



**Bible Readings**

**8am & 9.30am**  
 Matthew 15: 21-28  
 Mark 7: 31-37  
 James 2: 1-17



**Response after Bible Readings**

**Leader:** *In this we hear the word of God*  
**Response:** *Thanks be to God*

**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**



**16th  
 Sunday**  
 After  
 Pentecost

**Livestreaming at  
 8am and 9.30am only**

**8am—Worship**  
 Led by Vivienne Strong  
 and Jon Humphries

**9am—Worship @ the Willow's**  
 Led by Shamali Perera

**9.30—Worship**  
 Led by Dean Drayton  
 and Jon Humphries

**KUCA** Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8  
 Followed by morning tea

**6.45pm—Worship**  
 Community Meal

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

**MONDAY 9 September**

**9am—Sorting & Pricing for  
 Op Shop & Garage Sale**  
 lower hall

**7.30pm—Christian Meditation**  
 community room and church

**7.30pm—Cricket  
 Presentation Night**  
 upstairs hall

**TUESDAY 10 September**

**9am-2pm—Op Shop**

**9.30am-11am—Christian Meditation**  
 community room and church

**WEDNESDAY 11 September**

**9am-2pm—Op Shop**

**10am-12pm—Women's Fellowship**  
 upstairs hall & church

**THURSDAY 12 September**

**9am-2pm—Op Shop**

**FRIDAY 13 September**

**2.30pm—Op Shop Volunteers  
 Meeting** upstairs hall

**5pm—Fusion Youth Group  
 Offsite @ Flipout Castle Hill**

**5pm—Happy Hour @ The Winston**

**SATURDAY 14 September**

No Scheduled Activities

**SUNDAY  
 15 SEPTEMBER**

**8am—Worship**

**9.30am—Worship**

**KUCA** Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8  
 Followed by morning tea

**6.45pm—Worship**



**17th  
 Sunday**  
 After  
 Pentecost

**MINISTER**

REV JON HUMPHRIES

Email: jon@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

**CHURCH OFFICE SECRETARIES:**

ROBYN MORRALL AND LYNN SAMUEL

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

**OFFICE :** 9686 3003

Email: office@stmatthewsuniting.net.au

**LOCATION:**

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 BAULKHAM HILLS

**POSTAL ADDRESS:**

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Thank you to all who have  
 contributed to this publication.

# Something to think about

## 8th September

### 16th Sunday after Pentecost

#### Lectionary Readings:

[Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23](#)

Psalm 125

James 2:1-17

Mark 7:24-37

#### Reading for Our Service:

[Matthew 15: 21-28](#)

[Mark 7: 31-37](#)

[James 2: 1-17](#)

## Being Welcoming

Welcome is an easy word to say, but a hard idea to live. We can think that we are welcoming because we are friendly and like the idea that others feel welcomed when they come to us. However, welcoming is more than a warm greeting and good intentions. True welcoming involves a culture of community.

#### **WARNING: CONTROVERSIAL MATERIAL**

This week the Revised Common Lectionary puts before us one of the hardest texts to process as Christians who believe that Jesus was perfect and without sin and the incarnation of the love of God - being God in the person of the Christ. All this is certainly true – at least in terms of orthodox Christian doctrine. What is problematic in the Gospel reading is the way that Jesus treats a woman who comes to him for healing for her daughter.

We will be exploring the version in Matthew where the treatment of the woman is even more pronounced in its shocking seeming lack of compassion and respect than the version in Mark.

The story of the Syrophenician woman, or the woman from the region of Tyre and Sidon, is one which many have pondered over. Many commentaries seek to defend Jesus' treatment of the woman through a range of theological gymnastics and doctrinal spin. Part of the problem arises from the core theological affirmation that Jesus was sinless. I want to affirm this affirmation, but at the same time we have the teaching that part of the human condition is that we as people are sinful – even sinful in nature. So, if Jesus is fully human, then we have to do work to explain that he overcame this nature and didn't sin – ever, or accept that there was potential for him to sin.

I am not saying that Jesus sinned. However, I do believe that he fell short of the glory of God in this instance. The story itself shows how he changed his mind – which in Biblical Greek is referred to as *μετάνοια* [metanoia]. This is a change of mind, a reorientation, a fundamental transformation of outlook, of man's vision of the world and of himself, and a new way of loving others and God, which is often translated as repentance.

