

TRANSCEND: AUGUST

Ascot Vale Uniting Church Newsletter 2015

60 Maribyrnong Road, Moonee Ponds

Life has an infinite creative possibility

It was an unlikely sort of family that gathered: a homeless man, several people born in other lands who had emigrated to Australia and made it home; a ninety year old woman and a four year old boy, people of vastly different ages and means, life experiences and cultures. We became one, as many at Ascot Vale Church have to serve the common good. It was a weird and wonderful band of brothers and sisters- citizens and Christians. It reminded me of a host of similar activities held at our church over the years, simple, heartfelt, quietly beautiful.

On this occasion we gathered in our church to do the most unlikely of things, to clean up, despite our busy lives and commitments elsewhere. The working bee last Sunday became a kind of mindfulness meditation, and a sacrament of generosity extended to all who will benefit from a tidier church. The sermon went on too long. So other good people worked and helped but understandably had to leave. Just after midday there were seven of us.

I saw things I had never seen before. Before we broke for lunch it seemed like half of the floor of the sanctuary was covered with rubbish. Daunting. I saw corners of the storage room that I hadn't seen for years, cupboards and closets that looked like 'Methusala's

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"You see clutter. I see an environment that encourages the random juxtaposition of disparate elements for the potential generation of creativity born of chaos!"

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Services:

Sundays at
10am

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“Everyone can improve their thinking.

We can all be creative, critical and caring thinkers.” -Anonymous

closet’ now clear and empty, anticipating the future. After lunch with my mind still reeling from the dimensions of rubbish, the single-minded team attacked hills of clutter and cleaned chairs. Meanwhile our homeless friend, David, became one of us, as he laughed and joked sometimes incomprehensibly, and lifted boxes.

It’s hard to have time to build the bonds of tenderness in our marriages, let alone with other Australians from vastly different backgrounds from ourselves. But as people of faith that’s what we do.

For the thoroughly un-religious, the church is perhaps an irrelevant antiquated organization full of yesterday’s people who do weird religious stuff. Rampant cynics and narcissists get a thrill tearing things apart, or making the world conform to their needs. So for them the church is something like the daft and clumsy clown who performs at a kiddies’ circus, an irrelevant distraction in a carnival of lunacy. **After all don’t Christians believe in daffy stuff like a higher power called unconditional love, the eternal worth of every person, in sharing and compassion, and in having the courage to be?**

Then there was lunch. It was a late lunch because as I mentioned the preacher didn’t know when to stop. People brought food to share. **Again,**

moments that will live on forever, forming a bond between vastly different people and somehow linking us all to the profound and sublime. As we sat and ate together I thought how nice it was, particularly to have David in our number. I remembered what someone wrote, that life has an infinite creative possibility. Life has much more to it than any one experience discloses to me.

And I shall continue to believe that God is not through, not merely with life, but with me. **In our own imperfect ways we co-operate with that infinite creative presence, until in our lives there begins to pulse something much vaster and greater than any one person on their own can know. That’s active faith.**

Jesus said something about that.

‘Wherever two or three are gathered in my name’...**there is synergy...**’and I will be there among them.’ Maybe he didn’t say the middle bit but I think he was talking about synergy. **Synergy occurs when the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.** Isn’t that our story as we mark the eleventh year since our church was burned down in 2004, and celebrate the regeneration that has occurred since? This is what Jesus disclosed in his trumpet call, “I am the resurrection and the Life. Those who believe in me will never die.” **Life**

has an infinite creative possibility. Look well to that growing edge. We are part of a greater whole with immeasurable power for good.

David walked home after lunch in his tattered jeans pushing a trolley full of junk. He was smiling as he wore a new leather jacket which was given to him. One of our newest members at church is a young man who came to Australia recently in a boat, a refugee from Iran. He gave his jacket to David.



*There are in our existence spots of time,
That with distinct pre-eminence retain
A renovating virtue, whence, depressed
By false opinion and contentious thought,
Or aught of heavier or more deadly weight,
In trivial occupations, and the round
Of ordinary intercourse, our minds
Are nourished and invisibly repaired.*

- William Wordsworth

Join us on **30 August** for our eleven year commemoration/ celebration service.

All the best, Rev. Ron Rosinsky



Three boys are in the school yard bragging about their fathers.

The first boy says, 'My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a poem, they give him £50.'

The second boy says, 'That's nothing. My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a song, they give him £100.'

The third boy says, 'I got you both beat. My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a sermon, and it takes eight people to collect all the money!'

