

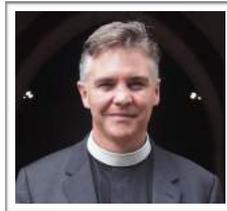


## FROM THE RECTOR

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

St Mark's Darling Point is a church with a special character and a unique opportunity.

It's not just that it is a picturesque building in a lovely area of Sydney.



It is that God has blessed our church with access to and the potential for influence in the city and in our nation.

We are a growing congregation of Christ-followers. But we also serve a community that is much wider. Many people call St Mark's their church. They remain in touch with us, and have had a positive connection over many years. This group numbers in the thousands.

We also have a platform from which to address an audience far wider than these first two groups. Our logo shows St Mark's against the backdrop of the city. We are not just a suburban church. We exist to share Christ to and in front of our entire nation.

We are doing this wider ministry already. The St Mark's Daily Devotionals, for example, reach an audience of 640 each day – most of whom do not come to St Mark's.

But the days are urgent, because we live in the midst of a spiritual crisis in our land.

Australia is de-christianising, and fast. Now, I don't mean just that the numbers of those who identify as Christian is falling. That is true, but you might easily say that there always were many people who were only nominally Christian if at all. I also don't mean that there are fewer Christians in politics, or that our political life seems to be more secular. There are many avowed Christians in politics, actually.

I mean something else. I mean that there is a loss of contact with the life-saving news of Jesus Christ. The

## Quarterly Newsletter March 2018

Christian message is no longer naturally at home in Australia. It seems strange. Not only that we believe in the miraculous, but that we believe in grace and forgiveness as essential to the character of the God who made all things. We have a hope in an inheritance that will never spoil or fade. There is something coarse and brutal about our world at the moment; it is unyielding and expensive place to live. It is a chronically anxious culture we inhabit – worried about identity, worried about having enough, worried about terrorism, deeply haunted by dying and death. We are addicted to change, and yet terrified by it. A journalist friend of mine said recently: *I sometimes feel like our whole civilisation is Wile E Coyote just off the cliff, looking down the barrel of the camera just before he remembers the existence of gravity.*

Christian communities like St Mark's have what our neighbours need. We can be for our country a still point in the maelstrom. We point upwards, to the lovingly sovereign God, and to the return of his Son Jesus Christ. We open ourselves to being transformed by the grace of God, as we pray and sit under the Word of God. From this, we aim to be a community that lives out the love of God for one another in practical and tangible ways. The health of our fellowship together and our spiritual lives is key to our ability to present Christ to our community. And, by the grace of God, we are aiming to serve our city and beyond with the good works that God gives us to do, and to share the news of Jesus Christ.

Prayer is our first priority. I invite you to pray for St Mark's, that we would be filled with the knowledge of God's will, and overflow with the love of Jesus Christ for fallen sinners.

Michael Jensen

## ALPHA 2018

This year the first ever St Mark's Alpha Course kicked off in fine style.

The Howard Lea Hall has been at capacity each Thursday night of the course, with nearly 40 people of all ages - 15 to 90! - joining together for a great meal, to watch the very stimulating Alpha videos, and to have an in depth conversation.

We've covered topics like 'Who is Jesus?', and 'How can I have faith?' and 'Why and how do I pray?'



The Alpha videos are truly excellent. They each run for about 20 minutes and manage to be both challenging and genuinely entertaining. Nicky Gumbel of Holy Trinity Brompton is the main presenter and is both warm and intelligent.

Amongst those who came were people who had been life-long church-goers, and also those who were quite new to church. It was great to see people returning week after week, and even bringing a bottle of wine or two!

Alpha continues in second term. You'd be most welcome to join us!

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### Alpha Term 2 Schedule at St Mark's, on Thursday evenings.

- 6:30pm Welcome 7:00pm Start
- 24 May - How does God guide us?
  - 31 May - Who is the Holy Spirit?
  - 07 Jun - How can I make the most of the rest of my life?
  - 21 Jun - How can I resist evil?
  - 28 Jun - Why and how should I tell others?
  - 05 Jul - Does God heal today?
  - 12 Jul - What about the church?



## THE ST MARK'S MEN'S DINNER

The St Mark's Men's Dinners have been hugely successful since they began back in 2014.

This year, more than 40 blokes headed to the Vibe Hotel in Rushcutters Bay once more. This time, our speaker was a new member of St Mark's - Mr Filimone Lolohea. Fili played Rugby League for the South Sydney Rabbitohs and the London Broncos, and also represented Tonga.



Fili spoke with good humour and great passion about his life in football and after. He told us of how he came to Christ through the witness of one of his fellow players who read the Bible with him. They read together the story of the thief on the cross -

and Fili said that he felt that if that man could have a share in God's kingdom, then maybe there was a chance for him too!



It meant that even as Fili faced a career-ending injury, he was at peace knowing that God had more in store for him.

