



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

FROM THE RECTOR - Rev Dr MICHAEL JENSEN

Dear Friends,

One of the greatest challenges before the Christian church in Australia is sharing Jesus with the next generation. Research published in 2014 showed that 25% of all church attendees are over 70, and only 21% of attendees were aged 21-39. Anecdotal evidence supports this too. The huge youth groups at the Anglican churches of the Eastern Suburbs in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s that did such powerful spiritual work are no longer to be found. Many people under 30 do not even have a passing knowledge of the faith of their parents and grandparents.

And yet the need for young people to hear the gospel has never been greater - especially in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney. Jesus Christ is good news for a generation that is highly anxious. In him we find a peace with God that, as Paul says, 'passes all understanding'. We find a place to rest, and an identity. We are also called into the adventure of serving him in the troubled world in which he has placed us.

That is why, with your help, we at St Mark's are deeply committed to passing on Jesus Christ to the next generation. It's an urgent business, but it is also very exciting. It's our duty, but also our privilege to do this work. And so, we've invested resources and time into inviting the young to consider Christ.

Our Youth Group has flourished this year under the leadership of Fili Lolohea. It's great

Quarterly Newsletter September 2019

to see the energetic chaos of a group of teenagers doing boxercise in the church hall! We've seen young people serving us with music and in the creche.

Our Children's Ministry has gone from strength to strength under our Children's Minister, Rachael Bell. Rachael has brought fresh imagination and her sense of fun to the role. The recent



Holiday Club was a terrific success. Erica Oliver has initiated and capably organised several activities ministering to our families. We've started our Monday morning Music Time for Mums (and Dads) and pre-schoolers, and we've seen the numbers start to build each week. We're running parenting courses, because we want to support parents in the tough job of bringing up the next generation.

These ministries have been wonderfully supported by people who've committed their time and their talents to teach and lead and serve the young.

But there's still much more to be done. We're only scratching the surface of what we could do to hand on the gospel. In 2020, we'll be looking to reconfigure our halls to better service all of our ministries, but in particular our ministries to the young. We'll be calling for more St Mark's partners to get directly involved in ministry to and for children and teenagers. And we'll be praying that God would move by his Holy Spirit to work through us to bring many into his kingdom. Won't you join us in this adventure?

Michael

SPOTLIGHT ON YOUTH - God's plan

Every Friday night during term time the sounds of children having fun can be heard coming from The Howard Lea Hall at St Mark's Church as they enjoy the God's Plan Youth Group. Targeting children aged 11 years onwards, the group meets from 6:30pm – 8:00pm and offers free activities that suit all levels of skill. Describing a typical week, Fili



Lolohea, Youth Minister, shared: "We love having a good time, music, food and dancing. We hang out, then we do different activities which may be physical and other times

more creative. We always pray together and hear something encouraging from God's word. Later in the year we will be having a youth camp, so that will be an event for our youth to look forward to."

"The aim of the group is to build children's confidence in their Christian faith and be part of a team. I would recommend children attend the group as it is a safe space to build lasting friendships and of course lots of fun," Fili explained.

Fili is passionate about working with youth. He shared: "Youth ministry is a vital ministry for the church in discipling the next generation of believers...It is a great time to invest and sow gospel seeds, which with God's grace will reap a harvest for his kingdom."

Reflecting on his own experience at St Mark's, Fili values the fact that people are open to God and his Word and that every week they hear about Christ. When asked what he values most about St Mark's, Fili reflected: "I value the multigenerational aspect of the church and also its Vision of reaching our city for Christ."

KIDS' CHURCH - a place of discovery and friendship

Rachael Bell, Children's Minister, reflects on the joys of children's ministry at St Mark's.

Kids' Church on Sunday mornings is such a wonderful place to be! This year we have been growing in friendship with one another and in knowledge of our great and loving Father. We are growing our crèche, pre-school, Kindergarten – Year 2, and Year 3 – Year 6 groups and are enjoying learning together.



Last term in Kindergarten – Year 6, we explored who Jesus is by reading about the things he did in the gospel of John. We saw how he performed miracles to show not only his care and concern for others, but also his ultimate authority over earthly elements, sin and death. Just as God spoke and brought order in creation, so Jesus spoke and corrected aspects of our chaotic, broken world.

This term we are joining the wider church community as we explore the Fruit of the Spirit and what they practically look like for us as Christians. We have considered how to love those people we find difficult to love and what true joy looks like. We have also made butter by hand to explore the concept of patience and were challenged not only to practice patience in waiting for things or timing, but also to have patience with other people. Above all, we are learning how important it is to ask God for help to understand and develop the fruit of the spirit in us.

