yet at the same time doubt what we believe, even doubting sometimes that God is real.

The questions which become more important in relation to belief and doubt is firstly what do we believe in? Then more urgently are the questions of who do we believe in and who to we allow to shape our faith and belief? Doubt is a part of intellectual belief. They are not opposite. We believe something and need to test it and explore it to see if it is real.

It is understandable and appropriate to hear the stories and teachings and promises in Scripture and doubt them at the same time that we believe in the authority of the Bible to inform, instruct and control our faith. The Bible in respect to those who might speak of how to understand the meaning of Scripture and the will of God says things such as, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out," [1 John 4: 1] and in Paul's writing such as 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21 we instructs his readers to not "despise prophecies, but *test everything*; hold fast what is good."

Faith seeks understanding, but where understanding comes up short, then we know and love God and trust in God, even if we doubt or don't understand or believe exactly how things work or happen. Jesus quoted Psalm 22 on the Cross when he cried out to God in faith, but in the midst of an experience of doubt. ""My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (or Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani) [Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34] Faith and doubt are part of life. Exploring our doubts and seeking answers in God can often lead to deeper faith. So faith and doubt are not really opposite and that is something to think about.

God bless.

Jon

PEOPLE NEWS

**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY**



Ron Mallyon

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

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

26 April — 2 May

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia

SYNOD SPOTLIGHT

Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter

For (17 April 2025) please see link to Synod weekly:

[Synod Weekly Spotlight 2026 - 17 April |](#)

Volunteer Form

Assisting with Morning Services
for

June, July, August 2026

**Please
return
completed
forms by
End of April**

Have been emailed or collect a copy from the foyer.

NEW HELPERS WELCOME

UNITING CHURCH
BATHURST HILLS

Please return forms to the blue mail tray or church office.

Thank you

Thank you to George Haines for offering to look after the gardens during May.

Thank you to Jon for doing the green and white arrangement for Easter Sunday.

Thank you for the people who donated tablecloths. Fortunately most have been returned and located. These tablecloths are for use by everyone using the church and belong to the church. Please leave your name and quantity of cloths taken, launder and iron and return within the week. The cloths are kept in the upstairs kitchen.

With appreciation, Katherine Pedersen

Could you serve morning tea?

1. Bring 1L of milk
2. Arrive 15 minutes early to set up cups
3. Serve tea and coffee after the service
4. Wash the cups (dishwasher lessons provided!)



Please contact Lynn,
Amanda or Sara if
you can help!

Parramatta Mission

We are collecting knitted and crocheted beanies and scarves, as well as soap, for the people who visit Parramatta Mission for meals and support.

The collection point at St Matthew's is the marked box at the top of the stairs

Please contact Christine Haines for more information.



For the second year running Hugh Darling will be participating in the Police Legacy fundraising ride from Sydney to Canberra from the 29th May to 31st May 2026, some 300 kms over the 3 days. Police Legacy is there to support families and loved ones of fallen Police Officers here in NSW, and having 2 sons serving in the NSW Police this is a cause close to his heart and that of his family. At least one of our members is also currently in the NSW Police Force.

Hugh's fundraising goal is \$1,000.00.

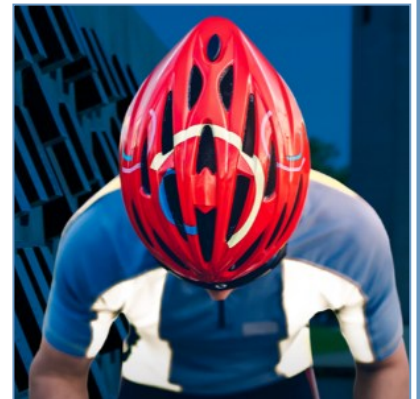
Detailed below is the link to his fundraising page and any donation amount would be greatly appreciated.

