



TRANSCEND

APRIL
2019

Ascot Vale Uniting Church Newsletter

60 Maribyrnong Road, Moonee Ponds

Services: Sundays at 10am

Rev. Gordon Bannon

Sowing seeds of Hope.

Last week we had a Harvest Thanksgiving service and it was great to share our produce. Normally at such services the focus is on the idea of giving thanks to the Divine for all that we have received in Creation and for our gifts. Or the focus sometimes is sometimes on resting in being cared for by God such as when Jesus reminds us to 'consider the lilies of the field' and the Ravens and how much they are cared for by the Creator.

Somehow neither of those ideas felt real for me, but I stumbled upon a reflection on thanksgiving which drew on a verse from Psalm 126 which really did speak to me. The verse reads "May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy!"

I think this verse connected with me because I, like many of us I think, have been sitting in a time of tears, particularly with the recent horror in Christchurch.

This psalm was written not a time of joy, but at time when the only thing they had going for the Israelites was the memory of joy. It was written in a time of sowing seeds in sorrow, of weeping for all that has been lost.

It was written long after the Israelites had been joyfully reunited with their homeland, and things had gone sour once again. It was written in a time like the massacre in Christchurch, and the massive loss of life with the floods in Mozambique, and like the time of environmental anxiety and political tension in our world, and in a time like trying to harvest a field in the midst of drought.

This is a psalm of hope written in a time of real darkness and in the darkness seeds of hope are sown in different ways. For me the seeds have come from listening to the stories of hope and faith that are around recently from people whose faith brought them through one desert after another only to experience blessing and renewal once again. This week I listened to the speeches at the memorial service in New Zealand, and they were sad but they were full of hope; the hope that had experienced in the outpouring of solidarity, love and hope in the wake of the Christchurch disaster. I listened as the imam of one of the mosques spoke of how his heart was moved by the compassion that surrounds his community.

For others this seed of hope can be found in faith in the cycle of life that reminds us that, even when we feel far from our God, it is only a matter of time before we will be reunited.

It comes from the foolish but somehow trustworthy faith that, with God, you can sow seeds in the tears of winter, and reap a joyful harvest in the spring.

It can come from being reminded of moments of joy. By bringing to your heart a time of hope, a time of beauty or a time of new life.

Continued Page 2



Ascot Vale Uniting is a safe place for all people to worship regardless of age,
race, creed, gender, cultural background, or sexual orientation

From Page 1

The psalm tells us to go ahead and plant seeds in the winter. It's a psalm that tells us to journey on, no matter what, because the harvest will be great. So the invitation is for us to plant seeds of hope and beauty even when it is a struggle to do and to do so in the faith that the harvest will come. I leave you with this hopeful poem by Michael Leunig.

Gordon

Dear God,

We give thanks for places of simplicity and peace;

let us find such a place within ourselves.

We give thanks for places of refuge and beauty;
let us find such a place within ourselves.

We give thanks for places of nature's truth and freedom, of joy, inspiration and renewal,
places where all creatures may find acceptance and belonging.

Let us search for these places; in the world, in ourselves and in others.

Let us restore them.

Let us strengthen and protect them
and let us create them.

May we mend this outer world according to the truth of our inner life

and may our souls be shaped and nourished
by nature's eternal wisdom.

Amen!

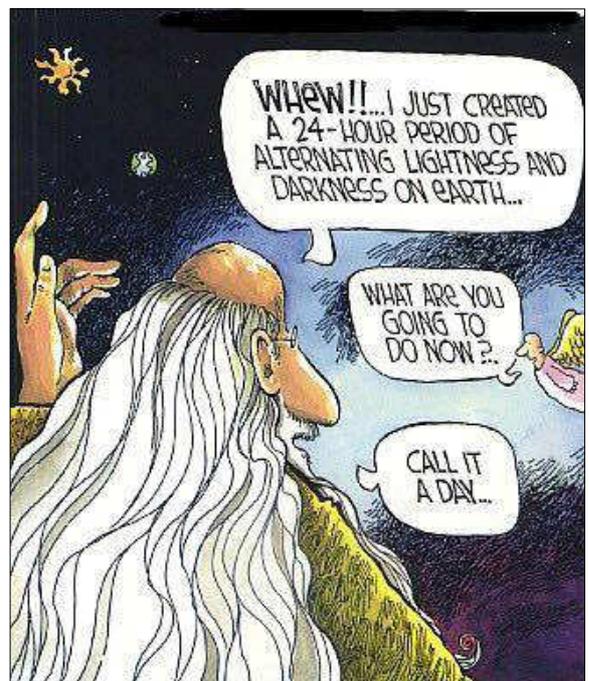


BOARD GAME NIGHT

Our next 'Fish and Chip' Social Night is on SATURDAY APRIL 27th from 6 pm

Bring something for dinner
(needn't be fish and chips) and have a
relaxing evening with friends.
Bring along your favourite game. .

