

TRANSCEND: JULY

Ascot Vale Uniting Church Newsletter 2014

60 Maribyrnong Road, Moonee Ponds



Services: Sundays 10 am

CHAPLAINS?



“Religions like Christianity are abusive insofar as they encourage people to feel inadequate, worthless, dependent, and deserving of harsh punishment. Such religions are abusive insofar as they teach people to accept the existence of a god which, if human, would have long ago been shut away in prison for all his immoral and violent behavior.”

- Austin Cline

These are some reasons why a person should rightly oppose Christianity, or want to ban chaplains from public schools who hold these views. We should too.

But the overwhelming majority of chaplains over the years have shown themselves to be a caring, empathic

presence for troubled children- a practical help in times of family and personal crisis. And this is in cash strapped schools. Also a school chaplain's employment contract forbids them from trying to proselytize or convert people to Christianity.

As an army chaplain I know that we are bound by the same kind of rules, thankfully, and our principal role is pastoral care for the soldiers- the care of souls- and moral and ethical guidance. Let's not remove this level of care from our already impoverished schools and children.

But we should ask, what kind of ethical and moral instruction comes from chaplains who are wedded to conservative beliefs on say, homosexuality, the role of women, and people of other religions? In this regard it seems that some fundamentalist, conservative and evangelical Christian clerics, who in their core beliefs tend to be dogmatic and reactionary, have created a rod for their own backs. They invoke a literal interpretation of many Bible passages to support their intellectual and spiritual laziness, and their own power over others.

But there is more than one kind of Christianity. The faith that people of this Church enact opposes homophobia and sexism for instance, and reveals a God who accepts us and guides us to stand up to our full stature as mature human beings.

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We *do not* teach that God put Jesus to death for our sins to somehow render us acceptable.

This 'worm' theology is what Cline is objecting to. It's not God's grace. Nor is it how Christ described his own mission in Matthew's Gospel. In it he said that what is most important is helping people to achieve within themselves and through their economic and social relationships the reign of 'justice, mercy and faith'. (Mtt. 23:23)

We are also calling on churches to repent of their exclusivism, to stop saying that Christ is the only way to God and that people of other religions won't go to heaven unless they 'accept Jesus as their lord and saviour'. This kind of theology at its heart is dark and divisive, potentially violent, and therefore inimical to living in a multicultural global village. This way of thinking seems to show that as Christ said, we still don't 'know the things that make for our own peace'. Let's be the bandage and not the wound on humanity.

Here I offer three essentials for our Christian ministry and service to others. These components were presented in summary fashion to us at a recent army chaplain's conference by Principle Chaplain Army, Father Glyn Murphy. He said that these were three aspects that we as chaplains believe in and present to others. I have added my interpretation to each point.

1. **Spiritual:** We believe that we can bring an ultimate meaning to life and to others by the good choices that we make. In doing this we incarnate or show the life of the Spirit. We understand that life is not just a collection of physical parts but the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. This is one spiritual aspect of life. Reality has a depth dimension that we also call Spirit, that is the basic energy and moral centre throughout all of life. Eternity is another way of describing that spiritual dimension. Eternity lies within and beyond each person; it's within as the eternal soul of each person. It's beyond as that spiritual presence that animates all of life and drives the evolution of humanity toward fuller compassion. Living in harmony with this spiritual dimension brings the greatest peace.

2. **Pastoral:** This means the care of souls; life lived in a deliberate and continual manner to serve others, to uphold them in their mental and spiritual health and wellbeing. It's about care for the dignity of the soul, both your own and another's, generated from belief in and union with that spiritual universe. For instance we say that in 'Christ crucified and raised' we achieve union with the spiritual universe and its power, because in his helplessness and suffering Christ evokes our best response- compassion. The release of human compassion into a troubled world is like a resurrection.

3. **Religious:** This is not religion for religion's sake, but to build a better world. Here I don't mean a literal view of the Bible nor a set of religious beliefs and dogma that may incite violence toward others. 'Religio' in Latin means to strongly bond. So we seek ways of bonding deeply with others and with that spiritual presence we call God. We also bond with our Christian heritage and story.

As leaders we join our life to the larger life of Spirit through symbol, teaching and story, through song and service. We do this in a church family, a family of faith that bears the Judeo-Christian heritage and story. That story is one of hope, and of relationships based on equality and reverence for others. It needs to be heard in our broken world.

