



Transformed by Grace to Love One Another, to Serve the City, and to Share Christ

FROM THE RECTOR Rev Dr MICHAEL JENSEN



Dear Friends,
We thank God for the faithful generosity of our church family. Because of your support, we've taken bold steps forward in mission and ministry. Together, we are growing in Christ and reaching out to our community in his name.

Back in October 2024, we shared our 20-year prayer for St Mark's:

That we would be a church so soaked in the transforming power of the Holy Spirit that we become more and more like Jesus Christ - growing spiritually and numerically, boldly witnessing to the Eastern Suburbs and the City, and stewarding God's gifts to bless gospel ministry across the world.

Since then, we've seen encouraging signs of growth:

- We've explored the Seven Marks of Discipleship.
- We've deepened relationships through "Meal-with-a-Member May."
- We've welcomed new people into faith through the *Discover* Course.
- We've launched vibrant ministries among Young Adults and Senior Youth

Quarterly Newsletter June 2025

- We've strengthened our ministry capacity by appointing Sam Giddy as Director of Music and also engaging an Operations Manager (Mark Edmonds).

None of this would be possible without your prayers, your service, and your generosity.

As we look ahead to 2025, we invite you to continue this journey with us. Will you deepen your commitment to this vision - for the glory of Christ and the good of our city?

With gratitude and hope,

Michael Jensen



MORE LIKE CHRIST RETREAT

28 members of the St Mark's community gathered at Hartzel Park in Bowral for our annual retreat. Surrounded by beautiful gardens and peaceful natural surroundings, we enjoyed a deeply refreshing time of prayer, worship, reflection, and fellowship. The retreat centred on the theme of **Spiritual Formation**, exploring how we are shaped by God's **Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, in Community**. Through guided sessions, quiet reflection, and open conversation, we considered how these three qualities draw us deeper into the life of Christ and the life of his people.

Each day included time alone with God, whether in silent walks, journaling, or prayer in the chapel. We gathered for worship and shared meals that nourished both body and

soul. One highlight was an excursion to Bowral to hear our own **Sam Giddy** give an inspiring organ recital - an experience that beautifully embodied the spiritual beauty we



had been reflecting on. Many participants expressed how grateful they were for the space to stop, to listen, and to reconnect with God and one another. The rhythm of community and solitude allowed us to rest in God's presence and be renewed in faith.

We thank God for the retreat and for all who came. It was a reminder that to become more like Christ is not a burden, but a gift - an invitation to live fully in his truth, goodness, and beauty, together.

Rev Dr Michael Jensen

KYCK EMPOWERS YOUTH

There's nothing quite like St Mark's Youth's yearly trip down to Katoomba for KCC's famous youth convention, 'KYCK'. Over four weekends of over 6,500 youth, KYCK isn't just

any old church camp. Singing with 2000 voices to our great God, building relationships with each other, being emboldened by each other's faith, seeing hundreds of youth accept Christ for the first time, these are just some of many highlights mentioned by our youth.



The most empowering and essential element of an event like KYCK is the profound effect of the gospel upon the lives of young

people. Diving into the book of Galatians, we heard how it is only through Christ Jesus that we find true freedom. A key takeaway was found in the words, "Freedom doesn't come from independence, but rather a deep dependence on God." Such a spectacular weekend to learn, grow and receive Christ's love amongst thousands of others, and to be reminded of the sweet taste of freedom in Him.

Charlotte Herron

MEAL-WITH-A-MEMBER MAY

Meal-with-a-Member May may have been a mouthful but we're hoping it also left your

hearts full as you engaged with some of our church family at a deeper level. It's been so encouraging to hear stories of people who have been at church together for 15-20 years, but never really gotten to know each other, sharing



meals and lives. Thank you to all who participated. If you missed out in May or can't wait to do it again, start planning for Meal-with-a-Member September.

Rev Michelle Philp
Assistant Minister

WELCOME TO SAM GIDDY - our new Director of Music

I am delighted to be joining as the Director of Music at St Mark's! I have enjoyed being



involved at St Mark's to varying degrees over the past few years: from my time as the organ scholar from 2016-2018, to returning as a guest organist and accompanist more recently, so I am delighted to be back in a more official

capacity. I remain deeply grateful to my predecessor Dr William Clark not only for his influence on my career as an organist during my time as the organ scholar, but also more recently for encouraging me to consider applying for the Director of Music position.

