

TRANSCEND: June - 2016

Ascot Vale Uniting Church Newsletter

60 Maribyrnong Road, Moonee Ponds

Services: Sundays 10 am

'It's Time': The Christian case for enacting same sex marriage

*"When any society says that I cannot marry a certain person,
that society has cut off a segment of my freedom."*

- Martin Luther King Jr., 1958

In a May 2016 election statement, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference said that marriage and family are at the heart of a healthy social environment. But they went on to insist that marriage is a union between only a man and woman. And ironically the bishops said that a society is ultimately judged by "how well it treats the thrown-away people."

I think we stopped listening to the bishops' lectures on sexual morality when the Royal Commission found that too many of them stopped listening to the cries of children, who were victims of abuse by priests.

It's discriminatory to bar the institution of marriage from gay and lesbian people based solely on their sexual orientation. And this happens without even considering their character or the quality of their commitment to their partner. It's the essence of discrimination; it's beneath us.

Surely marriage equality, supporting same sex marriage, is one issue where all people who care about the institution of marriage can join together, be they conservative or progressive. At a time when the ideal of marriage has been weakened, extending the marriage covenant to same sex couples who want to honour an ancient tradition- marriage- is a positive move. In many states in America, and elsewhere throughout the world, tens of thousands of couples have been lawfully joined, and the sky hasn't fallen in. Nowhere have churches who disapprove of same-sex civil marriages been forced to recognize them.

Jesus talked about the quality of a relationship, not its form. Jesus didn't mention homosexuality; he said nothing against it. Nor does it rate a mention in the list of "Thou shalt not's" found in the Ten Commandments. The Bible does not condemn the practice of homosexuality; as a whole it doesn't. But it does strongly condemn the treatment of others in word or deed which amount to discrimination.

And it condemns prejudice in its many forms. By logical application it is against prejudice in the form of homophobia, or statements from pulpits that would incite homophobia.

Homosexual acts are mentioned in seven Bible passages. As one Bible scholar put it, these passages have been used as 'tools of a homophobic polemic that has often claimed too much.' The authors of these passages were in fact chastising specific incidents of sexual aggression such as rape (Genesis 19: 5, Judges 19:22); sexual exploitation of boys by men (1 Corinthians 6: 9-10); and the practice of homosexuality within cultural groups with whom some Christians were intent on demeaning, because they were different; they were pagans, from a different religion and culture than Jews and Christians (Leviticus 18: 21-22; Leviticus 20:13; Romans 1: 26-27; 1 Timothy 1: 8-10).

Should we be appropriating the ancient bitterness of select Bible authors from 2,000 years ago or more, without seeing if they agree with our conscience? John Wesley was an influential British theologian of the 18th century. Though his beliefs would be judged conservative by today's standards, he believed that the Bible was not the only source for morality and truth. He said famously that four sources of truth are available when making informed decisions and they should all be considered: *the Bible, cultural and religious traditions, human reason, and individual experience*. Unfortunately Wesley's method of discernment has been crowded out by more conservative voices. Too many Christians champion a rigid and distorted view of the Bible to drive home their political agendas.

PTO



Kid's Uniting concludes for term two: Sunday 19 June & Recommences on Sunday 17 July
School Holidays, no Kid's Uniting: 26 June, 3, 10 July

Worship Themes- 10 am Sundays

5 June: **World Environment Day**

12 June: Family Service- 'Claiming your sense of self in the presence of another' Luke 7: 36- 8: 3

19 June: **World Refugee Sunday** - 'There's more to life than security and safety' Luke 8: 26-39- '...
Clothed and in his right mind'

26 June: Guest preacher – Luke 9: 51-62

3 July; **Communion Service** 'Sharing and caring, roots, place, belonging: key ingredients of mental
health' Luke 10: 1-11; 16-20

10 July: Family Service 'To rise to the great occasion' Luke 10: 25-37- A good enemy.



The photo above which is being used to publicise Refugee Week, features Aker Athoj, Monica Yengi and Sandra Paul, who play for the Butler Falcons, an all-girl multicultural AFL team from the Northern suburbs of Perth.