From page 2

It's a religious, spiritual and pastoral story. So religion is the external expression of our spiritual story and beliefs (divine revelation) .

By bringing together these three essentials in our thinking and in our work we can better answer critical questions of meaning and purpose. And we can clarify confused identities.

Lets not be the wound but the bandage on humanity.

Rev Ron Rosinsky

WORSHIP THEMES AND READINGS - Sundays 10.00 am

6 July: Communion Sunday;

Theme: 'You get the experience of God that you are prepared to receive' Matthew 11: 16-19; 25-30

13 July: Family Service 'Death and all his friends' Matthew 13: 1-9; 18-23

20 July: ' Relations to others must be dynamic, interconnected' Matthew 13: 24-35

Kid's Uniting Recommences- Term 3

27 July: ' The need for approval' - Matthew 13: 44-58

3 August: Communion Sunday; 'The great exposure'
Matthew 14: 13-21 Jesus feeds five thousand people

GETTING TO KNOW YOU MORNING TEA

Sunday 10th August following the Service: sponsored by the Elders



Members and friends of Ascot Vale Uniting Church are invited to this special morning tea to meet with their Church Elder and other people that your Elder looks after. A great opportunity to get to know others, who might be from your own neighbourhood, and your Church Elder who is responsible for pastoral care.

Riddle: A poor man is sitting in a pub. He sees that the man next to him is extremely rich.

Poor man: I have an amazing talent; I know almost every song that has ever existed.

The rich man laughs.

Poor man: I am willing to bet you all the money you have in your wallet that I can sing a popular song that includes a lady's name of your choosing.

The rich man laughs again.

Rich man: OK, how about my daughter's name, Joanna Armstrong-Miller?

The poor man goes home rich.

What song did he sing?

Answer on page 8

Coming Events

Wednesday July 9: Pentecost Study, 7.30 at the church
Sunday July 20: Kid's church resumes
Wednesday July 23: Pentecost Study, 7.30 at the church
Wednesday August 5: Pentecost Study, 7.30 at the church
Sunday August 10: Meet the Elders Morning Tea
Sunday August 31: 10th anniversary of the church fire

CAR PARK REVENUE

An arrangement has been made for Melbourne Heart Centre to park two doctors cars in our carpark on Monday and Friday afternoons.

Melbourne Heart Centre has made generous donations to our church and is paying rental for the car spaces.

31 August: Tenth Anniversary of Church Fire and 'Thanksgiving morning tea'



Please join us after the service for a special morning tea

We mark this day of solemn remembrance by giving thanks to those people who have served this church the longest and given so much value to us over the years



"Whatever your views happen to be about practical theology,

don't think a nation can live without religion.

When you give up religion you give up any kind of idealism."

- Harold Macmillan, former British Prime Minister



PENTECOST STUDY: NEW DATES

'Original Blessing: A Primer in Creation Spirituality'

Note change of dates to: Wednesday 9th July at the church, then fortnightly on Wednesdays, 23rd July, 5th August.
Time 7.30 pm to 9 pm.

At Ascot Vale Uniting Church, 60 Maribyrnong Rd., Moonee Ponds

Presenter: Rev. Ron Rosinsky, ph 9370-3181; rosinsky@optusnet.com.au

In this bestseller, named one of the "20 books that changed the world", maverick theologian Matthew Fox shows how Christianity once celebrated beauty, compassion, and justice; while providing a path of spiritual transformation and ecstatic connection with all creation.

Please look at the signs showing emergency evacuation information.

They are near all of the doorways. Be familiar with their contents.

They show the location of exits, fire extinguishers, the first aid kit and fire blanket.

Also note that in the event of an emergency you are to exit via the nearest safe exit and assemble in the car park.

A cake stall in the dead of winter?



We embarked on our first winter cake stall on June 14th this year and I have to admit I was a little bit concerned we might be left out in the cold with no one to sell to.

June can be a bit wet and rainy, even for a Canadian such as me. Some might have said we had a snowball's chance in Cairns to make any money for the church, but I am happy to say that we have once again proved any naysayers wrong.

We sold nearly everything and I have a rough idea of the total number of items we sold: 14 full size cakes/pies, 49 Cake pieces/plates of muffins/slices, 64 packs of cookies, and 84 Jams, chutneys and preserves.

We made \$1002!!!