FUN, FELLOWSHIP, FRIENDSHIP



Birthdays of the Month



We celebrated birthdays for Peter, Jenny, Ted, Gordon and Sue



Garden Swap

The next Moonee Valley Garden Group Garden Swap will be on Sunday April 28th following the service at 11.30am.

Bring anything garden or food related to swap with others. Seeds, seedlings, fruit, veggies, cuttings, succulents, worm juice, fertilizer, gardening magazines and books, jam, chutney, favourite recipe, eggs, pots, tools etc.

Come along and share your knowledge and learn from others.

For further information speak to Eileen Ray.

Kid's Uniting



We have a modern Sunday school program held during the service. Our teacher Fiona provides a program featuring yoga and guided meditation, and learning about key Biblical stories in a supportive and creative environment. The program runs during the school term.



Our Church Council Secretary, Dorothy was thanked for the outstanding work she put in during the long process of obtaining a minister.

The recent application put in to the Presbytery for a grant from the Simpson Fund was successful.

Thanks and congratulations to Gordon and those who helped him with this application. The funds will enable us to develop a Sanctuary Garden near the south west corner of the church.

This will be the first stage of our garden redevelopment.

The following is the introduction to the application.

Simpson Fund Grant Application.

The Sanctuary Garden.

Justification:

The Ascot Vale congregation since the building of the new Church space has maintained a vision for itself as 'The garden church' and a vision to develop the current garden into a public space for reflection, prayer and social action.

This is a medium-term vision which we envision as including a community garden space, a Labyrinthine Garden and the sanctuary garden beside the chapel. The vision is for the garden to be a space that is open to the public for community use but which also has spiritual meaning and mission purpose for the congregation.

As the congregation enters a new phase of ministry we have decided to seek funding for the Sanctuary garden as beginning point for the overall project. The missional vision for the overall garden project is one of an open and inclusive community space. The next stage is the building of a community garden space in cooperation with the local Kindergarten and child-care centre. (The congregation intends mid 2019 to apply for funding for this stage from the local council.) The sanctuary garden is a space enclosed on two sides by the worship space and the church multiuse area and as such is a visual focal point for worship and other church activities. The overall concept is to redevelop the area so that it is an attractive area for contemplation for those in the chapel, a space that can be used for personal prayer and meditation and also an area that can be used as an outdoor worship space.

(see illustration)

We see the redevelopment of this garden space as a missional opportunity which reflects our goals and that of the Presbytery.

One of the Ascot Vale congregation's mission goals is:

'Developing a "Garden" church as a new mission initiative...working to develop our large front garden as a place of quiet and hospitality, hosting possibly a labyrinth and community veggie plots-- Working on issues of social justice and developing our cross cultural relationships.'

We believe also that the development of the church garden will reflect the Presbytery's goal *to be a network of increasingly vibrant, diverse, contextual and disciple-making communities of Christ participating in and witnessing to the wonder of God's mission.*

And fulfils the presbytery's objectives to:

'Develop new models of being church. (objective 3. A growing number of contextual expressions of church.) We see the development of the Sanctuary garden as a first step in implementing an emerging and contextual expression of church.'

The Presbytery mission theme of 'Sparking growth, Bringing Transformation' is brought to life in the model of garden ministry that we propose. This garden-based ministry has its spiritual and mission heart in a theology of God's activity being evident in our garden practice.

In particular the Sanctuary garden space will include elements reflecting the multicultural and inclusive nature of the congregation (See objective 4 of the Presbytery objectives) as well as spiritual symbols of the Christian faith and other faiths.

The garden is designed to be low maintenance. It will be designed to be used for smaller worship services (up to 20 people) in an outdoor setting in the round. It is envisaged that the garden will include the following key elements:

P.T.O.

From page 4.

