



Faith-Part 3 —

I am sure that the previous two articles on faith may have seemed rather technical, as they documented various ways faith is used in common language and the comparison with the way faith is used in the New Testament. In this article the emphasis is on discovering the experience of faith for today. There will be a minimum of religious words. A few at first are needed to provide the context.

The writers of the New Testament are adamant that the death and resurrection of Jesus is at the centre of reality and changes everything, because God is especially at work in Him in history. The focus is on Jesus' life before the cross and Jesus' life after the resurrection. Before, God is far away, and after God is present in the midst of life. How did this happen?

Jesus' ministry emphasised the call to enter the Kingdom of God that has come near. The powerful and successful rejected his message, while the common people, who the successful considered failures, wanted to know more. In themselves people either rejected what Jesus offered, or were interested. They reflect the two options available to each one of us when life is lived with God far away. We like them are left as the one's who have to work out who we are and who we want to be.

Am I a Success or a Failure?

When assessing oneself there are two basic categories that dominate life. From the point of view of myself and/or society my life is either a success or a failure. There is a deep ambition to be a success, to make something of oneself, become financially secure, well known and well liked, independent and able to do what we want to do. Yet life can be tough. There is for many a deep pervasive sense that they are a failure. They have missed out on the opportunities others have had, feel looked down upon, judged by others for their mistakes and decisions, and find themselves locked into situations they would love to change but don't have the resources or power to do so.

Another Possibility

I once heard a middle aged woman in a large meeting cry out. "If I cannot think of myself as a success, and I cannot think of myself as a failure, how can I think of myself?" There was a deep silence.

Jesus opened another possibility. Seek first the kingdom of God. Don't define yourself by how you or others see you, as separated and independent from God. Instead, discover that through Jesus Christ, God's call for you is to know that you are a child of God.

That is what baptism is about. In baptism we enter into Christ's victory over death and sin and receive the gift to live alive to God.

Beyond Success and Failure

How to Live Alive to God

How do we do that? It is not by trying harder or being more committed or never making a mistake. Paul is a great guide here. He says don't put your mind to working out how you can live from your own perspective, put your mind on the Spirit of God that God has given you. Two profound discoveries happen when we receive God's gift of his presence through the Holy Spirit. There is the e-bike effect, and the unexpected happenings. Firstly, the e-bike effect. God is at work in you "enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil 2:13). God works through our minds and hearts as we set our mind on the Spirit catching us up into God's purposes. The fruit of the Spirit's presence is when "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control" flow. When we set our mind on these ways we discover it is like riding an e-bike. We peddle, but it is like another is peddling as well, giving adding power to these ways. The Holy Spirit brings into our awareness the deeply relational character of God, enabling us to experience our friends and others in a new way, and a drawing back from all that unjustly destroys relationships near and far. It is like discovering we live in a river of grace flowing through us. We work and the Spirit works.

Secondly, there is the way that things happen to us. Events occur, people are met, ideas come, difficult situations are resolved, new paths open. There are surprises along the way, sometimes often, other times occasionally, in which we discover there are resources in life that are not under our control, but beyond our control, God's gifts to us. Success and failure pale into insignificance in the light of discovering the way the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ opens his kingdom to us. Faith is not an idea or a conviction. It is the reality of discovering that the Lord of the Universe in whom the universe is immersed, is at work to bring God's loving purposes to fulfilment with awesome gentle relational power. Faith is living in this flow that God has made possible for us.

So much flows from this relational life, a concern for community, and justice, and for this God given planet. But more of that later.

Dean Drayton

'Am I Not Your Neighbour?'

In her book *The Sunburnt Country* Joëlle Gergis outlines the history and future of climate change in Australia. She is well placed to do so being a climate scientist herself. She acknowledged that there has always been variations in climate—but then she adds, what is happening now is very different from the past. Will Steffen was an Earth System scientist based in Canberra (he died suddenly this year). He saw things this way: those variations in the past were like a river meandering its way through a valley from one side to another. But now we are in an altogether different valley and we cannot get back to the valley that we have known in times gone by. Things are changing and we see symptoms of that in extreme heat, drought and floods. In some parts of the world the risks are more evident than elsewhere.