If we look at the Biblical narrative, especially as presented in Matthew the story, and if we take it on face value, it has the woman ignored, rejected, excluded, insulted, and uncared for by Jesus and his disciples. Some have conjectured that Jesus was testing the woman's faith, or that he was right to claim that he was only for the people of Israel etc. However, if we go back through the story of Matthew then a lot of these explanations encounter contradictions. Moreover, Jesus appears to contradict his own teachings, at least at first. Furthermore, when we apply things such as the Fruit of the Spirit, then Jesus seems to come up wanting.

Continued next page

**Being Welcome—Continued**

Firstly, a woman in that time would not likely culturally approach a man in public whom she did not know, let alone a respected teacher to whom she had not been introduced, nor someone not of her culture. She clearly has a level of boldness of faith similar to the woman who a few chapters earlier touches Jesus' cloak to be healed of her bleeding. So, the Syrophenician woman has really passed a test of faith in just presenting her request to Jesus, and in a way that many are not tested in other parts of the Gospels, especially those who Jesus goes and heals without asking.

Secondly, in respect to Jesus's statement that he "was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" [Matthew 15: 24], he has already previously healed the slave/servant of a Roman Centurion [Matthew 8: 10 & 13]. In Matthew 8: 28-34

Jesus restores two demon-possessed men who also were not likely to have been Jewish. He also doesn't have problem healing women, as we have already noted. So, why is this woman really rejected?

Then there is the matter of her treatment. As the account unfolds, she is progressively ignored, rejected, excluded, insulted, and uncared for by Jesus and his disciples. Although he doesn't actually call her a dog, Jesus implies with the analogy that he uses that she or her people are dogs which is simply insulting. Some have tried to lessen this with a range of explanations, but the context of the utterance makes it clear that dogs are lesser beings in the analogy. This is seemingly in direct contrast of Jesus's earlier teachings in his 'Sermon on the Mount,' where he teaches such things as, "If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if? Do not even pagans do that?"

If you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." [Matthew 5: 46-47] He also taught, "Give to the one who asks of you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you." [Matthew 5: 42]

However, despite all this mistreatment, the woman persists and shows not only great wisdom and faith, but also great humility. Jesus then notes her great faith and changes his mind and heals her daughter. He then goes on to heal others of her people as we see in the reading from Mark where Jesus heals a deaf man from the same region. I will leave it to you to consider how to interpret or understand Jesus' behaviour and actions. Please do some research of your own about this. At the heart of this story we can learn a lot about faith, grace, boldness and humility from the woman. Yet, this story can also help us learn about what it means to be welcoming.

If we flip the treatment of the woman, we get some sound principles for understanding welcome. Instead of being unnoticed, there is being noticed. Instead of being ignored there is being attended to and being given attention. Instead of rejection there is acceptance. Instead of exclusion there is inclusion. Instead of insult or discrimination there is affirmation. Instead of a lack of care and compassion there is care and compassion. On top of this all, welcome involves a sense of connection and knowing that we are known and appreciated. This appreciation of who we are involves involving us in the life of the community where each can play a part and find meaningful purpose. How well are we welcoming is something to think about.

*God bless*

*Jon*

PEOPLE NEWS



Vivienne Strong  
Graeme Gordon  
Blake Wood  
Noni Medcalf

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

## Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

8—14 September  
Ghana, Nigeria

St. Matthew's Uniting  
**2024 Indication form**  
to Assist the Church Council in  
Budgeting for the Coming Year

st. matthew's  
UNITING CHURCH  
BAULKHAM HILLS  
growing together



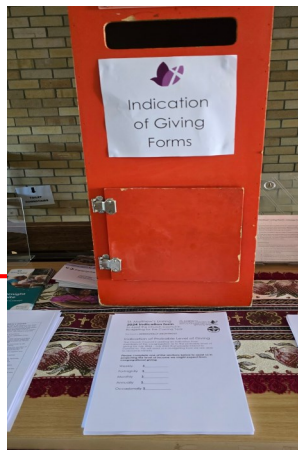
This form is **INTENTIONALLY ANONYMOUS**

### Indication of Probable Level of Giving

The Church Council is seeking an indication from members of the congregation as to the probable level of giving for July 2024 – July 2025 that people intend to commit to. This will assist us in budgeting how we are able to resource ministry

Please complete one of the sections below to assist us in projecting the level of income we might expect from congregational giving.

