

TRANSCEND: APRIL

Ascot Vale Uniting Church Newsletter 2015

60 Maribyrnong Road, Moonee Ponds

Services: Sundays 10 am

Good Friday and Easter: personal and political transformation

*In the non-canonical Gospel of Peter, the voice of God asks the rising and ascending Christ,
"Have you announced [their liberation] to them that sleep?"
Then the liberated ones answered for themselves with a resounding "yes"!*

We are the liberated ones but we don't know it and we haven't yet given our answer. We cannot say 'yes' to what it means to be truly alive, to reach out to our happiness, to others and to our best self. Sometimes the walls of our mental prisons are impenetrable. But they are walls that we have created, that we have built by the way we think.

Easter is our reminder that God's presence and grace, in other words God's unconditional love, have penetrated walls far thicker than the ones lining our mental prisons. If we don't do the work of defining ourselves from within, from living out our vocation of sonship and daughtership to God, and from our kinship to each other, then others will define us.

Political Transformation: Is Jesus our political 'Lord and Saviour'?

When we preach 'Christ crucified' we are saying that imperial power, people of wealth and authority, full of egoism and injustice crucified "the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2: 28). We search ourselves to see which mind game we play, knowing that egoism, playing to our small self with all of its obsessions and fears, is not just the game of the powerful.

Again, like our Christian martyrs and forebears, when we say, "Jesus is Lord" we proclaim that therefore "Caesar is not Lord", nor is any imposed authority. There is a better destiny which we fulfil.

Micah the prophet defined it this way, 'to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God [and others].' That's an alternative kingdom to all earthly ones, and it's the standard by which we measure them.

Sacrifice in service to this worthy cause of justice brings the greatest joy.

So Paul could write of Christ that, "though he was in the form of God, he did not regard his equality with God as something to be held to and exploited; but he emptied himself taking the form of a slave" to help others.

Personal Transformation: Is Jesus our personal 'Lord and Saviour'?

At the heart of our Christian vocation is a way of being that is forever new. It has eternal life within it, creative and unbounded. Good Friday and Easter are it's song, and they are freedom's song.

Remember your mental prison; now hear the music of the Easter story. It's this:

- Jesus died because he fought for this Hebrew principle: **covenant relationships, that is, that we treat all people as our equal and we pledge mind, body and soul to care for their good.** Then as now it's a value worth dying for. When we live this way, we speak volumes about 'Jesus as our Lord and Saviour'. This is a deeply Biblical Christology, one which abolishes the horrific misconception that says wrongly that Jesus' died in our place, as a substitutionary sacrifice to appease the wrath of God.

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- Easter is God's decisive reversal of the authorities' verdict on Jesus. It says "no" to the powers that killed him, and is a vindication of Jesus's passion for the kingdom of God. Easter says "yes" to us, the liberated. It reminds us that some relationships are mightier than the grave; and unconditional love transcends even death and violence. So even though Jesus died, or had 'ascended', Christians were undefeated and undaunted by their continuing persecution. And each believer became an authority for their own life because Jesus had shown them the way to the 'Father', and surprisingly it was within each of them.
- Easter is not about Jesus as a resuscitated corpse. Would we want to worship a God who tinkers with the physical order of the universe in this way? Physical resurrections were the mythological symbols of Hebrew martyrs and a symbol found in many other religions. Jesus rejected those kind of miraculous interventions to get people to believe and taught instead that God is *incapable* of being coercive. Rather God is persuasive, sustaining love; who places before each of us inexhaustible possibilities despite our crucifixions. Wherever the poetry of Biblical symbols and creative imagery is interpreted as science or pure history, it is killed.
- Good Friday- Easter tells us that we must die to certain pre-occupations in the way we think in order to find our true self. As you know, in the path of personal transformation you have to fall and die before you can rise. Life always has a growing edge to it; God brings to life an infinite creative possibility. Therefore no event in our lives, however terrible, can exhaust what God is trying to do. So we are not defeated by anything.
- Jesus had confrontations with abusive authority figures. He challenged the scribes and elders in the Jerusalem temple about their teachings; he kicked over the money-changer's tables; he healed the sick on the Sabbath. These provocative acts call on each of us to become instruments of grace and spiritual intensity to help others. Through non-violence and relationships of radical equality we can show what God is like. **Christ came to be crucified to evoke within your heart the sentiment of compassion; to take your mind off a blind commitment to the goods of this world. As we see the totally good man helpless and suffering, the injured one becomes our Saviour. So we enter joyfully the sorrows of life as Christ did. That's ours' and God's "yes" spoken to all of life.**

