



EPIPHANY:

DO WE REALISE WHAT IT ALL MEANS?

After Christmas comes Epiphany and after Epiphany comes After Epiphany. This is traditionally the season where we celebrate the coming of the magi or 'Wise Men.' Epiphany means a moment of sudden and great revelation or realization. It is when, as the saying goes, 'the penny drops.' It is that kind of a moment when you suddenly feel that you understand something, or suddenly get an awareness of the meaning of something that is very important to you.

Why the wise men magi are associated with this season is that they had a realisation when they saw the star – which some scientists believe was actually an astrological event more than an astronomical event. Scientists can now not only map the stars in the sky, but us computer

modelling to see how the stars would have been arranged at any given time in history. In 6 BCE, which is when Jesus was more likely to have been born due to the fact that the Gregorian Calendar which we use was apparently calculated around the reigns of kings back to when Jesus was born and it is said that it is off by six years. Anyway, when astronomers wind back the stars to 6 BCE there is an amazing astrological event where in the sign of Aries the Ram – the star sign for the kings of Israel. According to astronomers, on April 16, 6 BCE Saturn came into Aries, as did the Sun and the moon and then the moon was eclipsed and finally Jupiter appeared as morning star (Source: Video – 'Son of God' BBC 2001). For people who were waiting for the Messiah/Christ

who would be a 'super king' this event would have got them very excited that the Advent of something big was happening.

Anyway, whether they followed a visible star that literally went ahead of them or a sign that they read in the stars, these Gentile magi came all the way from their homelands to find the Christ. They had a different sort of epiphany. Theirs was a portent in the heavens. For us, we seek a theological epiphany each year where we come into a realisation of what it means to seek and follow God in the person of Jesus. Christmas is but the beginning of a new act in the story of the work of God in relation to humankind.

There is a song that often is played or sung leading up to Christmas. It is 'Mary Did You Know?' It is in many ways a song of epiphany because the person who wrote it seems to have had one about Mary and what it might have been like to be the mother of God. For some reason this song has become a meme and each year people like to pick on this Christmas song for some reason and seek to criticise it. Usually, the criticism is based on the poorly framed argument that of course Mary knew what it all meant, because the angel told her. I don't get the pile on around this song and why people take exception to it so strongly given that the song is clearly meant to be rhetorical. Continued next page

EPIPHANY:

DO WE REALISE WHAT IT ALL MEANS?



Continued

Even if you take the song as a literal conversation with Mary, much of the stuff in the song Mary would come to know, but in fact she wouldn't have even guessed was possible in Jesus's infancy. However, we don't have to think too much to work out the questions about details in the song are actually not meant as questions to Mary. But, back to Mary and the song, yes, she did receive certain knowledge from the angel. Yet, I'm not sure even if she did comprehend what the angel had told her that she would have fully understand the depth of the reality. I know I certainly don't fully understand or appreciate it. That is why Epiphany is a helpful season for me, because I seek to understand and comprehend it better.

For me, though, the song is clearly rhetorical, and is about evoking reflection in us who listen to and sing it, not about actual questions to actual Mary. It is more about reminding us about what we know or should know. It is a season and time to help us realise that Christmas is but

the beginning of this special act in the continuing story of God's work for the redemption of the world.

The theology is not too bad in the song and the tune is quite pleasant. There are many other Christmas songs and carols that I can be far more critical of, but in the end, like this one, I take them as they are: food for thought and stuff for me to do my own reflection around and a reminder to nurture my own spirituality. Even after all the Christmases that I have been through and all the services that I have led and all the messages, talks and sermons that I have presented, there is still more for me to learn about what it means that God is with us. It is part of Epiphany to realise that Advents words of hope, peace, joy and love, are not supposed to be left behind as being for a season past, but set the liturgical framework – work of the people work – for faith and discipleship for the rest of the year.

So, at the start of a new year, with the Christmas season over, with New Year's resolutions bouncing around our head and as Easter starts to creep into the stores for the next round of consumer celebrations, perhaps we need to keep seeking an epiphany. We need to keep seeking to discern and realise what our gifts might be and

what God might be calling us to do in terms of using them in ministry and service. We need to seek to be realising where God is at work in our lives. We need to seek to realise where God is at work in the world and have that epiphany that we are supposed to be joining in and helping.

