



FROM THE RECTOR

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



This time of year is always frenetic at St Mark's, with preparations for our Christmas services underway and planning for 2019 in swing.

I'd like to thank you once more for your ongoing support of the ministry we share together. With your support we've been able to begin a Marriage Enrichment course for about 20 couples, we've continued building our exciting youth and children's ministries and we've enjoyed a number of fine musical events. The choir's performance of Handel's Messiah on 25th November was a particular highlight, with more than 120 people in attendance for the whole two and half hours!

With your partnership, we will once again be reaching out into our community at this time of year with the incredible good news of Jesus - 'God with us'. This year our Christmas theme is 'Coming Home for Christmas' - a reminder of God's invitation to us to come to him and find hope, forgiveness, peace, and love. The Nativity Play, the Beer & Carols service, the Festival and Lessons and Carols service, and the Jazz Christmas are all magnificent celebrations of Jesus's presence with us.

We say farewell this year to Sam Giddy, our Organ Scholar, and Kate Lieschke, our Student Minister. Sam's contributions to our worship and his recitals have been extraordinary. Kate has been an inspiring leader at our 5:30 service.

Quarterly Newsletter December 2018

We'll miss both of them, but we thank God for what they've added to us, and pray for them as they continue to seek to serve God.

We've welcomed to our team Michael Coyne as our Operations Manager. Michael is helping our very busy parish operate much more effectively and efficiently, and overseeing our finances and our property, so that we can steward our resources.

What do we have planned for 2019? We are looking to appoint a new Children's Minister so that we can keep this essential ministry going. We have an amazing programme for those in primary School and below, but we could do so much more to help the next generation come to know Christ. It will cost us about \$25,000 to employ a terrific Children's Minister to our team. Considering the lasting value that this ministry adds, this is great investment. Can you help us?

Please do continue to pray for St Mark's, that God would continue to bless us and to glorify his name in us.

In Christ
Michael Jensen
Rector



FROM DAVID CRAIN**CHANGING THE PREPARATION FOR BAPTISM**

Baptism numbers at St Mark's across the last few years have totalled 54,77,47 and 70!. These are quite big numbers. This year we have replaced meeting with each family in their home with a one-night class which is offered each month. We lose some of the intimacy but are able to cover more issues, more thoroughly and with more give and take.



What is baptism? Why baptise children? What are sponsors promising? How can we teach our children to pray? How can we pass on our belief in God? – these are the issues raised in the monthly class. Also the godparents are expected to come, whereas we never saw them in the home visits. Baptisms are in the services for the regularly attending Church families and on one Sunday a month for others.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW OPERATIONS MANAGER

The Churchwardens and Parish Council have appointed Michael Coyne as Operations Manager for 6 months commencing October.



Michael brings many years of experience as Churchwarden and Church Treasurer to this role, as well as over 30 years experience in the IT industry.

He will be working closely with Michael Jensen to streamline some of our church's administrative processes. With oversight of

Finances, Technology, HR and Property, Michael will relieve our ministry team of some of this burden, and allow them to focus more on their gospel work.

Some of the projects that Michael is currently working on are the Church budget for 2019; the implementation of our new church database (Elvanto); Job descriptions for our staff and the Cranbrook preschool lease extension.

Michael is married to Anne, and they have 2 adult children. They have decided to make the St Mark's community their new "home", and are part of our 10am congregation. Please make Michael and his wife Anne welcome as they settle into St Marks, and pray that his time in this role will help improve our systems and processes so that we can continue to grow our ministry here.

FAREWELL TO KATE LIESCHKE

Kate Lieschke came to us from Wagga Wagga to be our student minister in 2017. At the same time, she started her studies at Sydney Missionary and Bible College. A dietitian by training, Kate had also had experience working in ministry on the campus of Charles Sturt University in Wagga.



Her role has been to lead in our 5:30 service and to support women in Christian growth. She's been a key leader in one of our Connect groups. In these roles, Kate has been an invaluable team member and a model to follow. We've really been blessed by her leadership and her example, in many ways.

Sadly, Kate is moving on from St Mark's in 2019 - but she will surely be a blessing wherever she ministers. We pray for her in her studies and in her future plans for ministry.



