



Bible Readings

8am and 9.30am

Job 42:1-6, 10-17

Mark 10:46-52

Response after Bible Readings

Leader: *In this we hear the word of God*

Response: *Thanks be to God*



23rd Sunday

After Pentecost

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

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

8am—Worship
Led by Geoff Stevenson
Followed by morning tea

9.30—Worship
Led by Geoff Stevenson
Includes the baptism of Ava Nielson
Led by Jon Humphries.
We welcome the family and friends of Ava to worship today.

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

5pm—Shine

6.45pm—Worship
Led by Abby Sim
and Jon Humphries

Thank you for worshipping with us today.

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

MONDAY 28 October
9am—Sorting and Pricing for Op Shop and Garage Sale
lower hall
7.30pm—Christian Meditation
community room and church

TUESDAY 29 October
9am-2pm—Op Shop
9.30am-11am—Christian Meditation
community room and church
7pm-9pm—NEW Bible Study
In church or community room
7.30pm—Thrive Bible Study
lower hall
7.30pm—Property Committee Meeting
upstairs hall

WEDNESDAY 30 October
9am-2pm—Op Shop
10am-12pm—In Stitches
upstairs hall

THURSDAY 31 October
9am-2pm—Op Shop

FRIDAY 1 November
5pm-7pm—Fusion
upstairs hall

SATURDAY 2 November
9am-12pm—Op Shop
9am-12pm—Garage Sale
lower hall

**SUNDAY
3 NOVEMBER**

8am—Worship
Followed by morning tea

9.30am—Worship
KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8
Followed by morning tea



24th Sunday

After Pentecost

MINISTER

REV JON HUMPHRIES
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Thank you to all who have contributed to this publication.

Reflection Notes

From Geoff Stevenson

27th October

23rd Sunday
after Pentecost

Learning to See; Learning to Love!

I stood, as a small boy, alongside my father on a bright starry night. He pointed skyward to the stars and spoke of shapes that were there, a saucepan, a cross and others, some with animal names. I looked and looked for a saucepan or a cross and saw nothing but bright, flashing stars. He directed me, I looked along his outstretched arm and finger. I scrunched my eyes and looked up and down and all around but could not discern a saucepan or cross up there, let alone anything else.

I looked at a starry sky and saw stars flashing. Dad looked and saw patterns in the stars, with brighter ones standing out and directing his gaze. We both looked at the same thing, but dad saw through and beyond where my limited, young vision was. So, it was in many things. Mum and dad, other adults, saw and knew things I couldn't comprehend, I couldn't see. I looked at life and saw it from the naivete and innocence of a young boy.

As I grew older, that naivete faded and the firm truths of my Marvel-hero-comic book world with Santa Claus, tooth fairies and so on, became the fiction that entertained and separated the older from the younger. I grew into critical thinking and truth, fact, hard and welded on became the currency of life and belief. I separated right from wrong, good from bad, truth from fiction and believed my own rhetoric, as we mostly do. I looked and saw clearly, I believed until...

Life intruded and innocence faded further in the real world wrestling with life and death, hope and disappointment, meaning and purpose amidst a universe that was unpredictable and mysterious, wondrous and complex. The more I thought I saw, the more I realised I didn't see very much. As I wrestled with faith in the midst of life, asking questions and posing, then ditching, theories and ideas, the more I was challenged and recognised that my seeing was always through lenses that altered the image. I saw through lenses of culture, language, privilege (of living in a wealthy Western nation), maleness, youth, family and life experience, personality, and we all do.

Seeing differently into life and faith, and ultimately, God, is the essence of our readings this week. The story of Job comes to its end (Job 42:1-6,10-17) with Job responding to God's poetic rhetoric. God had asked Job, 'Little man, were you there when the earth was set in place, or the stars in the sky, the animals...' The complexity of the world was held up before Job and hard, big questions posed. His mind was opened to see beyond his own small world and experience. The book ends with Job being vindicated and making amends for his errant friends who maintained the traditional world view where the prosperous and well-off were blessed of God and the suffering and impoverished were cursed, punished, by God. The book blows that false wisdom open, and Job settles for life held within the grace of God. That is enough! He will never understand all the dimensions and challenges of life and the universe, but God's grace will be enough for him to trust in the mystery of such Love and live in faith that God is with him in the good and harshness of life.

