



# The Gospel of Matthew

## .....Reading Matthew.....

Now that Christmas has come and gone Easter looms. This year the journey through Lent towards the cross and beyond is done in the company of Matthew. In the coming weeks why not spend some dedicated time and read through this gospel from beginning to end. You could do that in several ways.

The most obvious is simply to read it as it is in your preferred version from beginning to end. Along the way you might like to make a note of your favourite passages and perhaps reflect on why you selected those ones. Another route is what is called *lectio divina*—the divine reading. What happens here is that

you select a passage and read it slowly through several times: you can insert your own name into the text that you are reading. -for example, blessed are you, N, when ..... or, come to me, all who are heavy laden, N, and I will give you, N, rest.

Or you might like to try and find out more about why Matthew wrote this gospel in the way that he did. That way of coming at the text invites us to become explorers. It helps us become more aware of the kind of church /community for which this gospel was written.

## .....Some Basic Points.....

- The gospel of Matthew appears first in the order of the New Testament books. For many centuries it was regarded as the first gospel to be written down. Through literary and historical inquiry it is now believed that Mark was written first and Matthew second.
- Of all the gospels Matthew is the most 'Jewish'. That can be seen in a number of different ways.
  - ◇ The genealogy goes back to Abraham (rather than Adam);
  - ◇ the word for genealogy in Matthew 1:1 links us back to the very first verse of Genesis;
  - ◇ for the birth narrative features Joseph who dreams (compared with the Joseph in Genesis);
  - ◇ the flight into Egypt and the return to Nazareth mirrors the people of Israel's captivity in Egypt and their escape into the wilderness and coming to the promised land;
  - ◇ the sermon on the mount mirrors how Moses goes up Mt Sinai to receive the ten commandments;
  - ◇ the gospel is divided up into 5 separate blocks of teaching that mirrors the way in which the Torah (the Pentateuch) composes 5 books in the Hebrew Scriptures;
- ◇ there are many references which speak of how something that has happened fulfils the scriptures.
- The gospel emphasizes the importance of wisdom and righteousness;
- It is the only gospel that refers to 'the church'.
- The birth narrative emphasizes the names of Jesus (he will save his people from their sins) and Emmanuel (God with us); it closes with the words 'I will be with you to the close of the age'.
- It is the only gospel with the sermon on the mount (Luke has a sermon on the plain).



# Coming in February

The dates and times are still to be determined.

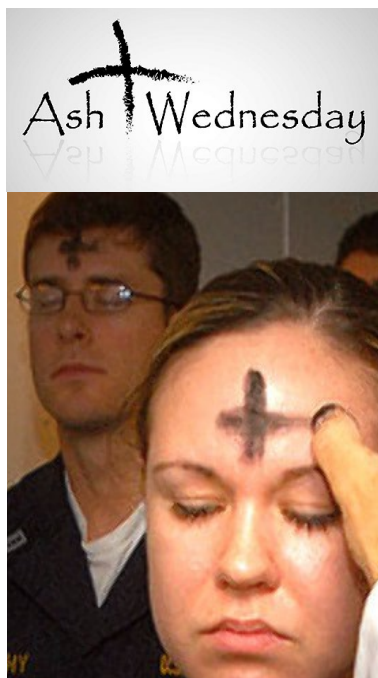
So much depends upon other events in the church calendar being settled first.

*There will be a 2 week study on:*

- i) **Matthew loses 'priority':**  
why is it no longer regarded as the first gospel to be written down.
- ii) **Matthew's account of Jesus teaching.**  
How does it differ from other gospels?  
What are the main ideas / themes?  
What are the implications for us today?

## Ash Wednesday

### 22 February 2023 at 7.30pm



The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday: it follows on from Shrove Tuesday, also known as 'Mardi Gras' (which means 'Fat Tuesday'). It is a time (traditionally) of fasting, penitence and reflection.

One of the customs of Ash Wednesday are church services where those who attend receive a mark of ashes in the form of the cross on their foreheads. The placing of the ashes is accompanied by one of two sentences: 'Repent, and believe in the Gospel' and 'Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return'. The standard practice for the ashes to be prepared by burning the palm leaves from the preceding year's Palm Sunday service.

One of the traditions of King's College, Cambridge is that the Ash Wednesday service always begins with the singing of Alleghri's Miserere mei,

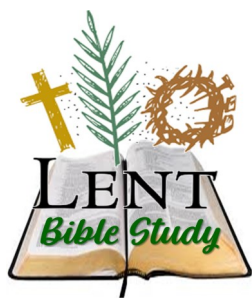
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IX1zicNRLmY&t=28s>

One contemporary song for Ash Wednesday is Tom Conry's 'Ashes'.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJvOejpJltA>

and,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mz-odlsetC8>



## Lent Studies in March

There will be a 4 week Lenten study in March which will explore how Matthew describes the passion of Christ and his resurrection. This study will also feature works of art that are consistent with this season of the Christian year. The dates and times are still to be determined. So much depends upon other events in the church calendar being settled first.

