



TRANSCEND: DECEMBER - 2016

Ascot Vale Uniting Church Newsletter

60 Maribyrnong Road, Moonee Ponds

Services: Sundays 10 am

We wish you all a peaceful, healthy and happy New Year

TO BE TRULY EDUCATED.....

"To be truly educated means to have ones' insights deepened - not to have one's information increased. It means to have a clear sympathetic understanding of the human race and its problems. There is nothing more sad than a person filled with "book-learning" who lacks this true awareness."
- Norman Vincent Peale

"The greatest formal talent is worthless if it does not serve a creativity which is capable of shaping a cosmos."

- Albert Einstein

"God became a human being in order that human beings might become God."

- St. Irenaeus

They were rank outsiders- Joseph, Mary and Jesus in a Bethlehem stable. But by the time their lives were finished, through Jesus, they had subverted the entire system and status quo.

Like Jesus kicking over the money-changers' tables in the Temple, the political and religious classes in Israel were upended by the Christian movement. They couldn't stop it. The rule of the Jerusalem elites was marked by phony morality, which they used to disguise their aggression and violence toward the common people. Land grabs and summary executions, enforced labour and martial law- being bullied- was the daily bread of the people under the rule of Pilate and Herod. And Caiaphas the High Priest legitimized the rule and aggression of these bullies with his brand of religion.

Christians who have very little to say about social justice and abuse of power and people, or who remain silent, deny the true meaning of Christmas and of the baby born that night.

They have a touch of Caiaphas.

In stark contrast to this was the Hebrew people's true spirit and beliefs flowing from their understanding of covenant relationships, relationships like none other, with God and each other.

Beginning from the days of Abraham and Moses God made a covenant with people.

It was a relationship and a promise to bless- a promise of unconditional love.

Key features of this bond developed over time, including: that all people from the greatest to the least are created as equals; all persons are to be treated with respect; all deserve to enjoy freedom, and to have their fair share in God's gifts- land and national prosperity- to be recipients and bearers of the blessing. These were the rules established by Father Moses, later enlivened by the great Hebrew prophets. **This shaped Jesus' world-view, it's the faith his parents instilled in their son.**

Jesus and his family represented that domain of Israel's outsiders and outcasts. They didn't have formal power. They had something better. They had creativity and imagination, a rugged belief in the covenant and what it meant, and a growing faith in each other. They discovered power for their lives and destinies. *Let's do nothing less in our time.*

PTO

Here are some gifts that flow to us from Christmas and the Christian movement: (Here I gladly lift up scholarship of 'The Jesus Seminar' mixed with my own reflections)

1. *Spiritual power- synergy:* Jesus rejected the notion of God as *coercive power*, in his extravagant love and creative resistance to authorities Jesus showed a new power: faith, persuasion and absence of force.
2. *A trust ethic:* *Jesus caught a glimpse* of the world after one's insights have been deepened, seeing it anew with God's eyes. It was a glimpse of a compassionate God who indwells all creation and creatures. He endeavored to share his vision through his *words and healings*.
3. *Joy and bliss:* Jesus *celebrated life* as though he had just discovered a cache of coins, or a truant son had returned home. Jesus had no doctrine of God; he had experience of God.
4. *Creative resistance:* Jesus was a stand-up Jewish *comedian*. Engaging freely in exaggeration, caricature and parody, using parable and ironic humor, he skewered religious and political leaders, their fake morality and unjust laws.
5. *Ending Temple religion:* Jesus practised and advocated *an alternative to Temple religion*. For Jesus temple and priests were redundant. He and his followers practiced an unbrokered relationship to God.
6. *Transcending Tribalism:* Jesus subverted *kinship codes and showed the beauty of an inclusive trans-ethnic society*: "Unless you hate your father & mother, wife & children, brothers & sisters, you're no disciple of mine," he said. True relatives are those who do the will of God- who do what's right.
7. *Transcending false pride and ego:* Jesus *abolished the barriers* that segregate and divide human beings: He ate openly with prostitutes, petty tax officials, and other 'sinners' in defiance of purity codes. He respected women. He advised his followers to love their enemies.
8. *Subverting the system:* Jesus advocated undermining the system: heal on the Sabbath. Turn the other cheek in defiance of your superior. Go the second mile with enemy troops.
9. *Kinship in the Kingdom-* for Jesus the domain of God, or God's life in the world is peopled with outsiders and outcasts. It's not the kingdom of David and Solomon; Trump and Turnbull. The kingdom as Jesus envisioned it subverts the common expectation of the restoration of a royal kingdom, and power based on wealth and privilege.
10. *Selflessness:* In the body of authentic sayings that originated with Jesus, he asked not one thing for himself and advised his followers to ask nothing for themselves, except bread for the day.
11. *Jesus as the guide to fulfilling your essential divine nature:* *Jesus was not sacrificed by God for our sins*. He was a victim of his own vision of what could be. He shows us how to live and love and what to value most in life.

