



Dear St Mark's family and friends

As we look ahead to 2026, we invite you to share in a vision that is both prayerful and practical:

### **Growing Space for Faith and Community**

This theme speaks to how God continues to shape us—deepening faith, strengthening relationships, and creating room to welcome and care for others. It invites us to make space not only in our plans and buildings, but in our hearts, our lives, and our shared mission.

At its heart, **Growing Space for Faith and Community** brings together four closely connected expressions of life at St Mark's:

- being young at heart
- growing strong in faith
- nurturing genuine friendships
- building for the future with purpose

#### **Young at Heart – Open, Creative, and Intergenerational**

To be young at heart is to remain open to God's Spirit and to one another, across all ages. It is a mindset and attitude of curiosity, creativity, and joy.

This spirit is especially visible in **St Mark's Makers**, a key ministry for 2026.

After the weekly Young at Heart message - St Mark's Makers offers a hands-on activities, storytelling, art, and shared reflection.

It creates a welcoming intergenerational space where faith is explored creatively and relationships grow naturally.

Children, families, and older members learn side by side, discovering that faith is something we live and grow together.

Our monthly **Saturday Sunset Services** also reflect this young-at-heart approach—offering a relaxed, reflective space for worship, friendship around a meal, and connection in a different rhythm of the week.

#### **Strong in Faith – Held Firm in the Gospel**

Growing space for faith means being firmly grounded in God's grace. Our strength does not come from programs or buildings alone, but from Christ who gathers us, teaches us, and sends us out.

Faith is nurtured through worship, preaching, prayer, and Scripture, and through shared learning.

In 2026, the Growing Together Bible Study, completing Luke's Gospel by Easter and then John's Gospel, continues to invite people into God's Word in a supportive and accessible way, where questions are welcomed and faith is deepened together. Men's Bible Study on a Thursday morning also encourages faith and friendship.

Our Sunday worship will regularly follow a theme based on Bible readings - Lent/Easter Sundays will reflect on "Forgiveness" - others could include: Trauma and Depression - a way ahead?, Friendship - genuine care, Salty Souls for all October with a Grandfolks Sunday, Community Care - Destiny Rescue, Mission Possible, ALWS (Australian Lutheran World Service), AL ANON and others you may suggest?

## **Genuine Friendships – Belonging, Care, and Compassion**

Faith flourishes in community. Genuine friendships grow where people feel known, welcomed, and valued.

At St Mark's, these connections are nurtured through Ladies Fellowship, Cuppa and Chat, Morning Tea after worship, Growing Together Bible Study, St Mark's Makers, Saturday Sunset Service and friendship groups forming around interests, life stages, or availability. These are the spaces where church becomes family and care is quietly and faithfully lived out.

An important expression of this care beyond our church walls is **Mission Possible**. For many years, St Mark's has supported this ministry through two wheelie bins at the front of the church—one for non-perishable food items and one for personal care items. These gifts are faithfully collected each Sunday by a long-serving volunteer of over 30 years and distributed to support victims and families affected by domestic violence, as well as to provide small care packages for people experiencing homelessness.

**Mission Possible** reminds us that growing space for faith and community includes compassionate, practical care for those most in need.

### **Shared Mission with Pacific Lutheran College**

An important part of St Mark's life and calling is our growing connection with **Pacific Lutheran College**. We are grateful that an increasing number of college staff and families worship with us and enrich our community.

Together, we encourage a shared mission and ministry that supports the whole college community—staff, students, and families—walking alongside young people as they grow in learning, faith, and life.

### **Building for the Future – Space that Serves the Vision**

Our **Future Building Projects** are a faithful response to this growing vision. They are not an end in themselves, but a way of supporting worship, accessibility, hospitality, pastoral care, creativity, and community connection for generations to come.

### **St Mark's Reflection & Vision for 2026**

#### **Growing Space for Faith and Community**

At St Mark's, we believe faith grows best when we listen—to God and to one another. This reflection is for individuals, couples, families, children, and friends of all ages.

There are no right or wrong answers.

Please share as much or as little as you feel comfortable.

#### **Looking Back – Thankful Hearts**

1. Over the past year, where have you noticed God's love, care, or presence in your life or in our St Mark's church family?

*(A moment, a person, a worship service, or a time you felt supported.)*

2. What has helped you feel welcome or connected at St Mark's?

*(Worship, St Mark's Makers, Mission Possible, friendships, Bible study, caring conversations, shared meals.)*

3. Is there something about St Mark's that you really value and hope we continue?

### **Looking Ahead – Growing Together**

4. In what ways could St Mark's better support or encourage your faith journey right now?

5. As we look toward 2026, what hopes, dreams, or prayers do you have for St Mark's?

*(For our church family, children and young people, Pacific Lutheran College, and those yet to come.)*

### **Ways to Participate**

*(Tick any that interest you — regular or occasional involvement)*

- Worship or music or power point preparations
- Altar Flowers
- Roster coordination - Deacons, Readers, Morning Tea, Data, Mowing
- St Mark's Makers- craft ideas/helper/set up
- Bible study or faith learning
- Friendship or fellowship groups
- Mission Possible (food, care items, or support)
- Prayer or pastoral care
- Shared mission with Pacific Lutheran College
- Hospitality or welcoming
- Help with meals for Sunset Service
- Mowing and maintenance
- Sharing skills, creativity, or practical help
- Church cleaning
- I'd like to learn more or have a conversation
- Other ideas or gifts you'd like to share

### **For Children/Teenagers**

Young people may write or draw.

- What do you like best about church?
- When do you feel happy or safe at St Mark's?
- What would you love to do more of at church?

**Thank you for sharing.**

Your reflections will be prayed over and will help guide worship, ministries, and our shared vision as we continue growing space for faith and community together.

**Hard copies of this reflection will also be available at the welcome desk.**

As we step into 2026, we trust that God is shaping St Mark's into a place where faith is nurtured, creativity is welcomed, friendships are genuine, compassion is lived out, and all are invited to belong.

***Growing Space for Faith and Community*** is not just a theme—it is a shared calling, grounded in Christ and lived out together.

With every blessing,  
Pastor Ray Morris and your Mission and Vision Teams



**Please send your response ( add your name if you would like to)**

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