



Continued Spiritual Fitness



We continue to think about our future and to work on rejuvenating our life and witness as we join in the mission of God as a congregation. Last month I talked about spiritual fitness. Spiritual fitness is something that maybe we are not used to thinking about. It has not been a traditional element of our language about Church. However, if we are to be a healthy Church then we should be more conscious about our spiritual fitness as members of the Church.

"Spirituality is a dynamic and intrinsic aspect of humanity through which persons seek ultimate meaning, purpose, and transcendence, and experience relationship to self, family, others, community, society, nature, and the significant or sacred. Spirituality is expressed through beliefs, values, traditions, and practices." (Spiritual care in palliative care: Working towards an EAPC Task Force, in Puchalski, et al. 2014, p. 646) From this densely packed, but very helpful definition, we can understand that spirituality is not just an internal thing but shapes our living as well.

Spirituality is about being human. We are people who have bodies. Our bodies include our brain which gifts us our mind. Yet, we are

more than just bodies and minds, at least according to God and our faith. We have spirit. We are in the Season of After Pentecost and this reminds us that just as God breathed life in the first humans, God breathes life into us as people and the people of God. That breath is God as Spirit. In Hebrew the words רוח (Ruach) and נשמה (Neshamah) both refer to breath and spirit/soul. The same is true in Greek where the word πνεῦμα (pneuma) is for breath

and Spirit. Without breath we are not alive, and this breath/spirit which comes from God we are not truly alive. Spirituality is about living and living well.

Coming to be the Church and gathering on Sunday or at other times is like a faithnasium where we should work on our spiritual fitness. A gymnasium is where we build up our health and wellbeing through strength and cardio training, physical exercise and fitness classes. A faithnasium is where we come to build up our spiritual health and wellbeing and work on our faith and discipleship to be spiritually fit.

Last month I explored some zones of spiritual fitness. These included inward spiritual fitness which is to do with our closeness to God or our abiding in God. Inward spiritual fitness is also about keeping ourselves "from being polluted by the world," [James 1: 27] through focusing on living rightly. Then there is our outward spiritual fitness which is how we strengthen our relating to others through things such as the Fruit of the Spirit and the marks of love such as in 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8. Outward spiritual fitness included loving others, and this involved both developing and using our gifts from God as Spirit, and this ministry is a way to love others. Loving others also includes working for justice and equity in the world.

Inward Spiritual Fitness Exercise Areas

Spiritual Soul Fitness: Christian Meditation, contemplative practices

Spiritual Mind Fitness: Theological fitness, Biblical Literacy and Hermeneutical fitness (ability to interpret Scripture)

Outward Spiritual Fitness Exercise Areas

Spiritual Heart Fitness: Building compassion through awareness of justices and equity issues and exercising advocacy and activism.

Spiritual Body/Strength Fitness: Discernment and use of gift in ministry,

One further aspect of spiritual fitness which is very important is that of grit and stamina. The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand [Matthew 3:2; Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:15] and within us [Luke 17:21]. However, the work of bringing the Kingdom into fuller being is part of the ongoing work of God, which is constantly and consistently facing resistance by people. Thus, this ongoing work involves a continuing struggle. If we are to participate in this with God and join God in God's work, as we are called to do, then we will need to develop our grit, resilience and stamina.

Anyone who has done anything physically demanding, such as a long hike, run, cycle, paddle or even a long journey in a car, knows that fatigue is a factor. Along with fatigue is motivation. There comes a point where, even when we know that what we are doing is worthwhile, tiredness can set in and there is a temptation to stop. The longer we keep going, the more fatigue becomes a factor and the harder we find to stay motivated. This is where stamina and grit - which is the mindset of dogged perseverance - becomes an important factor in our fitness.

The same can relate to spiritual fitness.

So, once again, it is good to ask: How spiritually fit are we? Even if our fitness isn't too bad, we still need to have a fitness and exercise plan to help us stay fit. What is our personal spiritual fitness plan and routine? How do we as a Church have a spiritual fitness plan and training program and regime as a community?

If we are to be a healthy Church, then we should be more conscious about our spiritual fitness as members of the Church. What might it look like to develop our Church as a faithnasium which builds spiritual fitness? How do we intentionally go about helping people seek ultimate meaning, purpose, and transcendence, and experience relationship to self, family, others, community, society, nature, and the significant or sacred? How do we as a Church help people through strengthening our beliefs, values, traditions, and practices so that they are connected with God and God's mission and purpose in the world so that all might live worthwhile, meaningful and purposeful lives? How do we nurture and build grit, resilience and stamina as part of our spiritual fitness? These questions prompt us to regard thinking about spiritual fitness as somethings to very much to think about.



God bless
Jon



Thursday 4 June 2026

10am—12noon

Guest speaker: Alan Wright



*I didn't know that about
and other stuff*

but now I know a little more

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

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

Floral Workshop @ St. Matthew's

**Everyone is welcome to come to a floral workshop on
Saturday 27 June**

Where: St. Matthew's upstairs hall

Time: 9.30am—12noon

Cost: \$20 If you bring your own container/vase and flower and foliage.