Thus, Epiphany is something to think about and even seek for ourselves, just like the Magi did all those many years ago. They knew it would be a long journey. They knew that they didn't really know what to expect, but they knew it would be something really important, and in the end it turned out probably nothing like they expected, because they ended up looking at a peasant Child of very humble circumstances, but who had a king already seeking his harm. I wonder what we might discover on our road to the cross and beyond.

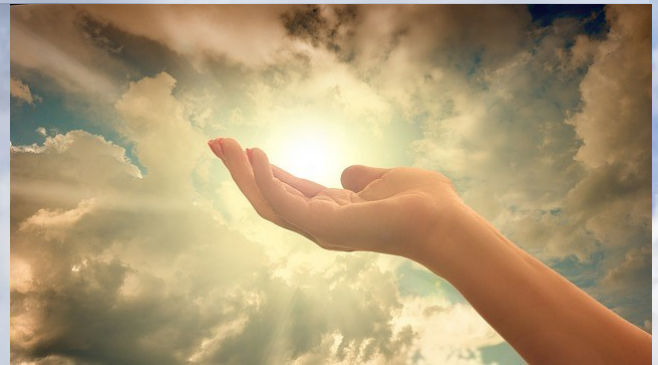
Blessings.

Jon



Learn About Healing Prayer Ministry

While following scripture we begin to see that Jesus, and Father God's true nature are revealed. Jesus never turned away from anyone in need. He was always thanking the Father, compassionate and ready to heal. Because we know God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow we need to work on our own childlike trust and receive wise instruction to follow Jesus and his clear directions to his disciples to heal the sick in his name.



- * Recorded talks by Rev. Mike Endicott
- * Rev. Dean Drayton will guide us about the necessary focus on the Kingdom of God
- * Care and Prayer members will share their own experiences in carrying out this Ministry

We hope you can join us for these **2 sessions Saturday afternoons in the church at St. Matthew's. 10th February and 17th February - 2pm to 5pm**

Session 1

Session 2

RSVP : The Church office on 9686 3003 or office@stmatthewsuniting.net.au



Cnr Edgar and Charles Sts Baulkham Hills



**Saturday
3rd February
9am - 12pm**

**Pre-loved Household Items,
Electrical, Toys & Books
(Fiction, Non-fiction & Childrens Books)**

St. Matthew's lower hall Edgar St



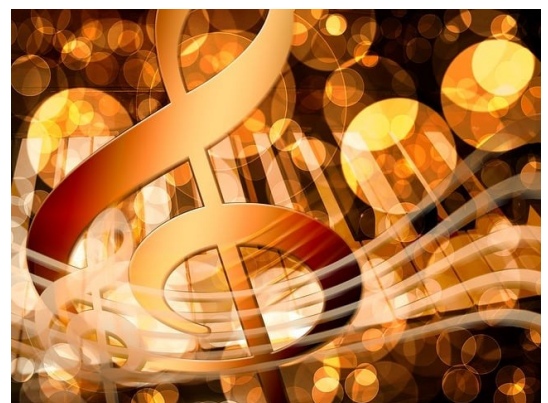
**Thursday
7th
March**

10am—12noon

Entertainers

**NOELEN & DAVID
NEIDECK**

David and Noelen will be entertaining us with a morning of music.