Let 'em have Trump. We'll take Christmas and Christ- a standing rebuke to all that would enslave us; an enlargement of our powers together and alone for justice and right relationships.

"We shall have a creative Kingdom!" -Mechtild of Magdeburg

"Do you create or destroy?" -Dag Hammarskjold

"The soul among all creatures is generative like God is." - Meister Eckhart

"By the grace of God I have not been fruitless." - Paul, 1 Cor. 15: 10

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,
Ron Rosinsky

Ron will be on leave from Sunday evening 15 Jan until Sunday 22 Jan.

Worship Services & Themes- 10 am Sundays

11 December: 'Differentiate or Die- Mentally and Spiritually'

Matthew 11: 2-11: Jesus differentiates himself from John the Baptist

18 December: 'Losing your soul- but so many ways to find it'

Matthew 1: 18-25

6.00 pm: Shared Community Meal, Children's Christmas Puppet Play & Christmas Carols Service

25 December: **9:30am Christmas Celebration**

'Leave Room for Some Bliss' Luke 2: 1-20

1 January: Communion Sunday, Rev. Eileen Ray

8 January: Rev. Eileen Ray

15 January: 'Our Dignity and Responsibility for Building the New Humanity' - Rev. Ron John 1: 29-42

22 January: Rev. Keith Howden

Kid's Uniting



Kid's Uniting will finish on 18 December. To recommence on Sunday 2 February

Primary aged children: teachers: Caterina and Fiona

Confirmation classes: second and fourth Sundays; teachers: Caterina and Claire

On the Grapevine:

'Murphy Goes to Church', by Steve Dennie and Rob Suggs

The Tenure Principle: Those who can't pastor, pastor many churches.

The Last Shall Be First Law: The pastor (and Elder or Church Councillor) is the last person to know and the first to get blamed.

The Holy Terror Law: All mischief can be traced to the preacher's kids.

On Preachers and Teachers:

The Law of the Thorn-Covered Rose: Good content plus lousy teaching equals lousy teaching.

The Rambler's Reality: The more the teacher or preacher talks, the less students learn.

Stay and Join Us!

Sunday December 11th after the service

Sausage Sizzle lunch & open house with 'Learning Land'



(Better than Bunnings)

Learning Land is a developmental learning program for pre-schoolers run during the week at the church. It is run by qualified teachers. Children learn ABC's and 1,2,3's through dance, art and craft and get a headstart in school readiness. Learning Land is the main hirer of our church building and an important source of our church income.

This is an opportunity for us and the people involved in Learning Land to get to know each other

Sunday 18 December: Shared community meal & Christmas Carols service- 6:00pm



Vale Iris Wright

Iris Wright died on Tuesday morning. Her funeral service will be held next Tuesday, 6 December at 10 am at the Crick Chapel at Faulkner Cemetery. After the chapel service Iris will be buried in the Faulkner Cemetery.

"Iris was a force of nature. Her formidable intellect, strength of character and her indomitable spirit will be greatly missed. She also had a wonderful ironic sense of humour.

'Aunty Iris' was good and decent, much loved and admired."