NEWS FROM SOPHIA CAMERON

It's been a busy month with training in Gorkha (with Assal Chhimekee), a Teach for All conference in Kathmandu, attending some mid-year Teach for Nepal training, and now I am writing from Rajendrapur, Bangladesh at the Teach for Bangladesh Institute training. The Institute is located 2-3 hours by car from Dhaka. I arrived Tuesday evening and am here for the next 3 weeks to help with TFBangladesh's English curriculum. Unlike other Institutes, I have less responsibility here at this training, with fewer sessions to run and no lesson plans to mark, and I am thankful to the Father for a slower pace. I'm also thankful for the beautiful site that we are staying in and the warm welcome I've been given by staff and Fellows.

However, as is usual at the Institute, there are various challenges and stresses. Each session I'm facilitating is with the entire cohort at once. This means running interactive sessions with one hundred Fellows of varying levels of expertise.



Communication, and being organised, can also be a challenge. To give an example of this, I met with the director two weeks ago while we were both in Kathmandu, and gave her a set of flashcards to be replicated for the Fellows to use in English sessions. Staff were aware of this, and I was told they would be ready for my first

session on Thursday. Thirty minutes before the session was to begin, I was told that the sets of flashcards had been printed, however, they were currently on their way in a vehicle to the site (from Dhaka). Amazingly, the flashcards arrived just before I began, and, twenty minutes later enough cards were sorted for the Fellows to use in my session. I am continually learning how to be flexible, patient and 'go with flow'.

Gorkha

The four-day trip to Shreenathkot, Gorkha with Assal Chhimekee seemed to go well. I was grateful for having Kate Shresta, another worker from my company, travel with me and come along to the training and school visits. I spent a day teaching 8 teachers from 3 schools in the area. Then a second day, visiting 2 schools and conducting observations, before meeting individually with some of the teachers. This seemed to be a good approach. I hope to return there early next year to meet with these teachers again.



Give thanks for:

- * Opportunity to establish relationships with another TFA partner organisation who seem keen for an ongoing connection
- * Opportunity to meet up with a few other company workers who are living in this location.

Please ask:

- * For patience and grace when things don't go as planned
- * That my English content sessions will be helpful for the team and Fellows
- * That I would point people to the Son through my words and actions, and for wisdom on how to do this during times when they confide in me.

FROM ERICA OLIVER - OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY MINISTER

Connect group. We love the people in our group and we love getting to know Jesus together. Last quarter we went through the book of 1 Corinthians. This quarter we've looked at the intersection between faith and work in Tim Keller's book, *Every Good Endeavour*. If you're looking for a summer read, I would really recommend it.



A job is a vocation only if someone else calls you to do it for them rather than for yourself. And so our work can be a calling only if it is reimagined as a mission of service to something beyond merely our own interests. Thinking of work mainly as a means of self-fulfillment and self-realization slowly crushes a person."

— Timothy Keller, *Every Good Endeavour: Connecting Your Work to God's Plan for the World*

"Everyone will be forgotten, nothing we do will make any difference, and all good endeavours, even the best, will come to naught.



Unless there is God. If the God of the Bible exists, and there is a True Reality beneath and behind this one, and this life is not the only life, then every good endeavour, even the simplest ones, pursued in response to God's calling, can matter forever."

— Timothy Keller, *Every Good Endeavour: Connecting Your Work to God's Work*

THE MARRIAGE COURSE

The Marriage Course ran for 12 consecutive Mondays at the Sheaf Hotel in Double Bay.

One of the church's mandates is to be a blessing to the wider community and helping people flourish in their marriages is one of the most potent ways we can do that. We are sharing the wisdom and love of God in a very practical way.



Love is not just an emotion but it's also a skill that can be learned and refined. That's exactly what the marriage course does. It teaches people how to love one another. Running it at the Golden Sheaf was great because it was the perfect atmosphere for couples. A big thank you to Trish Howes for all your help and wisdom. I couldn't have done it without you.

Topics covered included

- *Building Strong Foundations*
- *The Art of Communication*
- *Resolving Conflict*
- *The Power of Forgiveness*
- *The Impact of Family – Past and Present*
- *Good Sex*
- *Love in Action*

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