

St Mark's Quarterly Newsletter - September 2026



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

FROM THE RECTOR **Rev Dr MICHAEL JENSEN**



One of the things I love about St Mark's is our desire to see our friends and neighbours come to know Jesus. We have been praying that we might become increasingly **salt and light** in our community - not simply keeping the good news of Jesus to ourselves,

but naturally and confidently sharing it with the people God has already placed around us.

Last month we were greatly encouraged by the visit of **Julie-Anne Laird**, who joined us to help us think about how we can introduce our friends to Jesus.

Julie-Anne preached at each of our Sunday services, but she also led a special seminar over lunch on inviting friends and sharing the gospel. **Around 60 people stayed for the seminar**, which was a wonderful sign of the interest among us in growing in this area.

What I particularly appreciated about Julie-Anne's approach was its warmth and practicality. She showed us that talking with our friends about Jesus doesn't have to be awkward, artificial or intimidating. We can speak naturally and personally about the person who matters most to us. We can listen, ask questions, tell our own stories and look for opportunities to help people take a step towards Christ.

And there is something wonderfully exciting about this. We don't know what God might do when we simply open the door. A friend might

ask a question we weren't expecting. Someone might want to read one of the Gospels with us. A conversation over coffee might become the beginning of a journey of faith. And, by God's grace, we may one day have the joy of seeing a friend come to know Jesus.

Thank you to everyone who came and took part. **Let's keep praying - and looking - for opportunities to be salt and light.**

In Christ,

Michael Jensen

FRIENDS OF ST MARK'S



Join us to hear Melissa Levi discuss a topic very relevant to many in our community 'Navigating dementia together: Education and support for families and carers'.

Cost is \$10 per session. Bookings: <https://stmarksdp.org/whats-on/>

- Thursday 17 September 2026, 6pm - Keynote talk: 'Dementia – The guidebook nobody gave you'.
- Wednesday 7 October 2026, 10am - Community discussion session: 'Caring feels hard because it is hard.'

This event is proudly supported by a Woollahra Council Community Grant.



FOSM Committee members Dea Richardson and Geoffrey White accepting our grants certificate from Mayor of Woollahra, Councillor Sarah Dixon. Photo courtesy of Woollahra Council

GROWTH OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



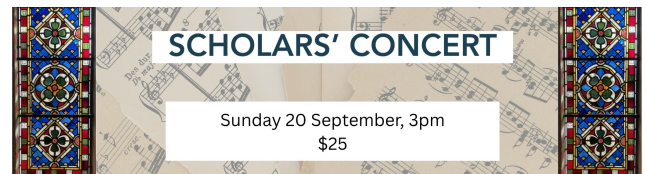
We are so excited to hear of the growth of our children's and youth ministry this year, ably coordinated by Nikita Psaltis, our Youth and Children's

Minister. Nikita recently shared some encouraging highlights at church:

- Our Sunday 10am Kids Program and Youth Bible Study group members have grown spiritually through learning about Psalm 23 in Term 2 and the Book of Daniel in Term 3.
- Record numbers (12 students) of our high school aged youth attended the annual KYCK Conference. This weekend away proved very encouraging and our Friday night Youth Group has since grown from four members to ten members! Two Youth Group members also chose to publicly affirm their faith on Affirmation Sunday, with one baptism and one confirmation a cause for celebration.
- Our Monday morning music playgroup, Music Time, is popular with local families. This group is a great opportunity to connect with non-church parents, carers and children in our community and currently 20 children attend per week.
- Scripture/Special Religious Education (SRE) – We are grateful to have the opportunity to teach classes at our local schools. This year Nikita has had the opportunity to teach one class at Sydney Girls High School and it's great to be able to work with other churches in the area to support this ministry. Our ongoing ministry at Double Bay Public School continues to reach 50 students across four classes each week.

We are so grateful for your prayerful and financial support as we continue to grow this important ministry our next generation. Please pray that our children and youth will continue to come to know, love and serve Jesus.

SCHOLARS' CONCERT



Join us on Sunday 20 September 2026, 3pm for our annual Music Scholars' Concert which will showcase the talents of our Choral Scholarship recipients and Special Guest Musicians from the St Mark's Community. The concert will include beautiful music by Bach, Handel, Mozart, Bellini, and others. Bookings: www.stmarksdp.org/whats-on/



MEMORIAL SERVICE



FOSM ANNUAL CHURCH SERVICE AND LUNCHEON

Dr Anne Johnstone's address to the Friends of St Mark's (FOSM) Church Service was both insightful and deeply encouraging. She spoke with a remarkable combination of experience, wisdom and warmth, conveying not only her considerable knowledge of educational leadership, but also the strong sense of purpose, conviction and thoughtful stewardship that she believes are essential to the life and flourishing of a great school.