This won't be enough to quieten the questions and demands of many in our world who want to define and control the answers, to know with deep certainty and to explain away the mysteries of life and the universe. But faith is faith is faith and that is what we are left with. Except there is still more to this seeing, an ongoing journey into transformation of life and being, a life lived in response to grace and faith and Love.

Continued next page

Learning to See; Learning to Love — Continued

In Mark's story of Jesus this week (Mark 10:46-52), we arrive at the end of this revealing, challenging section that has turned our understanding upside down and inside out. It is the bookend to a section in which Mark insists we have our blind eyes opened to see. The section begins and ends with blind men being healed of their blindness. This is for those who will have eyes to see and ears to hear – and will have the courage and faith to be transformed. As Jesus entered the last stage of the journey south to Jerusalem, he passed through Jericho. Along this 25 kilometre journey, beggars lay out their cloaks and called to the pilgrims, in good mood as their destination was in sight. Bartimaeus sat crying out for alms. When he heard who it was, he cried out, 'Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!' Those around him tried to silence him, as we do with those who embarrass us or call out things we don't want to hear. The lowly who cry out for help, justice a new way; whistleblowers who call out unlawful or unjust actions; Indigenous people who cry out for their land and culture...; those who cry out on behalf of the earth and its struggles under human weight and oppression. We silence the voices we don't want to hear, those that are uncomfortable and confronting, different or confusing, those that seem 'mad.'

Jesus called to Bartimaeus and asked what he wanted. Simple, he wanted to see! Jesus praised his faith, and he saw. Bartimaeus, who had thrown his only possession, his beggars cloak aside got up and followed Jesus on the way – Mark's designation for being a disciple. He lived the life, not just thought the thoughts!

This story picks up much of what has gone before in this rich section of Mark's story. Jesus was revealed as the Messiah, but the unfolding conflicts reveal that he is not the expected military King who will gather Israel's armies and drive the enemy from their land. His way is love, justice, peace, reconciliation and non-violence.

As they journey, the disciples keep failing to understand and grasp Jesus' words. He will be arrested, tried, handed to the Romans, crucified and will rise on the third day.

It's heady stuff but the disciples refuse to deal with and argue over who is the greatest. James and John ask for positions of honour when Jesus comes in his glory, as King. Jesus responds with teaching on true greatness – becoming the least and serving others in humility. A rich man wants the way into life and is told that all he has to do is let go of his grip on his wealth – sell what he has, give money to the poor and follow Jesus on the way. But he can't. He can't let go. Women are elevated to equality with men in a patriarchal society and the lowliness of childhood (no rights or status in their world) is celebrated as the way of seeing and those who lift up the lowly, marginalised and outcast into the equality of God's community, will experience the Reign of God.

This is about seeing, perhaps unseeing by casting aside the lenses that continue to blur or misinform our sight, so we might learn to see anew, differently. It is about turning our power, wealth and status driven world upside down. It is about resisting injustice, violence (in families, neighbourhoods, the world) and exclusion with the courage of love and reconciliation, peace and justice. It is what Ghandi (inspired by Jesus), Martin Luther King jr, Archbishop Romero, Dorothy Day, Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu and so many others have learned. It is what our struggling, pain-filled world needs now – people who see, act and live differently, grounded in God's love, hope and faith.

Geoff Stevenson

PEOPLE NEWS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



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

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle



27 October — 2 November
Canada, United States

NOVEMBER 2024 SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES
at the church

3rd November - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm
includes Communion

10th November - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm
Community Meal

17th November - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm

24th November - 8am, 9.30am, 6.45pm

Live streaming at morning services



Weekly

SYNOD SPOTLIGHT

Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT

Uniting Church Synod Spotlight Newsletter

For (18 October 2024) please see link :

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

Volunteer Form
Assisting with Morning Services



Please return completed forms by 27 October

December 2024, January, February 2025

Have been emailed or collect a copy from the foyer.

NEW HELPERS WELCOME



Please return forms to the blue mail tray or church office.



Elders Elections

Elections will take place on **new date**
Sunday 10 November
at all 3 worship services.

To find out what's happening at St. Matthew's during November click below:



Or go to the St. Matthew's website.
www.stmatthewsuniting.net.au

To be included in the combined December/January edition of In FOCUS please send your articles and group activities to the church office by **15 November**.