Thanks to all the bakers and jam makers: Judith and Dianne, Michael, Chris, Joyce, Bente, MaryCon, Angellika, and Barbara and to the brave souls who stood in the cold (Chloe, Donna, Rachel, Ron, Barbara, Peter, Hurriyet, Fiona, Judith, and Chris. I apologize if I have forgotten anyone.

Next Cake stall will be at the church for the state election in November and Michael and Melita will also run a sausage sizzle!

Candace



HAPPY
BIRTHDAY

TO PETER SCOTT ON
JUNE 25th.

At the Meeting of the Congregation on June 8th the following motion was passed.
“That the congregation of Ascot Vale Uniting Church request that Rev Ron Rosinsky be called to become Minister in Placement at this church in a .6 part-time capacity.”

The result has been forwarded to Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee and Synod Placements Committee for their consideration. We hope that our request will be acted on promptly so that Ron’s induction can be arranged.

Bust the Budget: Disability Support & Rights march – 11 July 2014

In response to recent budget cuts affecting people with disabilities a Bust the Budget march supporting people with disabilities has been organised for 11 July in Melbourne. People with disabilities, their carers, families and supporters are being urged to attend and support the march. Uniting Church Moderator Dan Wootton recently wrote to Prime Minister Tony Abbott to voice concerns over the dismantling of the Disability Discrimination Commissioner position.

Disrespectful Marketing by Sportsbet?



In response to the advertising balloon floated above Melbourne by Sportsbet, Synod Moderator Dan Wootton stated:

Sportsbet has clearly decided that adopting a marketing strategy designed to offend the Christian community will gain them lots of free publicity in the media to boost their profits. It is clear profits are all they care about and they have no respect for anything else. It is well beyond time that marketing by sports wagering companies was banned outright. The unethical and offensive marketing strategies of these companies should mean they should lose the ability to market their businesses.

FAREWELL PATRICIA

Patricia

Grey hair, kind eyes
and a friendly smile.
She's the kind of Lady
that stands out by a mile.

Soft voice, strong mind
and always enchanting.
Her home opened to all,
was warm and inviting.

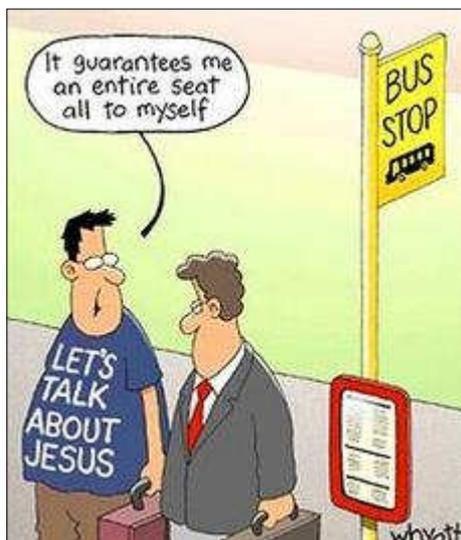
Patricia never came alone,
for her ever present friend -
her companion and life support
was ... the Oxygen Tank.

Her main concern for all of us ... was
that 'Her Tank' made too much noise
and that 'we' couldn't hear the hymns
nor the Minister's voice.

.....
Unlike you, I've only met, Patricia
towards her life's end...
Yet, just like you, I hold her dear
and admire her inner strength.

**So...
this is not a 'Good Bye'
just a farewell, our friend.
I know we'll meet again
somewhere - in the end.**

Dina



A TRIBUTE TO TREES

Splendid yet simple grace,
Head in the sky, the earth in your embrace;
Many in name and colour,
In manner, form and feature,
One in your unfailingly generous, giving nature;

All kinds of life sustaining
With succour, shelter, breath,
Refreshment in your living,
Life-giving warmth after death;

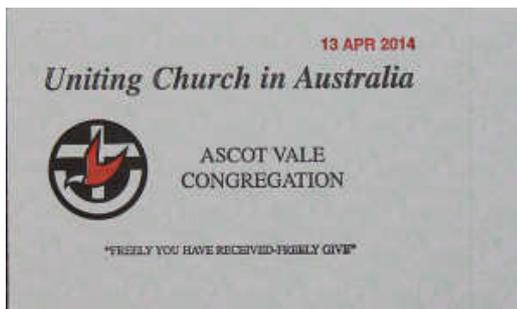
Solace to the solitary,
Rest to the crowd-oppressed;
Our selfish misuse of the earth
Often by redressed;

Joy inspiring, peace instilling,
Hope and delight re-bringing,
Mutilated, mute;
Sacrificed, oft up-springing;

Sunshine and rain diffusing,
Holding the wind and stars,
Long-suffering, oft-forgiving,
Bearing our wounding and scars;

Taken for granted, used, misunderstood
(Some cannot see the trees but for their wood),
In shape and sound, in scent and savour
Beauty and goodness shine;
You, of all things created, most recall the divine!

