

TRANSCEND: August - 2016

Ascot Vale Uniting Church Newsletter

60 Maribyrnong Road, Moonee Ponds

Services: Sundays 10 am

‘Deliver us From Evil’

The cruel and frequent abuse of indigenous children at a Darwin youth detention centre featured on ABC's *Four Corners* program; children being tortured and manhandled by the centre's staff; allegations that the abuse is more widespread across the territory and other states. We looked on in stunned disbelief and outrage.

Indigenous leader and Labour Senator Pat Dodson said that the Australian public has become "a bit callous" over harm to Aborigines. Dodson cites the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody from *the early 1990's*. Successive governments have never acted upon any of them. One of those recommendations was to set up Aboriginal justice committees to monitor how the system handles indigenous people.

A French priest in his eighties was celebrating mass. Two Islamic state (Issis) terrorists stormed his church in Normandy and cut his throat. Later police shot and killed the attackers. Before the priest was killed he uttered these simple but profound words: "Go away, Satan". In horror and disgust we ask, 'What has the world come to? Or 'what have we come to?'

To drive Satan or the power of evil out we must first understand it. Jesus prayed, "deliver us from evil". He spent the rest of his life identifying it's sources, confronting it's psychological and social causes, doing battle with its advocates, and helping people who were it's victims. Then he allowed himself to be nailed to a cross as mute protest against the moral evil of the state.

As we all know too well moral evil opposes the good and the right by trying to destroy it. Not by trying to reason with the good person, but by destroying them. The Nazi death camp at Auschwitz serves as a reminder of how evil can occur on an industrial scale, in a German nation that had been regarded at an earlier time as a civilized country. Evil is the desire for the non- existence of another, or of an entire culture or group of people.

Evil can infiltrate the minds of the mentally and emotionally vulnerable, the person who is anxious and fearful, who is isolated and desperate, who is without a strong sense of right from wrong; or a strong self- identity, and with low self esteem. From within and without, such a person is at risk. Resentment becomes wrath; violent thoughts fester in one's mind, then possess it.

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Besides wrathful and vengeful thinking, is not caring part of the calculus of evil? How about excessive self interest- narcissism- if it brings violence or prolonged suffering to another's life?

By not caring about someone who desperately needs our help, by remaining indifferent and standing on the sidelines when we see someone being hurt or destroyed mentally or physically, is that somehow part of communal evil? Cain rightly asked, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' (Gen. 4:9) The religious expert asked Jesus 'Who is my neighbour?' (Luke 10: 29) Is it the next generation of children? How about our collective inaction in the face of global warming?

Speaking in the 1960's, Martin Luther King Jr. identified what he called the triple evils of his day:

- **poverty;**
- **racism; and**
- **militarism.**

He described poverty for instance as a form of violence against the person. Poverty can be seen as a type of evil because humanity could do something to prevent it and the misery that it brings to millions of people.

"Deliver us from evil", Jesus prayed. Deliverance begins with the way we think about our problems. Do we apply scrutiny and truth- other people's truths- when finding solutions to our problems? As someone once said, 'listen and you will learn.'

Delivering ourselves from destructiveness and violence will take spiritual maturity, so that we stand up to our full stature with God's help and from within communities of mutual support and protest. It's often forgotten that the great Hebrew prophets weren't loners; they spoke from within and for communities of like-minded people. And together they were utterly devoted to the highest ideals of decency and charity for all. They changed the world.

Confronting evil could mean understanding why you are afraid, and what you can do about it with strong and active faith. Irrational fear, stoked up by the Donald Trumps of the world, leads to much violence. Taking up your vocation as a prophet or herald of a better humanity might mean standing up to bullies, but it could also mean listening to your fears, confronting your own apathy or fragmented concentration; or to search out that inconvenient truth. **It will absolutely require you to live consciously from who you really are, that is, according to your divine nature.**

The Hebrew prophets of our Old Testament, and Christ, were confronted by the violence done to their people by big money and predatory government. So they employed their analytical skills and imagination to form new communities of justice and care. Then they fired up their advocacy skills to call for democratic forms of government; for economic reforms that would empower the forgotten people chained to the bottom of the economic ladder. Sound anything like Senator Bernie Sanders? They were all against 'the winner takes it all' way of doing things in their nation's political and economic life, a 'rigged' political and economic system.