Refugee week is an annual week-long celebration of the positive contributions of refugees to Australian society. Hundreds of events are held up and down the country, including concerts, fundraisers, film screenings and more.

The Refugee Council of Australia has chosen "With courage let us all combine" as the theme for Refugee Week in Australia for 2015 to 2017.

Taken from the second verse of the national anthem, the theme celebrates the courage of refugees and of people who speak out against persecution and injustice.

It serves as a call for unity and for positive action, encouraging Australians to improve our nation's welcome for refugees and to acknowledge the skills and energy refugees bring to their new home.

No Election Cake Stall



I have received the unfortunate news that the church will NOT be used as a polling station this election. Apparently the number of polling stations has been dramatically reduced for this federal election, and the closest station to the church will be Moonee Ponds West Primary school. I understand the decision not to use the church was based upon the low number of voters using church polling station last election (I thought 600 was lots!).

It has been suggested to instead hold a cake stall and sausage sizzle on the first Saturday of August on Union Road so that all the European adventurers will be back in town.

Please let me know if you would be willing to spend some time to help in any way with a cake stall and sausage sizzle on Saturday August 6th on Union Road or whether there is another date more suitable. How about a second one at the end of November?

HOW CAN WE GIVE A STRUGGLING COMMUNITY



**clean water,
better health,
education for girls,
better farming techniques
political empowerment *and more*
with one gift?**
UnitingWorld has the answer!

It's described in their latest appeal, which Council has decided to support.

Our money goes to train a Community Development Worker for a community in either Asia, Africa or the Pacific. In a remote area in West Bengal, the CDW found and trained capable and passionate men and women to lobby their local government for an adequate water supply. The Worker then showed them how to set up a Self-Help group, so women could learn to save for Government loans, and buy valuable assets such as a cow. The trained local leaders also helped the people to establish a community grain bank, and a tutoring and breakfast centre for their children. UnitingWorld's Project Manager has described the results as inspiring.

For every \$1 we give, an Australian Government may give \$5. Making a donation not only helps poorer people overseas share some of the advantages we enjoy; it also sends a message to the Government that helping our global neighbours is important to us – and should be to them!

Dorothy Howes *for* Church Council

*\$310 will help train a Community Development Worker in Asia, Africa or the Pacific.
This puts power in the hands of families so they can end poverty for good.*

Social and Environmental Justice Report

1. Our **Homelessness letter, with 40 signatures**, has been sent to Federal and State Government leaders and Opposition party leaders.
2. The **petition for more funding for Victoria's National Parks** gained 50 signatures, an excellent result. Thanks everyone for your support!
3. We have purchased a plaque for the church stating "We are proud to **acknowledge the Aboriginal people** as the traditional owners of these lands and waters".
4. We have also obtained, from the Justice and International Mission Unit, an **Election Guide** to the major issues which the church sees as facing Australia at this time.
These include, not surprisingly,
Renewable Energy, Towards Zero Net Carbon and Climate Justice; Protecting Refugees in the Region, Australia's Humanitarian Program and Overseas Aid; Taxation Reform, Corporate Tax Dodging and Negative Gearing; *but also*
Constitutional Recognition for First Peoples, Online Gambling, Access to Quality Aged Care, and a number of other topics.

This Guide will help us to assess the positions and policies of candidates standing for election, so we can make more informed choices on how to vote. We have five sets of this information, which can be borrowed or copied as you wish. Just ask Dorothy!

As **Reconciliation Week** approaches, we encourage you all to visit the Incinerator Gallery in Holmes Road between 3 June and 24 July. There you will see "Reframed", an exhibition of the **work of indigenous Australian artists**, which aims to "challenge stereotypes of ...Aboriginality".

