For God so loved the world that he gave his only son...... John 3:16

As a parent what is it that you most want for your child. I’d be confident that a fair percentage of us would have answers that include being loved. There’s been a lot of talk of love in the last few days. The days around 14th February always see a focus on the special one we love in our lives. We are all encouraged to make sure the one we love knows it and feels special and valued on Valentine’s Day. Reading, seeing and listening to the many encouragements and promotions around you could easily wonder exactly what the definition of love is. The same words ‘I love you’ can mean something different to different people.

I heard a description of God’s love the other day as outrageous – and it’s hard to disagree with that. It seems to me that most worldly definitions of love rely on finding a love that first and foremost makes you happy. With that definition love works when you are getting just as much back as you give.

With that as a worldly lens I understand completely why God’s love for me is outrageous. I receive so much from God – all completely unconditionally, all by grace. My sin and mistakes take me away from God but he keeps reaching out to me with his love, grace and forgiveness. His love for us is so deep and so strong that he gave his only son, in love, so that we might forever be saved and forgiven.

I don’t know how your Valentine’s Day turned out but we all have an outrageous love from God each and every day. What a blessing and gift that is.

Community activities
I’m really looking forward to a number of St Mark’s community events in the weeks ahead. I love it when we all gather together and celebrate:

- **Twilight sports day.** For more information, please see further details within this newsletter. The excitement, energy, colour and joy we experience on this day is remarkable. We make a later start to the school day (roll call is at 12:40pm), enjoy a day of sporting activities and finish with a community tea from 5:30pm. Make sure Friday 18th March is marked on your calendar.

- **St Mark’s fete.** Every two years our parents and Friends do an outstanding job of coordinating our fete. This year our theme is ‘International’. You will receive a family fete pack tomorrow and I urge every family to play their part with a contribution of time on the day to make this another outstanding St Mark’s event.
**Parent Information Nights.**
Tonight it is the turn of our Foundation to Year 3 staff to have the opportunity to meet with you and share an insight into the classroom environment and learning opportunities they will provide for your children. I’ll begin at 7 pm in our hall when I will take the opportunity to speak with you and share some of the focus areas for the year ahead. Following this you are invited to move to your child’s classroom to meet their teacher from around 7:30 pm.
If you are unable to provide supervision for school aged children we will provide supervision for them. Please bring them to the Library for this to occur.

**LEAH schools partnerships**
As we announced last year we have strengthened our partnership with Cornerstone College in a practical way to assist families who have students enrolled at St Mark’s and Cornerstone at the same time. A rebate is available from us for your child attending St Mark’s and from Cornerstone for your child enrolled there. An application form is available from our office if you would like to apply for the rebate. It should be completed and returned to us and then we will forward it to Cornerstone College for them to action.

**This week’s events and activities**
Tuesday 16th – Foundation to Year 3 parent Information Nights from 7 pm in our hall.
Wednesday 17th - whole school assembly in our school hall at 9:00 am with our 5A class leading
Friday 19th February - whole school chapel with the installation of our SRC and House Captains in the hall @9:00 am followed by Coffee N Chat in the Library.

**Events and activities on the horizon**
Thursday 25th February - P and F AGM at 7 pm in the staffroom.
Friday 4th March - The blessing of 2016 class carers and presentation of bibles to our Year 2 students at school chapel.
Monday 29th to Wednesday 2nd March - Year 3 camp at Aldinga.
Friday 18th March - F to Year 6 twilight sports day. Students attend from 12:40 pm.
Saturday 9th April - St Mark’s ‘International’ Fete from 10 to 3 pm.

Please be aware that School Fees have gone home with your eldest child this afternoon.

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**Book Club**
Scholastic order forms were handed out last week. Scholastic provides schools with the option to purchase books through Scholastic Book Club. These books are generally well priced and they often have a few very good specials! The school receives bonuses according to the amount of books ordered. We use the credit from these bonus points to purchase books and other resources for the Library and classroom teachers.

