

TRANSCEND: FEBRUARY

Ascot Vale Uniting Church Newsletter 2015

60 Maribyrnong Road, Moonee Ponds

Services: Sundays 10 am

We sadly convey the news that Ron's mother Betty Alice Rosinsky passed away on January 22nd. Ron has travelled to Wisconsin for the funeral and to meet up with family members. On behalf of the congregation we extend to Ron, Isabella, and their children our sincere condolences.

Ron will be away for the services on January 25th, February 1st, and February 8th. He returns on Tuesday Feb 10.

During his absence services will be conducted as follows:

January 25th.—Michael and Melita Long did a great job at short notice.

February 1st. & 8th. Dr. Julie Hall

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday January 31st.	Barbeque at Church From 4pm BBQ at 6pm
Sunday February 1st.	Kid's Uniting Resumes
Tues February 10th.	Ron returns
Tues February 17th	Shrove Tuesday
Ash Wednesday 18th	Lent
Thurs Feb 19th	Chinese New Year - Year of the Sheep
Monday March 9th.	Labour Day Holiday
Friday April 3rd.	Good Friday
Sunday April 5th.	Easter Sunday
Saturday April 25th.	Anzac Day
Sunday May 11th.	Mothers Day

Special Social Events ('Fish and Chip Nights')

Friday 27th February
Barefoot Bowls



Saturday 28th March
Quiz Night



Saturday 25th April
Anzac Theme Dinner



NOTES FROM THE SERVICE ON DECEMBER 24th. 2014

'What children and adults really want. It's cheaper than video games and healthier than icecream.

Bible reading: Luke 1: 67-80 The Prophecy of Zachariah- Becoming Strong in Spirit.

Key Points:

1. Luke 1: 67-80: 'to give knowledge of salvation'

- **Salvation: to participate in God's life in the present moment**, not just in heaven after we die; 'eternal life' is now. It means living in union with this eternal presence or Spirit which is characterized by the experiences of **faith, hope and love**. Love is correctly translated as "charity": **1 Corinthians 13**.
- Paul the Apostle had a very here and now sense of 'eternal life': "*behold whoever is in Christ is a new being, the old has passed away and the new has come.*" **2 Corinthians 5: 17**
Paul saw that we could reach this state by trusting in God's love for us (as revealed through Christ)- a radical trust. He believed this was achievable through one's spiritual practices.
- The Christian triad/ triune for understanding God's life in the world is:
God 'the Creator': is power;
God the Son (Jesus): is purpose; and,
God the Holy Spirit: is presence.
- **Biblical and modern day prophets are not fortune tellers. Rather, they humbly impart knowledge of salvation.** By listening to God a prophet helps another to come alive by helping them to participate in that larger life of God's Spirit: *faith, hope and love*. This can be done in many ways, through advocacy and pastoral care for another, and by fighting for a world of justice and righteousness, bread and freedom. Check out how the early church/ apostolic community did this and laid down the example for all time: **See Acts 2: 42-47: The Apostles spent time with God and with each other by working their spiritual practices (teaching, breaking bread, prayers, relationships of equality) and then they put their spiritual practices to work in acts of charity: 'they gave to any as had need.'**

2. Ask: How do we do this in our family relationships?

- The family narrative or story is the result of healthy family relationships and interactions over a long period of time. Practice the things mentioned in **Acts 2: 42-47- notice the *quality* of those relationships.**
- Help your child and family to be aware of the **nurturing stories** at work in their lives (*the 'teaching' and learning*);
- Encourage contexts and patterns of relating to one another where nurturing stories can be further developed, where mutual honesty and respect of one another's feelings are practiced (*breaking bread together, talking, prayers*).

3. Luke 1: 67-80 "...to guide our feet into the way of peace...becoming strong in spirit"

- Help people be aware of the negative stories at work in their lives;
- Help them explore the unfolding stories that are positive;
- Provide your support so that the unfolding story can thicken – to challenge the negative story.
- **Your goal: to help your child or partner claim their sense of self in your presence, rather than being emotionally fused to you. Biblically this is what it means to 'become strong in Spirit'- connected to your deeper self which is God.**

4. Key Points: 'What Children really want', Steve Biddulph

- A child wants to know if your marriage, your mental health, your faith, your affection and your discipline are strong enough.
- Then the child can relax and begin to grow.
- Babies, children, adults need: Love, contact and affection in its various forms.

