Lord, it is good that we are here. Matthew 17:4

In the church calendar, we are now celebrating Lent, which is the 40 days before Easter, where Christians often dedicate themselves to spiritual renewal and spiritual discipline, like helping the needy, prayer or fasting. This helps people focus and prepare for Good Friday and Easter, when Jesus died to pay for the world’s sin, and rose from the dead. 

But before Jesus went to die on the cross, he showed his disciples a wonderful vision of his heavenly majesty, where light shone through his face and his clothes. We call this Jesus’ “Transfiguration”—his face and body were “transfigured” by heavenly light. And Jesus’ disciple Peter said to him, “Lord, it is good that we are here.” It must have been great to be there! And yet, this event is an encouragement to the disciples to remember who Jesus is, before he goes to die. And yet, even when he does die, and when the world sees Jesus in all of his weakness on the cross, it’s still “good to be there”—this is the greatest work anyone has ever done! 

Lord Jesus, be with me in times of happiness and also in the dark times. It’s good to be here with you. Amen. 

Pastor Stephen van der Hoek

The First Weeks

I’ve lost count of how many times during the past week I have either commented or heard, ‘It’s halfway through February already.’ The days, weeks and terms continue to roll by. Rather than being regretful about this, I like to look back at the wonderful opportunities the first four weeks have presented us with.

St Mark’s continues to be an environment with a range of excellent opportunities for all and the weeks ahead look to be no different.

St Mark’s Activities and Requests

- Chess club continues each Tuesday morning from 11:00am in the Learning Hub (Mrs Page’s room).
- Class 5I will be sharing at tomorrow’s Assembly beginning at 9:00am in the hall.
- Volunteers training session on Thursday 26th February at 2:30 pm.
- 14 students are representing St Mark’s at the annual Courier Cup swimming event on Thursday. We wish them well.
- Pastor Stephen will lead our whole school Friday chapel this week. This will include a blessing for our Class Carers as well as our Year 2 students receiving a bible. We begin at 9:00am in the hall followed by Coffee and Chat in the library.
- Our Year 3 students, teachers and parent helpers are at Aldinga Beach on the second day of their three day camp. I am with our Year 6 students and teachers at Shiloh Hills on our three day ‘survivor’ camp.
- School Photos will be held on Wednesday 18th March.
- F to Year 6 Twilight Sportsday is being held on Friday 20th March. Today we overview the community and food aspect of the day.

Special Moments at Chapel

This Friday we celebrate two special moments at Chapel. Our Class Carers will be acknowledged and encouraged in their role as they receive a blessing during the chapel service.

Secondly, each of our Year 2 students will be gifted a bible from St Mark’s School and Church. Members of the St Mark’s Church Ladies Fellowship will be present acknowledging the generous donation they make each year towards the cost of the bible.

As a Lutheran school, we know that the word of God is the foundation of our faith as God reveals himself to us in it.

Volunteer Training Session at St Mark’s

I will be leading a repeat volunteer training session on Thursday 26th February at 2:30pm in the school staff room. Please let Julianne in the school office know if you will attend this session or if you would like to volunteer at St Mark’s but have not been able to attend a training session this year.

If you attended one of these sessions in either 2013 or 2014 you do not need to attend a session in 2015.

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**Student Leadership**

Congratulations to the following students who were elected to student leadership positions.

2015 School Captains: Charli S and Vincent W


School House Captains: Imogen R, Dylan B, Riley M, Ruby Shaw, Cooper F, Akeera C, Patrick T, Simona S

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**Welcome to Staff**

I am pleased to advise that Mrs Noelene H has been appointed to the staff at St Mark’s in the recently advertised Lutheran School Support Officer role. Noelene will begin her role in Term 2. We look forward to working with her then. Until that time, Sheryl Shillitoe will continue to assist in this position for the remainder of this term.

**Care-Net at St Mark’s**

Already in 2015, I have witnessed the fabulous practical support given by families to other families experiencing family sickness or other unexpected challenges through the Care-net program. Thank you to the many families who have volunteered to cook a meal, assist with transport and provide other means of support to families. To assist with administration of our Care-net program, I am pleased to advise that one of our St Mark’s parents, Felicity M, has been appointed as our Care-net support volunteer. She will provide valuable support to Janene Overton as she assists with overseeing the supply and stocking of meals, maintaining our Care-net data base, helping with minutes at class carers meetings and putting together hospital packs for students. I thank Felicity in advance for volunteering to help out in this way.