Our church wishes you a wonderful Easter and school holidays,

Rev. Ron W. Rosinsky

Worship Themes and Readings

12 April: ' "Blessed are those who believe without seeing": in your thinking be mature'
Acts 4: 19-31; John 20: 19-31

19 April: Interview with Layce Vocale, 'Young women making their way in a tough world'
Acts 3: 12-20

26 April: Anzac Day Commemoration- 'Relationships of radical equality that change everything'
1 John 3: 16-24; John 10: 11-18

3 May: Communion Sunday- 'Some relationships change everything- look for these qualities'
John 15: 1-8

10 May: Mother's Day- 'Moms and Dads- developing emotionally intelligent parenting'
1 John 5: 1-6; John 15: 9-17



Kid's Uniting Term 2: Sunday 19 April - Sunday, 28 June

Teacher: Caterina Rosinsky

Themes:

- Women in the early Church;
- Non- violence and social change;

Covenant relationships throughout the Bible= radical equality, unconditional love

Soul Groups recommencing for 2015

Everybody is welcome to come and have a look. We meet fortnightly on Sundays after the Service from 11:45 to 12:45 with the next meetings on 5 and 19 April.

The groups encourage a person in their spiritual formation and emotional maturity; they're based of the 12 step groups of Alcoholics Anonymous and John Wesley's covenant groups.

Study topic for 2015:

'Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life', by Karen Armstrong

Karen Armstrong is a British author and commentator known for her books on comparative religion. A former Roman Catholic religious sister, she went from a conservative to a more liberal and mystical Christian faith.

The twelve steps she suggests begin with "Learn About Compassion," and close with "Love Your Enemies." In between, she takes up self-love, mindfulness, suffering, sympathetic joy, the limits of our knowledge of others, and "concern for everybody." She shares concrete methods to help us cultivate and expand our capacity for compassion, and provides a reading list to encourage us to "hear one another's narratives." Armstrong teaches us that becoming a compassionate human being is a lifelong project and a journey filled with rewards.

The First Step: Learn About Compassion

The Second Step: Look at Your Own World

The Third Step: Compassion for Yourself

The Fourth Step: Empathy

The Fifth Step: Mindfulness

The Sixth Step: Action

The Seventh Step: How Little We Know

The Eighth Step: How Should We Speak to One Another?

The Ninth Step: Concern for Everybody

The Tenth Step: Knowledge

The Eleventh Step: Recognition

The Twelfth Step: Love Your Enemies



Dates for Your Diary

Friday April 3rd.	Good Friday Service 9.30am
Sunday April 5th.	Easter Sunday
Sunday April 19th	AGM
Saturday April 25th.	Anzac Day
Sunday May 11th.	Mothers Day
Monday June 9th.	Queens Birthday Holiday

NOTICE: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sunday 19 April after the service.

Please join us for the latest news and reports on the progress of our church.

'Fish and Chip Night'

Saturday 25th April
Anzac Theme Dinner



GOOD NEWS AT LAST

We are thankful that after repeated delays and a hastily prepared oral presentation before Presbytery four weeks ago, our request that Ron's term with us be extended by up to five years has been granted. The start of this five years is backdated to May 2014, ten years after Ron began his ministry here. He, and we, will therefore have the option of his remaining at Ascot Vale (in a .6 capacity) until May 2019. So we look forward with gratitude and hope to four more years of growth, not only in terms of new members, but in faith and spiritual discernment, under Ron's guidance. We also offer our support to him in his busy role both here and at the Laverton RAAF base, where he will work two days a week.

Dorothy H. (2015 Annual Report)



Thanks

Thank you to those who watered the garden over summer. Your good work has enabled most of our plants to survive. The fruit trees in particular have flourished. Special thanks to others who have worked in the garden. Patricia Stewart has been a wonderful worker and garden coordinator.



Patricia Stewart has been working three days a week at a gallery in Yarraville. If you are over that way arrange to call in and see her. She will be delighted to show you around.

Bassett Gallery
14 Wembley Ave.
Yarraville

Congratulations!



Best Wishes to Jacques and Ruth married earlier in the year at a service conducted by Ron at St Kilda.