Babies- human contact and affection:

- Skin to skin contact frequently;
- Movement of a gentle but robust kind; bouncing your child on knee;
- Eye contact, smiling, colourful, lively environment;
- Sounds such as singing, talking, etc.

Children:

- All adults and children need to be recognized, noticed and, preferably given sincere praise.
- **Ask: Are you relaxed and happy enough to give others a *secure* feeling?**
- Your words, your presence (active listening), your affection; your '**incarnational presence**' shows **faith, hope and love to another in your maturity and deeds: 'the word becomes flesh full of grace and truth' in you.**

5. Why do children play up?

- They're bored: mental stimulation needed;
- They feel unwanted: **can you spend a little time each day giving full, positive attention and physical contact to another?**
- It gets them noticed: give attention for doing the *right* thing.



1 Feb - Kid's Uniting Reconnences - 10:00am

Pastoral Emergencies during Ron's absence: please contact Rev. Mark Dunn

We warmly welcome Dr Julie Hall back to Ascot Vale and look forward to her ministry with us while Ron is overseas. Among her qualifications, Julie has earned a doctorate of social work and has extensive experience in progressive Christian and spiritual practices, particularly supporting women who are survivors of violence.

1 February: Preacher- Dr. Julie Hall

8 February: Dr. Julie Hall

15 February: Rev. Ron returns Theme: 'The power of a therapeutic presence'

Mark 1: 40-55 Jesus cleanses a leper: *'I do choose. Be made clean.'*

22 February: Lent Begins: 'Temptations to manipulate: growing up is hard'

Mark 1: 9-15: Jesus' wilderness temptations and the beginning of his ministry

1 March: Communion Sunday: 'The principle of non-attachment for your mental health' - Mark 8: 31-38: *'Those who want to save their life will lose it.'*

8 March: Family Service: 'Our lives end when we become silent about things that matter' - John 2: 13-22: Jesus' act of civil protest- cleansing the temple

WELCOME REBECCA AND AIYAH!



On Wednesday January 21st we celebrated the baptism of a lovely little girl Aiyah. At the same time her mother Rebecca reaffirmed her faith.

Members of the congregation were joined by friends and family of Rebecca on this happy occasion.

We warmly welcome Rebecca and Aiyah into our church family.



After the service we were treated to a delicious afternoon tea.

Special thanks to Isabella who made and decorated a splendid christening cake.



COMING EVENTS – FROM THE PRESBYTERY

Pancake night at North Essendon Uniting Church: Tuesday 17 Feb, 6.00 pm – we are all invited to enjoy sweet and savoury pancakes (gluten-free also available) in a fundraiser for SHARE. Cost \$15 Individual, \$40 Family, \$6 Children under 12. Please RSVP by 8 February to Carol: 9370 5107.

Focus on Youth Services at St John's UC Essendon – for your diary:
Sun 29 March and Sun 28 June, both at 5.00 pm, and Sun 1 November at 7 pm.

A DAY TO REMEMBER



Something momentous happened for one of our AVUC congregation on Monday 26 January 2015! Our Sudanese friend Deborah became an Australian citizen – and Mike and I were able to join her husband James and their three children at Richmond Town Hall to see it happen.

It was a real multicultural occasion. A Vietnamese choir sang as we entered.

A local Elder welcomed us to Aboriginal country, the Mayor explained that his parents are Greek, an award was made for a Community Event organised jointly by Aboriginal people and others, and of the three Young Citizens of the Year, two were from Africa.

The 68 new citizens, from 25 different countries, pledged their “loyalty to Australia and its people, whose democratic beliefs I share, whose rights and liberties I respect, and whose laws I will uphold and obey”. Cheers and tears, handshakes, hugs, photos and applause accompanied the presentation of citizenship certificates.

