




**Bible Readings**

**Matthew 18: 21-35**  
**Psalms 103: 1-13**  
**Romans 14: 1-12**

*Response after Bible Readings*  
**Leader:** Hear the word of the Lord 



**8am—Worship**  
Led by Pamela Leslie  
and Albert Olley

**9.30am—Worship**  
Led by Sharon Underwood  
and Laurel Barr  
**KUCA** Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8

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 & 9.30am only**

**6.45pm—Worship**  
includes Community Meal

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

**MONDAY 18 SEPTEMBER**  
**9am—Sorting & Pricing**  
for Op Shop lower hall

**TUESDAY 19 SEPTEMBER**  
**9am-2pm—Op Shop**  
**9.30am—Christian Meditation**  
in the church  
**7.30pm—Thrive**  
lower hall

**WEDNESDAY 20 SEPTEMBER**  
**9am-2pm—Op Shop**  
**10am-12pm—In Stitches**  
upstairs hall  
**10am-12pm—Men's Morning Tea**  
Circa Norwest Shopping Centre

**THURSDAY 21 SEPTEMBER**  
**9am-2pm—Op Shop**

**FRIDAY 22 SEPTEMBER**  
**5pm-7pm—Fusion**  
**'Let's Get Creative'**  
upstairs hall

**SATURDAY 23 SEPTEMBER**  
**No Scheduled Events**

**SUNDAY**  
**24 SEPTEMBER**

**8am—Worship**

**9.30am—Worship**  
**KUCA** in Recess

**5pm—Shine**

**6.45pm—Worship**



**CHILDREN, YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS MINISTRY WORKER**  
DANIEL GIBB *Part Time*  
Email: daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

**SENIORS PASTORAL CARER**  
MICHAEL STRONG *Part Time*  
Email: mike@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

**CHURCH OFFICE SECRETARIES:**  
ROBYN MORRALL AND LYNN SAMUEL

**CHURCH OFFICE HOURS** 9AM-3PM MON-FRI

**OFFICE :** 9686 3003

**LOCATION:**  
CNR CHARLES & EDGAR STREETS  
BAULKHAM HILLS

**POSTAL ADDRESS:**  
BAULKHAM HILLS UNITING CHURCH  
PO BOX 773 BAULKHAM HILLS 1755

**WEB SITE:** www.stmatthewsuniting.net.au  
**Weekly newsletter available on website**

**EMAIL:** office@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

**FACEBOOK:**  
@stmatthewsunitingchurchbaulkhamhills

**PRE-SCHOOL DIRECTOR** 9639 8570  
SONALI WANIGESEKERA  
PO BOX 321 BAULKHAM HILLS 2153  
**EMAIL:** director@stmatthewsps.net.au

Thank you to all who have contributed to this publication.

# Lectionary Notes

## Pentecost 16

### September 17

#### Exodus 14:19-31

Pharaoh rues his decision. "What have we done, letting Israel leave our service!" The chariots were called out to pursue and trap the Israelites between the wilderness way they had taken and the Red or Reed Sea. The pillar of cloud moved from in front of the now fearful army of slaves to stand between them and the elite advancing Egyptian forces. The crossing of the Red Sea allows the people to escape and the attacking forces to be destroyed. The passage describing this divine event interweaves two accounts of the night according to those who study the Hebrew. First, "The Lord drove back the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land." At the critical moment an escape route is given, they are no longer trapped with their backs to the sea. As the exodus account continues the miracle is heightened. "And the waters were divided. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left." When the people are on the other side, and Pharaoh's chariots are still crossing, Moses is instructed to stretch out his hand, so that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, "and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth."

In today's critical era there is so much discussion and comment about this pivotal event. If you want to read about the wide range of belief, doubt and alternatives that are out there, Google the article "Did the Exodus of Moses and His People Happen?" For some commentators, it was not the Red Sea, but the Reed Sea - the actual place cannot easily be identified. Others think that there were many groups that fled from slavery and headed north toward Canaan. This, it is claimed, is the story of one large group that left under Moses. When pursued they had a dramatic escape. There are varying explanations and, perhaps it is not surprising that in most accounts God drops out of the picture, and the explanation takes over. The key fact is that which Israel has never forgotten. If it was not for God's act there wouldn't be a nation. The nation has never forgotten it's life was given by God in this awe-full night. "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, the house of slavery."