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Unfortunately, it's been another great year for mass murderers and serial polluters. And displays of self-serving hypocrisy from our politicians abound from shore to shore. U.S. lawmakers refuse to limit the supply or control of semi-automatic rifles; billion dollar polluters and their companies, both here and in the U.S. continue to burn dirty fossil fuel- coal- while holding consumers at their mercy. Pauline Hanson and her mates win four Senate seats; Donald Trump tells the Republican National Convention an American horror story, featuring Mexican walls and Muslim expulsions-with himself as the happy ending!

Exalt the worth of the individual; champion the forgotten man and women; protest any degradation to their dignity, spirit and divinity- that's the prophetic vocation. May the prophetic mind and voice be yours! Move forward with a strong and active faith!

*"You twist justice, making it a bitter pill for the oppressed.
You treat the righteous like dirt...
How you hate honest judges!
How you despise people who tell the truth!
Your trample the poor, stealing their grain through taxes and unfair rent."
- Amos 5: 7-11*

All the best, Rev. Ron Rosinsky

Worship Themes- 10 am Sundays

- 14 August: 'No life without war and affliction' Isaiah 5:1-7; Luke 12: 49-56
- 21 August: 'Spiritual care and growth is vital' Jeremiah 1:4-10; Luke 13:10-17
- 28 August: **Commemoration of Church destruction and reconstruction: Interview- Can our 'Biblical garden' also serve as a community greenspace?** Luke 14:1; 7-14
- 4 September: Communion Sunday- 'Overpowered and Empowered'
Psalm 139: 1-18; Luke 14: 25-35
- 11 September: Spring Festival



KID'S UNITING

10 am every Sunday in term;
Faith, hope and radical love- learning and living it, within a caring church family
Primary aged children: teachers: Caterina and Fiona
Confirmation classes: second and fourth Sundays; teachers: Caterina and Claire



'BOWLING NIGHT'

Our next 'Fish and Chips Night' will be 10 pin bowling at AMF Bowling, Maribyrnong behind Officeworks on Rosamond Rd.

6pm, Saturday 27th August

It would be helpful if you let Michael or Melita know if you are going.

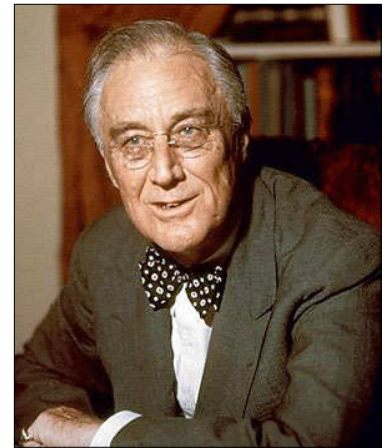
Everyone is welcome and it will be lots of fun for young and old.

On the Grapevine: *Ron R.*



"In these days of difficulty we must and shall choose the path of social justice, the path of faith, the path of hope, and the path of love toward our fellow man [and woman]."

- President Franklin Roosevelt, 1936



"The last word must always be love."

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"God's acceptance of us is personal and political. It speaks to our inner need; it challenges every social and political discrimination."

Dr. Francis Macnab





Coming Soon

‘Threes’: A New Dining Together Program

The proposal is that each person or household in our congregation would be teamed up with two other households. One household can be an individual, or a family of any description or size.

This group of three households would meet to share a meal together. This would happen at least once every three months, ideally, once every two months. At the end of six months the roster would change.

A meal together can be as low-key or as elaborate as those involved want it to be, anything from a cup of coffee together to, say, a barbecue at a host’s home.

Why not build some deeper friendships, stronger support and really get to know each other?

A draft roster will be published soon.



Soul Group

Friendly discussion and study to sustain spiritual and emotional growth, featuring: *finishing our life time-lines.*

Next meeting: Sunday 21 August- 11:30-12:45- All welcome!