There are two orders per term. In August we also run Scholastic Book Fair which the children really enjoy! There are two ways to place an order. You can fill out an order form and send the cash or a cheque to school. This should be in an envelope or plastic bag and can be handed in to the front office or put into the class tray. The second way is to do an online order (LOOP) where you place your order online and pay by credit card. This is a popular choice for people wanting to purchase gifts or items that they don’t want their children to see.

Issue 1 orders are due in by **Wednesday 17th Feb** with orders generally taking about one week to arrive.

If you have any questions please ask me or your class room teachers.

**Louise Paterson**
Teacher/Librarian
At St Mark’s students belong to one of four house teams: Barker (yellow), Davison (blue), Sturt (green) and Dunn (red). House teams are involved in various activities on a number of occasions throughout the year. St Mark’s first whole school event is our annual Sports Day. Due to the number of events, St Mark’s Sports Day is held over two days; Wednesday, 16th of March and Friday, 18th of March. Only Upper Primary students are involved on Wednesday when they compete in 600m and Discus.

St Mark’s Sports Day on Friday 18th March is held as a twilight event marked each year by outstanding community spirit. The day is run in three sessions. During the first session, Junior Primary students compete in a number of Junior Tabloid events which help develop their skill for future Senior Tabloid events. These events include: Jumping Hoops, Accuracy Throw, Distance Throw, Hockey Hit, Vertical Jump, Accuracy Kick, Goal Throw and Sprints. Junior Primary students stay in the class groups and are accompanied by their teacher to each event. They all receive a placing to record on their Sports Day tag. At the same time, Upper Primary students compete in age groups in the Senior Tabloid events. These include; High Jump, Long Jump, Sprints, Javelin and Shot put.

After a well-deserved afternoon break which often includes a treat from the P&F, the second session of events begins. Students compete in house teams in combined year level groups in novelty type events. During the final session for the day we have the Year 1-6 relay, parent/teacher races and the presentation of the House Shield. Students cheer their house team mates from their house tents.

Parents and students are invited to attend an optional community lunch prior to our sports day opening ceremony. This begins from 12:00pm, where you are welcome to bring a picnic lunch or support our P&F who provide the option of purchasing a BBQ style lunch. If you don’t wish to attend this part of the day, your child is expected to be in their classroom at 12:40pm for the official school roll call. Please ensure your child has eaten a substantial lunch before entering the classroom, is wearing their house coloured plain polo top, has applied sunscreen, has a bottle of water and their school hat.

If you are unable to provide care and supervision for your child before roll call we are able to provide modified supervision for them at school from our usual start time. Camp Australia will provide their usual before school care on the day.

After the winning House has been announced and the House Shield has been held high, the school community is invited to stay for a community tea. The P&F will provide food options for tea and you are also welcome to bring your picnic rug and enjoy the evening amongst other school families.

The community spirit on this day is great to see. Students will be wearing their House coloured plain polo tops and it would be terrific to see parents supporting their child’s house in the same way. And of course, the more supporters there are the better; so bring your family and friends as well.

St Mark’s Sports day is a fantastic whole school community event and the St Mark’s staff would love to see you there!
Dear Parent(s) of Year 5 students

Families should have received an email inviting them to attend Information Sessions for Year 7, 2018 on 23 and 25 February at 6.30pm.

If you have not received this communication and you are interested in a position at Cornerstone College, please phone Helen Charles on 8398 6009 to confirm that an application form has been received.

Kind regards
Helen

Helen Charles | Principal’s Assistant / Registrar
CORNERSTONE COLLEGE | MOUNT BARKER
68 Adelaide Road | PO Box 820 | Mount Barker SA
5251
P: 08 8398 6009 | F: 08 8398 6098
E: hcharles@cornerstone.sa.edu.au
W: cornerstone.sa.edu.au

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**PRAYER MEETING**

1 Thessalonians 5:16-17 says:

16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing.

Christians of all denominations are invited to a St Marks School prayer meeting. Thursday night 7-7:30pm at the cross near the netball courts. My plan is to make this a regular event, every first and third Thursday of the month. This is not to be a deep Bible study or a lengthy sermon, let’s just get together for 30 minutes and pray for our school, the teachers, the kids and their families.

If you have any questions, feel free to send an email to dawidverwey@rocketmail.com or pop me a message on Facebook.