### Music featuring Matthew's gospel

King's College Choir, Cambridge Arvo Pärt 'The Beatitudes',  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxArDRcVb4>

James Gilchrist's Guide to Bach's St Matthew's Passion,  
King's College Choir  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=591fCQvRjmo>

Hillsong 'The Beatitudes'.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kkjmXnIWow>

# Op Shop Update

Dear Friends,

The Op-shop is back in full swing, and our customers seem to be pleased we are open again. In other parts of the globe, Op-shopping is really popular. In the UK there are over 9,000 'charity' shops and in every town or city you will find at least 4 such shops in the main street. In the USA there are more than 25,000 resale, consignment and Not For Profit shops. Although in the USA, what we call 'Op-ting' or Op-shopping is called 'Thrifting', and in the UK it is called 'going to a charity shop' with no inference of shame or guilt.

In Australia, Op-shopping has only become trendy in the last 15 years. This has been driven mainly by consumers wanting to 'do the right thing' for the climate, and to a degree, the rising cost of living. Fast fashion is a major contributor to rising carbon emissions and land fill.

So if the customers are trying to 'do the right thing', then of course Op-shops have to do likewise. How much rubbish is generated, and

where the unusable clothing goes is important. The St. Matthew's Op-shop recycles as much as possible into the yellow garbage bin. Soft plastic was going to Woolies until that unfortunately stopped. Our unusable clothing is donated to a local company who pick-up at no cost to us, about 20 bags a week. They send the best overseas, and turn the rest into rags.

Our volunteers are always very grateful to receive donations of clean, good condition clothing, brick-a-brack and books. When donating clothing to any Op-shop the best 'rule of thumb' is to ask yourself if you would give the clothing item to a family member or a friend? If the answer is no, then the item is most likely unsaleable. To keep clothing out of landfill, the St. Matthew's Op-shop teams will be happy to accept these items in a separate bag clearly labelled, so they can be included with our re-donated consignment.

We thank the St. Matthew's Uniting Church family for your ongoing support of the Op-shop and *hope to see you shopping soon.*

With love

Pamela

**Women's Fellowship**  
**Wednesday 8th February**  
**@ 10am**



The Women's Fellowship meeting on Wednesday  
**Please join us** Enquiries: Barbara McIntosh

**MEN'S MORNING TEA**  
**Wednesday 15th February**  
**10am to 12noon**



Mckel's Café, Shop 14, Circa

Every third Wednesday of the month  
Enquiries Alan Wright

## Care and Prayer

**All Welcome**

**3pm**

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

**February to November**

**Next Date: 6 February**

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

A small, quiet group  
are here to pray for  
your needs.

Whatever your faith,  
you are truly welcome.



## CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

You are invited to come  
along to the church on

**Tuesdays at 9.30am—10.30am**  
**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](http://www.WCCM.org)

[www.christianmeditationaustralia.org](http://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](mailto:kathped56@gmail.com)

























The first meeting for the  
year will be held on  
**Thursday 2 March @ 10am**

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

**Stand by for more details.**

**ALL WELCOME**

# Calendar of Events for February 2023

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		<b>1</b>  9am-2pm—Op Shop open 10am-12pm—In Stitches In the upstairs hall 7pm—Finance Committee Meeting Meet at the church	<b>2</b>  9am-2pm—Op Shop open	<b>3</b> 5pm-7pm <b>FUSION Youth Group</b> upstairs hall	<b>4</b>  9am-12pm—Op Shop 9.30am-1.30pm—Netball registration day upper hall	<b>5</b>  8am—Worship includes Communion 9.30am—Worship includes Communion KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 6.45pm—Worship includes Communion
<b>6</b>  9am—Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop lower hall 3pm—Care and Prayer Meet in the Church	<b>7</b>  9am-2pm—Op Shop open 9.30-11am—Christian Meditation in the Church	<b>8</b>  9am-2pm—Op Shop open 10am-12noon—Women's Fellowship in the upstairs hall and church 7.30pm—Church Council Exec meeting	<b>9</b> 9am-2pm—Op Shop open 	<b>10</b> No scheduled events	<b>11</b> No scheduled events	<b>12</b>  8am—Worship 9.30am—Worship KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 6.45pm—Worship
<b>13</b>  9am—Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop lower hall	<b>14</b>  9am-2pm—Op Shop open 9.30-11am—Christian Meditation in the Church	<b>15</b>  9am-2pm—Op Shop open 10am-12noon—Men's Morning Tea at McKels Café Bella Vista. See back page for details 10am-12pm—In Stitches upstairs hall	<b>16</b>  9am-2pm—Op Shop open	<b>17</b> 5pm-7pm <b>FUSION Youth Group</b> upstairs hall	<b>18</b> No scheduled events	<b>19</b>  8am—Worship 9.30am—Worship KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 6.45pm—Worship
<b>20</b>  9am—Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop lower hall	<b>21</b>  9am-2pm—Op Shop open 9.30-11am—Christian Meditation in the Church	<b>22</b>  Ash Wednesday 9am-2pm—Op Shop open 7.30pm—Ash Wednesday Service	<b>23</b>  9am-2pm—Op Shop open 7pm—Children, Families, Youth & Young Adults (CFYA) Focus Group Meeting lower hall	<b>24</b> No scheduled events	<b>25</b> No scheduled events	<b>26</b>  8am—Worship 9.30am—Worship KUCA Preschool, Years K-2 & Years 3-8 5pm—Shine 6.45pm—Worship
<b>27</b>  9am—Sorting & Pricing for Op Shop lower hall	<b>28</b>  9am-2pm—Op Shop open 9.30-11am—Christian Meditation in the Church 7.30pm—Community Engagement Focus Group Meeting upstairs hall			st. matthew's <b>UNITING CHURCH</b> <b>BAULKHAM HILLS</b> growing together		

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