- Water feature – religious symbol of the love of God. Possibly in the shape of an overflowing urn. Including a Solar powered fountain
- A Celtic cross (a Celtic cross that was part of the original building was stolen a few years ago. This has important symbolism for the congregation.)
- Seating for meditation/prayer/worship
- Multifaith aspects/symbols – Peace poles
- Watering system
- 2 x shade sails with metal posts:
- Lush green plantings – including feature tree ferns
- Gravel paths and river pebble ground cover base.
- Stepping stones.

A space can be sacred, providing those who inhabit a particular space with a sense of transcendence—being connected to something greater than oneself. It generates spirituality, peace and energy. The sacredness may be inherent in the space, as for a religious institution or a serene place outdoors. Everything outside of that space shrivels in importance. Time takes on a different dimension. Emotions flow more freely. The bodies of participants become filled with the energy of life, and this energy reaches out and blesses the creation around them. All is made new

Patricia Edelstein



JOIN THE PALM SUNDAY Walk for Justice for Refugees on Sunday 14 April 2019 at the State Library Melbourne (Corner Swanston & Elizabeth Streets) at 2.00pm.

The Moonee Valley Garden Group has a Facebook group with 1365 members. Members post items for sale, gardening tips and questions, etc.

NEED A NEW NAMETAG?

Haven't got one yet / lost the old one / changed your name???

Robin Waltrowicz will be happy to make a new one for you.

A Recipe from Sue

Gluten Free cake or can be cut in squares for brownies ☐

This is a Benham-Bannon family favourite:

Ingredients:

One 400 gram can of drained chickpeas

Four eggs

1/2 teaspoon gluten free baking powder

1/2 cup pure maple syrup

270 grams(1 and 1/2 cups) Cadbury dark choc chips MELTED over double saucepan or in microwave

Instructions:

Use bamix stricken or food processor

Blend chickpeas with eggs (hint do one egg first then add next three)

THEN

Mix all ingredients together

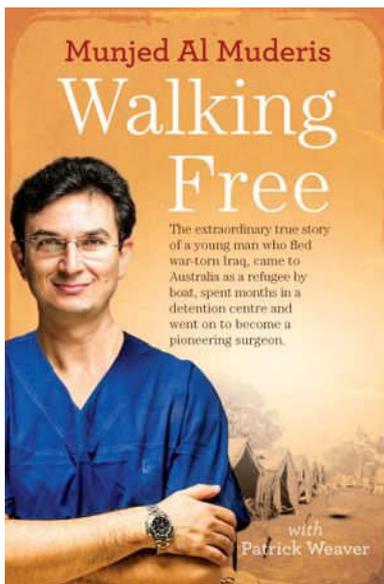
Pour into gluten free greased cake tin (or baking paper)and bake for 33- 40 minutes at 180 degrees Celsius

Note: Can spread with Nutella for icing when still warm or dust with gluten free icing sugar when cool.

NOTE: when cooking gluten free for coeliac people need to be VERY aware of cross contamination risks but don't be worried as not that complicated once you know what to be aware of. Feel free to ask me if not sure what this means.

Enjoy - Sue Benham (close to Bannon but I have kept my own surname ☐)

LOOKING FOR A GOOD READ?



I've just begun an inspiring book which you may also be interested to read.

It's called "Walking Free", and is the true story of Munjed Al Muderis, a young doctor who became a refugee from war-torn Iraq.

Munjed escaped the horrors of life under military rule – during which he had seen his chief surgeon executed for refusing to mutilate army deserters - and endured the ordeal of a dangerous boat journey from Indonesia to Australia, hoping for peace and security.

Instead he was imprisoned for ten months in the harsh conditions of Curtin Detention Centre, where he was repeatedly subjected to solitary confinement. Yet after being freed he went on to become one of the world's leading osseointegration surgeons, who has pioneered a technique that enables amputees to walk again.

How can a man who has had so much suffering inflicted on him, still have the desire to help his fellow humans?

Where do people find such ability to forgive?

That's what I can't wait to find out. Why don't you join me? I'll be happy to lend you my copy (as soon as I've finished it!).

Thank you, Jean, for introducing me to Munjed, and to "Walking Free". .

Dorothy Howes

GARDEN NEWS



Gordon has installed a spray watering system in part of the garden. As pictured above the other watering system is still working well.

Lots of work has been done tidying up the garden. The area outside the children's rooms has been mulched, weeded and the plants trimmed.

The grant received from the Simpson Fund will enable us to develop an attractive and functional garden at the North West corner of the church.