AVUC ROSTER, August-September

| | LEADER | COM-MUNION | DUTY ELDER | MUSIC | WELCOM-ER | READER | MORNING TEA |
|--|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 7 August Communion | Rev Ron | Angelika | Angelika | Rob | Dina | Angelika | Dina & Barbara |
| 14 August Family Service | Rev Ron | | Noel | Maria | Peter | Cally | Bente & Marycon |
| 21 August | Rev Ron | | Dorothy | Dorothy | Ken/Jenny | Bente | Ken/Jenny |
| 28 August Garden Swap | TBA | | Angelika | Candace | Michael/ Melita | Peter | Dina/Judy |
| 4 September Communion | Rev Ron | Dina | Dina | Rob | Robin and Chris | Chris | Bente & Angelika |
| 11 September Family Service | Rev Ron | | Michael/Melita | Maria | Peter | Melita/ Michael | Marycon & Barbara |
| 18 September Kids Uniting on Holiday | Rev Ron | | Noel | Dorothy | Judy | Ken | Ken/Jenny |
| 25 September | TBA | | Dorothy | Candace | Cally | Barbara | Chris & Judy |



CAKE STALL & SAUSAGE SIZZLE AUGUST 13th.

Now that all our European adventurers are back in town, we are ready to hold our cake stall and sausage sizzle on Saturday August 13th on Union Road in front of Happy Receptions. We will be there setting up from 8:15am in order to start selling from 9am until 12 noon or until we are sold out. Please let me know if you are willing to bake, or make jams or preserves, or if you would like to help out selling or setting up on the day. It is a great way to spend some time with friends and you will spot lots of people you know doing their Saturday shopping.

Please let me know if you would be willing to spend some time to help in any way. Michael will need help cooking and selling sausages, so please contact him for more details.

Candace



Do You Want to Join a Singing Group?



In the last Transcend I asked if anyone was interested in forming a singing group or choir with the purpose of singing a piece or two in a selected church service later this year.

I know there are a few people out there who would like to sing as I can hear you every Sunday. We would aim to rehearse after church a few Sundays in advance of the performance.

If you are interested, please come and chat to me.

Thanks Candace



Harvest Swap

AUGUST 28th.

The next harvest swap by the Moonee Valley garden group is scheduled for Sunday 28th August, at 11.30. This is a great time to share and gain knowledge about gardening.

You are invited to bring anything garden or food related to swap. eg. pots, fertilizer, fruit, veggies, seeds, seedlings, cuttings, flowers, jams, chutneys (any cooked items must have the ingredients listed), recipes, ... and then discuss with those present what you would like to swap your items for.

GREAT SUPPORT FOR OUR JULY APPEAL



There was a great response to our appeal for food and other goods for Asylum Seekers. The items will be delivered to the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre in Footscray. Thank you everyone! A fantastic effort.



Thank you Eileen!

Eileen Ray kindly conducted the service for us on July 31st during Ron's absence.

The photo shows Eileen with two of the children during the children's part of the service.

Eileen was also instrumental in starting the Harvest Swaps that are held on the last Sundays of most months.

Thank you Melita for the two above photos

A Sunday School teacher asked her class why Joseph and Mary took Jesus with them to Jerusalem .. A small child replied, 'They couldn't get a baby-sitter.'

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A Sunday school teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her 5 and 6 year olds. After explaining the commandment to 'Honour thy father and thy mother,' she asked, 'Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?' Without missing a beat, one little boy answered, 'Thou shall not kill..'

FROM THE TREASURER

New Offering envelopes

New envelopes for 2016/2017 are available on the table in the gathering space.
Please take a set.

Direct Credit

Several members are now using direct credit, using electronic funds for offerings.
This has significantly increased our offerings. If you are interested please see Peter Macdonald.

Income and Expenses

| | <u>June</u> |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Offerings | \$ 1,722 |
| Fundraising and Appeals | \$ 100 |
| Donations | \$ 101 |
| Building users | \$ 4,925 |
| Other | \$ 0 |
| Total Income | \$ 6,848 |
| Ministry | \$ 5,552 |
| Mission & Service | \$ 0 |
| Property | \$ 3,515 |
| Other | \$ 807 |
| Expenses | \$ 9,874 |

Deficit for year through June is \$ 14,252

UCA Funds Management

UCA Funds Management held their annual briefing Tuesday July 26th and I attended their presentation themed "interest Rates lower for longer".

