I don’t know if you’ve ever been at a sports game where people have had to sing the club song, or at some public occasion where people have had to sing the national anthem. Sometimes it’s always good to have someone nearby who is a strong singer, otherwise it seems like we’re the only one singing! If someone near us really knows what they are doing, and really knows how to sing the song, it gives us such encouragement to sing along and join in.

The bible tells about how at Christmas time some simple shepherds in a field were joined and encouraged by all the angels of heaven to sing God’s praises after hearing the news of the birth of the baby Jesus. May God bless you this Christmas, and I pray that it may be a wonderful time to encourage you in your life – a time to realise that wherever the message of Jesus is found, the angels are never far away to encourage us and to lead the singing!

Dear Jesus, thank you for your birth. We thank you also for this year, and we ask you to bless us into the next one.

Amen.

Pastor Stephen van der Hoek

After close to 200 school days in 2014, we are preparing to close our school year. This always brings with it a range of emotions. While there is the excitement of Christmas, holidays and the chance to enjoy more time with family and friends, there is always a touch of sadness. This week we farewell our 28 Year 6 students as they complete their primary school education at St Mark’s as well as 12 students in Reception to Year 5 who will be moving to other locations in 2015. At the same time, we have been preparing for 55 2015 Foundation students and 12 new students joining us in Years 1 to 6 in 2015.

This week we also farewell two staff members who are finishing their current work with St Mark’s. I would like to acknowledge and thank Mrs Kelly Johnston (Year 4 teacher for three years) and Frau Westermann (German teacher for three terms) for their service and contributions to St Mark’s and our students and families. They have been a blessing to us as they shared their God given talents. I wish them God’s blessings as they embark on new opportunities in 2015.

St Mark’s Activities

We’ve almost completed our year together but look forward to tomorrow and two closing events:

- Student Assembly
  Our final student assembly will be tomorrow morning at 9:00am. We will give out final achievement awards for 2014, farewell students in Reception to Year 5 leaving St Mark’s, announce our 2015 School Captains and make the presentation of our House Shield. Interspersed during these activities, will be some favourite Christmas songs.

- Whole School Closing Service
  Tomorrow night we will all gather at Inbarendi, Cornerstone College for our closing service. This will be an opportunity for students, families and staff to come together and give thanks to God for the many blessings we have received during 2014. The graduation of our Year 6 students will also occur during this service.

I ask you to please note the organisational details below to assist with the running of the service:

- The service will begin at 7:00pm with the doors open from 6:30pm for family and friends of our Year 6 graduating students. There will be reserved seats towards the front for these families.
- I ask Reception to Year 5 families to arrive from 6:40pm and be seated by 6:55pm. Upon arrival, students should move to the front and meet their teacher to sit with their class.
- All students should wear their summer uniform.
- After the conclusion of the service, Reception to Year 5 students will stay seated in their class groups until a parent comes to collect them.
- Light refreshments will be available following the service.

I look forward to your company during this very special occasion. As all students will have a role during the service, I ask that if your child is not able to attend this important school activity, to please advise me in writing.

James Heyne
Principal
2014 Satisfaction Survey
One final request I have for parents is to help me reflect upon the year we have experienced to evaluate what is working well and what are the most significant and important areas that I should be leading improvements in during 2015.

Yesterday, students brought home a parent satisfaction survey for you. I do ask that you take the time to share your experiences of 2014 and hopes for 2015. While the survey is structured to be brief, please feel free to provide as much additional information as you like.

Student Written Reports
Tomorrow, students will bring home their end of year written reports. If you wish to speak with your child’s teacher regarding any aspect of the report, please phone the office to make an appointment. Teachers will be available on Thursday and Friday to answer any questions you may have.

2015 Student Stationary/Booklist Collection
Booklists and stationary have been ordered for students for 2015. Families are asked to collect these from the school between Tuesday 20th and Friday 23rd January 2015. Collection will take place in the school library. Please note our school office will be closed from January 20th and will reopen on January 27th. Normal service will be available on Thursday and Friday to answer any questions you may have.

2015 Term Dates
Term 1
Tuesday 27th January - First day of term for students in Years 1 to 6.
Wednesday 28th January - First day of term for Foundation students
Friday 10th April - Last day of Term 1
Term 2
Monday 27th April to Friday 26th June
Monday 29th June to Friday 3rd July (Pupil Free Week for staff professional development)
Term 3
Monday 20th July to Friday 25th September
Term 4
Monday 12th October to Wednesday 9th December

You are all welcome to attend our 2015 opening chapel on Tuesday 27th January. Students will first assemble in their 2015 classrooms and then move with their classes ready for chapel which will begin at 9:00am. Coffee and Chat will follow after chapel for families and friends.

2015 St Mark’s Lutheran Lightning Pedal Prix
Last week an information letter with an expression of interest form, was sent home to all current Year 5 families. I ask any interested students and families to please return the expression of interest form to our Business Manager, Holly Wake by Friday 12th December.

Thank you to staff
I ask you to join me in affirming and acknowledging the incredibly talented, dedicated and hardworking 33 members of our staff team. From our classrooms and learning spaces to our office and support areas, we are blessed to have highly skilled and passionate staff that come together to provide a wonderful daily experience for our students. They are the foundation on which St Mark’s relies each and every day.

On behalf of all our students and families I thank our staff for everything they do to enrich the lives of the young people that come to St Mark’s. They are a blessing to our students.

Thank you to students and families
As we finish our year I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank you all for giving us at St Mark’s the privilege and opportunity to be part of your child’s lives and their growth and development as young people. It is an honour and I do thank you for partnering with us.