On Sunday 31st March we farewelled Francois, Anneke, Arnold and Tiaan. They will be transferring to the Coburg Uniting Church.



Harvest Festival on May 31st



We acknowledge and give thanks that the land on which our church building stands is country for which the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation are the traditional custodians. We honour their elders past and present and commit ourselves to work for reconciliation and justice.

'Transcend' is published on the first Sunday of each month except January. Articles, photos and other contributions are welcome. Email them to the Editor, Robin Waltrowicz no later than the Wednesday before publication at : avuniting@hotmail.com

WHAT IS A PEACE POLE?

One of the features that may be included in our Sanctuary Garden is a Peace Pole. A Peace Pole is a wooden pole that displays the message and prayer *May Peace Prevail on Earth* on each of its four or six sides, usually in different languages. Usually a Peace Pole is eight feet tall (2m 50cm) with the bottom "planted" in the ground. There are more than 200,000 Peace Poles in 180 countries all over the world dedicated as monuments to peace. They serve as constant reminders for us to visualize and pray for world peace.

The peace pole project was started by the World Peace Society, a non profit, member supported, non-sectarian organization dedicated to uniting people across the world through the universal saying, "May peace prevail on earth."

Founded in Japan in 1955 by Masahisa Goi, the Society has its world headquarters in New York, and is recognized as a non-governmental organization with the Department of Public Information at the United Nations.

When you plant a Peace Pole in your community, you are linking with people all over the world who have planted Peace Poles in the same spirit of peace.

Peace Poles have been presented to many international organizations and governments to promote a Culture of Peace around the world.

Peace-lovers of all faiths have been involved in Peace Pole dedications, including the XIV Dalai Lama, Mother Teresa, President Jimmy Carter, Deepak Chopra and John Denver, as well as mayors, clubs and Girl Scouts.

There are Peace Poles on the Allenby Bridge between Israel and Jordan; at the Peace Park where 84 Peace Poles commemorate the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City; at the War Museum in Viet Nam; at Robben Island in South Africa, where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned; at the Pyramids at El Giza in Egypt; at the site of the baptism of Jesus at Bethany-Beyond-the-Jordan; and at schools, churches, synagogues, mosques and temples on all the continents around the world.



A Peace Pole at Hiroshima, Japan

Church contact phone numbers and emails

Church Council Chairperson, Michael Long: 0406 028 508

Church Council Secretary, Dorothy Howes: 0432 397 359

Church Officer/Property Manager, Candace Elliott: 0434 491 271

Church email avuniting@gmail.com

Church Office Phone 9370 3181

michaelphotoman@gmail.com

dorothyshowes@hotmail.com

mloqueen@hotmail.com

AVUC ROSTER April –May 2019.

LEADER / COMMUNION		DOORS	MUSIC	COUNTING	READER	WELCOMING	MORNING TEA
April 7	Gordon Dorothy	Dorothy	Julian	Benson	Chris	Judy	Kate Benson
April 14	Gordon	Candace	Candace	Robin	Angelika	Robin	Chris Tupu
April 19 Good Fr.	Gordon 9.30am	Dorothy	Dorothy				No Morning Tea
April 21 Sunday	Gordon	Michael	Rob	Judy	MaryCon	Ken	Ken Jenny
April 28	Eileen	Fiona	Julian	Jean	Rachel Clara	Robin	Tupu Chris
May 5	Eileen	Dorothy	Rob	Dorothy	Peter	Peter	Hamid Marjan
May 12	Gordon	Fiona	Julian	Benson	Kate	Fiona	Judy Kate
May 19		Candace	Candace	Melita	Angelika	Michael	Tupu Chris
May 26	Gordon	Fiona	Dorothy	Robin	Chris	Robin	Chris MaryCon
June 2	Gordon	Dorothy	Rob	Jean	Benson	Ken	Ken Jenny

Roster for March –April

Thank you to all the people who let me know they were unavailable for various dates.

Please talk to Dorothy if you feel you could open the church or lock it up sometimes on Sundays.

Rob always appreciates help with the plant swap tables

Chris: waltrowicz@gmail.com

Thank you for stepping in when people are unavoidably absent.

Prayer for Pumpkins.

We give thanks for pumpkins. While we may worry about our shape, pumpkins do not. They ripen into fullness and contentment. They do not jog or go to the gym, they just lie there smiling in the Autumn sunshine as they reflect upon the lovely summer in which they grew so happily and well. God bless the beautiful pumpkins. AMEN.



Leung