Last Friday our 5I class shared parts of the story of Elijah with us at chapel. They told us about King Ahab who thought he was the big cheese. God used Elijah in ways that he couldn’t have imagined to show King Ahab that he really is the big cheese who is over and above all of our circumstances.

They also shared the story of the widow who was asked by Elijah to provide a meal for him which meant using the last of her water and flour for Elijah in the time of severe drought. She was asked to act in a way that seemed to make no sense and would have a great negative impact on her. She was obedient to God and he provided - not a storehouse for weeks ahead but a daily provision.

The message from 5I was timely for me as I’ve listened and observed the stories that happen in all our lives. We all have difficult circumstances that we face. We all encounter family and friends who have broken relationships, financial struggles, sickness and even death of loved ones to deal with. When the sad side of life seems to be engulfing us it is stories like Elijah that provide a way forward. When we are in the middle of circumstances and events and we don’t know what the next day will bring and we don’t have an answer to our ‘why’ questions, we are reminded that trust in God as the big cheese who ultimately has a better plan we don’t know about on the horizon is a way forward.

It is easy to say and write and hard to live in the moment but my pray is that God gives us the strength to rest in his grace and promises when the waves of tough times come.

**Joys of my role.**

It really struck me last week when I ventured outside amongst our beautiful grounds during lunchbreak, that I am blessed to work in such a wonderful environment. From the sharing of ‘buddy lunch’ to all sorts of relays and games, construction and collaborating in the sandpit, fossicking and foraging amongst the trees, the buzz of activity and positive energy was clearly evident. It was rewarding and satisfying to see our students engaging with each other so well and in particular the leadership of our senior students amongst younger ones. Well done!

**St Mark’s 2016 International Fete**

Planning continues to occur and we are grateful for the positive response to date. Please read this week’s fete news snippets and requests in today’s newsletter to help us out.
St Mark’s Tuition fees and discounts
As you are only too aware, payment of full tuition fees are a necessary part of enrolment at St Mark’s. I acknowledge and am grateful for the commitment you make to provide a St Mark’s education for your children. As we partner with families we seek to provide assistance to families with their commitment. Our generous sibling discounts and our new rebate available to families who have children enrolled in both St Mark’s and Cornerstone are two ways we seek to help families with their commitment to a Lutheran Education for their children.

The third way we support families is through the availability of a tuition fee hardship remission when families experience a change of circumstances such as sickness or changes to employment that reduce your income. Our remission scheme is designed to provide with short term assistance you during these times while you re-establish your financial position.

Until 2012 schools received a small contribution from the State Government under what was called the ‘School Card’ scheme. This scheme no longer exists as it was, and independent schools receive no money from the State Government for families who are ruled eligible for School Card under the previous School Card criteria. I am aware of a small number of schools who base their individual tuition fee discounts on School Card criteria. At St Mark’s we use eligibility for School Card as just one of the criteria in determining our individual school tuition fee discount scheme. If you find yourself in changed financial circumstances, please contact me to discuss how we can support you.

This week’s events and activities
Wednesday 2nd March - school assembly led by our 6B class
Thursday 3rd March - Courier Cup swimming competition
Friday - 4th March - The blessing of 2016 class carers and presentation of bibles to our Year 2 students at school chapel followed by Coffee N Chat in the Library.

Events and activities on the horizon
Thursday 10th March - P and F meeting
Friday 18th March - F to Year 6 twilight sports day. Students attend from 12:40 pm.
Wednesday 23rd March - school photos
Saturday 9th April - St Mark’s ‘International’ Fete from 10am.

Prayer meeting
Ephesians 6:18 - be alert and always keep on praying....

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. We meet 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
Sports Day 2016

SPORTS DAY 2016 - Friday the 18th of March

As we look forward to Sports Day we’ve provided a few reminders for you:

- POLO SHIRTS are to be worn - Yellow, Blue, Red or Green - no singlets or other t-shirts
- Students must be protected from the sun - sunscreen, a school hat and no ZINC
- P & F will supply food, drinks and other items for the day - students receive an icy pole in the afternoon
- Optional picnic lunch at the school commencing at 12pm
- Students must be present in their classrooms at 12:40pm for a roll call
- Tabloid events begin at 1pm - Afternoon break scheduled for 4pm
- The presentation of the House Shield is scheduled for 5.40pm followed by St. Mark’s Community Tea where we encourage you to stay and support our wonderful P & F

We look forward to celebrating our sporting skills with the St. Mark’s community and would love for you to be a part of the day!

St Mark’s Church Development

As preparations for the concrete pour near completion the builders will need to remove some low risk old asbestos sheet off cuts used when the original foundations were put in place. The work is scheduled to occur early Wednesday morning and will be completed before any students and staff are on site. A qualified asbestos contractor will perform the work and appropriate monitoring will be in place.