A large number of people attended and much of the question period revolved around ethical investing.

Finance Committee

The 2015 audit has been completed.
The next finance committee meeting is scheduled for August 11th 7.30 PM at the church and business at this meeting will include review of income and expenses versus 2016 budget through June, rental rates for our building users in 2017 and updated chart of future viability .

Regards
Peter Macdonald , Treasurer

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



We celebrated Jean's birthday in June

JUDGE GENTLY

Author Unknown

Pray don't find fault with the man who limps
Or stumbles along the road,
Unless you have worn the shoes he wears
Or struggled beneath his load.
There may be tacks in his shoes that hurt,
Though hidden away from view,
Or the burden he bears, placed on your back,
Might cause you to stumble too.
Don't sneer at the man who's down today
Unless you have felt the blow
That caused his fall, or felt the shame
That only the fallen know.
You may be strong, but still the blows
That were his, if dealt to you,
In the self-same way at the self-same time
Might cause you to stagger too.
Don't be too harsh with the man who sins
Or pelt him with words or stone,
Unless you are sure, yea, doubly sure,
That you have no sins of your own -
For you know perhaps if the tempter's voice
Should whisper as softly to you
As it did to him when he went astray,
It might cause you to falter too.

Submitted by Jean

REFLECTION ON THE ELECTION

The results of the recent Federal election suggest that we will not see significant improvements anytime soon in Government policies on issues such as tackling climate change, and treating asylum seekers humanely.

We will need to prepare ourselves for an ongoing campaign on these and other justice issues.

It can be disheartening to find that once again we seem no nearer achieving our goals than we've ever been.

But let's think of the movements to end slavery, or gain the right for women to vote. These goals took decades to achieve, and at times it must have seemed a hopeless quest. But in the end they were achieved, thanks to campaigners who didn't give up.

My father was a great battler against injustice and bureaucracy, and a great encouragement to him was this poem by A H Clough (1819- 1861). In case you haven't heard it, here it is, for your interest and encouragement too.

— **Dorothy Howes**

Say not the Struggle Naught availeth

Say not the struggle naught availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase ev'n now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, streams in the light;
In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly;
But westward, look, the land is bright!

A.H.Clough

About the Poet.



Although a bright student, the poet Arthur Clough suffered from the intense pressures of high expectations. He attended Oxford but was dismissed before completing his studies. He had difficulty securing a job, and he eventually found a career as a clerk in the British Education Office.

This poem appeared in 1849, when the poet was 30. The great Irish famine was a recent memory, Reform seemed to have run out of steam in England, monarchism was rising again in France, the revolutionary impulses of Europe in 1848 had petered out, and the slavery issue was heating up in the U.S.A. (where Clough spent parts of his life from childhood on). For liberal-minded people like Clough it was a difficult time..

A Little Wisdom??

Before you judge a man, walk a mile in his shoes. After that, who cares?
He's a mile away and you've got his shoes.

Birthdays are good for you. The more you have, the longer you live.

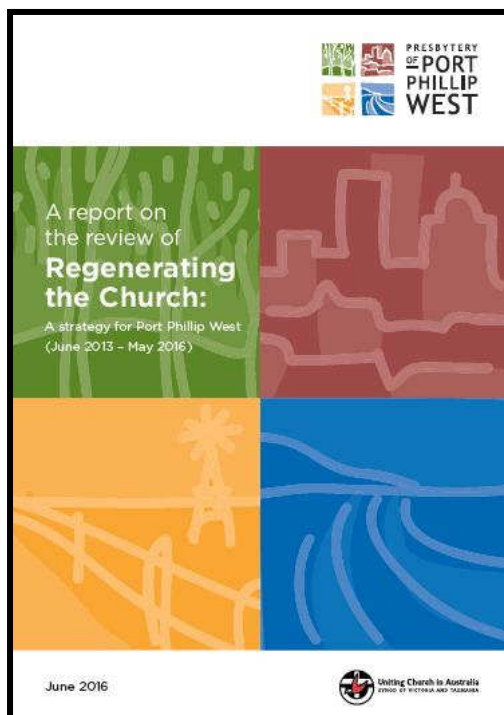
If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you.