Social and Environmental Justice

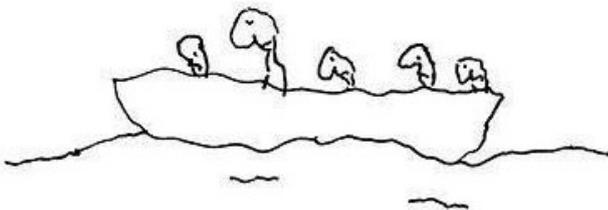
1. Asylum Seeker Policy:

Thank you to all who signed our recent letter, in which we urged the ALP not to support the Government's policy of turning back asylum seeker boats.

Disappointingly, the Labor Party voted at its Convention on Saturday to endorse this barbaric policy. This was in spite of the opposition of many of its own MP's, who are members of "Labor for Refugees". Hundreds of members of refugee support groups, such as "Grandmothers Against Detention of Children", also rallied outside the Convention Centre as the issue was being debated. They were encouraged by union leaders, as well as by ex-asylum seekers, who told of their distress when the Australian navy failed to come to their help, and of the persecution of those forcibly returned to their country of origin.

The Labor Party's decision means that both our major political parties are now prepared to turn their backs on desperate people in danger at sea, leaving them to be accepted by some more responsible nation, or to drown on the way, in other waters, out of sight and out of mind of the Australian people.

*we gave them shock and awe
And now they're at the door
Wanting our protection.
Well what a strange connection.*



But this terrible practice cannot be maintained for ever. We must go on resisting, in every way we can, for as long as it takes. Anti-slavery activists in Britain must have thought they would never succeed, but in the end they did. We must take encouragement from them and not give up. We will keep you posted!

2. Future Directions for the SEJC:

We have reached a crossroads. The death, retirement or removal interstate of members has left a committee of only two, both of whom have a number of other responsibilities at AVUC. It bothers me that two people can hardly speak with credibility on behalf of the whole congregation.

Yet I know that many of you have a real concern for justice and environmental issues. The problem is that we are all so committed, with other roles in the church, and with family and other outside activities and responsibilities. Time and energy can only stretch so far!

So my hope is this: if you believe, as we do, that Christians should emulate Jesus by actively caring for creation and for our fellow humans, then join a new "Email SEJC". No need to worry about meetings! Simply agree to go on an list of interested people whom we can consult or who can offer ideas about what issues we should tackle, and how. This would be so supportive, and could bring new life and fresh ideas to the SEJC. Please consider giving permission for me to use your email address, so that periodically we can inform you of plans, and ask for your input. I look forward to hearing from you!

Your friends in Christ,
Dorothy and Fiona

Social and Environmental Justice



Progressive Christian Network

Did you know there was a branch of the Progressive Christian Network meeting close to us? You are welcome to join in.

Where? Christ Church Kensington, 76 McCracken Street, Kensington.

When? Fourth Thursday of the month, 7:30pm

Current topics involve watching and discussion of a Richard Rohr DVD. (Richard Rohr, s teaching is grounded in the Franciscan alternative orthodoxy—practices of contemplation and lived kenosis (self-emptying), expressing itself in radical compassion, particularly for the socially marginalized)



Social events

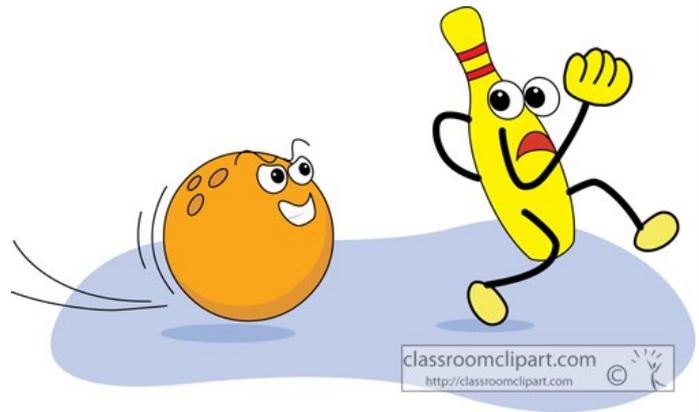
August event: 10 pin Bowling

Saturday August 29th, 6pm

AMF Bowling Centre 169 Rosamond Rd, Maribyrnong VIC 3032

(near Harvey Norman, across from Highpoint Shopping centre)

Costs: to be confirmed but will include food for approximately \$30 per person. Contact Michael or Melita for more information.



Future event: Journey to another world Date: to be confirmed.



Bring a meal (takeaway or otherwise) and join us for food before enjoying a presentation by Harjono on his travels in India and Vanuatu. Meal from 6pm, presentation from 7pm

Harjono is a freelance photographer who has been commissioned by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as

Australian Volunteers International (AVI), Oxfam Australia, and the Australian Red Cross (ARC), just to name a few, to document their work in the developing world.

