

ST MARK'S

ANGLICAN CHURCH DARLING POINT

(02) 9363 3657 | 1 Greenoaks Ave, Darling Point NSW 2027 | office@stmarksdp.org | www.stmarksdp.org
ABN: 54 044 193 629

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Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

It is with a heavy heart that I have to announce to you that we will not be gathering this Sunday morning at St Mark's.

I have taken this decision after consulting widely and after prayerful consideration. Just as I was about to pass this on to you, the Archbishop of Sydney has also written to us to say that all church services should be closed for the time being.

The people of God are called to meet around Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. We meet for our spiritual nourishment and encouragement, and to renew our hope! But we cannot meet as we usually do at the moment. As it was in the 1919 flu epidemic, St Mark's has to find other ways to be the community that God has called us to be.

So what are we going to do now?

I want us to focus on four things.

1 Deeper Discipleship. I believe God is giving us this time as an opportunity to deepen our discipleship of Jesus.

The ministry team and I have a number of ideas of how we can do this in the coming weeks and months. We'll be letting you know what these are in due course.

On Saturday, we will be sending out "Worship Packages" by email, for each of our services. These will contain the words of the service, prayers, Scripture readings, and links to recordings of the hymns. We will send out the text of the sermon, and also a YouTube recording of the sermon. There will also be material for children. **We invite you to gather with your household, or with a small group of people, and to have your own service at home. If it is a communion service, share bread and wine together as someone leads you in the words.**

We are also looking at livestreaming a 10am service. Stay tuned!



Don't forget to sign up to the [Daily Devotions](#) if you haven't already. You can hear [last week's sermon on the Coronavirus epidemic here](#).

2. Keeping Together. We need to keep together as a family of God's people, and not let this crisis separate us from one another.

So: let's call each other and keep in touch. Let's find new ways to catch up. If there are safe ways to gather with small groups of people, let's take the chance to do it. We'd love to hear any ideas for how to do this! [We've set up a Facebook group so that we can share thoughts, prayers, and ideas together.](#)

Connect groups will decide how and whether to keep meeting. There are ways to do it via the internet which we are exploring. Whatever happens, do keep sharing prayer points with one another.

3. Loving our Neighbours. Now is a great time for us to express the love of Christ for our neighbours. Is there a way to set up something in your building or on your street so that we can be alert to the needs of those around us? We'd love to hear your ideas. But we will be supplying you with a flyer that you can use for your area.

4. Leaving No-one Behind. No-one in our community should be forgotten or overlooked. If you know of someone who is doing it tough, or if you have particular needs, let us know. We already have people who have volunteered to give people a ring or do some shopping for a person who can't get out. Could you supply something for our freezer in the church hall?

Update on Events:

The Twilight Canapes event has been postponed. You can either seek a refund, or we will credit you a ticket for when it runs again later in the year.

The Prayer Meeting scheduled for March 19 has been cancelled. But we will be supply prayer materials for that evening, so that we can pray together as a church. We are setting up live-streaming to enable us to pray with one another.

The AGM will go ahead, with the appropriate safeguards in place. Please do continue to nominate people for positions. We will try to keep the meeting as short as possible.

Easter Services: At the moment, it seems unlikely that we will be able to have our usual Easter Services in the normal way. But we will still celebrate the death of our Lord and his resurrection as this world's best hope.

This is a time of great anxiety for many of us, and many in our community. In his letter, the Apostle Peter says 'Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you' (1 Peter 5:7). This is not a message not to worry, but rather to give all our worries to the one who cares for

us. Whatever may come, Jesus Christ is the Lord; and he, not the virus, will have the last word.

In him

Michael Jensen
Rector