Thank you all for your friendship and support – Dorothy and Fiona

Report from the Church Council

At our meeting on 25 May these points were discussed and decided:

- Chairperson Michael **welcomed our new member Judy** with the words "we're proud to have you on Church Council with us".
- Council passed a vote of **grateful thanks to Chris** for updating and producing for us an invaluable Parish Directory .
- Rev Ron outlined his plan for a "**Dining Club**", whereby all individuals and families in the congregation would be divided into groups of three. Each group would be asked to arrange a shared meal or coffee at some time during the following two months. Then the groups would be rearranged, and the process repeated. In this way we will be able to get to know and to share with one another, and so strengthen ties within our congregational family
- Our Treasurer, Peter, reminded us that our **rental income has fallen**, as Learningland has reduced its hours of use from 19 to 13 per week.
- Council decided to **donate \$150 to UnitingCare** (see separate article).

We noted that Dina and Angelika are already holidaying overseas, and Michael and Melita will leave shortly, also on an extended overseas trip. This leaves only **two Councillors and two Elders here during June and early July**. We ask all members of the church, please make yourself available, as you are able, to help Peter, Noel and Dorothy as they in turn do their best to support Ron during this time.

Dorothy Howes, Secretary

Don't you just want to sing?



Last Transcend I asked for expression of interest for people interested 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.

Could I ask that all interested people get together briefly after church on June 19th to find out what dates suit us best?

Thanks Candace

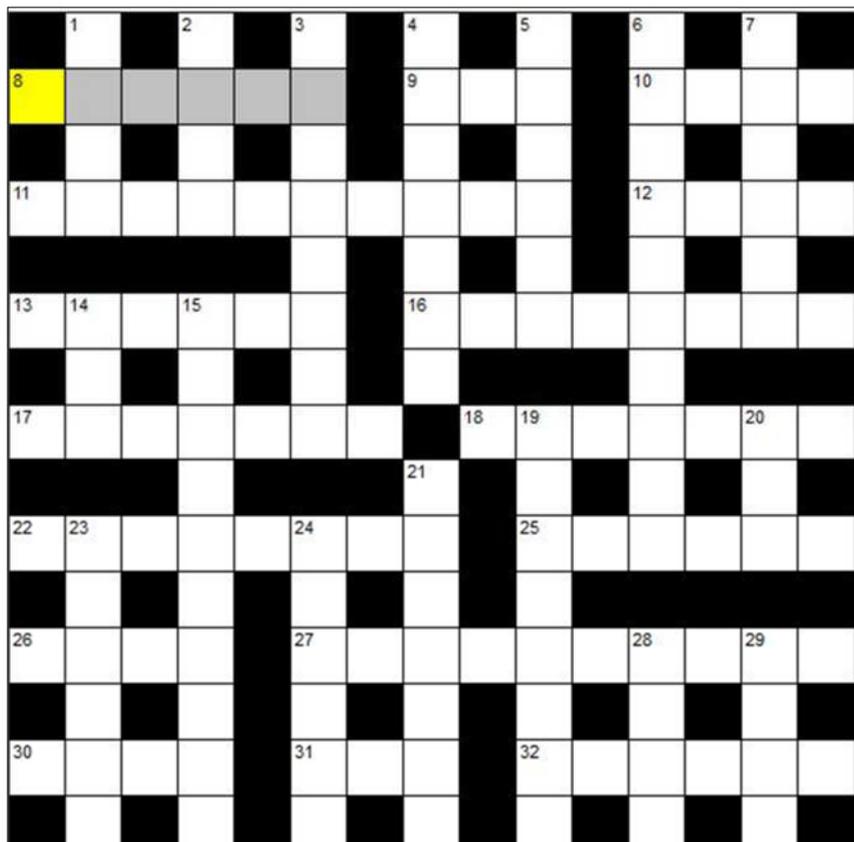
A Note concerning the Roster:

The roster for June to September has been sent out by email, and copies are also available at church.