Ron



Thank You Mark

Rev. Mark Dunn kindly replaced Ron on November 20th.

Until his retirement Mark was the minister at St Johns Uniting, Essendon. He and his wife Jan are busy moving to Pascoe Vale.

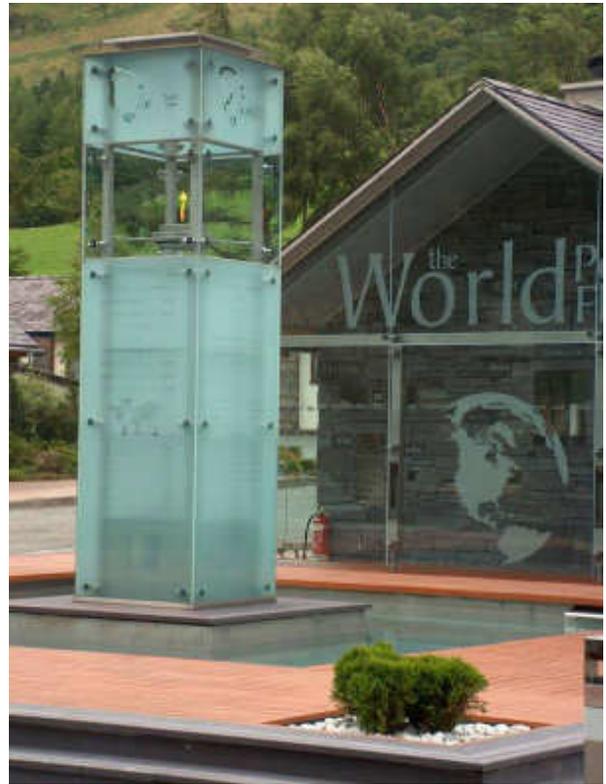
Mark is active in the wider church and is a senior Army Chaplain.



Mark brought along a tea candle which a friend had lit from the World Peace Flame. The World Peace Flame is a symbol of peace, unity, freedom and celebration. It is aimed to help spread the message of peace throughout the world.

The Peace Flame project was started in 1999, when seven flames, lit by eminent peacemakers on five continents were brought together to light a World Flame in Bangor North Wales.

Today there are permanent flames in many continents and Flames burn in thousands of homes, schools, workplaces, hospitals and places of worship around the world.



The World Peace Flame is now burning permanently in Byron Bay, Australia.

The Flame arrived by plane on 17 Sept. 2005. It was carried in a candle-lit procession at sunset to a special Aboriginal fire ceremony on the beach and then to The Byron Peace Park where it was received by a large audience gathered for a spectacular outdoors Peace Flame Ceremony. The next day, the World Peace Flame was installed in a monument at the Byron Bay Community Centre.



Lighting tea candles from the flame

**THE BAPTISM OF NIKA, DAUGHTER OF
REZA AND NASRIN ON NOVEMBER 11th.**



**Ron talks to the children
about Christmas on
November 27th**



**NEW SIGN ON THE FRONT OF
THE TOWERS**

THANK YOU DOROTHY

**ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL
GARDEN SWAP HELD ON
SUNDAY NOVEMBER
27th.**



**THANKS AGAIN TO
EILEEN & ROB FOR
RUNNING THIS
ACTIVITY**

HELP NEEDED

We have a beautiful church garden.

BUT

Weeds have grown rapidly this year.

Can you please give some time to pull out some of them

WHEN

Any cooler time of the day

It can be a few or a lot, it all helps.

For more information speak to Dina



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'Transcend' is published monthly
Articles and photos are welcome.
Email to the Editor
Robin Waltrowicz

'Threes': A Dining Together Program



Ron has circulated a draft roster for the 'Threes Dining' Program. This is a voluntary program in which those who choose to take part will 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 meet to share a meal together. This dining together could occur once or more, over a three month or so period, from November 2016 to February 2017, At the end of six months the roster would change.

The meal can be in someone's home; at a cafe for tea; a picnic at a park; or at church. It could be a barbecue, a sit down meal, a sandwich at church, or just a cup of coffee. The members of the 'Three' agree on what they would like to do.

