



Our Mission:
*“To grow in faith and
To share God’s love with others”*

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ

Grace and peace to you from God our Father, and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

At times like this, it is appropriate to begin my message to you like a New Testament letter to God’s faithful people – just like in the ancient world.

This greeting Grace and Peace to you, comes to you from Philippians 1:2. Paul begins his note to the people he loves by offering them a promise and a blessing in the midst of turbulent times.

First, the promise – grace – God’s unmerited favour to his people at all times and in all places. Secondly, peace – a blessing in the midst of incredible uncertainty and suffering. A peace that passes all understanding which guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. This blessing of peace allows our hearts to continue beating for each other and it guards our minds to be fearless in the face of chaos.

Pause, for one moment – take a deep breath – and remind yourself that you are loved, saved and remembered by God and by the people of your St Mark’s community.

I have already advised that we have suspended all public worship and all group gatherings in the St Mark’s building, Church office and Pacific Lutheran College for a time.

Giving up public worship and other gatherings for a time is consistent with our Prime Minister’s announcement – and being enacted by other congregations and all places of worship. While not being able to gather in public worship for a season is disappointing, we can forgo this with a clear conscience.

St Paul talks about giving up eating meat so as not to cause offence to those who could eat only vegetables. Out of love for others – and for the greater good of our community – we can give up our freedom to gather for worship and other friendship events.

In the current situation, we do this for the sake of the elderly and vulnerable of our own church family as well as the wider community.

We are not only the Church when we gather for worship, but we are also the Church when we are sent out into the world. In and from our own homes, we can continue to worship individually and/or with our families. We can continue to pray, bless, keep in touch with others, and look after people who are struggling. Instead of doing church on Sundays, we can be the church every day!

These are things we should dwell on, and these are the things we should be doing in these times of group gathering uncertainty.

- We want to take care of all in the community, especially those at risk, the elderly.
- We want to promote a sense of peace, calm and assurance
- We want to, as a community, gather together resources that help to fulfil our Mission at the top of this letter: *“To grow in faith and to share God’s love with others.”*

We will continue being the church rather than going to church. For those who have the opportunity to give, give generously. As the early church did, we hold ‘all things in common’ at times like these.

See over

We recognise that hidden in the shadow of this difficulty is also a realisation that the blessing of the Christian is not limited to simply what one has, but is multiplied exponentially by what one shares.

As we continue to walk this difficult path, we pray that God continues to bless this community in Jesus Christ as we partner with other churches to serve between worship services.

Over the last 2000 years, the Church has faced waves of persecution, threats of false doctrine, and maligned by the prevailing culture. Yet the Church endures.

In times of national disaster – famine, flood, or plague – the Church at its best has responded with compassion, solidarity with the suffering, and practical care. At its best, the Church reflects the light of Jesus into people's gloom, and brings hope to the world.

We continue to be the body of Christ, serving the world in love, enacting the kingdom of God, and playing our part in God's restoration plans.

God is with us, Christ is in us, and by the Spirit of the living God we go forward together knowing that nothing in all creation can separate us from his unfailing love.

Please share this with as many people as you know.

“Faith at Home’ packs

In this, the first in a regular series of ‘Faith at Home’ packs, I have attached various items to support you or your family in this faith journey.

These will be emailed and posted to those who do not have email or access to a printer. You're welcome to let us know what works for you. “How can we help you?”

These resources will evolve and we will work on making some resources accessible on Facebook and our Church webpage: stmarkslutheranocaloundra.net

Our Core Values at ST Mark's Lutheran Church Caloundra:

Jesus is Lord

When Jesus is Lord,
no one and nothing can be placed before Him.

Everyone is welcome

Jesus came to save sinners.
We are all sinners; it is only by God's grace
that we are saved. Therefore, everyone is welcome in
our church, with no exceptions.

God's love changes people

Out of sheer thanks and gratitude to God for what he has done
for us in Christ, we seek to be a blessing to others,
so that God's love may rule in the lives of others.

Everybody has something to offer

We all have God-given gifts and
everybody has a part to play in God's ministry.

Everyone needs God's love and forgiveness

Christ won the victory over sin,
so that by His forgiveness we can be sure of eternal life.
From our faith in Jesus comes a joyful, willing
and free mind to serve others.

Grace and Peace

Pastor Ray

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