The core of music at St Mark's is what happens in the service on Sundays, with the choir leading the congregation in singing God's praises and providing appropriate music for worship and reflection during holy communion. St Mark's Choir has a strong foundation of having done this week in and week out for many years. I hope to lead and support the choir to continue doing this with a rich repertoire range sung to the highest possible standard. I also aim to support and train talented young musicians (through our choral and organ scholarship programmes) to further their own musical careers and hone their skills in a valuable ensemble setting. As someone who benefited immensely from being an organ scholar here during my first years of study at The Con, I feel particularly grateful to be able to contribute further to this community.

Since joining St Mark's as the Director of Music, I have been encouraged by members of the choir who not only work hard to achieve

high musical standards but are also committed to making the choir a warm and supportive community. The choir remains an excellent avenue to engage with the Christian gospel through the rich and beautiful Anglican tradition. I've also been deeply encouraged by the welcoming and supportive 8am congregation, and the other members of St Mark's ministry team.

My Christian journey has been a slow process of growth and discovery rather than a sudden, dramatic experience! I had the blessing of being taught the gospel since childhood. My understanding of what it means to follow Jesus has grown over the years, through the challenges of life (including moving to Sydney for university in 2016), the wisdom and challenge of Christian community, and the quiet guidance of the Holy Spirit.

I remain greatly indebted to Dr Bill Clark for his influence on my musical career. In addition to being the first person to introduce me to a broad range of Anglican choral repertoire, Bill has subsequently taken a great interest in my career and encouraged me to take steps to grow as a musician. During my organ scholar days, Bill frequently took the time to offer thoughtful, tailored feedback on my liturgical accompaniments – which to a (then) young and inexperienced church musician proved to be foundational.

In my life outside of St Mark's, I also have the privilege of overseeing music ministry at the neighbouring parish of St John's Darlinghurst, as well as working as a freelance organist (including for weekday evensong services at St Andrew's Cathedral), and continuing developing the organ-playing skills which have been the backbone of my musical career. Outside of music, I enjoy cycling, reading, and getting to the beach when I can! My wife, Wayo, works as an architect in Paddington and we live near Rushcutters Bay, so we enjoy exploring all that this area has to offer.

OUTSTANDING RESULT OF ELECTION BBQ

This federal election, St Mark's provided a fine example as more than 20 church members selflessly gathered to cook and serve over 400 democracy snags to 1,150 voters from 7.30am until late afternoon. Energetic Year 10 schoolboys rubbed shoulders with senior members as intergenerational collaborators in a frenzy of unfamiliar activity to achieve a grand net profit of \$2,685.40 for the worthy team of Banksia Women from gross sales of \$4,080.05. The profit was achieved by the magical serving of generosity that so many patrons provided as they rounded up their purchases or sometimes just simply donated cash to support Banksia Women.



Special thanks to all St Marks' members who gave their valuable time to take part in this Australian ritual. There is no doubt that we live in a wonderful country and are blessed by sensible and commendable politicians compared with other parts of the world. What could be better than to see joyful volunteers of all ages interacting with local voters, appreciating the finest democracy snags in Sydney on a lovely sunny election day. This is truly one of the hidden joys of being a part of the St Mark's community...the beating heart of Darling Point.

Ian Tresise

DISCOVER COURSE

The *Discover* course has proved popular, with a second course currently being run on Tuesdays at 10:30am. Participants have been really enthusiastic about the content and delivery of the course, the delicious food and opportunity to get to know others.

We had lovely feedback including: "That was one special course amongst a lovely group of people" and "The meals have been something of a treat each week.

Thank you to all cooks/chefs! Thank you Michael for keeping us in a questioning mode. It has kept our table on track and led to some interesting observations."



A special thank you to all our wonderful volunteers who have kindly helped set-up and pack-up and made and served delicious food, all contributing to a positive course vibe!

JOIN US AT OUR FRIENDS EVENTS

Friends of St Mark's is thriving, with the stimulating *Discover* course and Organ Recital both proving popular. Book now for our events: Choral Evensong (29 June), Great Synagogue Tour (10 July), Annual church service/luncheon with guest speaker General (Rtd) the Honourable David Hurley AC CVO DSc (30 July): <https://stmarksdp.org/whats-on/>

JOIN WITH US TODAY

St Mark's relies on our community's generosity to fund the ministries within our parish and beyond. To share in our ministry through your financial giving; including bequests; visit <https://stmarksdp.org/giving/> Could you please help with all or part of these projects?

NON-TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS

- Resources for Discover course - \$500
- Youth Ministry Resources - \$1000

TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS

St Mark's Music - visit <https://stmarksdp.org/ministries/st-marks-music/>