Welcome Nyuoth

Congratulations to Debrah and James on the birth of their daughter Nyuoth on 11 Feb, brother for Amer, Yier and Majok



FREE PARENTING PROGRAM



Tuning in to Kids: Emotionally Intelligent Parenting

A parenting program that helps parents build a strong relationships with their children, and enables them to communicate even in difficult times.

It helps parents to:

Understand the relationship between children's emotions and their behaviour

Teach their children to manage strong emotions

Help their children to manage transitions better

When: Six sessions from Wednesday 22 April to Wed 27 May

Where: Ascot Vale Uniting Church

Time 12.30—2.30pm

Cost: Free

To register contact Linda Baker on 9680 8444

Why is Anzac Day special to Australians?

When war broke out in 1914, Australia had been a federal commonwealth for only 13 years. The new national government was eager to establish its reputation among the nations of the world. In 1915 Australian and New Zealand soldiers formed part of the allied expedition that set out to capture the Gallipoli peninsula in order to open the Dardanelles to the allied navies. The ultimate objective was to capture Constantinople (now Istanbul in Turkey), the capital of the Ottoman Empire, an ally of Germany.

The Australian and New Zealand forces landed on Gallipoli on 25 April, meeting fierce resistance from the Ottoman Turkish defenders. What had been planned as a bold stroke to knock Turkey out of the war quickly became a stalemate, and the campaign dragged on for eight months. At the end of 1915 the allied forces were evacuated, after both sides had suffered heavy casualties and endured great hardships. Over 8,000 Australian soldiers had been killed. News of the landing on Gallipoli had made a profound impact on Australians at home, and 25 April soon became the day on which Australians remembered the sacrifice of those who had died in the war.

Although the Gallipoli campaign failed in its military objectives, the Australian and New Zealand actions during the campaign left us all a powerful legacy. The creation of what became known as the "Anzac legend" became an important part of the identity of both nations, shaping the ways they viewed both their past and their future.

Boatloads of troops land at Anzac Cove



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

J03022



Banjo Paterson (right) during the Boer War

A Link to Gallipoli

Have you noticed the small Rosemary plant growing near the pathway. This plant was propagated from one of the rosemary plants growing naturally at Gallipoli. Just as wattle is an Australian native plant, rosemary is a native plant in Turkey.

We're All Australians Now

Australia takes her pen in hand,
To write a line to you,
To let you fellows understand,
How proud we are of you.

From shearing shed and cattle run,
From Broome to Hobsons Bay,
Each native-born Australian son,
Stands straighter up today.

The man who used to "hump his drum",
On far-out Queensland runs,
Is fighting side by side with some
Tasmanian farmer's sons.

The fisher-boys dropped sail and oar
To grimly stand the test,
Along that storm-swept Turkish shore,
With miners from the west.

The old state jealousies of yore
Are dead as Pharaoh's sow,
We're not State children any more
We're all Australians now!

Our six-starred flag that used to fly,
Half-shyly to the breeze,
Unknown where older nations ply
Their trade on foreign seas,

Flies out to meet the morning blue
With Vict'ry at the prow;
For that's the flag the Sydney flew,
The wide seas know it now!

The mettle that a race can show
Is proved with shot and steel,
And now we know what nations know
And feel what nations feel.

The honoured graves beneath the crest
Of Gaba Tepe hill,
May hold our bravest and our best,
But we have brave men still.

With all our petty quarrels done,
Dissensions overthrown,
We have, through what you boys have done,
A history of our own.

Our old world differences are dead,
Like weeds beneath the plough,
For English, Scotch, and Irish-bred,
They're all Australians now!

So now we'll toast the Third Brigade,
That led Australia's van,
For never shall their glory fade
In minds Australian.

Fight on, fight on, unflinchingly,
Till right and justice reign.
Fight on, fight on, till Victory
Shall send you home again.

And with Australia's flag shall fly
A spray of wattle bough,
To symbolise our unity,
We're all Australians now.