Dawid Verwey

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**Messy Games**

JAFFA Junior Youth is starting up again for another fun filled year! This youth group is open for children in Years 5-8 and happens 2-3 times each term. With the Church redevelopment that is underway for about half or the year JAFFA will mostly be using the school facilities (oval, hall, courts, library).

There are registration forms for new families to complete upon arrival to any event. Also this year I please ask for RSVP’s for each event so I can get an idea of numbers for catering, supplies and know how many ChildSafe trained people to have at each event.

The details for our first event for the year which is “Messy Games’ are given below:

**Sunday 21st February 2016** - RSVP by Thursday 18th Feb
2:00pm - 4:00pm on the School Oval

Bring: $2.50, water, a hat, wear sunscreen, towel, and we encourage them to bring along any friends.

JAFFA Junior Youth (school years 5-8): Contact- Zoë Kleinig on 0488 155 757 or via email to zjkleinig@gmail.com
Dear Parents,

Chess at St Mark’s has been very successful and enjoyed by many of our students. We are delighted that it will continue this year. The students will recommence classes next Monday, 22 February 2016 at 11:00am in the school hall.

All new students are welcome to attend a first free session.

If your child is participating in chess class, they will need to have a workbook which can be purchased from David Koetsier, the chess instructor, for a fee of $15.00. If your child already has a workbook, there is no need to purchase one until they are in need of the next level book. The workbooks are filled with exercises for students to work from. This workbook also allows the coach to support the student’s progress. To solve chess problems, the student can draw lines or notate the moves under the diagrams which is beneficial to understanding the strategy of the game. The cost of the workbooks will be billed to your Term 2 fee account. There is also a fee of $5.00/session which will also be billed in Term 2.

Should you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Koetsier on 0433 693 990 or ring the school office to speak to Leanne.

Sam Thomas
0403 731 488
Mt Barker Lutheran Netball Club – winter 2016

Last season the Mt Barker Lutheran netball club had 12 teams playing in the Midhills Association. The teams started at A grade, down to lower senior teams then a number of teams at each junior level. A net set go Program was also conducted through Term 2 and 3. The club welcomes new senior and junior players to the club and coaches.

Important dates:

Registration night and AGM on Monday 22nd February, 6:30pm. In the school Library. Registration starts 6:30pm

AGM starts 7:30pm All welcome to attend

Trials

Thursday 25th February  (St Mark’s Lutheran School Courts)
3.30pm – 9 and under
*Please arrive 15min before your start time to warm up.

Saturday 27th February  (St Mark’s Lutheran School Courts)
8:30am – 11 and Under
9:30am – 13 and Under
10:30am – 15 and Under
11:30am – 17 and Under
12:30pm – Seniors
*Please arrive 15min before your start time to warm up.

Thursday 3rd March  (St Mark’s Lutheran School Courts)
3:45pm – 11 and Under
4:45pm – 13 and Under
5:45pm - 15 and Under
6:45pm – 17 and Under
7:30pm - Seniors

Wednesday 9th March
t.b.c.

Please ensure you come to trials with your hair tired back, no earrings or jewellery, appropriate clothing to play netball and a water bottle.

For further information please contact Lis Chapman on 0419 838184 or email your enquiry to mblnc@hotmail.com

The MBLNC have 4 goal rings (only the rings) to give away. The rings bolt around a pole. If interested please contact Lis to arrange collection.
What makes a positive school community?

"Mum, Miss Collins told me to be sure you go to the school for the meeting tonight. She says it's very important." "You're not in trouble, are you Omar? Teachers only ask parents to come to school when there is a problem, don't they?" "No Mum. She says she is looking forward to meeting you."

When Rasheeda got to the meeting it wasn't as she had expected. Lots of other parents were there and they were talking with each other and with the teacher. It seemed quite friendly. The teacher explained what the children would be learning in school this term and then asked the parents to talk to two different people they didn't know.

Rasheeda felt a bit shy about this. Luckily, the other parents at her table started talking to her. They asked her what school was like in her home country. "Oh, very different!" she told them. "Over there the teacher talks and the children listen. They don't learn in groups. They start early and they go home at lunchtime." The other parents seemed interested.