#### Psalms 103:1-7, 8-13.

The psalms are meditations and prayers. They are not meant to be read, so much as to be lived with. In pondering, we give the Spirit of God a chance to break open the words to us as a present reality.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits—who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. (v2-5)

As far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us. (v 12)

And many more verses in this psalm are worth spending time with.

#### Romans 14:1-12

Paul writes, that the congregation should welcome those who hold strong opinions about particular matters, even though others in the congregation hold that in the freedom Christ they do not have to restrict themselves in these practices. Paul is very clear. There is a fundamental tension between those who hold to certain practices they perceive as holy practices, and those who hold to the freedom Christ gives. He addresses two issues that were present in the Roman congregation to whom he is writing. First the group he calls 'weak in the faith' who are convinced a Christian should only eat vegetables, or hold that a Christian must not work on the Sabbath, and secondly those whose 'strong faith' gives them the freedom to see that these are not important matters.

His wisdom in Christ: those who refrain must not pass judgement on those who do, and those who don't refrain, must not despise those who do. It will not have escaped your notice that there are many such sorts of matters still dividing groups, like sport on Sunday, opposing political opinions on matters such as the Voice, climate change, gender matters.

The reasons Paul gives are really important. First, we are not to be the judge of others whom God has welcomed into the congregation (it is God's congregation, the body of Christ, not ours!). Second, each person is to stand before the Lord, for it is before the Lord they own that they stand or fall. Let each be fully convinced in their own minds before the Lord about what they believe and do. It is not the task of anyone to be the prosecutor or defender of their position against the other. For we do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. The church is not a group of like-minded people. It comprises those whom God welcomes into the congregation, and those who hold their convictions before Jesus Christ their Lord. We are to live our lives before the Lord, rather than before others.

How easy it is to limit those whom we recognise as fellow Christians. Since the sixteenth century Reformation Churches have continued to split. There are thousands and thousands of denominations. This passage calls us to another way to live together: that is living in the grace of Christ, that we may be one.

#### Matthew 18:21-35

As Peter found, Jesus called him to re-assess his attitudes. Peter's question is one we all have to face in our life at some time. How often do I forgive? After seven times have I not become a doormat giving permission to others to walk over me? How have we come to terms with this call to forgive seventy seven times? A variant of this reading, states seventy times seven, that is 490 times. This the most difficult reading may have been the original. For either reading it is forgiveness unlimited.

Jesus then tells a parable about the kingdom of heaven. A king has an official working for him who is a slave, who when an audit is made finds that he owes him at last ten billion dollars. The king has pity on him when he begs for time to repay this amount (how?) and forgives him the total amount. This slave coming out from the king saw a fellow slave, also probably an official, who owed him about \$20,000. But when this person begged for time to repay, the slave refused and threw him into gaol. The amounts are calculated from the equivalents today for a talent – fifteen years of a laborer's wage, and a denarius – a day's wage for a laborer.

The king is told and calls this slave official back. "Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?" What a question from the Lord for Peter and for us all? This is not just about money of course, it is about discovering the mercy of God, and that discovery flowing through into the church and each of us, giving mercy to others. In the parable the slave official asked for mercy when he was audited. Peter asks how many times should he forgive. In both cases overflowing mercy and forgiveness is given.

Thank God that in the audit of our lives we stand before God who is merciful. And in the cross we see the cost of that mercy given for all, where the son of God takes our debts, that we may go free.

But there a big questions. What about tough love? Do we need to forgive those who don't ask for forgiveness? What if the issue is not forgiveness of others, but, "I cannot forgive myself." Peter's question is about sins in a church setting. Is the parable about mercy in the community?

The deeper question in the light of the cross is, how is this mercy to be lived out in the church and the community? In the Romans passage for this week, we are each to be responsible to the Lord for our convictions. Here we are in the sensitive area of what happens not only when convictions bring friction, but when hurts come from sins in the community of faith, and beyond. Sensitive it may be, but it is also the way the profound mercy of God is both discovered and experienced for ourselves and opens the way to live in that same mercy with each other and indeed all whom we meet.

