



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

**FROM THE RECTOR -  
Rev Dr MICHAEL JENSEN**

We are often told that faith has a place in the contemporary world. Faith, we are told, is in rapid decline. As the story goes, churches cling by the fingernails to the cliffs of their societal influence, representing not anything contemporary, but an unwanted throwback to the distant past. Science and technology rise to supply both the practical needs of modern people and the glowing light of a hope to fascinate them.

We recently had the privilege of hearing Dr Laura Rademaker speaking on Unfinished Business: Australia's First Nations and Christianity. The annual St Mark's Lecture exists to challenge our faith in that old story, by reminding us of an older one. The abandonment of faith in the God of Jesus Christ does not mean the abandonment of faith, but rather the appearance of many new gods, many of whom do not look at first like new gods, but who do demand of us what gods demand.

And when we look closely at these new gods – the forces in this world to which we are, in the end, enslaved – perhaps we will find that they lack the resources to inspire in us civility, love of neighbour, merciful judgement and true hope.

Your generous partnership with us in the gospel of Jesus Christ enables St Mark's to be a place where a different story is told. I often say to

## Quarterly Newsletter June 2021

parents bringing their children for baptism 'you are giving your child the precious gift of hope'.

And that hope is not in ourselves or in some far-off dream. It's a hope in the God who raised Jesus from the dead! By sharing with us in this work, you are sharing in the passing on of this astonishing good news to the next generation.

Because of your gifts, we've been able to employ Stephanie Leung as our Children's Minister. Currently more than 40 kids come to our Kids' Church each week. But we'd like that to be 60 by the end of the year. Please help us!

Michael Jensen



*St Mark's Annual Lecture introduced by Michael Jensen and presented by Dr Laura Rademaker.*



## A VISION FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

Youth ministry has always been a vital part of what we do at St Mark's. We have always guided children and young people as they grow into thriving adult disciples. In 2021, however, we have especially focussed attention on youth and kids' ministry. We could see that our youth needed attention and investment, especially after Covid disruptions and leadership transitions.

Our Outreach minister Erica Oliver took on youth ministry for the first term of the year. Under her leadership, our ministry has flourished. Friday night youth group has been a friendly, stable, and enriching place to be, and the Sunday morning Bible study has been a welcoming place for youth to explore their faith and life in Jesus more deeply.

From the beginning of Term 2, our Assistant Minister Tim Escott took over youth group, with Erica going on maternity leave. Two new developments have been critical for the long-term health of youth ministry. First, Tim and Erica put together a team of youth leaders so that Tim is now working alongside and training up three new young leaders in the youth ministry. Second, a new senior high school/young adult Bible study group began. This initiative filled a structural hole and now provides nurturing for older youth in times of transition and high stress. Our attendance levels have recovered to pre-Covid numbers, and we have welcomed new Year 6 students as well as some visitors seeking confirmation.

Some say youth ministry is vital because it nurtures the next generation. That's not quite right. Youth ministry does not simply prepare

young people for the future. Of course it does that - in this sense it does nurture the next generation. But first, youth ministry helps young people to be effective and faithful disciples here and now. And now is a challenging time for young people to persevere as Jesus' followers. So please pray with us that the youth in and around St Mark's would have the faith, love and hope from the Spirit that flourishes now and perseveres until the end.

Rev Dr Tim Escott  
Assistant Minister



## ALPHA COURSE

It was wonderful to be able to host the Alpha Course in person again last quarter! There's something very special and Biblical about being able to gather around a meal and discuss varying aspects about the faith and trust we can have in Jesus Christ. We had around 17 people in attendance from all three services.

A special thanks to Craig McLean, Lisa Bell, and Sophia Chen, for doing an amazing job of leading the discussion groups in a thoughtful way. We'd also like to thank the volunteers who took the time to prepare and provide meals on the evenings.

We'd love to see our congregation members continue to invite their non-Christian friends, neighbours, and colleagues to the next Alpha Course.

Erica Oliver  
Youth & Outreach Minister



## LITTLE PEOPLE, BIG PRIORITY

Sometimes it's taking care of the tiny things that make a huge difference. Resourcing our Creche Ministry is no exception. For parents, knowing their children are welcomed and learning in a safe and fun environment makes a huge difference to their experience of church life. As part of our focus on our kids ministries this year, we really wanted to ensure that even our tiniest people have the opportunity to learn to follow Jesus in fun, interactive and creative ways. That's why it was so exciting when Bronte came on board as our new Creche Worker this year.