(AB "Banjo" Paterson)

As a younger man Paterson served six months as a war correspondent in the Boer War. But in 1915, though more than 50, he was determined to be among the fighting troops. Initially he went to London, hoping to join the British Army. Frustrated, he then heard a Remount Unit was being formed in Australia to take care of the 8000 horses being sent to the Middle East with the Australian forces. He raced back to Sydney, qualified as a voluntary vet, knocked two years off his age - lying that he had been born on February 17, 1866, not 1864 - and secured a position as lieutenant (later major) in the so-called "Horsedung Hussars". The men he commanded, he wrote approvingly, were "rough riders, jackaroos, horse-breakers, ex-jockeys and buck-jumping riders from country shows". Arriving in Suez in December 1915, he and his unit took charge of the horses of the Light Horsemen who were away fighting at Gallipoli. When the battered remnants of that army returned to Egypt after the evacuation, Paterson followed them through their campaigns in Palestine and Syria.

smh.com.au

THEY NEED OUR HELP!

A letter from the Moderator of the Uniting Church

Dear friends,

Many of you will be aware of the devastation and tragic loss of life caused by Tropical Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu. Early reports indicate at least eight people have been killed and that many more have been seriously injured. Thousands in the region are now believed to be homeless, with the category-5 storm seriously damaging tens of thousands of homes in the region.

Firsthand reports paint a very distressing picture of the destruction brought upon the Vanuatuan people. The death toll and full extent of injuries and damages is expected to rise as the clean-up and humanitarian effort begins in earnest.

You may also be aware of the damage caused by other recent cyclones closer to home in the Northern Territory and Queensland. President-elect and Moderator of the Northern Synod Stuart McMillan has said the damage across Aboriginal communities in this region is widespread.

The Uniting Church has long been committed to assisting those in need, especially during times of crisis. I urge you to consider ways you and your church community may be able to assist in the relief and support effort and to keep those affected in your thoughts and prayers.

Please consider contributing what you can, to stand beside our neighbours and to offer the practical support they desperately need at this time.

Share has set up a Cyclone Relief Appeal with donations for Vanuatu supporting UnitingWorld's Cyclone Pam Appeal. Their partners in Vanuatu are currently identifying their most immediate requirements and UnitingWorld will respond accordingly.

Donations for the Northern Territory and Queensland will be forwarded to the Assembly National Disaster Relief Fund.

Funds will provide direct financial support and targeted recovery programmes to people in the worst-hit areas.

You can support the cyclone relief efforts through Share by sending a cheque or money order to: Share Cyclone Appeal PO Box 24154 MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Alternatively, you can call 1800 668 426 or donate online at www.shareappeal.org.au

Please pray for these communities and for the relief and aid workers assisting on the ground.

With kind regards,

Dan Wootton Moderator



ROSTER	SERVICE/ LEADER	COMMUNION ELDER	DUTY ELDER	MUSIC	WELCOMER	READER	MORNING TEA
3 April Good Friday	Rev Ron			Dorothy	Peter	Dina	Dina/Bente -----
5 April Easter	Rev Ron	Dorothy		Rob	Ken/Jenny	Angelika	Jenny/ Angelika
12 April	Rev Ron		Peter	Maria	Michael	Marycon	Fiona/Bente
19 April	Rev Ron <i>KU resume</i>			Dorothy	Andrea	Candace	Jutta/Dina
26 April	Rev Ron		Michael	Candace	Robin	Michael	Marycon/ Chris
3 May	Rev Ron <i>Communion</i>	Dina		Rob	Cally	Cally	Fiona/Bente
10 May Family	Rev Ron		Angelika	Maria	Ken/Jenny	Barbara	Jen- ny/Barbara
17 May Pentecost	Rev Ron			Dorothy	Melita	Melita	Marycon/ Dina
24 May	Rev Ron		Noel	Candace	Robin	Chris	Chris/Angelik a
31 May	Rev Ron			Candace	Dina	Bente	Bente/Fiona

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We create a welcoming community that shows unconditional love by following the spirit and teachings of the historical Jesus.

We do this by:

- welcoming people in all circumstances, races, beliefs and gender preferences
- being caring, compassionate and kind to all
- striving for social justice through action
- caring for all creation and protecting the environment
- studying the teachings of Jesus Christ to expand our spiritual understanding and know God
- and honouring tradition within a more progressive and open form of worship service.

Ascot Vale Uniting Church

Rev. Ron Rosinsky

avuniting@hotmail.com

www.ascotvaleuniting.org.au

ELDERS

Peter Macdonald

Angelika Ranellone

Melita Long

Michael Long

Dorothy Howes

Noel Lloyd

Dina Monaghan

*'Transcend' is published monthly
Articles and photos are welcome.*

Email to the Editor

Robin Waltrowicz

avuniting@hotmail.com