*In grace and peace,*

*Dean*





## PEOPLE NEWS

Janet Goodman  
Jeanette Coleman

Enid Clifton

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

## Ecumenical Prayer Cycle 17 — 23 September

*Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay*

## SEPTEMBER SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES at the church

3 September - 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm  
includes Communion

10 September - 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm

17 September - 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm

24 September - 8am, 9.30am & 6.45pm

*Live streaming morning services only*



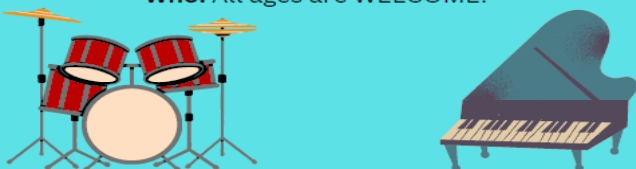
Come and join us each month for an evening of live music, dinner and fellowship.

**When:** Sep 17 and Oct 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

## 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](mailto:daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au)

**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.**

market stalls

# HILLS FAIR TRADE MARKET

gifts . clothing . food

SATURDAY 30th SEPTEMBER  
10AM-2PM



all undercover at St Paul's Castle Hill  
421 Old Northern Rd

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](https://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!



Contact Daniel Gibb for more information  
[daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au](mailto:daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au)

# PASIFIKA EMPOWERED 2023

A Community Event for Climate Justice and Cost of Living



With  
**CHRIS BOWEN**

Minister for  
Climate Change  
and Energy

Saturday, 7th October  
Nexus Meeting Room  
Pullman Hotel

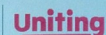
NEW LOCATION!



REGISTER NOW

9 OLYMPIC BOULEVARD  
SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK NSW 2127

1pm - 4pm | Followed by Fiji Day celebrations nearby!







# OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

## THE OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD PROJECT

Preschool is inviting members of the congregation to support Operation Christmas Child (OCC), a global project to fill up shoeboxes with gifts that will be distributed to disadvantaged children at Christmas time. For children living in poverty, the shoebox is usually the first gift they have ever received.

You can pick up an empty shoebox along with a brochure, which provides more information on the gifts to pack, from the Preschool Office between 9am – 3pm Monday - Friday. The shoeboxes are available now for collection.

**Please note that we will need all the boxes returned to the Preschool Office by latest Friday 21st October.**

A Donation of \$12.50 per box is essential to cover shipping costs. Payment details are on the brochure.

Thank you for your helping us support the wider community!

*Please note that the Preschool will be closed for holidays from Monday 25<sup>th</sup> September till Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October.*

Warmest Regards  
St Matthews Preschool

Dear Friends of the St Matthews community.

**Bundaleer** will be open on several days from 10am to 4pm within the next 3 weeks then closed to St Matthews visitors.

The garden is blooming and the temperature is pleasant for a visit relaxing among the trees and by water and having a drink and something to eat.

**If you missed coming in autumn this is your last chance.**

Please consider visiting by yourself or with a friend or group to enjoy the peace and beauty of this place. For inquiries or bookings email Katherine at [kathped56@gmail.com](mailto:kathped56@gmail.com)

### Last Dates

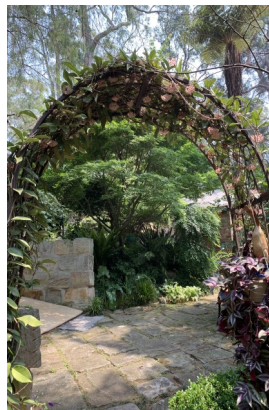
**September 17; 20; 22; 23; 24; 25; 29; 30.**

**Time: 10am- 4pm.**

**October 1; 4; 6; 7; 8**

**Time: 10am- 4pm.**

All donations go to the Roofing Fund.



Uniting Church Hawkesbury Zone

# TWILIGHT JAZZ

ON THE BANKS OF THE HAWKESBURY RIVER

## 8<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2023

4.00PM TO 8.00PM

A PERFORMANCE BY

### HARMONIX BIG BAND

AND SUPPORTED BY  
WARRAWEE PUBLIC SCHOOL  
STAGE BAND

ON THE LAWN OF

## EBENEZER CHURCH

BRING A PICNIC, CHAIRS, BLANKET & BYO  
BBQ, TEA, COFFEE & CAKE AVAILABLE

TICKETS \$20 EACH

CONTACT REBECCA ON 0439 309 303

TICKETS SOLD ON NIGHT IF NOT SOLD OUT

Find us on Facebook

Ebenezer Uniting Church - Twilight Jazz

FUNDS RAISED GO TO THE WEST PAPUAN DEVELOPMENT COMPANY - FOR CLEAN WATER WELLS