Parents are asked NOT to park there or walk between the site hut and the temporary fencing for their own safety and others.

We will be pouring concrete this coming Thursday the 3rd starting at 7am on site, we will have trucks coming and going till lunch time.

Then Tuesday the 8th we will be pouring the high section, we will have concrete trucks coming and going for most of the day.

Please contact me via email or phone 0417 941 411 if you have any questions.

James Heyne
THIS WEEKS FETE NEWS!

With just five weeks before the 9th April (Fete day!) we have lots to do. We’re very excited that we’ve received many offers for help. We still need YOU! The more the merrier! It really is a wonderful community event, celebrating all that we do at St Mark’s.

WANTED!
- looking for donations for our silent auction and raffles. Grateful for donated items such as electrical goods, vouchers for businesses or goods, items for hampers, travel or accommodation vouchers, bales of hay, housewares, clothing and travel goods etc. Please bring in new raffle / silent auction items to the front office.
- International food stalls are looking good - looking for a person or group of friends to oversee an Italian stall with pasta or bolognese. Support is available with logistics and preparation and costs associated with the stall are covered.
- Does anyone have a deep fryer which they could lend for the Brazilian Food Stall? Please advise the front office if you can assist!

DON’T FORGET!
Don’t forget to enter the Scarecrow competition! It’s a lot of fun and only $5 per entry. There are great prizes to be won for the best dressed scarecrow and also the People’s Choice! Remember, it’s an international theme, so get your thinking caps on and enter!

Don’t forget to order your St Mark’s Wine (See order form attached)! It was a sell-out at the last fete. Not only a great fundraiser for the school, but also a great wine. Choice of red or white, or both!

Thank you

Hi everyone,
Who doesn’t have a hat?
As we have many new OSHC family members this year I thought I would touch on our sun policy. It is really important that everyone in OSHC wears a hat when we play outside. As we are coming into the 5th week of term it is a good routine to get in to or if you’d prefer (as many OSHC families do already) you can leave a spare hat with us😊

What’s been happening…
The past couple of weeks we have been working on our Healthy Choices theme. The paper mache art is looking AWESOME! We have also been making our very own play dough. We’ve made 4 colours so far and will add a few more colours this week. Here are some creations….

HOLIDAY CLUB BOOKINGS ARE NOW OPEN.....
Holiday Club bookings are now OPEN! If you would like to use our service for the holidays, please go online and register at www.campaustralia.com.au. If you require medical forms for this period, please come to the service before or after school and I will give you everything you need.

Sam Thomas 0403 731 488
Belonging at school makes a difference


Aunt Sue also talked to Tommy’s friend, Lulu, who had come over to play. “What about you, Lulu? How do you like school?” “It’s good. If I need the teacher then I have to put up my hand. But if I need help at playtime I can ask Jackie,” said Lulu. “Is Jackie your friend?” “Jackie’s my buddy. She’s a big girl.” “What does a buddy do?” “She helps me if I don’t know where to go or other stuff. She helps to look after me ‘cos she’s big and I’m now.”

Belonging improves mental health, wellbeing and learning

All children need to feel that school is a safe place where people will care about them, where their needs for support, respect and friendship will be met, and where they will be able to get help if they need it. When these needs are met children develop a sense of belonging at school. Belonging is very important for children’s mental health and wellbeing.

Children who feel that they belong at school are happier, more relaxed and have fewer behavioural problems than other students. They are also more motivated to learn and be more successful with their school work. Research into children’s mental health has found that a sense of belonging and connectedness at school helps to protect children against mental health difficulties and improves their learning.

Making friends and having positive relationships with teachers helps children develop a sense of belonging at school. Having older ‘buddies’ to turn to helps younger children feel that school is a place where they can get help if they need it. Looking after younger children encourages caring and helping in older children and helps to reduce conflicts and bullying. These are some of the ways that children’s sense of belonging at school can be supported.

Starting school is a big change for children

Not only do they have to cope with schoolwork and teachers, but they also have to get used to being part of a class and a whole school. A lot more is expected of children when they start school and there are lots more people to get on with. It helps children to know that there are people at school who will look after them and care about their needs.
More ways schools can help create a sense of belonging

As part of KidsMatter Primary, schools look closely at ways they can continue to build strong positive, respectful relationships with all students and families. This includes things like:

- making the school environment welcoming for all students and families
- encouraging teachers to get to know all their students and their families
- identifying ways of improving communication with families
- focusing on child and family strengths
- making sure that school policies on safety, welfare and discipline are clearly communicated and support a sense of belonging for children and families.

All children need to feel that school is a safe place.