We are very thankful for our SRE (or Scripture) teachers at Double Bay Public School. We teach Kindergarten to Year 6 on Thursday mornings each term and are currently presenting stories from John's gospel. How



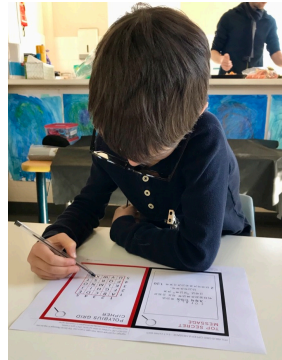
wonderful to see the St Mark's children in our SRE classes are remembering some of the stories they learnt last term at Kids' Church and that there is cross-over between church and school in what we are learning.

KIDS' HOLIDAY CLUB encourages fun detective work while demonstrating service in action

We had an exciting opportunity to run a Kids' Holiday Club in July. Holiday Club presents a fantastic opportunity for children to be introduced to Jesus in a fun, safe environment and it is such an important ministry opportunity for our church to be involved in.

Our theme for this year's Holiday Club was 'Follow the Clues', using Christian Education Publications (CEP) material as the basis for our program. Children became special agents and developed their skills in detective work, sharpening their reaction speeds and controlling movements. They each had special agent name tags with code names and passed through security every morning. Some chose to tackle the 'laser zone', trying to get through without touching the green lasers as fast as

they could. Others took on the 'Cave of No Return' challenge, trying to get across the maze by only stepping on the squares that correctly matched the secret path, while others used chopsticks to move mini marshmallows from one cup to another.



Most exciting though, was meeting characters from the Bible as we watched the drama unfold over the three days. They met Eve, Abraham, David, a soldier, and Jesus' friend Mary, as Detective Dexter Duck and Constable Claire Clooney uncovered clues to discover who the mystery man was. As some predicted, our mystery man was Jesus, the one who came and fulfilled all of the promises that God made to Eve, Abraham and David, the one who died and rose to life and who now invites us all to trust him.

I am especially thankful for the St Mark's congregation members and also my fellow SMBC students who generously volunteered their time to help out with the Holiday Club. Our volunteers



shared that they were greatly encouraged by being involved and serving Jesus in this way – for the conversations they had about the Bible with the children and the fun they had while organising and playing games, being in the drama and puppet conversations, preparing appealing food and helping with gardening. I am so thankful to our great God for each of these people and enjoyed seeing the smiles on their faces as they used their gifts to minister to the children at Holiday Club.

ST MARK'S MEN'S WEEKEND AWAY builds knowledge and camaraderie

St Mark's annual Men's Weekend Away is always a popular event, offering men the opportunity to take a short break away from the busyness of life, while enjoying great teaching. 34 men took advantage of this opportunity in early August, enjoying great company and activities on the Nepean River.

This year's speaker was Dr John Best who spoke on "Pursuing a Fruitful Life". Feedback about his talks included: "I enjoyed the interactive nature of the talks" and "John Best encouraged us all to participate with personal examples."

The retreat provided an opportunity for our members to get to know each other better. One attendee reflected: "It was encouraging with great camaraderie." Men also enjoyed lots of fun activities including playing the inaugural St Mark's Men's Tennis Open, along with afternoon cricket and tennis. The event was summarised well by this feedback: "I am very thankful for the godly and wise men at St Mark's who provide great insight into living for Christ."



PARENTING COURSES FOR UNDER 10's and PARENTING TEENS



The 5 week courses will be held at St Mark's Church beginning on Tuesday 3 September with light refreshments at 7pm.

The course starts at 7:30pm and concludes 9:15pm.

While based on Christian principles, the content should be helpful for any parent in their parenting journey.

Cost: \$50 for couples and \$25 for singles.

To register - <https://stmarksdp.org/whats-on/>



JOIN WITH US TODAY BY CONTRIBUTING TO ST MARK'S

St Mark's relies on the generosity of our community to fund the ministries within our parish and beyond. Please consider making a gift to St Mark's. Donations can either be directed towards tax-deductible projects (such as church maintenance) or non-tax-deductible projects (for equipment and materials for ministries such as the children's and youth ministry and choir).

To make a non-tax-deductible gift to St Mark's by direct debit

Name of Westpac Bank account: St Mark's Church

BSB 032 054 Account # 250036

Ref: QG (followed by your name)

If donating by cheque

Payable to St Mark's Church Darling Point

Post to 1 Greenoaks Avenue, Darling Point 2027.