<https://www.policelegacynsw.org.au/my-fundraising/1044/hugh-darling>

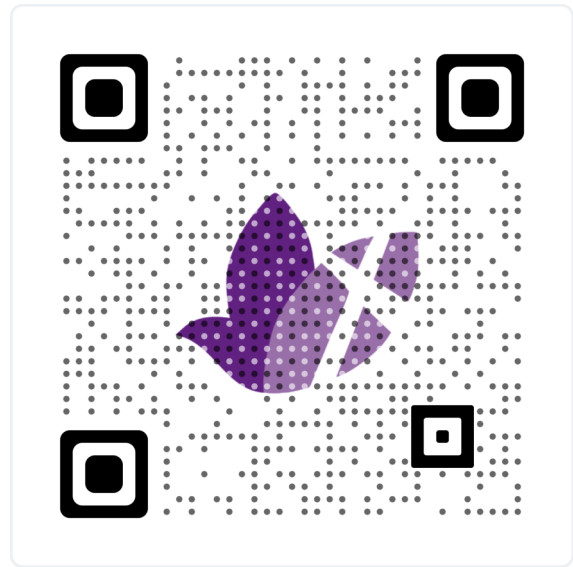


NSW POLICE LEGACY

Caring for the
Police Family



Please see QR Codes for links for YouTube,
Facebook & Twitch



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.

St Matthew's Social Action Missional Ministry Team

How doing little things makes a big difference.

Topic: Thank you and feedback from the Christmas Bowl Appeal 2025

From a recent email from Josie Worner, Head of Philanthropy, Act for Peace.

The support of the Christmas Bowl Appeal is a proud tradition of Australians using Christmas, a season of celebration, to stand with families worldwide who have been forced to flee their homes, helping them find safety, rebuild their lives, and start again. St Matthews members gave over \$3,250 to the 2025 Christmas Bowl appeal. Behind every gift, every prayer, every act of generosity, there is a story.

In Zimbabwe, families are improving access to clean water, growing food year-round, and learning skills to earn an income, helping them feel safer and more resilient.

In Jordan, young people are building small businesses, finding work, and gaining confidence through mentoring and emotional support.

In Indonesia, communities in flood-prone areas are leading disaster planning and early response, while a woman restarts her home-business after floods.

Thank you for being part of these stories.

Our CEO, Andrew Hassett, would like to share a thank you video and resources to show the impact of your gifts. <https://youtu.be/EmU8cwJqk7s?si=Dn8DQyU6GqoLelyZ>

We warmly invite you to join us online on Tuesday 28 April 2026 at 11 am AEST, to hear updates from our partners around the world and learn more about the vital work they do. You can register for the webinar using this link:

https://actforpeace.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_glB0bsEGQ6ebanjBW5yfxw#/registration?afp_cc=CB25-WBNR-IMPCT&utm_campaign=CB25-WBNR-IMPCT&utm_source=ac&utm_medium=edm

Together, we pray, give, and act for peace—thank you for standing with us.

*Josie Worner,
Head of Philanthropy,
Act for Peace.*

*“Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God”.*
Matt 5:9 NIV

To ask about joining the Social Action Ministry Team at St Matthew's
email Alexander on alexander.lawless7@gmail.com

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 16th June 2026 at 7pm in the Lower Church Hall

Friends of the Middle East

Re: E-books for the Near East School of Theology (NEST) in Beirut.



If you would like to consider offering some financial assistance, **please email: library@nswact.uca.org.au with the subject 'NEST'.**

Every donation counts.

Donations of over \$20

will receive a tax-deductible receipt

The only way to donate specifically to the e-books is directly via the library as shown above and not via the FME website.



The Armenian Genocide Observance 2026:

link to the Assembly Website.

<https://uniting.church/commemorating-the-111th-anniversary-of-the-armenian-genocide/>

<https://www.fmeorg.au/armenian-genocide>

Why?

Back in July 2015 (in Perth) the Assembly resolved to:

- a) Acknowledge that the Armenian massacres and forced deportations of 1915- 1923 constitute a Genocide.
- c) Affirm the value of recognising a date on or near the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, as a day of observance and commemoration of the Armenian Genocide and request the National Consultant Christian Unity, Doctrine and Worship to prepare:
 - i). a prayer to be provided for all congregations of the UCA for use on the day; and
 - ii). in consultation with others, educational and that liturgical resources for congregations to use.