The Mayor’s speech was balanced and thoughtful. He reminded us that, as well as the very many things we Australians have to be proud of, there are also many of which we should *not* be proud, and which we must aspire to change. The community of the City of Yarra (in which Deborah and James live) includes a significant population of Aborigines who make fine contributions to community life; but Australia’s Indigenous people also suffer significant disadvantage, which we must find ways to overcome. He praised the co-operation and caring typical of our community here in Melbourne; but he also alluded to Australia’s treatment of asylum seekers, asking that we encourage others to think, as Australians used to, of migrants as people who come to contribute to our society, not take from it. We must always remain vigilant against racism, however civilly or wittily expressed, because it has no place in our multicultural society, where except for Aboriginal people all of us are of migrant origin, and everyone has the right to be valued equally.

It was wonderful to see how overjoyed the 68 new citizens were, to become official Australians. And as I watched Amer and Yier dancing about bright-eyed, and darting off to share with each other the excitements of the hot-air hand-dryer in the wash-room, it seemed to me that here are some young Australians we are going to be very proud of in a few years’ time.

Thinking of Deborah and James, and of Nasrin and Reza, Hamid and Marjan and Arshia, I am convinced that if people are fearful, scornful or hostile towards asylum seekers and refugees it is only because they have never had, or made, the opportunity to meet and talk with any. How lucky we are to be able to think, and tell others when the subject comes up in conversation, “I have friends who were refugees, and friends who are asylum seekers, and I am proud to know them”!

Dorothy



Congratulations to Deborah Deng who became an Australian Citizen on Australia Day 2015.

THE POOR MAN'S CHRISTMAS TREE

For many Centuries our world has been divided between the rich and the poor.

The rich owned the castles, the lakes, the rivers and the forests and they feared change.

And the poor people had little.

If the poor person had a small piece of land he would grow a peach tree or an apple tree or a plum tree.

When Christmas time came only the rich people had a green fir tree cut from their vast forest holdings.. The rest of the people were given none.

But the poor were resilient. They created their own unique kind of Christmas tree.

They cut a branch from deciduous birch or oak tree. Because it was winter the branch was bare.

They set the branch in a pot filled with soil and decorated it with hand made paper chains.

They lit candles and prayed together as a family.

Even now my family in Prague follow this custom. All members of the family young and old participate in cutting and pasting a huge hand-coloured paper chain to put on the tree.

Perhaps they do not even know of the history. That is not important. OUR FAITH LIVES ON.

Dina

You may have noticed Christmas trees for sale—stark white, perhaps decorated with lights as in the photo. **The tradition is still alive.**



MOONEE VALLEY FESTIVAL 2015

Date: Sunday, 22 February, 10am-5pm

Location: Queens Park, Moonee Ponds

Queens Park will once again come to life for our largest free community celebration, the Moonee Valley Festival.

Back for its 38th year, come and join in the fun summer day full of excitement with market stalls, roving performers, entertainment stages, business expo sites, delectable food stalls, amusement rides and community activities and displays.

There was a preacher who fell in the ocean and he couldn't swim. When a boat came by, the captain yelled, "Do you need help, sir?" The preacher calmly said "No, God will save me." A little later, another boat came by and a fisherman asked, "Hey, do you need help?" The preacher replied again, "No God will save me." Eventually the preacher drowned & went to heaven. The preacher asked God, "Why didn't you save me?" God replied, "Fool, I sent you two boats!"

CHRISTMAS AMONG FRIENDS



Ron, Isabella and their family kindly hosted a number of our members for lunch after the service on Christmas day.



CHRISTMAS BARBEQUE AND SOCIAL EVENING

Once again Michael and Melita organized a most enjoyable 'Fish and Chip' night. Instead of fish it was an excellent barbecue cooked by Michael. Vegetarians brought vegeburgers!

Everyone received a present from Father Christmas
We must have all been good!
Even the big kids got one.





HELLO and some NEWS from the Social and Environmental Justice Committee!

You may have noticed signs appear recently on the entrance doors to AVUC, which read (in case you haven't had the chance to notice them!) as follows:

WELCOME TO ASCOT VALE UNITING CHURCH

We value and embrace diversity

We welcome people of every age, gender, sexual preference, race, religion and political affiliation

We explicitly reject any form of prejudice or discrimination based on religion or race

ALL PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL ARE WELCOME HERE!