I have had the privilege of observing Anne's leadership journey over many years. From her time as Deputy Headmistress at St Catherine's, when I had the privilege of serving on the Board, through her subsequent leadership at Seymour College and Ravenswood School for Girls, and now to her appointment as Head of Cranbrook, it has been a joy to witness the steady development and deepening of her leadership.

What particularly encouraged me was seeing how Anne has continued to broaden and strengthen her experience, skills and understanding of world-best practice in educational leadership. Her influence and responsibilities have grown significantly, and her appointment to Cranbrook represents an important and exciting new chapter. Cranbrook holds a significant place within the life of St Mark's Church, and in our wider community and district.



Leading a major independent school is a considerable responsibility. It requires not only

a clear vision for the future, but also a deep commitment to preserving what is precious, strengthening the culture of the school, nurturing its community and creating the conditions in which students, staff and families can flourish. At a time of considerable change and opportunity across education, the Head of School has a particularly important role in providing stability, confidence and direction while also embracing innovation and preparing the school for the future.

Dr Johnstone's address gave every indication that her considerable experience, sound judgement and genuine commitment to the flourishing of others will serve Cranbrook exceptionally well in this next chapter. Her leadership is characterised by confidence without arrogance, conviction balanced by humility, and a recognition that enduring leadership is built upon wisdom, courage, integrity and service. It is especially heartening to see someone of Dr Anne's calibre now leading Cranbrook. I believe her leadership can make a significant contribution not only to the school itself, but also to the wider educational and community life of our district.

From St Mark's, our prayer is that God will richly equip Dr Johnstone for the responsibility entrusted to her. May He give her wisdom in every decision, discernment in times of change, courage when difficult decisions are required, strength for the demands of leadership, and continued good health and stamina for the journey ahead. The words of Isaiah seem particularly fitting for this season "Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles." Isaiah 40:31

Ken Patteson

EVERY CHURCH WINDOW TELLS A STORY

We've been able to restore and rededicate the gift of a prominent family made 160 years ago. The stained-glass window depicting Jesus as "the Good Shepherd, who lays down his life for his sheep" was gifted by Thomas and Theresa Mort, who originally gave the land for St Mark's in 1847.



Photo: Roshana and Shemara Wikramanayake with a photograph of their parents, Ranji and Amara near The Good Shepherd Window.

For reasons lost to time, the window was only briefly installed. Following a bequest from the family of the late Dr Ranji Wikramanayake and his late wife, Amara, the window has been restored by Rick Allan of Moss Vale as a backlit feature and is mounted behind the baptismal font. It was dedicated at a special Evensong service, and the service was attended by members of the Wikramanayake family.

Michael Jensen commented on the beauty of the work and reminded us that Jesus as the Good Shepherd guides us and gives his life for us. He observed how appropriate it was that the restored window should be dedicated to the senior members of a loving family who had discharged their pastoral responsibilities in the manner of the Good Shepherd and whose own lives were, indeed, a great Australian story.

FINANCIAL PARTNERSHIP WITH ST MARK'S

At St Mark's Church we are *transformed by Grace to love one another, to serve the city and to share Christ*. As we love one another and share Christ we are confident the Lord Jesus will grow his church.

We pray St Mark's Church will grow to 350 regular attenders by 2030.

St Mark's depends on the generous *financial partnership* of our congregation members to sustain the many ministries of our church.

We are thankful that there are about 100 regular *financial partners* at St Mark's. Under God we are seeking to grow this number of regular *financial partners* to 120.

Your regular *financial partnership* (i.e. weekly, monthly or quarterly donations) can be received via *Direct Deposit* (transfer from your bank account) or via a *Credit Card* deduction.

Please visit <https://stmarksdp.org/giving/> to set up a secure automated deduction from your *Credit Card* or you can set-up a *direct deposit*.

Direct Deposit

BSB: 032 054

Account #: 250036

Name: St Marks Church Darling Point

Tax Deductible Donations

In addition to regular *financial partnership* in St Mark's Church ministries, there are opportunities for Tax Deductible donations in support of St Mark's Music programs as well as the maintenance and restoration of St Mark's heritage buildings (via the National Trust of Australia). Please contact St Mark's Church Office (02 9363 3656 or office@stmarksdp.org) for assistance in making *Tax Deductible Donations* in support of St Mark's Church.