LECTIONARY READINGS

Bible Study Tuesday Evenings

Everyone is invited
to come along.

Commencing
Tuesday 22 October

*We will be Focusing on the Lectionary
readings from the previous Sunday.*

First readings—20 October 2024

Start Date: Tuesday 22 October 2024

Where: St. Matthew's UC

Church or Community Room

Time: 7pm-9pm

(last half hour will be supper)

Weekly: On a Tuesday night
until 17 December 2024
(excluding 10 December)

Will restart weekly from
Tuesday 28 January 2025

Led by Jon Humphries and Alastair Burn



LECTIONARY READINGS

On Tuesday this week we had our first **Weekly Bible study**. Although the turnout was small in number we covered quite a lot. We explored the Revised Common Lectionary readings set for last Sunday, 20 October 2023.

We covered such topics as who was Melchizedek? We sought to better understand the book of Job and how it deals with the problem of suffering. We explored what priesthood meant in the Bible, how Jesus was our Great High Priest, and related it to how we are all part of the priesthood of all believers.

And, if that wasn't quite an achievement, we also thought about how the sacrifice of Jesus, as the Son of God and the incarnation of God related to the idea of ransom which is mentioned by Jesus in Mark 10:45, also managing to touch on the story of Abraham - which sort of brought us full circle.

The aim of this series of Bible studies is to allow people to shape what we learn about by suggesting questions and what they would like to understand better, as we look for links between the set readings and what might have been covered in the sermon the previous Sunday.

If you would like to know more about the enigmatic and mysterious character of Melchizedek whom Jesus is compared to and surpasses, here is a YouTube video you might like to watch.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zt31DHTGmNw&t=1s>

If you would like to join in the fun and learning, we are meeting in the main Church space each Tuesday night from 7pm-8.30pm (with time to share some supper at the end if people are up for it)

Thanks and blessings,

Jon



Thursday 7 November
10am-12pm

**“From Humble Beginnings”
 Transport Heritages NSW**

Guest Speaker: **Allan Williams**

Allan will share his interest and experiences with this organization which is committed to preserving our State’s transport history.



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



To all our beautiful customers. In the lead up to Christmas the Op Shop are requesting donations of:



- Ceramic glazed, decorative pots
- Large good quality black plastic pots
- Unwanted/unloved pot plants
- Hanging baskets
- Bird baths
- Chimes
- Statues
- Hose reels
- Hose hangers
- Sprinklers
- Gardening tools
- Unwanted plant food, fertilizer
- Plants stands/patio plant display/shelving/small round tables

• Pick-up may be available depending upon location, weight etc.

If you require items to be collected, please contact the church office.

St Matthew's
HAPPY HOUR!

At NBC

166 Windsor Rd, Northmead

29 NOVEMBER | **5 PM FRIDAY**

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

RSVP to Belinda or just come along belinda.schuster0709@gmail.com



Church Diary for 2025

A note to all group leaders — If your group is planning to use a part of the church property please ensure the area is available before finalizing your program. Even if you will be continuing to use the same space as this year, we still need your confirmation.

Please send your 2025 programs to the church office ASAP.



**Saturday
2nd November
9am-12pm**

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

St. Matthew's Lower Hall

st. matthew's
UNIONVILLE UNITING CHURCH
growing together

**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

**Click on the metal dove image /
publications or find in recent posts.**

The Galston Concerts Sunday 27 October 2024

a pre-concert chat c. 1.40, the concert (& players' relaxed comments) 2 till 3.15ish, then 'meet the musos' afternoon tea, in **Galston Uniting Church**, 11 School Road, Galston

Founders Farewell Gala

Stars return: **Louise Johnson** (Sydney SympH Principal Harp alumna); **Evgeny Sorkin** (Sydney Con violin virtuoso) with pianist **Rachael Lin**; prize-winner organist **Samuel Giddy**.

Adult \$40, Conc&Senior \$30,
Students \$10,
Children 12u free

A farewell
to artistic directors
**Robert Harris &
Dorit Herskovits**,
with great music by Bach,
Handel, Brahms, Gershwin,
Grainger, Russia,
France & Spain -
wonderful!



Bookings advised on trybooking.com
(search *Galston 27 October*)
Cash-only sales at the door on the day.

Enquiries phone 9653 2039