That is the case for the low lying islands of Tuvalu situated just south of the Equator. At one point in time they were known as the Ellice Islands and with Kiribati formed the Gilbert and Ellice Group. No part of Tuvalu is more than 3 metres above sea level: already they have been subject to loss of land and saltwater bubbling up through the coral and making it impossible to grow staple crops. Nearly everyone on this group of islands is Christian: the life of faith lies at the heart of island existence.



Am I Not Your Neighbour?

Is Global Warming Real?

Does Climate Change Matter?

Come and listen to Dr. Clive Pearson in conversation with Dr. Maina Talia

The theme of the neighbour is based on a reading of the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Thursday 14th September, 7:30 to 9:00 pm.

**St Matthews Uniting Church, Baulkham Hills
Crn. Edgar & Charles St. BH**

Maina Talia is a former co-chair of Global Indigenous Forum on Climate Change, author, climate activist. Maina has participated in every COP conference since Paris 2015; he has organized numerous workshops; addressed the German Parliament; been reported in major Australian and overseas newspapers. He recently completed his doctoral thesis on the situation in Tuvalu: three of the world's leading theologians on climate change believe his thesis should be published immediately.

RSVP: Email St. Matthew's Uniting Church office@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

Maina Talia recently completed his PhD in the theme of 'Am I Not Your *Tuakoi*/ Neighbour?'. In a globalized world tiny islands are weak actors and at the mercy of the policy of others. Maina has attended every COP conference since Paris in 2015; this year he intends to take his 13 year old son. As you can imagine the islanders are very concerned with what will happen to their children.

Maina has organised many workshops and has been the co-chair of the United Nations' sponsored Global Indigenous Forum on Climate Change. In recent times he has posed this question to do with the neighbour in many places. It is a question that goes back to the parable Jesus told of the Good Samaritan in response to an enquiry about what must one do to inherit eternal life. For the peoples of Tuvalu the issues are urgent: their islands are likely to disappear sooner rather than later. There is no international legislation that covers climate displaced people. It is a complex business with many matters to be addressed.

Come along and lend a neighbourly ear and hear what Maina has to say.

Clive Pearson

Save the date

Rev Jon Humphries
Induction Service

3pm Sunday 15 October

at St. Matthew's Uniting Church

*Please join Jon as he begins
his ministry with us.*

More details to follow.

ST MATTHEW'S UNITING CHURCH,
BAULKHAM HILLS

**TRIVIA
NIGHT**

Tables of 8
\$15 per person

SATURDAY | 28 OCTOBER, 2023

7:30 PM

More Info
daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

Coffee
and
Discovery

Guest Speaker

John Nichol

Thursday
7 September

10am—12noon

Religion in Japan, past & present

Maybe the thought of Japanese religion conjures unknown, mystified or suspicious thoughts. I will trace the history of a number of belief systems - Shinto, Confucianism, Buddhism and Christianity from way back until now. Plenty to see in art and architectural representations as well as some music. My aim is to stimulate your thinking through a range of stories.



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

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

SHINE AND ST. MATT'S *IN THE PHILIPPINES.*

The village (barangay) of Ravina situated on the small island of Guimaras, received packs of hygiene goods and school requisites from SHINE and St. Matt's.

24 children selected by one of the teachers were excited to open their goodies. They loved the colouring pencils the best, they had their very own pack!

The gifts to this school have been named a box of H.O.P.E.