"A Tribute to Trees" was found among the work
of a little-known Australian author, and contribut-
ed by Dorothy Howes



OFFERING ENVELOPES

OFFERING ENVELOPES FOR THE PERIOD JUNE 2014 THROUGH MAY 2015 ARE STILL AVAILABLE ON THE FRONT TABLE AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE CHURCH.

PLEASE TAKE A SET, ALTERNATIVELY SEE MYSELF OR TED JENNINGS

PETER MACDONALD Treasurer

Governments and bureaucracies are driving us mad! We need your help to find a saner world - Denis Moriarty

Australian governments have gone off the rails, and civil society doesn't have the resources to pick up the pieces.

Governments at all levels and of all persuasions seem to be all about putting forward policies that will win the day's media coverage, to the almost total exclusion of policies that will produce the outcomes we want.

For a government, a good policy is one that

- ▶ will make it into the tabloid media,
- ▶ differentiates the government from the opposition,
- ▶ annoys the government's critics,
- ▶ has no performance indicators built in, and
- ▶ can be expressed in five words or less.

For the bureaucracy, a good policy is one that's just words and doesn't require anyone to change anything. A public service that used to have the expertise to vet new ideas is now reduced to the function of handling the paperwork involved in refusing freedom-of-information requests.

Australian not-for-profits hold large stores of valuable knowledge

about how to deal with Australia's social problems, but the sector finds itself excluded and ignored. Its achievements and insights die with the grants that developed them. Reports are filed and forgotten in departmental silos.

Governments today:

1. Don't plan, because that would inhibit them from committing themselves utterly to whatever bright idea occurred to the leader over morning coffee;
2. Don't learn, because you learn from your mistakes, and no government ever admits to making a mistake;
3. Don't look at evidence, because that would interfere with (1) and (2);
4. Don't have any institutional memory, because that would interfere with (1), (2) and (3).

We have endless consultation, but it's only mood music – nobody in government really listens to it. And advocacy is punished. If you have the answer, you're supposed to keep it to yourself.

That's how we see it. **What about you?**

LAST MONTH'S PUZZLE

Find a number with its letters in alphabetical order.

Solution: Forty

It is the only number we know of in English with its letters in alphabetical order.

Answer to riddle

"Happy Birthday." This song can be sung with anybody's name in it.

IN MEMORY OF MY FRIEND

My dear friend Douglas died recently. While going through his papers I found the following poem.

I know nothing about the author, perhaps he is a Buddhist.
But these words gave me some solace after the death of my friend.