We also heard from long-time member, Malcolm Young, about his interesting career, and about his conviction that the resurrection of Jesus from the dead was an intellectually convincing piece of history.

We look forward to the next dinner, and also to the **Men's Retreat on August 3 - 5.**

Do save the date.



## PRE-MARRIAGE COURSE

Everyone knows that St Mark's is a great place to get married. A wedding at St Mark's takes place in beautiful surrounds. The photos will always look gorgeous!

But we take the business of getting married very seriously. We want to prepare our wedding couples not just for a wedding, but for marriage itself.

Each couple takes part in our pre-marriage course, which is held over four weeks. The aim of the course is to get the couples talking more honestly with one another, and to give them some skills to manage their relationship over time.

We are able to do this from the deep resources that the Bible gives us. God's own character tells us so much about love itself, that we can learn an amazing amount just from him.

We talk about marriage as a gift from God. It is God who unites man and woman as one flesh. As Jesus said 'what God has put together...'. We then discuss forgiveness. Any couple will need to forgive each other. And in Jesus, God gives us the perfect model for forgiveness. That leads us, in our third session, to talk about love. Love as we receive it from God is about sacrifice and patience. His love is 'steadfast love': it is consistent over time, and unfailing.

It's the cross of Jesus Christ that tells us how to be married.

Overall, the couples report that the sessions are really enjoyable, and a real help to them as they prepare not just for a wedding, but for the adventure of marriage.



## ST MARK'S SUPPORTS THE FOLLOWING MISSIONS

**Sophia Cameron** lives in Tansen, Nepal where she trains teachers and is supported through CMS NSW.

**Living Water Fellowship** in Redfern is a ministry to the indigenous community.

**The Mandarin Fellowship** is under the umbrella of Focus Churches at UNSW and ministers to the Chinese student community.

**Dave and Leoni Painter** live in Cambodia where they teach at Phnom Penh Bible School and Dave works on translating the bible into Khmer. The Painters are supported through CMS NSW. Dave and Leoni are on home leave.

**Rough Edges** is part of St John's Church in Darlinghurst ministering to, and feeding the homeless and marginalised in Sydney.



## GUESS WHO'S COMING TO LUNCH

On Sunday March 11, St Mark's held its second 'Guess Who's Coming to Lunch'. What is GWCTL?

It's a simple idea. People volunteer to host a meal or to be a guest. We then allocate people to different lunches - and the guests contribute to the food and drink. Conversation then ensues!

This time, we had more hosted spaces than guests! More than 40 people ended up somewhere at lunch, and the reports that came back were very positive, and appreciative. It's a great way to get to know someone from your church just that bit better. Christians have been sharing food together since the beginning after all - it's part of our DNA.

We look forward to the next GWCTL!



## LIVING WATER FELLOWSHIP

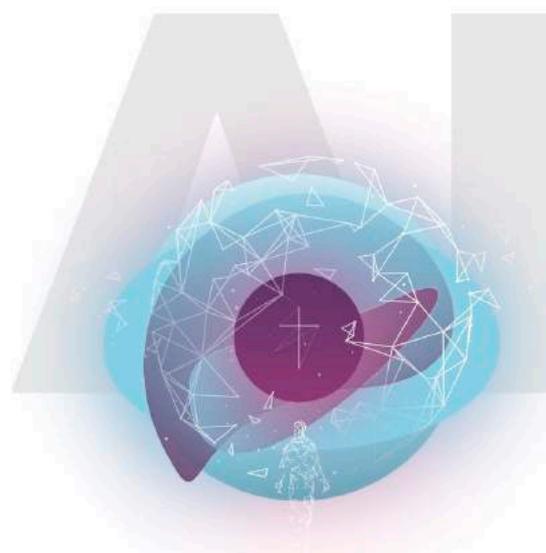
It's been a real blessing over the years to be in fellowship with Living Water Community Fellowship in Redfern, under the leadership of Rev Matt Paterson.

Matt regularly joins us to give us updates on how it is going. We heard from him recently that a youth group has been started and is going really well. There's also a women's group now meeting on Fridays, and the fellowship is growing.

Recently, Matt had the opportunity to minister at the funeral of a young indigenous man who died in a tragic fall. There were great openings for the gospel through this moment of great sorrow and pain. Of course, it was also very difficult for everybody.

Let us continue to pray for the community and for Matt as they represent Jesus Christ in Redfern.

## THE ST MARK'S LECTURE 2018



Paul Henderson

### ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE & THE IMAGE OF GOD

St Mark's Annual Lecture  
x

St Mark's  
Anglican Church  
1 Greenoaks Avenue  
Darling Point

Ethics, reason, and spirituality in an  
age of advanced technology

Wednesday 7:00 p.m // May 16th



*At this year's annual lecture at St Mark's we will be hearing from Paul Henderson on ethics, reason, and spirituality in an age of advanced technology. He will be exploring the rise of Artificial Intelligence in consequence to the theological view that Humans are uniquely made in the image of God.*

### PAUL HENDERSON