How parents and carers can help

Parents and carers can work with school staff to help create a bridge between home and school. When the adults responsible for children take a positive interest in what happens at school it helps children feel at home. It also makes it easier to pick up any problems early when they are easiest to resolve.

- Find out about the school and what your child is learning: participate in information sessions.
- Make time to listen to your child tell you about what he or she is doing at school.
- Let your child’s teacher know if he/she is having difficulties and discuss what kinds of things you can do at home and school to help.

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](http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au)
St Mark’s Lutheran School

“International Fete” – Saturday 9th April 2016

WINE FUNDRAISER

We have been presented with the opportunity once again to purchase some sensational Langhorne Creek wine at a great price. This year wine is provided by Brothers in Arms Wines. Both red and white wine will be made available to purchase as part of the St Mark’s Lutheran School Fete Fundraiser.

Price remains the same as the 2014 Fete.

Red or White - $10/bottle or $100/dozen

Brothers in Arms Wines are offering a 2007 Chardonnay & choice of 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon and 2013 Shiraz

Wine orders will be available for collection from the Front Office between the 4th – 9th April. Payment is due on day of wine pick up.

____________________________________________________________

WINE ORDER FORM

Name........................................................................................................

Child/Class....................................................................................................................

Contact Number........................................................................................................

Email Address........................................................................................................

Number of bottles:

Chardonnay ..............................

Shiraz ..............................

Cabernet Sauvignon ..............................

Please return this form to the front office – thank you
FUNDRAISER
Supporting Mrs A’s trip to Kakuma Refugee Camp and
Australian Lutheran World Service

$1.00

AVAILABLE EVERY WEDNESDAY LUNCH TIME! (TERM 1)

Zooper Doopers will be served from the
5A Classroom!
KAKUMA TEACHER TOUR

This year I have been chosen along with 9 other teachers from across Australia, to fly to Kenya with Australian Lutheran World Service, experience life in the Kakuma Refugee Camp and to support volunteer teachers who work in the camp.

On June 25th this year, I will travel to Nairobi and learn from Lutheran World Federation staff about what to expect in the camp and how to effectively help and support Kenyan teachers. I will then travel to the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Northern Kenya – working / learning in the camp for around 10 days.

Whilst there, I will learn about refugee life, life in a refugee camp, spend time getting to know the people who live there, hear their stories and experience their life. I will meet and interact with Youth Human Rights and Leadership Training groups, visit the Kakuma Host Community and have them share the impact of ALWS supported actions.

In Term 1 & 2 we will be running a variety of fundraisers to raise funds to support this trip and the wonderful work of the ALWS.

Blessings
Lisa Angwin
The sun bakes on Turkana and it’s 40 degree Celsius as 238 students line up in identical uniforms at Horseseed Primary school. The sound of clapping, laughter and children singing at the top of their lungs is heard all over Kakuma refugee camp. The lively voices belong to a crowd of 3rd grade refugee children who are crammed on a dark, dry and dusty classroom floor. The overpopulated room is lit up by rays of white teeth forming big smiles as they greet their teacher with excitement. For some, dreams have become a reality and include bright futures with pursued education.

Kenya shares boarders with several politically unstable countries such as South Sudan which causes influxes of refugees. This contributes to the ever increasing student population and create very diverse learning environments with many language barriers. This 3rd grade consists of recently arrived refugees as well as children who have grown up in the camp. Background’s set aside, the individuals all share the same story of coming from families that have been forced to leave their homes.

Having a tough background is not made easier as one class hosts students with over 9 different nationalities leading to language barriers, and culture differences in regards to religion, customs and traditions. However, the harsh circumstances that play a role in the student’s learning environment does not affect the hope that they all have in common; the hope of one day returning home.

Education is essential to support the refugees. It enables the students to obtain an official certificate when graduating. Hereby the student can proceed in the system of education. The issue of the overpopulated classrooms is being dealt with through double shifts and trying to continuously construct more classrooms.

As the day has gone on at Horseseed Primary school, dribbles of sweat have started to race down the cheeks of the hardworking 3rd graders as the clock hits three and the sun reaches its highest point. The noise of synchronized bells being manually battered announces that yet another day of school has come to an end. Clouds of dust scatter into the air as 238 children jump off the floor and race towards the classrooms’ exits. The school yard overflows with a mass of densely packed students that form an identical unit of green uniforms. As the gate is pushed open the children dash off in all directions. The mass disintegrates into individual boys and girls from widely different nationalities, ages and social classes. As the school yard empties, clouds of dust erase the writing from the chalky blackboards, leaving them blank for the day to come. Tomorrow, the shared ambition to learn will once again reunite the multiethnic students into a form of educational solidarity.

By Amanda Höjer and Mikala Henry Madsen, 19 Feb 2016