

Dear Members and Friends of St Marks,

Grace and peace be yours in abundance (1 Peter 1:2).

It is with a heavy heart that I write to inform you that public worship services will not be held at St Marks this Wednesday evening, Sunday morning, or until further notice is given. This is in keeping with the latest Government regulations regarding the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19). We had planned to continue holding services for as long as possible, but in order to honour our government (Mark 12:17, Romans 13:1) and maintain our duty of love and care to our fellow citizens (John 13:34) we must now find other ways to share in Christian worship and fellowship.

St Marks Church Council has established an Emergency Response Committee, which has met and organised small teams of people to be responsible for the ongoing worship life, pastoral care, communication, finance and facilities of our congregation. We will need the help of the whole congregation to ensure these areas are addressed and that we maintain our focus on Christ and living out our Christian faith in these changing times.

Our worship team is looking into new ways that we can engage in worship together. We are currently working to have both online services and sermons, and printed copies of worship materials available, as early as this week. Please keep an eye on the website <http://stmarksmtbarker.org.au/> and Facebook page for updates <https://www.facebook.com/stmarksmtbarker/> if you are able to.

We would also like to develop a database of those who can access online material, and those who would appreciate printed copies. We hope these can be delivered to your door. This will take some time to organise but our goal is to continue to reach as many people as possible, as regularly as possible, with the word of God. Please communicate your needs through the church office, or an Elder or Pastoral Assistant, as well as your willingness to assist in any of these areas.

We encourage you to start thinking about how your household will keep worshipping and praying together, around family altars and tables, with specific times of the day and week set aside. Sunday mornings are still a wonderful time for this. God willing, by 9:30am this Sunday, our regular combined service time, there will be worship material available online, so we 'come together' even when we are apart.

We also encourage members to think about their ongoing financial contributions to the congregation. For the time being, you can still drop off offering envelopes to the church office. But we suggest that as many people as possible set up Regular Electronic Giving. You will find more information about this in the bulletin or at www.lca.org.au/REG or by phoning the LLL toll free on 1800 556 457.

In all this, remember that God is still our refuge and strength (Psalm 46:1) and that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). He will never leave us, nor forsake us (Deut 31:6). He is always working for the good of those who love him (Rom 8:28) and he has given us his Holy Spirit as our advocate (John 14:26) and to ensure the spread of the gospel in the world (Acts 1:8). Feel free to contact me with any needs, questions or concerns.

Yours in Christ,

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