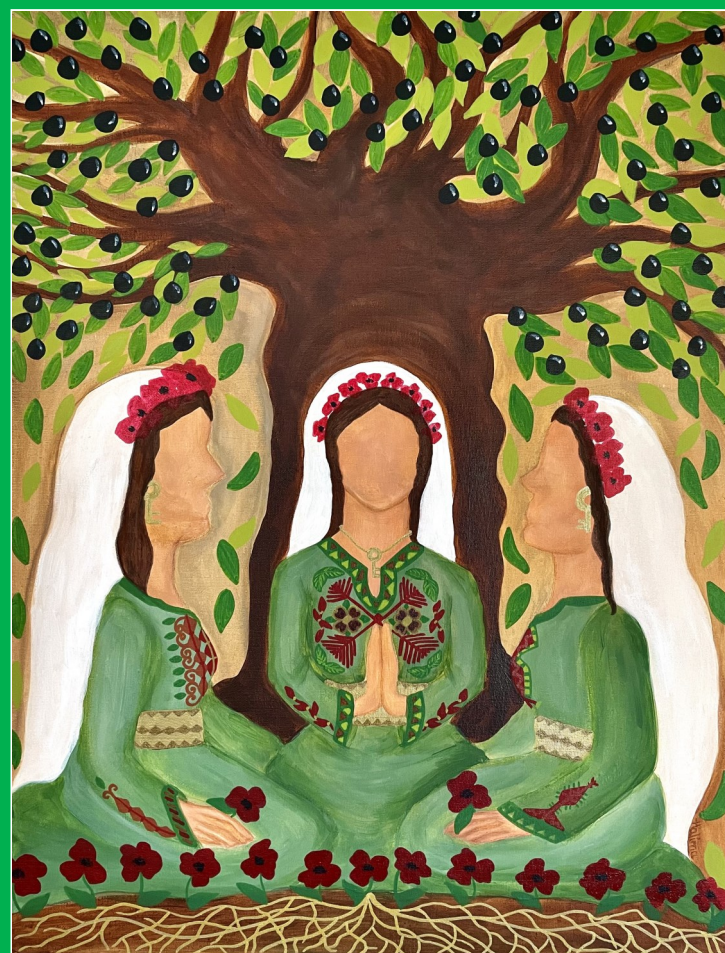


These informal morning gatherings include devotions, morning tea and guest speakers which cover a large range of interesting and informative topics.

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



Ash
Wednesday
Worship Service
at St. Matthew's
Wednesday
14 February
@ 7.30pm



WORLD DAY of Prayer 2024 PALESTINE

7.30pm
Friday 1st March

Our Lady of Lourdes
Catholic Church,
Canyon Road, Baulkham Hills.

*It is important that people understand that this year's event was prepared by **Christian Women living in Palestine** approximately 10 years ago and has nothing to do with the disastrous current conflict that is happening now as we speak.*

Calendar of Events for February 2024

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

			<p>1 9am-2pm Op Shop </p>	<p>2 No scheduled events</p>	<p>3 9am-12pm Op Shop  9am-12pm Garage Sale lower hall </p>	<p>4 Epiphany 5  8am—Worship includes Communion 9.30am—Worship includes Communion KUCA resumes for 2024 Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 6.45pm—Worship includes Communion</p>
<p>5 9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop lower hall </p>	<p>6 9am-2pm Op Shop  9.30-11am Christian Meditation in the Church 11.30am Care & Prayer Community Room  7.30pm—Thrive Bible Study lower hall 7.30pm—Property Committee Meeting upstairs hall</p>	<p>7 9am-2pm Op Shop  10am-12pm In Stitches  upstairs hall 7.30pm—Finance Meeting upstairs hall</p>	<p>8 9am-2pm Op Shop </p>	<p>9 5pm-7pm Fusion Youth Group upstairs hall</p>	<p>10  2pm-5pm Learn about Healing Prayer Ministry in the Church & Community Room</p>	<p>11 Transfiguration of Jesus  8am—Worship 9am—Worship @ the Willows 9.30am—Worship KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 6.45pm—Worship Community Meal</p>
<p>12 9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop lower hall </p>	<p>13 9am-2pm Op Shop  9.30-11am Christian Meditation in the Church </p>	<p>14 ASH Wednesday  9am-2pm Op Shop  10am-12noon Women's Fellowship in the upstairs hall & church  7.30pm Ash Wednesday Service 8pm Church Council Exec Meeting</p>	<p>15 9am-2pm Op Shop </p>	<p>16 No scheduled events</p>	<p>17  2pm-5pm Learn about Healing Prayer Ministry In the Church & Community room</p>	<p>18 Lent 1  8am—Worship 9.30am—Worship KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 6.45pm—Worship</p>
<p>19 9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop lower hall </p>	<p>20 9am-2pm Op Shop  9.30-11am Christian Meditation in the Church  7.30pm Thrive Bible Study lower hall</p>	<p>21 10am-12pm In Stitches  Upstairs hall 10am-12noon Men's Morning  Tea McKels Café Bella Vista</p>	<p>22 9am-2pm Op Shop </p>	<p>23 5pm-7pm Fusion Youth Group</p>	<p>24 No scheduled events</p>	<p>25 Lent 2  8am—Worship Followed by Morning Tea 9.30am—Worship Followed by Morning Tea KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 5pm—Shine 6.45pm—Worship</p>
<p>26 9am Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop lower hall </p>	<p>27 9am-2pm Op Shop  9.30-11am Christian Meditation in the Church </p>	<p>28 9am-2pm Op Shop  7.30pm Church Council Meeting lower hall</p>	<p>29 9am-2pm Op Shop </p>			