The signs were placed by the SEJC, with the approval of the Church Council, in response to a reported rise in verbal and physical attacks on people in Australia who are from overseas, in particular those that appear Middle Eastern or are thought to be Muslim. We believe you will want those who visit or use our church (such as Learningland and Kumon parents) to know that we accept and honour all people of any religion or none. We owe this, we believe, to Nasrin and her family, who honour us by being a part of our church community.

In response to a suggestion by one of our gardeners, SEJC members were able recently to initiate the collection of some free mulch from Moonee Valley Council, to spread round our beautiful garden so that it can be kept watered more effectively. Many thanks to Bob Muntz and Rev Ron, and specially to Michael Long, who borrowed a friend's trailer for the purpose, and did much of the hard work. More mulch will be needed, and any help in collecting or spreading it – in close consultation with our garden experts! – will be appreciated.

We are in the process of drawing up a tentative proposal to put to Church Council, that we install rainwater tanks, both as an environmental initiative and as a way for the church to minimise the cost of water usage. Your responses to this suggestion will be welcome!

Dorothy H. Spokesperson, SEJC

A PLEA for HELP!

Lentara Uniting Church Asylum Seeker Program need accommodation for an Asylum Seeker couple for 6 months from March. If you know of any dwelling available at relatively low rent, could you please contact the Program Manager Mohammed Isah, on 9326 8243 or 0409 091 734, or at misah@lentarauc.org.au.

Pancake Day - Shrove Tuesday February 17th

Believe it or not, but February is the most festive time of the year.

Why? Because of the carnivals happening world-wide! From Rio to Venice the festivities typically include lively parades, rich foods, and different forms of entertainment. Many different theories surround the origins of Carnival. Some suggest that it is derived from the Latin expression "carne vale", which means "farewell to meat", signifying that those were the last days when one could eat meat before the fasting of Lent. The Mardi Gras parade in New Orleans is typical of the masquerades and dancing in the streets that take place in many countries on this day as people prepare for the long Lenten fast.



Shrove Tuesday is the last day before the long fast for the Lent period in many Christian churches. It has many names, including Fat Tuesday, Mardi Gras, the Tuesday of Carnival, and Pancake Day. The name Shrove Tuesday is derived from the Christian custom of confessing sins and being absolved just before Lent. Shrove Tuesday was traditionally a time to use up all the milk, butter and eggs left in the kitchen. These ingredients were often used to make pancakes, which is why the English call it Pancake Day. Others believe that the celebrations were a way to scare away evil spirits, thereby saying goodbye to winter and welcoming spring.



AN AUSTRALIA DAY QUIZ

1. How much of Australia is classified as desert? 8% 16% 25% 35%
2. The landmark *Katu Tjuta* is also known as what?
3. Cate Blanchett has received an Academy Award nomination for what movie?
4. What song played during Scott and Charlene's wedding on *Neighbours*?
5. Who invented the bionic ear?
6. In what year was decimal currency introduced?
7. What date did "new" parliament house open?
8. Who was Australia's first Aboriginal Senator?
9. How many ships were in the First Fleet?
10. In what year was gold first discovered in Victoria and NSW to begin the "Gold Rush"?
11. Who designed the Sydney Opera House?
12. Australia has the world's largest sand island. What is its name?
13. In what city did the Commonwealth Parliament first sit?
14. Who is on the front of the current issue \$100 note?
15. Of our Australian male swimmers, who has won the most Olympic gold medals?
16. Who was the most recent Australian to win the men's singles title at Wimbledon?
17. Who is the only person to have been awarded both the Australian of the Year and Young Australian of the Year titles?
18. Which former prime minister once managed a rock band called The Ramrods?
19. What is the common name of *Ornithorhynchus anatinus*?
20. Who was the first Australian-born governor-general?

PREPARING FOR EASTER AND LENT

A Spiritual Exercise Plan for Lent and Beyond

Now that we're about two weeks into 2015, how's your resolution going? If you're like a lot of people, you made some kind of resolution to get into better shape this year. Maybe you started new diet. Maybe you signed up for a membership at your local gym. If you made a resolution like this, it's because you have a standard for your own well-being... a standard that you failed to live up to last year.

Fortunately, when you hang the 2015 calendar on the wall, you get a fresh start. Every day is a new beginning. That's why the apostle Paul teaches that spiritual living is a daily struggle, similar to that of an athlete. We can't take time off and expect to stay in good shape. Every day, we have a responsibility to stay on top of it. We need to practice the spiritual disciplines of prayer, meditation, and worship. Prayer and meditation can go hand in hand with Bible reading.