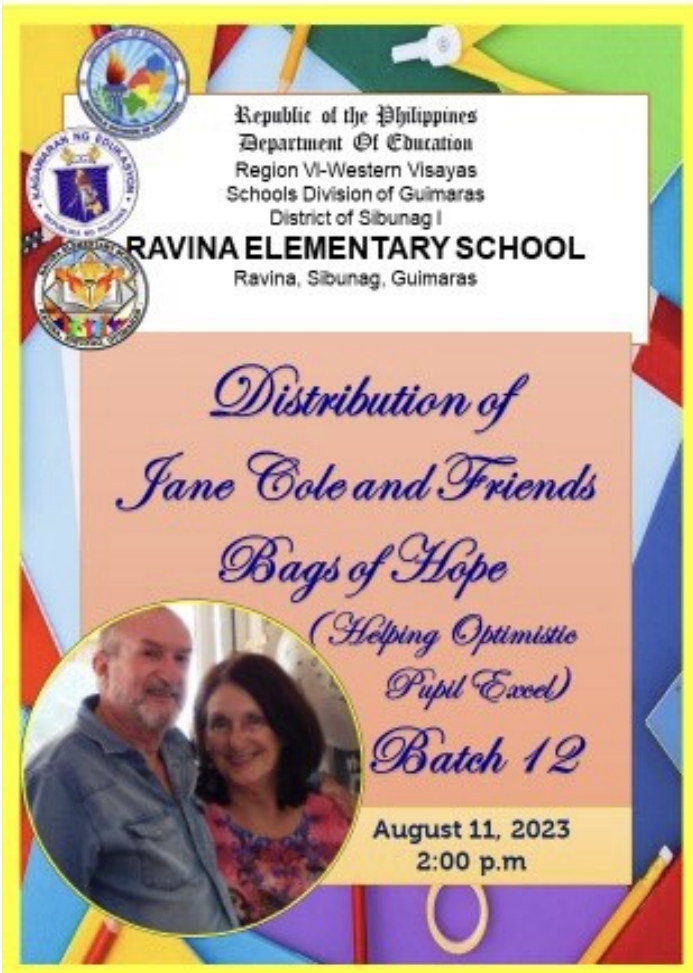
Helping Optimistic Pupils Excel.

We were fortunate that at last, they have internet connection that enabled them to face time us for the giving out of gifts ceremony.

The smiles were huge as they delved into their gifts! We were treated to a song and prayer before signing off.

Well done SHINE. Well done St. Matt's.

Jane Cole

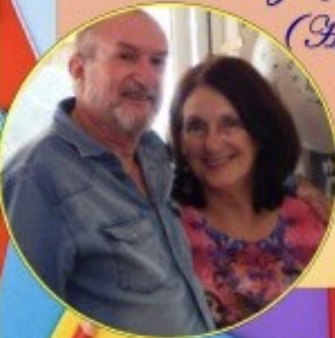


Republic of the Philippines
Department Of Education
Region VI-Western Visayas
Schools Division of Guimaras
District of Sibunag I

RAVINA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Ravina, Sibunag, Guimaras

*Distribution of
Jane Cole and Friends
Bags of Hope
(Helping Optimistic
Pupil Excel)
Batch 12*

August 11, 2023
2:00 p.m.



UNITING YOUTH CAMP 2023

THAT'S MY TEAM

A high-energy camp for high schoolers in grades 7-11. Big on community, fun, food, and Jesus. There will be worship, big activities, small groups, free time, and more!

"AND YOU ARE CHRIST'S, AND CHRIST IS GOD'S"
1 Corinthians 3: 23

The Collaroy Centre
22 Homestead Ave
Collaroy NSW 2097

LIMITED SPOTS AVAILABLE
REGISTER NOW:
pulse.uca.org.au/uyc

3 - 6 OCTOBER

Cost:

- \$360 for campers (discounts for multiple children in the same family)
- Limited early bird registrations for \$310 (if registered by 14 Aug 2023)
- Sponsorship available if required.
- Congregations are encouraged to donate to help send a kid to camp!

  Uniting Church
SYNOD OF NSW & ACT

Contact Daniel Gibb for more information
daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au



 **JAZZ ON HAMMERS** 

Come and join us each month for an evening of live music, dinner and fellowship.

When: September 17 and October 15 from 6-8pm

Where: Northmead Uniting Church, 3-7 Hammers Rd Northmead

Cost: Donations welcome for pot luck dinner

Who: All ages are WELCOME!



