



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

**FROM THE RECTOR
Rev Dr MICHAEL JENSEN**



Where is peace?

This is a question which presses home quite sharply at the end of 2023. It's with heavy hearts that we reflect on the growing conflict in the Middle East and on the

war in Ukraine. War never seems to end. Humanity never seems to learn its lesson.

But the end of the year points us once more to the baby born to be the "Prince of Peace" - this world's bright morning star. Jesus' birth was attended by angels who announced that peace had indeed come on the earth. Human beings can now be reconciled with God in Jesus, and so reconciled with one another.

And that's the work we're engaged in at St Mark's - sharing the good news of the peace of God offered to us in Jesus Christ. In 2024, we're going to be seeking to be 'More Like Christ': to know God more, to love him more, and to obey him more - so that we can more deeply know the reality of peace with God in everything we do, and share it with our neighbours.

With your help, we've been able to do that in many ways this year already. Your support and partnership means that Rev Michael Figueira can do his work as our Outreach Minister through programmes like Hope Explored and the Alpha Course. Your help will mean that we

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will be able to provide mentorship and training for our growing number of youth and young adults, under the supervision of Rev Dr Tim Escott, by appointing two new student ministers. Your assistance enables us to partner with exciting ministries such as Living Water Community Fellowship in Redfern and the Mandarin-speaking ministry at UNSW.

We do hope that you will join with us in 2024 as we hold out the peace of Jesus Christ to a world that surely needs it more than ever.

Michael Jensen

CHRISTMAS AT ST MARK'S

ST MARK'S

Follow the star

Friday 15 December
5pm - Kids Carols

Sunday 17 December
5.30pm - Beer and Carols

Thursday 21 December
7pm - Festival of Lessons and Carols

Christmas Eve
4pm - All Ages Christmas
8pm - Jazz Christmas
11pm - Choral Communion

Christmas Day
8am - Choral Communion
10am - Christmas Service

Visit: stmarksdp.org/whats-on

ST MARK'S CONFERENCE - WITNESSING TOGETHER



We have the greatest news that has ever been told: Jesus Christ is the Lord and saviour of the world who died and rose

again, so that all who turn to him might have eternal life. How could we keep this news to ourselves? And yet, witnessing to Jesus Christ is not always easy. It can feel awkward and we sometimes even face opposition. Our Witnessing Together conference inspired and helped us to be confident and capable witnessing to Jesus in our lives and as a church. Michael Jensen showed us from the Bible how God invites us to join in his mission in the world. Dr Ruth Lukabyo from Youthworks College inspired us with stories from the Sydney Billy Graham crusades in 1959. Max Jeganathan from the Centre for Public Christianity equipped us to live as witnesses in natural and accessible ways.



We heard the stories of many of our people who courageously hold out the word of life, and prayed together that we would do the same. Even if you were not at the conference, thank God with us for his gospel of salvation, and join with us to proclaim his message in our city.

Rev Tim Escott
Assistant Minister

MARRIAGE COURSE

We held the Marriage Course again this year. Eight couples committed to coming along for the seven weeks of the course to invest in their relationship together. Couples consider topics such as communication, conflict, and love as



they continue to grow in their understanding of each other. St Mark's has a rich history of

weddings, we believe in supporting strong and healthy relationships. We are grateful to Trish for facilitating the course by bringing her wealth of experience as a Social Worker, as well as Robert and June with their support and technical expertise, making this course possible.

Rev Michael Figueira
Assistant Minister

PRE-MARRIAGE COURSE



St Mark's runs a pre-marriage course for all our wedding couples who get married at our church. It enables couples the opportunity to connect and

build on various aspects of their relationship together. Couples comment on how beneficial it is to talk openly and know what to expect as they commit to one another in marriage. Over the year a number of congregation members have been involved in running this online course including Jaime, Amelia and Greg.

Rev Michael Figueira
Assistant Minister

HOPE EXPLORED



Run for the first time, this course explores the foundations of the Christian faith, centred around the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

The course explores some of the deepest longings of the human heart: hope, peace and purpose and shows the profound ways that Jesus fulfils these. Five guests joined us with the course facilitated by Richard, Diane and myself.