So how do you do that?

Public worship. Hearing God's word and receiving the sacrament is how God nourishes you spiritually. Its like putting petrol in your tank before you need it.

Prayer. God tells you to bring all your concerns to him. Prayer is a way to stay connected to God in a private and intimate way. The world is less stressful.

Personal devotion. Read a manageable portion of the Bible daily, or find a good devotional book to keep your mind on God every day. Many Christians find that the best time for this is early in the morning, when their minds are fresh. Read over the scripture, then ask yourself some questions: what is God saying to me? Is there a promise to claim? A sin to confess and forsake? A resolution to make? A truth to learn? Someone to help?

People. Talk to other Christians about faith and spirituality. Often you can learn more from a interpersonal dialogue that you can from solitary studying.

Being grateful – Remind yourself of everyone and everything in life you are grateful for.

Forgiveness: Give up anger and hate.

Do something unselfish every day.

Febfast

FEBFAST is a secular charity which takes the theme of giving up something for the month and raising money for Youth Addiction Take a break from a habit you'd be better off without this month – alcohol, sugar, junk food, smoking or even social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat... they're all out). Pick a challenge, register online, feel healthier, and raise funds for drug and alcohol support services.

febfast.org.au

The captain of a cruise ship has a parrot. He and his parrot go to the magic show on board every night, and every night the parrot calls the magician out on his trickery, "It's up his sleeve!", "There is a hole in his hat!", "There's a fake bottom!"

So finally one day the magician gets so fed up with the parrot he pulls out a gun, shoots at the bird, misses the bird and hits the ship's boiler. This causes the ship to blow up and sink.

The magician grabs onto a piece of floating wood and the parrot lands on his shoulder. The parrot looks at him and says, "I give up, where's the boat?"

SPECIAL THANKS



The church expressed its appreciation for the contributions made by Clare and Noel. Clare provided wonderful service as a Kid's Church teacher before leaving to work in Queensland. Noel, is one of our Elders and is a great worker in our congregation.

Our Chairperson Ken presented certificates of commendation to Clare and Noel.



Australia Quiz Answers

1. 35%
2. The Olgas
3. Elizabeth
4. Suddenly
5. Professor Graeme Clark
6. 1966
7. 9th May, 1988

8. Neville Bonner
9. 11
10. 1851
11. Joern Utzon
12. Fraser Island
13. Melbourne
14. Dame Nellie Melba

15. Murray Rose
16. Lleyton Hewitt
17. Cathy Freeman
18. Paul Keating
19. Platypus
20. Isaac Isaacs

WANT TO BECOME A MEMBER OF OUR CHURCH?



During the year we have a number of services during which we formally welcome people as members of our congregation. If you wish to become a member please speak to Ron. He will be delighted to explain the simple process to you.

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

Email to the Editor
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ROSTER	SERVICE/ LEADER	COMMUNION ELDER	DUTY ELDER	MUSIC	WELCOMER	READER	MORNING TEA
15 Feb	Rev Ron		Dorothy	Dorothy	Peter	Peter	Jutta/Barbara
22 Feb	Rev Ron <i>Know Your Elders Day</i>			Candace	Robin	Chris	Bente/Chris
1 March	Rev Ron Communion	Michael	Noel	Rob	Cally	Michael	Fiona/Dina
8 March	Rev Ron <i>Family</i>			Maria	Ken/Jenny	Ken	Marycon/ Jenny
15 March	Rev Ron		Dina	Dorothy	Dina	Bente	Bente/Barbara
22 March	Rev Ron <i>KU end</i>			Candace	Angelika	Angelika	Fiona/Jutta
29 March	Rev Ron <i>Palm Sunday</i>		Angelika	Candace	Melita	Melita	Marycon/ Barbara
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	Jenny/Barbara
17 May Pentecost	Rev Ron			Dorothy	Melita	Melita	Marycon/ Dina
24 May	Rev Ron		Noel	Candace	Robin	Chris	Chris/Angelika
31 May	Rev Ron			Candace	Dina	Bente	Bente/Fiona