FROM THE TREASURER

Offerings

Envelopes for 2016/2017 are still available. They are on the table in the gathering pace. Please take a set.

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: October

Offerings	\$ 1,985
Fundraising	\$ 0
Donations	\$ 325
Building users	\$ 1,208
Other	\$ 0

Total Income \$ 3,518

Ministry	\$ 3,648
Mission & Service	\$ 0
Property	\$ 2,549
Other	\$ 118

Expenses \$ 6,315

Deficit for year through October is \$ 17,889

Outstanding Bills And Accounts

I would appreciate help from all those with outstanding bills and accounts for any goods, purchases and services on behalf of the church that such accounts be passed to me as soon as possible and with minimum delay.

Thanks for your help.

Cheques For Purchases And services

I would appreciate help from all those with cheques from the church for goods, purchases and services that these cheques be presented as soon as soon as possible and within the month the cheque is raised.

This will save me carrying over outstanding payments from month to month.

Finance Committee

The finance committee met on Thursday November 24th and prepared the church 2017 budget for submission to the next church council meeting.

Peter Macdonald— Treasurer



Holding the Light

An ecumenical service to remember victims & survivors of domestic violence

Sunday 4 Dec—2.30-3.30

St Peter's Eastern Hill

15 Gisborne St. East Melbourne

THANK YOU JUDITH



On November 6th our congregation formally thanked Judith Geddes for her many years of service to our church. Our past chairperson Ken Roberts presented her with a certificate of commendation.

Each week for many years Judith has supplied the beautiful flowers for our service.



SAVE THE BARRIER REEF

Well done, Clara and Rachel who have been campaigning to save The Great Barrier Reef! They have written to the Prime Minister expressing their concern. Our church is adding its support and encourages everyone to sign the letter that Dorothy is shown holding in the photo above.



AVUC ROSTER, Dec 2016 – Jan 2017

	LEADER	COM-MUNION	DUTY ELDER	MUSIC	WELCOMER	READ-ER	MORNING TEA
11 Dec -Family Serv. Kids Uniting finish	Rev Ron		Dorothy	Maria	Judy	Candace	Judy/Chris
18 December	TBA		Noel	Candace	Ken	Angelika	Angelika/ Bente
25 December Christmas Day	TBA		Angelika	Dorothy	Peter	Barbara	Barbara/ Marycon
1 January 2017 New Year's Day Communion	TBA	Dina	Dina	Rob	Robin	Chris	Judy/Chris
8 January Family Service	Rev Ron		Dorothy	Maria	Dina	Dina	Ken/Jenny
15 January	Rev Ron		Noel	Dorothy	Judy	Marycon	Marycon/ Angelika
22 January	Rev Ron		Angelika	Candace	Cally	Cally	Bente/Fiona
29 January	TBA		Dorothy	Candace /Maria	Michael & Melita	Michael/ Melita	Dina/Judy