A Little Bit of Background:

- a) Australia became aware of the emerging genocide through the reports of journalists like Charles Bean and prisoners of war (Gallipoli).
- b) Over the next few years churches held 'Armenian Sundays' in order to raise money. It had become known that Armenia was the first nation (ever) to declare itself to be called Christian.
- c) The language of genocide did not yet exist. At the time Winston Churchill referred to the ethnic cleansing of Armenians as 'the unnamed crime'.
- d) The Armenian Relief Fund marked the first overseas exercise in humanitarian aid carried out in this country. The churches supported this work and helped send a ship of mercy (with medicines and food), and the setting up of an orphanage to the north of Beirut.
- e) One of the leaders in the response was a Congregational minister from Adelaide – the Rev. James Cresswell; another was an American congregational minister, the Revd. Lionel Wirt, who had served in ministry in Sydney and Brisbane; women were heavily involved as well – one of the most notable was Edith Granville from Strathfield – her son had been killed on the day the Australians first landed at Gallipoli.

3. For more information:

The Rev. Dr. Krikor Youmshajekian is willing to show the film, 'The Golden Chain of Mercy' which is the story of the Australian and New Zealand response.

The following podcasts: Empire, by William Dalrymple and Anita Anand.

Episodes 36 and 37 The Armenian Genocide

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/6tnvbXbxShIjIASQ7K2P4I>

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/66YtTfAS8Or7svZe3cibnn>

Churchill's Photographer

Karsh

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/7wngGrVIPkyUr0gFmSsyNx>

4. Prayers that can be used.

Armenian Martyrs' Day Prayer

Our loving and gracious Heavenly Father, for all those who stood firm in their Christian faith in the face of persecution, exile and death.

We praise You, O God.

For all who endured the genocide,

We praise You, O God.

For all those Armenian men, women and children who were deported, driven in death marches, and massacred mercilessly because they refused to deny Christ,

We lift up our cries to You, O God.

For all those who directly or indirectly participated in the murder of this small Christian nation and washed their hands saying, "I am innocent of their blood,"

We lift our cries to You, O God.

For all those who continue to trample on truth, justice and human rights,

We lift our cries to You, O God.

That this nation may not perish but prosper under Your fatherly care,

We pray to You, O God.

That You may uproot from our hearts every trace of hatred and the spirit of vengeance.

We pray to You, O God.

That those of us who are the descendants of those noble martyrs may have a deep sense of gratitude and a deep sense of responsibility.

We pray to You, O God.

That we may recognize they died for their faith that we might live for it,

We pray to You, O God.

Grant that we may value the freedom and the security we are privileged to enjoy in this beautiful country.

Hear our prayer, O God.

Grant that Your power of resurrection may inspire us to live as a righteous people prepared for every good work,

Hear our prayer, O God.

Grant that we may be a compassionate, forgiving and loving people.

Hear our prayer, O God, and grant us a right spirit. Amen!

Further Prayers.

Holy God, it is through of your heart of compassion,
shown to us in Jesus
That we are brought to see the pain of others
and find the truth, the justice and peace of your way.
At this time, we remember the slaughter of the Armenian people,
Driven from their homes
and all that had been safe and good
because of who they were by ethnicity and faith.
They are our friends and witnesses 'in Christ'
On the suffering endured,
Lord cast your eye:
Hold those whose lives came to such cruel ending
In your heart.
For their faith, we give you thanks.
May they be held in our memory
blessed through time.
The passage of time does not forget;
the legacy of hurt and trauma remains.
We bring to you
those whose lives are scarred, threatened and held hostage
by persecution, by fear and hatred still today,
in Armenia, in the Middle East and in many other places:
people unknown to us but known to you.
On the suffering endured,
Lord cast your eye:
Hold those held fast in the violent power of others
In your heart.
For their faith that continues, we give you thanks.
Bless them we pray.
The present cannot not forget:
the massacres and loss of life of the past
weave their way into later holocausts
and present-day acts of genocide.

We bring to you families
that have been torn apart, loved ones lost,
whose lands and livelihoods have been taken:
We bring to you all those for whom
fear for the future threatens to drown out hope
and who find themselves innocents and by-standers
in no-man's lands.
We pray for children
whose lives are lived to the sound of gunfire and bombs.
We pray for those
who live with life-threatening hunger, thirst and disease.
We pray for those
We pray for those
who now see happening things that ignite memories they would forget.
In a time of silence
We remember the peoples of Armenia,
the genocide,
and the dispossession of Artsakh
On the suffering endured,
Lord cast your eye:
Hold those whose lives were so cruelly treated
In your heart.
For their faith, we give you thanks.
Bless them we pray.

For hymns, see our website: <https://www.fmeorg.au/armenian-genocide>



ARMENIANS HELD PRISONERS AFTER THE TREBIZOND MASSACRE.