Rev Michael Figueira
Assistant Minister

WOMEN'S WINE AND CHEESE AFTERNOON

Listening to Learn: Building a Culture of Care through Mentoring.



Communities thrive when people care about one another. We know when others care about us: it's in the way they take time to listen and understand. They give us their full attention and seek to really

see us and love us, even if we disagree.

Having healthy, supportive relationships with one another brings us joy and strength, and as Christians, people who trust and represent the Lord who is love, cultivating these kinds of relationships is not just desirable, but vital!

The women of St Mark's met to discuss how mentoring – getting alongside one another with the goal of encouraging and growing each other in faith – could help us to develop these relationships. Our guest, senior management consultant and women's mentor Janet Hohne, and her conversation partner

Gillian Davidson led us in a lively and in-depth discussion about how to get alongside another in constructive, loving ways. They helped us to differentiate between trying to 'fix' someone and supporting them. They helped us to tease



through how to practically care for someone, talking through useful concepts such as 'listening to learn' and of employing accurate empathy. The rich conversation throughout the event showed just how

interested people are in making real change in their relationships and our community here at St Mark's.

A tangible example of people's desire to build each other up was through the many hands that worked to make such a stimulating, thought-provoking and fascinating afternoon possible. Thank you to all those involved in catering, food and drink service, Janet and Gillian and the organising committee's input and vision. We pray that mentoring might be one way we continue to build, and so offer, this culture of Christ's care here in Darling Point.

Stephanie Leung
Children's Minister

MEN'S DINNER

The dinner was a night of encouragement to the 40 guests. Dave Jensen; a former Army Commander who is now a pastor at EV Church on the Central Coast spoke. He shared how meeting Jesus changed his life's direction after he learned that Jesus truly is the way, the truth and the life. Parishioner Geoffrey White was interviewed about his fascinating life which has included growing up in colonial Kenya, service as a diplomat including five overseas postings (one as High Commissioner to Kenya), his rural interests, faith and family.

REMEMBERING LOVED ONES AT CHRISTMAS

Christmas Day can be hard when we've lost a loved one. Whether lost recently or long ago, when someone is missing the joy of Christmas can fall flat or ring hollow. Each year we hold a service to remember and give thanks for those we have lost, and to pray for 'God's peace which passes all understanding' to be with each one left behind. Prayers will also be offered for those lamenting life's many sufferings, whether experienced through work, loss or breakdown of family, divorce, mental health struggles, and other griefs. Anyone who is weighed down at Christmas by lament or loss is welcome to join us on Friday 8 December 2023, 7pm. To register visit <https://stmarksdp.org/whats-on/> or email office@stmarksdp.org

Rev David Crain and Stephanie Leung
Ministers at St Mark's Church.

ST MARK'S MUSIC LAUNCH STRIKES THE RIGHT CORD

St Mark's Music was launched on Thursday 9 November 2023. Guests were entertained by both the St Mark's Choir and Matthew Lee, the inaugural Basil Sellers Choral Scholarship recipient. Rev Dr Michael Jensen; shared his vision: "St Mark's Music (an activity of the St Mark's Darling Point Cultural Trust) has been set up with tax deductible status as a means of

funding 'cultural' ministries – especially music – at St Mark's. My prayer is that, with the help of the Trust, St Mark's would become known even

more as a centre for excellent, beautiful, and Christ-focused music which benefits the



community and is to God's glory."

Michael continued: "St Mark's has a long tradition and commitment to sharing fine



choral and organ music with both our regular congregation and wider community.

The church has looked to honour the bequest of the late Michael Crouch by establishing St Mark's Music. Recently we've been able to offer several Choral Scholarships thanks to the generosity of Basil Sellers AM. This program aims to facilitate the development of young musicians and grow St Mark's music ministry. We will also be able to support our successful organ scholarship programme via St Mark's Music."

To learn more about St Mark's Music, visit <https://stmarksdp.org/ministries/st-marks-music/> or click on the QR code below.



SUPPORT OUR MINISTRY

To share in the ministry of St Mark's Music through your financial giving by making a tax deductible donation, visit <https://stmarksdp.org/ministries/st-marks-music/> or click on the QR code. If you wish to support other ministries, visit <https://stmarksdp.org/giving/>