BLUE CHRISTMAS -

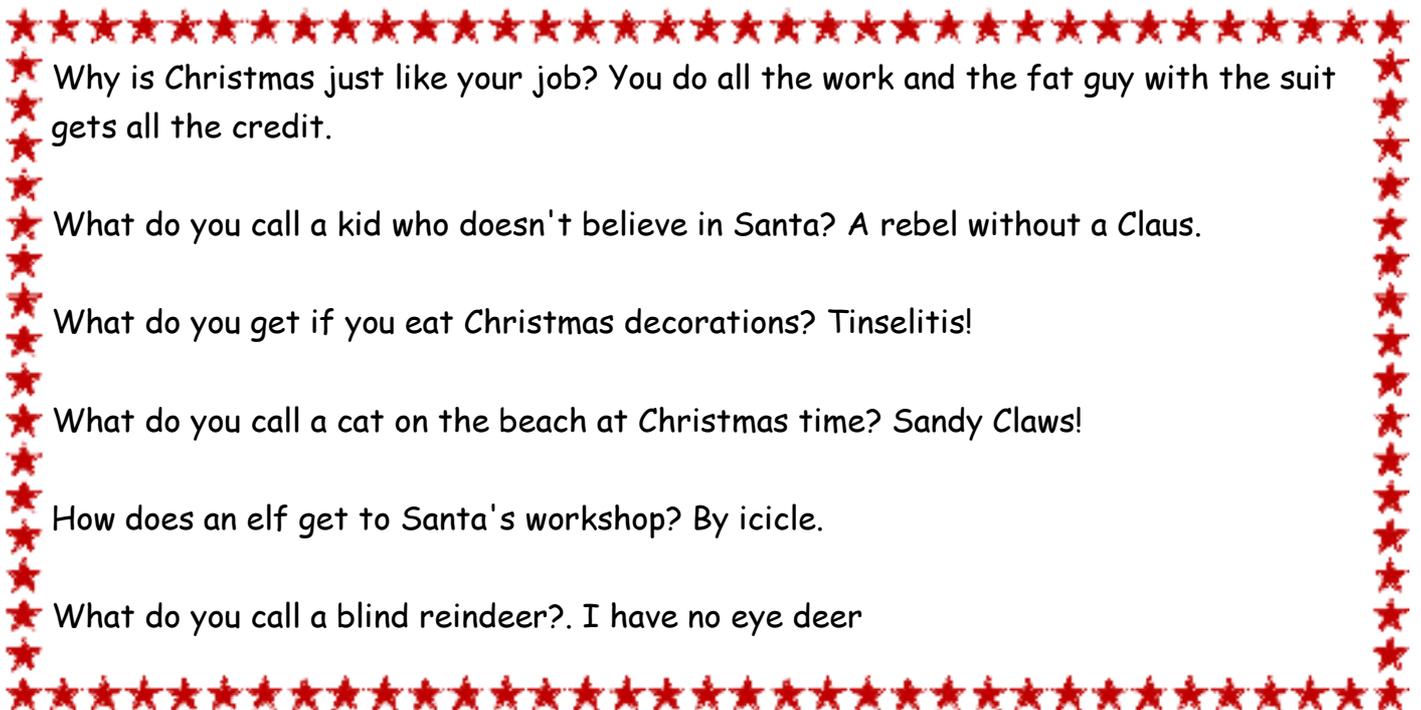
What a beautiful experience!

Was it a musical treat enhanced by thoughtfully chosen readings, or a service of guided meditation enriched by beautiful music? Either way, it was a deeply moving occasion.

Subdued candlelight; a time apart to focus on the deeper issues we usually push aside; a rich array of piano music masterfully played by Rob; the quiet, measured voices of Eileen and Ron with prayers and readings that centred on a theme of light in the darkness. Candles were lit to represent the lights of creation, of guidance, of courage, hope and new life, and we were invited to add our own candles carrying our silent remembrances and prayers for the world, our community, our loved ones and ourselves.

A passage from Kahlil Gibran taught that pain and sorrow are inseparable from, and indeed prerequisite for, joy. This truth was illustrated by a recorded performance from the Women's Vocal Orchestra. The orchestra was formed in 1943 in a prisoner of war camp in Sumatra, with the hope and aim of transporting its audience and singers beyond the confines of their nightmare experience in the camp, and nurturing their will to survive. It made inspiring listening.

I felt a heightened awareness of the deeper meaning of Christmas, and a sense of the calm of solitude, warmed by a quiet fellowship. Thank you, Eileen and Rob, for the thought and energy you gave, to enable us to prepare ourselves for the celebration of Christmas in this beautifully alternative way. - Dorothy Howes



★ Why is Christmas just like your job? You do all the work and the fat guy with the suit gets all the credit.

★ What do you call a kid who doesn't believe in Santa? A rebel without a Claus.

★ What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations? Tinselitis!

★ What do you call a cat on the beach at Christmas time? Sandy Claws!

★ How does an elf get to Santa's workshop? By icicle.

★ What do you call a blind reindeer?. I have no eye deer