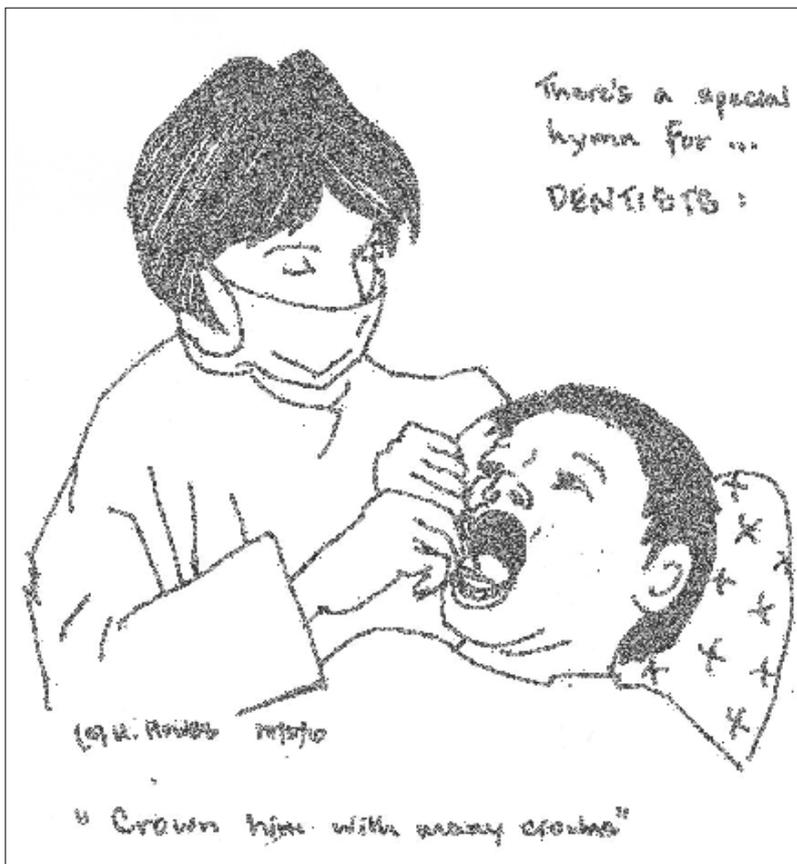
Bob Muntz

Death

You are not going to die, you are only going to disappear.
Yes, you will not be found in the individual form.
The form will disappear into the formless – like a snowflake into the pure air.
But you will be there and more so.
When the river disappears into the ocean, it is not dying –
It is becoming the ocean, it is spreading, it is becoming bigger.
Huge, enormous, infinite.

Death, if you cling to life, will look like death.
If you don't cling to life, death will look like a transformation, a freedom.
You are freed from the imprisonment of form, you become formless.
Then there is great joy.
A man who can die like a snowflake disappearing into the pure air is blessed.
There is great ecstasy, great silence and peace, utter joy.
There is celebration in the very heart of your being.

B. S. Rajneesh



Ascot Vale Uniting
Church
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Minister: Rev. Ron Rosinsky

ELDERS
Peter Macdonald (Chairperson)
Angelika Ranellone
Dorothy Howes
Michael Long
Melita Long
Noel Lloyd
Dina Monaghan

LOOKING BACK AT THE DIFFICULT YEARS AFTER THE FIRE

FROM THE HERALD-SUN JUNE 2007

PARISHIONERS of an Ascot Vale church have forgiven the Satanist who burned down their beloved 108-year-old church, but they are not so charitable towards Moonee Valley Council.

Ascot Vale Uniting Church worshippers are angry the council is delaying the building of a church to replace the historic Moonee Ponds one that burned down in 2004.

The main problem they say is the council's demand they re-use original bricks for the new church.

They are also seething at demands they hold church events only between 9am and 10pm and have no more than 30 people at church events.

Ascot Vale Uniting Church is heading to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal to fight the council restrictions.

Rev Ron Rosinsky said: "We're not asking for miracles, we just want Moonee Valley Council to give us some support."

The church, which has a local heritage listing, was insured for \$1 million but the fire caused \$3 million damage.

Rev Rosinsky said council's demands pushed the cost to \$6 million, well out of reach of a parish on an annual income of \$17,000.

"After the church burned down, an engineer assessed the site and said it was unsafe to salvage," he said.

"Although it was tragic for the parishioners, there was a unanimous vote to knock it down and start again.

"We wanted to start afresh, it was going to be a new beginning for us."

The church gave the council its rebuilding plans in June last year, but was granted permission only in January this year.

But Rev Rosinsky said that the conditions made parishioners feel persecuted.

"Because of the arson, we already felt like victims of crime - this has made it far worse," he said.

The restrictions come as a double blow for the parishioners, after hearing that convicted firebug Novak Majstorovic had been released from detention.

Majstorovic was 19 in September 2005, when he was sentenced to three years in a youth detention centre for lighting the fire.

But Rev Rosinsky has been told the arsonist was released more than six months ago, less than 15 months into his sentence.

He said parishioners were not concerned about punishing Majstorovic, just about getting their new church.

"We say love your enemies - we were going to invite Majstorovic to the opening of the new building," Rev Rosinsky said.

"But with council's restrictions, we might not even be able to have an opening."

Rev Rosinsky said the restrictions were due to concerns from one neighbour, and that council was over-reacting.

"We're talking about a church here - we're not going to be pumping out noise," he said.

"What these restrictions will stop is a range of community activities we would want to hold at the church."

CHURCH ROSTERS

Dorothy Howes is now arranging the rosters. We thank Dorothy for taking on this important task.

If you are unavailable when rostered, please arrange for a swap so that your duties can be carried out.

If you are not currently on a roster consider lending a hand. Have a chat with Dorothy.

Rosters cover Morning Tea, Greeting and Bible Readings.

Joke: A termite walks into a bar and asks the waitress, is the bar tender here?