**St Mark’s Twilight Sportsday - Friday 20th March**

This week, I’d like to highlight a community aspect of our Sportsday. Our P and F play an outstanding role through catering which adds greatly to the spirit and atmosphere of the day. This also raises valuable funds for Sportsday. Our P and F café selling coffee, tea and cakes from 10:30am onwards - P and F café serving coffee, tea and cakes for sale.

Afternoon tea - Ice blocks provided for the students.

Children must wear the correct summer uniform on photo day.

**School Photos - Wednesday 18th March**

Master School Portraits will be at the school on Wednesday 18th March to take school photos.

Envelopes have been distributed to families. Please take the time to read all of the relevant information on the envelopes. You can send the money (cash, cheques, money orders) to the school in the envelope supplied however **On-Line Ordering**, where parents are now able to select their preferred package online, makes it much easier for both the school and parent community. By ordering on-line, parents have the option to download a low resolution image for a smart phone, a high resolution digital download of their child’s image and Family/Sibling packages will also be able to be ordered on-line. You will need to pick up a family photo envelope from the front office to get a ‘shotkey’ to order family photos on-line. Please make your children aware they are having a family photo. (On-line ordering closes on Monday 23rd March at 11.00am).

If you are not ordering family photos on-line, please collect a family photo envelope from the front office. Family photographs are only for school aged students attending St Mark’s.

There is also the option to purchase SRC and House Captains photos for $15.00 each. A notice will be inserted into the newsletter advising when the proofs have arrived and of the ordering procedure if parents wish to order these.

Children must wear the correct summer uniform on photo day.

House Captains will need to bring their sports uniform to change into for the House Captains photo.

Other children who have sports on that day, can also bring in their sports uniform to change into.

**Graduation Packs (Year 6):** Each child receives a ‘Graduation Pack’ at the graduation service in December. The graduation pack shows a photo of each individual child and is complimentary (no charge). If your child is absent on photo day, it is up to you to make arrangements with Master School Portraits for your child to have their photo taken at their studio in school uniform. This is to ensure that your child will receive their own graduation pack. This is very important. NB: The complimentary Graduation Pack does not include a class photo - these will need to be ordered from the photo envelope sent home last week.

If parents have any queries, please ring MSP direct on 8391 3951.

Please note: Orders can be placed and paid for after photo day. Please ring MSP to organise this. Do not send in envelopes noting ‘pay later’ as orders are not processed until payment is received.

**Separated Families:** parents can place multiple orders for children by either placing all the orders in the one envelope or handing in multiple order envelopes (please make enquiries at the front office if you haven’t received a photo envelope). If this is the chosen method, please label the envelope ‘Mum’s Copy’ or ‘Dad’s Copy’ so upon delivery the correct photo order is returned to the correct parent.

Photos will be delivered early Term 2.
School Directory
In order to have your contact details included in this year’s school directory, please undertake to return your database and consent forms to the front office as a matter of urgency. Thank you.

Unidentified School Fee Payment
A school fee payment was directly deposited into the school’s bank account on 17th February. The school is unclear as to who has made the payment. If you think it is yours, please ring the school. Thank you.

Parents & Friends News
Our Parents & Friends Annual General Meeting was held last Thursday night and it was great to see a number of school families in attendance. We have started to organise the catering for our Sportsday coming up where we will be selling yiros, bbq, jellies, drinks and coffee and cakes. A call out for helpers will occur in the next couple of weeks so if you can spare some time on sportsday, it would be very much appreciated. We will also be holding a hot cross bun day this term and order forms for this will be out soon. This year’s P&F Committee comprises: Scott F (Chair), Sam J (Vice Chair), Sarah C (Secretary) and Penny G (Treasurer). We look forward to a fun, productive 2015.

Scott F, President P&F

Mt Barker Lutheran Netball Club Trials
Trials (at St Mark’s Lutheran School courts):
Saturday 28th February: U/9: 1.30-2.00-pm, U/11: 2-3pm, U/13: 3-4pm
Thursday 5th March: (no under 9’s) U/11: 3.30pm, U13: 4.30pm
Registration (closing soon) and Enquiries to 0417 872 548 or mbnc@hotmail.com

Mt Barker Football Club
Junior Registration Day on Friday 27th February at 6.00pm - Training Clinic, Sausage Sizzle, Boot Swap, New Players Welcome - Enquiries David 0466 501 283
Training: U13 2nd March Mon/Wed 5.30-6.30pm, U10 & U11 3rd March 4-5pm, U8 & U9 4th March 4-5pm
Enquiries David 0466 501 283