For more information contact Noni Medcalf: nones81@gmail.com

**Report from
St. Matthew's
Women's Fellowship
for AGM
on 23rd July**

We meet on the second Wednesday of each month from 10am to 12pm in the upstairs hall and church. The group strives to assist the Church by supporting missions and outreach organisations, as well as catering for thanksgiving services of which there has been 4 in the last couple of months.



The ladies enjoy the fellowship and caring for one another by organising a varied program consisting of guest speakers, travel talks, quizzes, games, sharing other's hobbies and pastimes, and

favourite recipes, just to mention a few. Not forgetting morning tea at the start of each meeting. We start our meeting with prayer led by our president, and each month a member leads us in a devotion of her choice.

We have an average attendance each month of 12 ladies. There are currently 22 members on our monthly email list. Any ladies who would like to join with this Women's Fellowship group will receive a warm and friendly welcome.

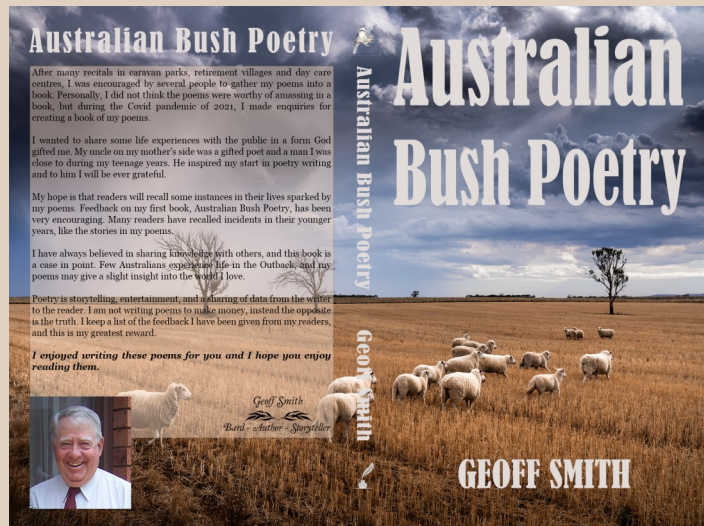
Margaret Gray (Secretary)

Geoff Smith is a member of the Narromine Uniting Church which St. Matthew's has a strong connection with.

Do you remember the amazingly evocative poems from Geoff, that he kindly let us publish in St. Matthew's Connections Newsletter, a few years back, during lockdowns?

Well, Geoff has just published his second book "Australia Bush Poetry".

We congratulate Geoff on his new book and wish him every success.



Geoff Smith is launching his second book of wonderful bush poems.

Cost: paperback book \$20 + \$5 postage if applicable.

Kindle \$21.99

E book available through Amazon.

Book Launch
Narromine Library
Monday 4 September

Display / Signing
Dubbo Library
Friday 8 September

Poetry Reciting
Narromine Variety Concert
Saturday 9 September

"I am very excited with the new book of poems and am happy to autograph any copies for you. Please advise me when ordering. I hope you will take up the offer and that I hope to see you in Narromine or Dubbo." Geoff Smith

Geoff's email address available from St. Matthew's church office if you would like to order.



Women's Fellowship
Wednesday
13th September
@ 10am

'Table games'

There will be some games provided or if you wish, you can bring your own.

All ladies are welcome to join with us in a relaxed and friendly time together.

Enquires: Dulcie Duncum



Saturday
2 September

9am-12pm

Pre-loved
 Household Items,
 Electrical, Toys & Books
 (Fiction, Non-fiction & Children's Books)

St. Matthew's Lower Hall

St. Matthew's
 Community Engagement



CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

You are invited to come along to the church on

Tuesdays at 9.30am—11am
All are welcome

“The important aim in Christian meditation is to allow God's mysterious and silent presence within us to become more and more not only a reality but the reality which gives meaning, shape and purpose to everything we do, everything we are” John Main.

www.WCCM.org
www.christianmeditationaustralia.org
 The World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM)

Katherine Pedersen. Facilitator of the Tuesday 9.30am sessions and for information.
kathped56@gmail.com



Meeting Dates
September
6 & 20

1st, 3rd & 5th
 Wednesdays
 of the month in the upstairs church hall.
10.00am to 12.00pm
 Bring your craft along to do.
 Share fun and fellowship with other crafty ladies.
 Morning Tea supplied. Enquiries: Jane Cole

Recycling
Appeal

St. Matthew's Community Engagement Focus Group are still collecting glass and plastic DRINK bottles as well as DRINK cans. To raise money for various organisations who support women and children who have been affected by domestic violence.