Weekly \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Fortnightly \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Monthly \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Annually \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Occasionally \$ \_\_\_\_\_



Please fill in the Indication of probable level of giving form located in the Church foyer

## Weekly SYNOD SPOTLIGHT

Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter for last week (30 August 2024) please see

[New Insights \(uca.org.au\)](https://uca.org.au)



Uniting Church in Australia  
ASSEMBLY NEWS

## Being a Welcoming Church

The Uniting Church in Australia is empowered in diversity. Our unity is not about sameness, but unity in diversity. The Uniting Church believes that in the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ sustains his Church through the changes of history, commanding people's attention and awakening faith (Basis Par 4). Part of that nurturing comes through the "scholarly interpreters of Scripture" and in the "inheritance of literary, historical and scientific enquiry which has characterised recent centuries" (Basis Par 11). The Basis also recognises that "an informed faith" is sharpened by contact with contemporary thought. The books of Hebrew Scriptures and early Christian writings were formed in different social and historical contexts, and this diversity is intrinsic to the Biblical witness.

The Uniting Church is a culturally and linguistically diverse Church, and a theologically diverse Church. As a result, various interpretations concerning the authority of the Bible and the application of that authority, exist in our diverse congregations. Some important aspects of our embracing of diversity within the Uniting Church over our first 40 years are that we seek a renewal of our relationship with the First Peoples of this Land, and that we look to renew our identity within the context of a welcoming and multicultural Australia. [Basis of Union Paragraph 13] We are a welcoming church, but what does that mean?

"All are welcome here" means that every person is accepted and embraced in this place, regardless of their background, race, gender, or beliefs. It signifies an inclusive and open environment where diversity is celebrated. This phrase emphasizes the importance of creating a safe and accepting space for everyone, fostering a sense of belonging and equality. It promotes the idea that everyone deserves respect, understanding, and the opportunity to contribute and thrive." Quote from : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39yQP-Q52NQ>

The Uniting Church Assembly has endorsed a proposal that seeks to affirm, welcome and honour the life and faith of transgender, intersex and gender diverse people in our Church. As part of the proposal, members of the recent 17th Assembly agreed "to recognise that transgender, gender diverse and intersex people are beloved by God and full members of the Body of Christ in baptism." The Assembly resolved to "invite congregations and councils of the Church to welcome and honour transgender, gender diverse, and intersex people, and the gifts and skills they bring to all aspects of the Church's life, including worship, leadership, and social justice advocacy."

If you would like to read more about the recent 17th National Assembly of the Uniting Church and the decisions that were made, the following link takes you to a summary. <https://uniting.church/assembly-full-summary/>



## SEASON OF CREATION

The Season of Creation is an ecumenical initiative. It is a time to renew our relationship with our Creator and all creation through celebration, conversion, and commitment together.

The Queensland Churches Together have produced an excellent, free daily devotional resource for the Season of Creation.

Here is a link to learn more about The Season of Creation if you are unfamiliar with it <https://seasonofcreation.org/>

Here is the link to devotional resource -

[<https://www.cmla.org.au/blog/season-of-creation-daily-devotion/>](<https://www.cmla.org.au/blog/season-of-creation-daily-devotion/>)

[The PDF link on the QCT page is currently wrong, so click on the link above and you'll get one that works.]

## St Matthew's

# HAPPY HOUR!

At The Winston

170 Caroline Chisholm Drive, Winston Hills

**13**  
SEPTEMBER

**5 PM**  
FRIDAY



COME AND SHARE IN SOME HAPPY CONVERSATION, A DRINK AND SOME FOOD WITH FRIENDS FROM ST MATTHEW'S.



RSVP to Belinda on [belinda.schuster0709@gmail.com](mailto:belinda.schuster0709@gmail.com)

## SEPTEMBER 2024 SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES at the church

1st September - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm  
Includes Communion

8th September - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm  
Community Meal

15th September - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm

22nd September - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm

29th September - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm

Live streaming at morning services

## Organ Concert

Sunday 22nd September @ 2pm



Galston Uniting Church - 11 School Road, Galston



HEATHER MOEN-BOYD

A graduate in organ performance from Sydney Conservatorium, Heather has been organist and choir director at Scots Kirk Presbyterian Church in Mosman since 2006, and is coordinator for the annual inter-church Mosman Hymnfest. She was guest organist at the 2023 New England Bach Festival in Armidale. In addition to giving solo recitals in Sydney and beyond, Heather has accompanied many church and community choirs in major oratorio presentations, including the annual performances of Handel's *Messiah* at Epping Baptist on Good Friday, and Hornsby Catholic Cathedral in December. Recently she played for the Penrith City Choir in a performance of Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, and in November she will give a lunchtime recital at St Stephen's Uniting Church, Macquarie St.

In 2021 she was appointed organist to Macquarie University to accompany graduation ceremonies.

Adults/Concession \$25.00 Tertiary Students \$10.00 Children Free Cash only at door

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

<https://www.stmatthewsuniting.net.au/>

Click on the metal dove image / publications.