You can't miss Bronte: You know from the warmth, calm, energy and joy she conveys through her bright smile and keen attention that she will use all her skill in her work with children. She has recently reorganised our toy storeroom, enabling her to more effectively minister to children by building a program of activities to introduce our 0-2 year-olds to God through creative play, simple craft, songs and stories. Not only are our kids learning, but their growing security has opened up new avenues of service. This means their parents are becoming increasingly free to remain in church, providing the important opportunity of learning themselves. Bronte really is a blessing to St Mark's.

We would love to be able to continue resourcing her for the extra planning she does to enhance this ministry and would appreciate your prayers and financial support to make that happen.

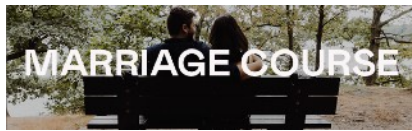
Stephanie Leung  
Children's Minister

## THE SIGNIFICANT WOMAN COURSE (SWC)

The SWC was held for eight weeks, ably led by Dr Megan Best. Course participant, Sonia Andreatta, described it as: "An assembled gathering of like-minded women who are searching for spiritual guidance and assurance in supporting their crusade towards achieving their full potential and comprehending who they really are, or aspire to be." Sonia appreciated the group's openness and sharing as together they explored how to discover God's plan for their lives.

June Buchanan likewise found the SWC beneficial. "The SWC consolidates many things, one is required to delve deeply into discovering, supported by prayer, a plethora of aspects about oneself that one has never necessarily thought about in any deep and meaningful sense. For example, what are one's core values? Spiritual gifts? What personality type are you? What are your life experiences? What are your skills and abilities? All this culminates into one's unique 'Mission Statement'.

I highly value this course in terms of my continuing growth as a servant of the Lord. God gives us spiritual gifts, not for our own edification, but to use in serving and edifying others. By delving deeply every week into various facets of who God has created us to be and the fact that each one of us is unique, one is able to understand how one can use our God-given uniqueness to glorify God and help build up His body the church. This is a fantastic course for Christian women seeking to strengthen and grow in one's life purpose of glorifying God and delighting in Him – and serving others."



## THE MARRIAGE COURSE

If you're looking for practical advice for enriching your relationship on everything from resolving conflict through to how to work through the impact of your family history, The Marriage Course is for you. At St Mark's we're committed to promoting healthy family relationships and have had fantastic feedback in the past from those who have attended this course. While based on Christian principles, the course is helpful for any couple with or without a Christian faith or church background.

The Marriage Course starts on Tuesday 20 July 2021 and runs over seven sessions. The course will be held in the Canopy Room of the Sheaf Hotel in Double Bay, 6.30pm – 9.30pm. The cost is \$75 per couple (including booklets).

For more information, please visit <https://stmarksdp.org/ministries/marriage-enrichment/>



## ST MARK'S FAREWELL ORGAN RECITAL

St Mark's Organ Scholar, Nico Tjoelker will present a Farewell Organ Recital for the Scholarship Fund on Sunday 20 June 2021 at 2pm. Don't miss this opportunity to hear this talented organist perform before he leaves us to take up his enrolment in the prestigious Master of Music programme at Yale University USA.

Why not invite your family and friends to join you at the recital? To register, please visit <https://stmarksdp.org/whats-on/>

## JOIN WITH US TODAY

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. We would be grateful if you could consider giving whatever you can contribute to help secure our ministries.

Could you please help with all or part of these items for 2021?

### NON-TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION PROJECTS

- Children's and Youth ministry - \$1,000
- Scripture (SRE) Teaching - \$2,000
- Teaching Resources for Children - \$200
- Bibles to give away to newcomers - \$30
- Support Bill Clark and the Choir - \$6,000

### TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION PROJECTS

You may like to make a tax-deductible donation to St Mark's National Trust. Suggestions include:

- Maintenance of the roof and sandstone
- Maintenance of the stonework (we are currently commissioning stone masons for this task)

### HOW TO DONATE

To make a donation to St Mark's please visit

<https://stmarksdp.org/giving/>