We have raised \$120 so far! Thank you to everyone who has participated in this initiative.

DRINK Plastic and DRINK glass bottles need to have their barcode and plastic wrapper still attached. DRINK Cans should be left uncrushed as the machine needs to read the barcode. **PLEASE LEAVE YOUR DONATIONS IN THE MARKED TUBS LOCATED IN THE UPSTAIRS HALL.** We appreciate all the donations and look forward to continuing fundraising.

Thank you
 Marijke Prinsloo



MEN'S MORNING TEA
Wednesday 20th September

10am to 12noon

Mckel's Café, Shop 14, Circa
 Boulevard Bella Vista.

Enquiries
 Alan
 Wright

Every third Wednesday of the month

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

Care and Prayer

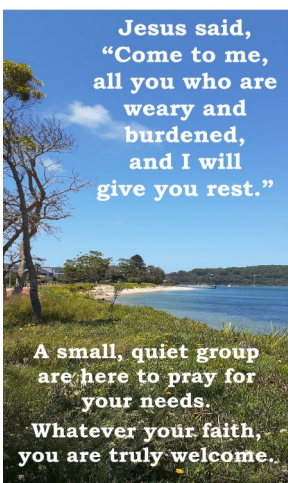
All Welcome

3pm

on the first Monday
of each month
at St. Matthew's

February to November

Next Date: September 4



A small, quiet group are here to pray for your needs.
 Whatever your faith, you are truly welcome.

Calendar of Events for September 2023

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>9am-12pm Op Shop </p> <p>9am-12pm Mini Mart lower hall</p> 	 <p>8am—Worship includes Communion</p> <p>9.30am—Worship includes Communion KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship</p>	<p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop lower hall</p> <p>3pm Care and Prayer in the church</p>	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>9.30–11am Christian Meditation in the Church</p> <p>7.30pm Thrive Bible Study lower hall</p>	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>10am-12pm In Stitches upstairs hall</p> 	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>10am-12pm Coffee & Discovery Speaker John Nichol “Religion in Japan Past & Present” in the upstairs hall and church</p> 
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
<p>5pm-7pm Fusion Youth Group “Balloon Night” upstairs hall</p>	<p>No Scheduled Events</p>	 <p>8am—Worship</p> <p>9am—Worship @ the Willow’s</p> <p>9.30am—Worship KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship</p>	<p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop lower hall</p> 	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>9.30–11am Christian Meditation in the Church</p>	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>10am-12noon Women’s Fellowship in the upstairs hall & church</p> 	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>7.30pm-9pm “Is Global Warming Real? Am I Not Your Neighbour?” at the church</p>
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
<p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>No scheduled events</p>	 <p>8am—Worship</p> <p>9.30am—Worship KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship</p>	<p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop lower hall</p> 	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>9.30–11am Christian Meditation in the Church</p> <p>7.30pm Thrive Bible Study lower hall</p>	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>10am-12noon Men’s Morning Tea McKels Café Bella Vista</p> <p>10am-12pm In Stitches upstairs hall</p> 	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>5pm-7pm Fusion Youth Group “Let’s Get Creative” upstairs hall</p>
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
<p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>No scheduled events</p>	 <p>8am Worship</p> <p>9.30am—Worship KUCA in recess</p> <p>5pm—Shine</p> <p>6.45pm—Worship</p>	<p>9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop lower hall</p> 	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p> <p>9.30–11am Christian Meditation in the Church</p>	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p>	<p>9am-2pm Op Shop </p>
29	30					
<p>No scheduled events</p>	<p>No scheduled events</p>					

