

Prayer Week – Easter 2020

This Holy Week we are focusing our prayers on particular issues and concerns arising while the impact of COVID-19 is felt. Each day, bring your thanksgiving and prayer requests before Jesus in your own time, using the below schedule as a guide. At the end of the day, follow along to the corresponding evening prayer prepared and recorded on video by one of our St Mark's friends, available on the St. Mark's Youtube channel or Facebook page.

On **Maundy Thursday** we welcome you to join us for a special evening service at 8pm on our Facebook Live.

And on **Saturday** evening, please join in to a live 'Zoom' prayer meeting to gather our prayers together from 8.00-8.30pm.

Acknowledgement: Thanks to St Bartholomew's Anglican Church, Toowoomba, and the Church Missionary Society, Victoria, for your supportive materials.

Monday, 6 April

Pray for the social and political impacts of COVID-19 in our Hills community, Melbourne and our country

Holy Spirit,

Guide our hearts and minds as we start this week in prayer today. Help us to unburden ourselves onto you; trusting that you are the Almighty God who hears us, loves us and is well able to meet our needs, beyond our imagination. Amen.

Read John 12:1-11. What about this passage speaks to you at the moment?

Spend some time in confession, asking God's forgiveness for your sins and regrets.

Dear Lord,

Often we carry on as if you are not alive and present in our lives. We are sorry for the ways we have disappointed you: whether in our actions, words, or thoughts. Please forgive us and show us how to live more faithfully as your followers day by day. Amen.

As you pray for the social and political impacts of COVID-19, you may be guided by the following requests:

- Healing and comfort for the sick, and comfort and strength for their loved ones
- People in the Hills area and beyond not to be afraid but to put their trust in God and the hope we have been given in Jesus
- Restrictions to be observed by all Australians
- Wisdom and resources needed for healthcare workers and others in the frontline
- Protection for the most vulnerable groups in our community
- Decision-makers to be wise and clear
- People who are losing work, their employers, and small businesses in our community and beyond
- Teachers, child care workers, supermarket workers, and other professions experiencing stress

Spend some time thanking God for the way he is providing and protecting you, your family, friends, and our community at St Mark's and in the Hills.

Later, tune in to the evening prayer (video) prepared by Nicki and Magda.

Tuesday, 7 April

Pray for opportunities to share the good news of Jesus at this time

*We praise you, God,
we praise you, for your Name is near;
people tell of your wonderful deeds. Ps 75:1.*

Read John 12:20-36. Pause to reflect on Jesus's words in this reading. What is their relevance to you and your prayers today?

Again, spend some time asking for God's forgiveness.

*Lord Jesus,
You make me clean by your blood; you forgive and accept me. You have dealt with the sins, regrets, mistakes and failures of my past. You have made me a temple of your Holy Spirit, who dwells within me. You work all things for good for those who love you and are called according to your purpose. I praise you, Lord! Amen.*

As you pray for opportunities to share the good news of Jesus at this time, you may like to include these requests:

- Opportunities to share the cause for the hope that we have in Jesus with our friends, families and community, amidst the challenges current restrictions bring
- People to see Jesus with a new clarity; to see him for the very first time and for those who have drifted away to return to Jesus
- Guidance as a church about the needs of our community and how God is asking us to help him meet them
- Ways to demonstrate God's love for others in our community through offering help and compassion, particularly in reaching those who are especially isolated

'the Lord your God...is a great and awesome God'. Deut. 7:21.

Later, tune in to the evening prayer (video) prepared by Liz, Annabelle and Harry.

Wednesday, 8 April

Pray for missionaries and the Church around the world

We keep asking you, God of our Lord Jesus Christ, glorious Father, that you may give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that we may know you better.

(Based on Eph 1:17).

Read John 13:21-32. You may like to read this passage several times, and reflect on what God is bringing to the fore.

Thinking of the previous day, name to God the things you have done poorly (thought, action, omission, or anything you can't remember or perceive yet) and ask for God's healing and forgiveness.

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Col. 3:13.

As you pray for missionaries and the Church around the world, here are some suggested requests:

- Protection and provision for active missionaries supported by St Mark's: Irene in South East Asia, Bethany in Cambodia and Kerry in Japan.
- People in the countries they serve to take precautions against COVID-19 but not have fear, but to be reminded of the power and hope we have in Jesus
- Wisdom for missionaries in how to support and connect with people when it is not possible to meet in person
- Churches everywhere to continue to be a light in their communities during the pandemic and over Easter; that God would provide all that they need to continue ministry into the future
- Churches in 'hot spot' COVID-19 countries, such as US, China, Italy, Spain, Germany, France UK, other parts of Europe.
- Churches in countries facing COVID-19 that are already experiencing challenges due to poverty, natural disasters, or war – Middle East and African countries, parts of the Pacific and Asia.

'The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.' Zeph 3:17.

Later, tune in to the evening prayer (video) prepared by Susie.

Thursday, 9 April (Maundy Thursday)

Day of Prayer and Fasting – see the guide on the St Mark’s website

Participate in the day of prayer and fasting to help focus your mind and heart on our Lord as we lead into the Easter weekend.

Then join us in the evening for the Maundy Thursday service online.

Friday, 10 April (Good Friday)

Pray for St Mark's vision to be a community of transformation in the Hills area

O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Neh 1:11.

Read John 18:1-19:42. Pause to digest this, reflecting on your own need for grace.

Dear Jesus,

Seeing you go to the cross and die for us, let us not have hardness of heart.

Help us to repent, confess our sin and receive your overflowing love,

In Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

As you pray for the St Mark's vision (to be a community of transformation), here are some suggested prayers:

- For St Mark's people to understand and live out God's plan for us to be a community of transformation
- To be filled with God's presence and empowered by Him to be part of his great plan for our community
- For new members to join in God's plan and be transformed
- For healing, restoration and reconciliation where needed
- Guidance for St Mark's people making decisions and preparing materials and communications during this time
- Services to be accessed and for the Holy Spirit to unite and encourage us over Easter

For God placed all things under [Jesus's] feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Eph 1:22-23.

Later, tune in to the evening prayer (video) prepared by Russell.

Saturday, 11 April (Easter Saturday)

Pray that the people of St Mark's would remain faithful and resilient

Those who enter God's rest also cease from their labours as God did from his. Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest. Heb 4:10-11.

Read Matthew 27:57-66. Imagine what this day after Jesus's death, and before his rising, would have been like for the disciples.

Today, spend some time waiting on God in prayer, using periods of quiet to allow the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart.

Pray for the people of St Mark's to remain faithful and resilient. You may like to include in your prayers:

- Thanks to God that even though we can't gather in-person, we can still gather online
- Pray for services and activities online and in our homes would be helpful in our life together to be a community of transformation in the Hills
- Pray for virtual small groups, prayer and worship gatherings to be meaningful
- For new people to seek out and find services/videos online and find support in our community
- Our passion for Jesus would not diminish but grow, and we'd see growth and maturity for all members (children, youth, families, older people, singles, couples)
- That isolation and separation would not weaken our community but would remind us of our connection in Jesus, our cornerstone, and result in us finding new ways to encourage each other and our community to be transformed in Jesus.

Please hear all these prayers from the lips of Jesus Christ; your Son, whom you have made our Saviour, High Priest, Intercessor, and Mediator. Amen.

Join us on 'Zoom' for a live meeting to gather our prayers together from 8.00-8.30pm.

The link for this meeting is <https://zoom.us/j/886773901> or the Meeting ID is **886-773-901**.