Check out his webpage for more photos! <http://www.djoyobisono.com/>

Charter for Compassion

The principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves. Compassion impels us to work tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creatures, to dethrone ourselves from the centre of our world and put another there, and to honour the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equity and respect.

It is also necessary in both public and private life to refrain consistently and empathically from inflicting pain. To act or speak violently out of spite, chauvinism, or self-interest, to impoverish, exploit or deny basic rights to anybody, and to incite hatred by denigrating others—even our enemies—is a denial of our common humanity. We acknowledge that we have failed to live compassionately and that some have even increased the sum of human misery in the name of religion.

We therefore call upon all men and women to restore compassion to the centre of morality and religion ~ to return to the ancient principle that any interpretation of scripture that breeds violence, hatred or disdain is illegitimate ~ to ensure that youth are given accurate and respectful information about other traditions, religions and cultures ~ to encourage a positive appreciation of cultural and religious diversity ~ to cultivate an informed empathy with the suffering of all human beings—even those regarded as enemies.

We urgently need to make compassion a clear, luminous and dynamic force in our polarized world. Rooted in a principled determination to transcend selfishness, compassion can break down political, dogmatic, ideological and religious boundaries. Born of our deep interdependence, compassion is essential to human relationships and to a fulfilled humanity. It is the path to enlightenment, and indispensable to the creation of a just economy and a peaceful global community.

To confirm this charter for compassion, go to: <http://charterforcompassion.org/sign-share-charter>

At Sunday School they were teaching how God created everything, including human beings.

Little Johnny seemed especially intent when they told him how Eve was created out of one of Adam's ribs.

Later in the week his mother noticed him lying down as though he were ill,

and she said, 'Johnny, what is the matter?'

Little Johnny responded, 'I have pain in my side. I think I'm going to have a wife'



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Worship and Readings

9 August: Lay Led Service

Ephesians 4:25- 5:2- 'Putting away falsehood'; John 6: 35- 41, 51

16 August: 'Mindfulness and Positive Action- Escaping our Inferior Self'

Proverbs 9: 1-6- 'Laying aside immaturity'; Luke 6: 37-45- 'cultivate the good treasure of the heart'

-Soul Groups* at 11:30

23 August: 'Everyone Can Improve Their Thinking'

Ephesians 6: 10-20- 'Fasten the belt of truth around your waist';

John 6: 63-69- 'Ways of thinking that bring Spirit and Life'

30 August: 11th Anniversary of AVUC Destruction by Fire & Regeneration

'In Conversation with Bente: Mother, Grandmother, potter, artist, singer, valued member of A.V.U.C.

Deuteronomy 4: 1-2; 6-9; Mark 7: 1-8; 14-15 - 'Teaching the word of humans as if it's the Word of God?'

6 September: Celebration of Communion

'Growing in Compassion- Recognizing How Little We Know'

Mark 4: 24-37- 'But even the dogs eat the children's crumbs'

-Soul Groups*at 11:30

13 September: Spring Festival and Family Service

Soul Groups

Study Topics from: 'Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life', Karen Armstrong

2, 16 August: Mindfulness and Action

6, 20 September: How Little We Know; How Should We Speak to One Another

11:30-12:30- in the multi-purpose room

KIDS UNITING

Last Sunday, 13 September (no classes on 20, 27 Sept. and 4 Oct.);

First Sunday of Term 4: 14 October

Report from the Treasurer

Offering envelopes

Plenty of Offering envelopes for the period June 2015 through May 2016 are still available on the front table at the entrance of the church.

Please take a set, alternatively see Peter Macdonald or Ted Jennings.

Direct Credit

Several members are now using direct credit, using electronic funds for offerings.

If you are interested please see Peter Macdonald.

Finance Committee

The finance committee met Thursday July 23rd and reviewed income and expenditure through June (half of this year) to budget. Generally income and most expenses are reasonably in line with budget

One very good item was that Synod has negotiated a reduction in our annual insurance premium for the church and manse from \$5,166 last year to \$3,732 this year.

More good news was there would be three new building users which will generate additional rental income

June income was

Offerings	\$1,811
Fundraising	\$1,411 (Mainly cake stall and sausage sizzle)
Donations	\$ 1,300 (includes \$1,200 from Melbourne Heart foundation)
Building users	\$ 886

Total \$5,408

Expenses \$8,700

Professor Kean Soon and the Melbourne Heart Foundation have now donated \$6,200 to our congregation since the start of last year.,

The finance committee is still reviewing our holdings split between cash holdings (one year requirements) and the balance in growth units (equity) considering risk and returns, with a view to increasing our cash holdings to cover our projected deficits.

The next finance committee meeting is Thursday Oct 8th 7.30pm at the church.

Kind regards
Peter Macdonald

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<http://ascotvaleuniting.org.au/>