Finally I would like to wish you all a safe, restful and blessed Christmas season as we remember with great joy the greatest gift we ever receive - the birth of Jesus. Peace and blessings to you

James Heyne
Principal

Farewell
With the 2014 school year coming to a close, it is a time to say farewell to a number of families who are finishing their association with St Mark’s. To all families who are leaving St Mark’s this year, we offer our sincere thanks for your contribution to our school and our very best wishes for the future. Farewell and God bless to:

Kelly & Scott M(Tyler)
Donna & David K (Holly & William)
Lisa & Andrew S (Nicholas)
Christine & Jurgen K (Christian & Michael)
Krista & Benjamin H (Lilli)
Davin K & Kerry D (Hannah & Lillian)
Tracey S & Rob M (Angus & Oscar)
Jennifer & David B (Chelsi)
Deb & Euan R (Oliver & William)
Miriam A (William)
Carole & John C (Paisley)
Sharron & Brian C (Karlie)
Liz & Eric G (Anita)
Sheralee & Matthew H (Alicia)
Marie Fox & Paul H (Sophie)
Shannon & Stephen H (Kiara)
Tammie & Symon P (Stephanie Ladas)
Kylie M & Phil M (Tannah)
Andrea M (Aveeda)
David M (Aveeda)
Robyn & Anthony M (Amelia)
Tanya D (Callum Page)
Darren P (Callum)
Christine S (Corbin)
Chris S (Corbin)
Leanne W (Alyssa)

Mt Barker Pageant - ‘Thank You’
It was great to see many of our students coming along on Saturday morning to be dressed as Mary & Joseph, angels, shepherds and kings and take part in our St Mark’s Church and School Community Float for the Mt Barker Pageant. The children were very well behaved. Thank you to all the parents for helping get the children dressed and walking over to the oval. Our thanks also to Jack Schultz for driving the vehicle and to Andrew May for the loan of the trailer.
Enjo T-Towels
The Enjoy T-Towels have arrived in the front office for those who have ordered them. Thank you to those families who have supported this fundraiser.

URGENT – St Mark’s SAPSASA t-shirts
If your child has been involved in a SAPSASA event this year or in previous years and still has a SAPSASA polo shirt at home, please return them to Miss Barolo before the end of the week.

Coming Up
- Wednesday 10th December - Assembly @ 9.00am
- Wednesday 10th December - Term 4 Concludes @ 3.15pm
- Wednesday 10th December - Whole School Closing Service & Year 6 Graduation (Inbarendi, Cornerstone College) @ 7.00pm

STALL
There will be Christmas decorations and gifts for sale in Janene Overton’s room Wednesday lunch time.

All these things have been made by year 5 students in our LUNCH CLUB and ELECTIVES.

Prices have been marked down!

Profits will go to Gifts of Grace, Janene Overton & the LUNCHCLUB students.

Congratulations
Congratulations to Jasmine G who this year won the Art Aggregate Award (both senior and junior sections) at the recent presentation night of the Southern Country Shows Association.
Congratulations also to Cooper Geue who was runner up.
Well done Jasmine and Cooper.

St Mark’s Lutheran Church - Christmas Church Services
St Mark’s congregation invites you to worship with us at St Mark’s Lutheran Church:
- Christmas Eve: 7pm @ Inbarendi (Cornerstone College) (Carols 6.30pm) & Candlelight Service @ 11pm (St Mark’s Church)
- Christmas Day: 9am (St Mark’s Church)
- New Year’s Eve: 7.30pm - Holy Communion (St Mark’s Church)
- New Year’s Day: 11am (Holy Communion (St Mark’s Church)
LEAH Schools community statement

The Working Group that are responsible for the management and administration of the educational land at Aston Hills have continued to meet monthly. These meetings have considered and delivered preliminary assistance to the District Council of Mount Barker and Lanser Communities (Aston Hills Developer), who have been actively planning, preparing and installing the infrastructure to support the future development and the greater Mount Barker community. Strong relationships have been formed amongst these groups and other stakeholders, with everyone working together, striving to create an environment and community that is well planned, contemporary and sustainable.

The next phase and focus of the Working Group is to consider how the educational land at Aston Hills can best complement the existing offering of Lutheran education in the Adelaide Hills. The campuses that make up Lutheran Education Adelaide Hills (LEAH) are St Mark’s Lutheran Primary, St Michael’s Lutheran Primary, Spring Head Lutheran Primary, Lobethal Lutheran Primary and Cornerstone College. The Aston Hills educational offering will be strategically and carefully considered, ensuring that the future multi-campus arrangement meets the needs of the community and offers an exciting and seamless journey for each student as they develop their skills and abilities and grow in their faith and knowledge.

While the Working Group analyse data, consider the future, and prepare a vision and Campus Master Plan for LEAH, work will continue towards preparing the site for the development of a future educational centre. An example of the preparatory work is the production of a Landscape Master Plan. This will provide a framework within which the external environment can be created in stages, provisioning for early planting and the creation of a stimulating external learning environment. The Working Group will also continue to work closely with the District Council of Mount Barker and Lanser Communities in identifying opportunities of mutual benefit for shared use facilities and the building of community.

As this exciting new vision for LEAH becomes clearer the Working Group will continue to provide updates. The thoughts and prayers of the LEAH community will help guide, and shape our future and your support in this way is greatly appreciated.

James chapter 1 verse 17:

*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.*

John Proeve
Executive Director LSA SA/NT/WA
EMBSWG