Position Vacant: Telepath. You know where to apply.

Why do kamikaze pilots wear helmets?

Never play leapfrog with a unicorn.

Report on Our Presbytery's Regenerating the Church Program



A comprehensive evaluation of this program has been completed and a copy of the report can be seen at <http://www.regeneratingthechurch.org.au>

The program which commenced in 2013 aimed :

1. To identify and train people across the Presbytery to:
 - a) lead the planting of a variety of expressions of church;
 - b) lead the development of new forms of church in existing congregations, schools or agencies.
2. To nurture, develop and support missional leadership for the renewal of existing congregations, schools or agencies.
3. To identify and encourage congregations to actively explore and support (through people, financial and other resources) the development of new forms of church and planting a variety of expressions of church.

Some of its findings were:

- 152 people (including 81% of ministers), representing 78% of congregations and faith communities in the Presbytery, have participated in missional education programs such as Mission Shaped Ministry, Pioneer Learning Communities, etc
- 44 people (including 12 ministers) have participated in missional coaching, following on from their initial Mission Shaped Ministry program
- 86% of congregations and faith communities in the Presbytery have invited Rose Broadstock and/or Adam McIntosh for an information session about the Strategy
- At least 1/2 of congregations and faith communities have engaged in missional planning in the last three years
- More than a third, possibly 45% or more, of congregations and faith communities, are experimenting with new forms of church. They are at different stages of development, but at least 6 (and up to 13) of them have fully emerged as a new form of church
- Up to 44 new mission activities, based in at least 10 (and up to 25) places; others may be underway and not reported through the survey.

The full report is worth reading and the Regenerating the Church Website has a number of short videos showing some of the new activities and new ways of “doing church”.

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

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IMAGINE YOU'RE LISA.

You're married with two beloved children. Then your husband walks out on you.

You're devastated, but you manage to get a part-time job. This just pays for the rent, and food, and school books and uniforms.

Then you have an accident. You're injured, and have to take time off work. But when you're well enough to return, the boss tells you they don't need you any more.

You try everywhere for a job. But no one wants a worker who needs flexible hours so they can be there for their children.

You go onto Newstart. It's not enough to live on. 85% of it goes on rent. Then there's the gas, electricity, water, school expenses ...

You're buying less food, cheaper food. One day you look in the cupboard and find that all you have for the kids' tea is dry biscuits ... What do you do?

Hopefully, like Lisa, you find a UnitingCare office nearby. Perhaps, like her, you enter in tears, you feel so ashamed at having to beg for help.

But you find— at last – sympathetic and knowledgeable people, who can give you food for your immediate needs, organise concessions on your bills, and advise you on getting a job again. They will be there for you until you're back on your feet.

OR IMAGINE YOU'RE JOSIE

You're 21, and studying to be a nurse. You live in shared accommodation with a friend, Naomi, and her six-year-old daughter Ava.

Then Naomi has a nervous breakdown and has to go into hospital. Of course you promise to look after Ava till she comes back.

But the weeks stretch on and Naomi doesn't come back. She's had to go into a psychiatry unit for extended counselling and rehabilitation.

It's been hard enough to stretch your allowance to cover your University fees as well as food and your share of the rent. Now you've got an extra mouth to feed, and all the rent to pay for. On top of that, with minding Ava and worrying about the future, how are you going to focus on your studies or get through your course?

Hopefully you hear about the local UnitingCare office, where you find understanding and support...

These are real life people, just two out of hundreds that UnitingCare staff meet and help every week. They work in a whole range of community support programs that the government doesn't support. They depend on our donations to carry on.

We all receive many requests from good causes. But surely this must be one of the best – one to which we can all contribute something, however small.

AVUC's Share Appeal will last throughout August. See Dorothy or another Elder or Councillor for a donation folder, or pick one up at the door!