Miss Collins also spoke with her. "Rasheeda, I wonder if there's anything more you would like to know about how Omar is going or what we are doing at school? We want to be sure you feel welcome, so if there is anything the school can do to help you or Omar settle in, please let us know."

Positive school communities create opportunities for families, children and staff to feel included.
What feeling included is all about

Children come from an endless range of different families, backgrounds, cultures and religions. They also have a variety of interests, learning styles and abilities. Despite all of these differences, everyone should feel included and welcome within their school community.

Positive school communities create opportunities for children, families and staff to feel included. They make help and support accessible and find lots of ways to invite people to take up the support being offered. They help everyone benefit from understanding experiences and cultures that may be different to their own.

When children feel included, when they are part of a community that promotes inclusion and respect for everybody, they show more caring and compassion towards others, and they feel safer and more secure. They are also better learners and have better mental health and wellbeing. In a positive school community every face has a place, every voice is valued, and everyone has something to contribute.

School communities from around Australia choose care, compassion, respect, understanding and inclusion as important values for children to understand. These are things that children can learn about. The best learning happens when children see adults around them putting values like these into practice. Feeling included is important for mental health, and is supported best when diversity is respected and valued.

Some ways of showing people they are welcomed and included at school

- Display information, posters, and artwork that reflect the diversity in the school community.
- Provide information in appropriate languages, verbally, where possible, as well as in written form.
- Cater to specific needs where possible (eg dietary needs, access needs).
- Publicly celebrate diversity (eg diverse families, cultures, languages and values).

How parents and carers can help

- Get to know other families, take an interest in others’ different backgrounds as well as what you have in common.
- Set up a ‘buddy’ system where families who have been at the school for a while buddy up with new families to provide welcome and support.
- Encourage children to include and appreciate others’ cultural and individual differences.

Being included and learning to include and respect others are very important for children’s social development.

Being included promotes belonging and connectedness, which are also key factors for supporting children’s mental health and wellbeing.

This resource is part of a range of KidsMatter Primary information sheets for families and school staff. View them all online at www.kidsmatter.edu.au
Dear Families

An important aspect of my role as Religious Pastoral Support Worker is to support student well-being. We all understand that change and loss are issues that affect all of us at some stage in our lives.

At St Mark’s we recognise that when changes occur in families through death, separation, divorce or related circumstances, relocating homes and schools or any other kind of loss or change, young people may benefit from learning how to manage these changes effectively.

We are therefore offering a very successful education program called **Seasons for Growth**. This program is facilitated in small groups and is based on research that highlights the importance of social support and the need to practice new skills to cope effectively with change and loss.

The program focuses on issues such as self-esteem, recognizing and managing feelings, problem-solving, decision-making, effective communication and developing support networks.

**Seasons for Growth** runs for eight sessions and each session is 60 minutes in length, once a week during the school day and then the program concludes with a ‘Celebration’ session after school that parents can attend. There are 3 levels:
- Level 1—year 1, 2 students
- Level 2—year 3, 4 students
- Level 3—year 5, 6 students

**Seasons for Growth** will commence in week four of Term 1. I will facilitate the program as I have received special training in the use of this program. I have run this program for the past 7 years and many students have participated.

If you think your son or daughter would benefit from **Seasons for Growth** I would encourage you to talk to him or her about this. It is important that the child chooses to do the course rather than being told to do the course. Should he/she decide to participate please fill in the tear-off section below and return to the school by Friday 19th February 2016.

If you would like to know more about the program, please feel free to contact me at the school office. (8391 0444)

St Mark’s is pleased to be able to offer this important program and we are confident that it will be a valuable learning experience for those who request to be involved.

Janene Overton (Religious Pastoral Support Worker)

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**SEASONS FOR GROWTH** with Janene Overton

My child ______________________________________ is interested in taking part in the SEASONS FOR GROWTH program in Term 1—2016.

I have discussed this with him / her.

The reason (s) he / she wants to do the program are;

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________          ____________________________
Parent/Guardian Signature        Student’s Signature

Class: ________________________