**MONTHLY ACTIVITIES and
REGULAR GROUPS**

YOUNG FAMILIES

KUCA.....

@ 9.30am service during term
for Preschool, Years K-2, and Years 3-8

YOUTH and YOUNG ADULTS

Fusion Youth Group.....

Years 3 to 8. Meet Friday evenings at the church during term time. 5pm—7pm

Contact Daniel Gibb
daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

THRIVE BIBLE STUDY.....

For young adults
Fortnightly on Tuesdays

Contact Daniel Gibb
daniel@stmatthewsuniting.net.au



Wednesday 14th February @ 10am

Enquires: Dulcie Duncum & Margaret Gray



3rd Wednesday of the month 10am to 12noon

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

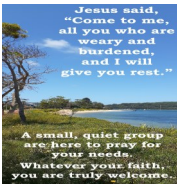
Every third Wednesday of the month Enquiries Alan Wright



Meeting Dates February 7, 21

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



Care and Prayer

Next Date:

All Welcome
11.30am on the first TUESDAY
of each month at St. Matthew's
February to November

**6th February
2024**

**CHRISTIAN
MEDITATION**



Tuesdays at the Church 9.30am-10.30am

All welcome

For more information or to express your
interest in attending please contact

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



OP SHOP

Open Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 9am-2pm
and 1st Saturday of the month 9-12pm

Pre-loved clothes & accessories, Books,
Haberdashery, Bric-a-brac, Pot Plants.



**Saturday
3rd February
9am-12pm**

Pre-loved Household Items,
Electrical, Toys & Books
(Fiction, Non-fiction & Childrens Books)

St. Matthew's lower hall Edgar St



SHINE is a special needs social group for all ages from high school up.
Meets Sundays Monthly for dinner & fun.

Still collecting in 2024 for their shoebox appeal supporting a school in the Philippines. Donations of small educational items, soaps & combs are greatly appreciated. Please place donations in the box provided at the top of the stairs in the church foyer.

Giving From time to time, we receive questions on how someone can make donations to St. Matthew's Uniting Church Baulkham Hills, to further support God's work through the Ministry team and congregation, in the wider Community. To assist with this, we have set up the following account with Uniting Financial Services:
Account Name: Baulkham Hills Uniting Church – Giving Direct
BSB: 634634
Account Number: 100025924

If required a Direct Debit Request Form is available in the foyer or speak with Barry Gregory.

For your support of God's work here at St. Matthew's, a big thank you!

To include your activity in the
MARCH
In Focus
St. Matthew's
Monthly Newsletter
please send details to Robyn and Lynn in
the Church Office by **15 FEBRUARY**
Thank you

**Maintaining contact with you and
your family is very important to us.**
We would be grateful if you change your
address, phone/mobile or email details that you
let us know by phoning and leaving a message
on 9686 3003

Thank you to all who
have contributed to
this publication.

MINISTER

REV JON HUMPHRIES

**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](https://www.facebook.com/stmatthewsunitingchurchbaulkhamhills)

PRE-SCHOOL DIRECTOR 9639 8570

SONALI WANIGESEKERA
PO BOX 321 BAULKHAM HILLS 2153

EMAIL: director@stmatthewsps.net.au