\$35 If you don't bring your own vase/container. Flowers or foliage that will be provided for you.

A donation of \$8 per person will go towards a worthy cause.

Please book a place by the 23 June.

For details or to book please contact

Katherine on 0437 772 011 or church office 9686 3003



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

FUSION
Youth @ St Matts
 Term 2, 2026
 5.30-7.30PM
 FORTNIGHTLY ON FRIDAYS
 Upper Primary - High School \$10 (includes supper)

WEEK 2 1 May COORDINATED CHALLENGES	WEEK 8 12 June TV Gameshows
WEEK 4 15 May MASTER CHEF	WEEK 8 26 June Knight Night
WEEK 6 29 May LASER TAG	ST. MATTHEW'S UNITING CHURCH Baulkham Hills growing together

For more information contact Jon Humphries
jon@stmatthewsuniting.net.au 9686 3005

OP SHOP
 Open Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 9am-2pm and 1st Saturday of the month 9-12pm
 Pre-loved clothes & accessories, Books, Haberdashery,

ST. MATTHEW'S UNITING CHURCH Baulkham Hills growing together

Garage
SALE

1st Saturday of the month 9am-12pm
Upcoming dates

- **6 June**
- **4 July**
- **1 August**

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

St. Matthew's Lower hall

Garage sale & Art sale

Mixed mediums, lots of stock

Saturday 6 June

9am-12pm

Where: St. Matthew's

Upstairs hall



From the St Matthew's Social Action Missional Ministry Team

'Doing little things can make a big difference'.

Topic: Hidden in Plain Sight: Modern Slavery in Australia

Modern slavery did not end in the 19th century—it still exists today, affecting millions of people worldwide. As Christians, we cannot ignore this reality. Our faith compels us to act rather than turn away from those who suffer. Scripture calls us clearly: *"Seek justice. Defend the oppressed"* (Isaiah 1:17). This command remains as urgent today as it ever was. Yet modern slavery often goes unnoticed because it is rarely discussed. It exists quietly within industries we rely on, hidden in plain sight.

Modern slavery refers to situations where coercion, threats, or deception are used to exploit a person and undermine their freedom, as defined by the NSW Anti-Slavery Commissioner. It includes practices such as human trafficking, forced labour, debt bondage, and forced marriage.

One example closer to home is the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme. Introduced in 2022, it merged prior programs consisting of Seasonal Work Program and the Pacific Labour Scheme programs to fill workforce shortages in agriculture and regional industries, particularly during harvest times. The scheme allows a 'guestworker' program that allow workers from nine Pacific Island nations and Timor-Leste to take up low and semi-skilled jobs across Australia. Over 31,000 people now participate, generating significant economic value.

However, the program has also uncovered situations where migrant workers and their families did not receive the expected benefits. Studies indicate that much of the money earned stays in Australia instead of helping communities in the workers' home countries.

The visa system creates a power imbalance by tying workers to one employer, preventing them from easily changing jobs, bringing family, or seeking permanent residency. These limitations increase vulnerability to exploitation, such as wage theft and threats of visa cancellation, with many cases only partially resolved.

Barriers to seeking help are substantial. Workers may fear losing their visa if they speak out, and many are based in remote areas with limited access to legal support. Language barriers, lack of education about rights, and reliance on employers further increase vulnerability. Also, their visas can be weaponised against the worker; the worker cannot extend their visa to seek workplace justice. Finding new jobs for visa workers does not apply to PALM workers, which is a powerful silencing factor. Sometimes, inaccurate information about visas can cause problems for workers, especially if their immigration advisers are unscrupulous.

In response, the Australian Government has begun taking steps to improve workplace justice. In March 2025, *Protecting Migrant Workers: Information and Education Program* was launched to support temporary visa workers. This initiative funds unions and organisations to provide education, outreach, and legal advice in workers' native languages. This effort is already making a difference. In one case, a woman in Sydney was found to have been trapped in domestic servitude for nearly seven years. She worked every day without proper pay, leave, or freedom of movement. With union support funded by this program, she is now seeking to recover an estimated \$500,000 in unpaid wages and entitlements.

These stories remind us that injustice is not distant or abstract. It exists in our communities—sometimes unseen, often unheard. As Christians, we are called not only to be aware, but to respond. Modern slavery is not just "out there." It is on our doorstep. We must not look away.

Blessings, Dr Sandra Morell, SAMT Team

Daily Wisdom

(Breakthrough, by Laurence Freeman)



To awaken is to open our eyes. And we open them, as St Benedict said, to the divinising light. In the Prologue to the rule of St Benedict he says this, that the call of God to us comes to us through the crowd, through the crowd of our thoughts, through the crowd of our activities, through the crowd of our memories, our unconscious, our ambitions. The Word of God or the call of God comes to us through all of this, it penetrates through all of this noise and distraction, and it is calling us. And he says, 'What is sweeter to us than to hear this call and to feel that there is an opening in the wall'. That there is a window, that there is a path, through the wall and that this leading us into life into a bigger, broader panorama of life than we imagined possible. And this is a continuous process, day by day.



From St. Matthew's Finance Committee:

Thanks to Barry

We would like to express the gratitude on behalf of all past and present members of the Finance Committee to Barry Gregory for all of his work for the Finance Committee for many years in managing the day-to-day financial running of St Matthews. We are grateful that Barry is continuing as a member of the Finance Committee, and we really appreciate Titima Betts from our 9:30am congregation for stepping forward to take on the day-to-day financials.

Roof Loan Information Update:

Thanks to the generosity of church members, we are making good progress with paying off the roof loans. We originally took out two loans to finance the roof renewal with a Schofield that attracts a low concessional interest rate, and a larger loan at commercial rates. We have paid a total of \$53,261.27 off the \$150,000 borrowed through the main loan and \$17,615.67 off the \$50,000 Schofields Loan.

The current loan balances owing are \$32,384.33 for the Schofield loan and \$96,738.73 for the main loan, totalling \$129,123.06.

Thanks to the generosity of one of our congregation members, the Church is receiving the benefit of a repayable deposit that is offsetting the outstanding balance of the commercial loan. Donations identified as being made for the loan are also put into the offset account, giving us \$136,697.70 in the offset account. Because it has been offset, this means that we do not have to pay interest on the main loan. We pay \$14 per month interest on the Schofield loan.

However, we still need \$14,549.64 per annum (\$1,212.47 per month) for the roof loan repayments, we are most fortunate that this amount mostly goes to repaying the principal. St. Matthew's will largely be relying on general revenue to fund the roof loans repayments and we thank all the congregations at St Matthew's for their support with the repayments for the roof.

A summary is shown below:

	Schofield Loan	Main Loan
Original Amounts of loans	\$50,000.00	\$150,000.00
Amount repaid as of 18/05/2026	\$17,615.67	\$53,261.27
Current Loan Balances	\$32,384.33	\$96,738.73
Average Interest per month	\$14	\$0 (offset account)
Current monthly repayments from April 2026, next payment due on 19 th May '26	\$427.26	\$785.21
Funds in Offset account – includes \$100,000 refundable donation	-	\$136,697.70

Best wishes

Dom Schuster and Alastair Burn

Calendar of Events for June 2026

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall</p> <p>7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room</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>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>10am-12noon In Stitches Upstairs hall</p>	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>10-12pm Coffee & Discovery Speaker: Alan Wright</p> <p>7pm-Cricket Club Presentation night Upstairs hall</p>	<p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>9am-12pm Op Shop</p> <p>9am-12pm Garage Sale lower hall</p> <p>9am-12pm Art Sale Upstairs hall</p>	<p>2nd Sunday after Pentecost</p> <p>8am—Worship Includes Communion</p> <p>9.30am—Worship Includes Communion followed by Morning Tea</p> <p>KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8</p> <p>6.45pm Worship Includes Communion</p>
<p>8</p> <p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall</p> <p>7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room</p>	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>9.30-11am Christian Meditation Community Room</p>	<p>10</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>10am-12noon Women's Fellowship</p>	<p>11</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p>	<p>12</p> <p>5pm-7pm Fusion Youth Group TV Gameshows</p>	<p>13</p> <p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>3rd Sunday After Pentecost</p> <p>8am—Worship</p> <p>9am—Worship @ the Willow's</p> <p>9.30am—Worship followed by Morning Tea</p> <p>KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8</p> <p>2-4pm—Hall in use</p> <p>6.45pm Worship Community meal</p>
<p>15</p> <p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall</p> <p>7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room and Church</p>	<p>16</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>9.30-11am Christian Meditation Community Room</p> <p>7pm—SAMMT meeting lower hall</p>	<p>17</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>10am-12noon In Stitches Upstairs hall</p> <p>10am-12noon Men's Morning Tea McKels Café Bella Vista</p>	<p>18</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p>	<p>19</p> <p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>20</p> <p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>4th Sunday After Pentecost</p> <p>Uniting Church Anniversary</p> <p>8am—Worship</p> <p>9.30am—Worship Followed by morning tea</p> <p>KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship</p>
<p>22</p> <p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall</p> <p>7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room and Church</p>	<p>23</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>9.30-11am Christian Meditation Community Room</p>	<p>24</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>10am—Preschool using hall</p>	<p>25</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p>	<p>26</p> <p>5pm-7pm Fusion Youth Group "Knight Night"</p>	<p>27</p> <p>9.30am-12pm Floral Workshop Upstairs hall</p>	<p>5th Sunday After Pentecost</p> <p>8am—Worship Followed by morning tea</p> <p>9.30am—Worship Followed by morning tea</p> <p>KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8</p> <p>5pm—Shine setup from 4pm</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship</p>
<p>29</p> <p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop & Garage Sale lower hall</p> <p>7.30pm Christian Meditation Community Room</p>	<p>30</p> <p>9am-2pm Op Shop</p> <p>9.30-11am Christian Meditation community room</p>	<p>st. matthew's UNITING CHURCH BAULKHAM HILLS growing together</p>				