Because so many faithful members are away during this period, I have had to roster the remaining loyal and hardworking people oftener than usual, and I'm sorry about this. We are all so grateful to you for the work you do, and your willingness to help with the Sunday by Sunday running of the church.

Could I suggest that if any of us sees a need – if the rostered person for some reason can't be there, or someone is struggling with the washing up (quite a large task) - can we all be ready to offer to lend a hand or fill the spot as needed? Thank you in anticipation for your help in keeping everything running smoothly – Dorothy

Have a Go at this Bible Crossword



Across

- 8 Religious Service
- 9 Vessel
- 10 Drive forcibly
- 11 Christ does this for us
- 12 Bethesda was the name of this
- 13 Servant of a prophet
- 16 One who leaves the straight and narrow path
- 17 Check the money
- 18 Fragrant offering; make angry
- 22 Come out from among them
- 25 Works with clay
- 26 Main part of text
- 27 Chucked it too far
- 30 Treachery sealed with this
- 31 Simon washed his
- 32 Migratory grasshopper

Down

- 1 Standard for the tribe of Judah
- 2 Brother of James
- 3 Choice by vote
- 4 Evening glow
- 5 All sing the tune
- 6 To reduce deficiency
- 7 Take no notice of
- 14 Look at
- 15 Alternative Revelation
- 19 Son of Jacob
- 20 The blind will
- 21 Regrets; Serpent (anag)
- 23 Angels by another name
- 24 Decorates
- 28 Say it and you will be in danger of the council
- 29 Cleanse

Enjoying a great social night at “Hot Chilli”



Our May social night was to Hot Chilli Thai Restaurant in Moonee Ponds on Friday May 27th.

It was a night of enjoyable food, lots of talking and good companionship.

Special thanks to Michael and Melita our Social Activities leaders for organizing the evening.



On the Grapevine:



“In an age where external controls have grown weak or are actually disappearing, the individual must set up his/her own standards and you, as an individual, can do it.

Choose the higher path. Choose the more difficult goal.
The preacher can preach, the moralist can exhort, but nothing will happen unless the individual says to

himself, “I choose.”



-Norman Vincent Peale, 1898- 1993

From the Treasurer - *Peter Macdonald*

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 for April

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Offerings | \$ 1,922 | Ministry | \$ 3,640 |
| Fundraising and Appeals | \$ 0 | Mission & Service | \$ 0 |
| Donations | \$ 100 | Property | \$ 2,378 |
| Building users | \$ 4,167 | Other | \$ 0 |
| Other | \$ 0 | | |
| Total Income | \$ 6,189 | Total Expenses | \$ 6,390 |

Deficit for year through April is \$ 9,800

Finance Committee

2015 finances are currently being audited.

Finance committee met May 12th and reviewed income and expenses through April, account balances at end April and cash flow through December.

Synod annual financial survey has been completed and submitted.

ACNC (Australian Charities and not For Profits Commission) annual information statement is due by end June.

The next finance committee meeting is scheduled for August 11th 7.30 PM at the church.

Harvest Swap



The next harvest swap by the Moonee Valley garden group is scheduled for Sunday 26 June, at 11.30. 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.

Some of the visitors at the Harvest Swap on May 29th



THE WATER AND THE WAVES

Doug Lloyd

The ocean is one and yet it is many.

It is often many waves yet it is the one ocean of water.

The waves are inseparable from the rest of the water in the ocean .

All the water in the ocean is one undivided whole.

The waves do not hover above the water like birds and helicopters sometimes do.

So God is one indivisible boundless whole that expresses itself, herself, himself as all that exists. God who is beyond all knowledge and all thought permeates all creation as one invisible, indivisible, boundless reality.

As the waves appear and disappear in the ocean and the ocean remains, so the creation comes and goes yet God remains.

A paraphrase of Psalm 139 verses 8 & 9:

If I walk on the moon you're there.

If I go down to the bottom of the ocean in a submarine you're there as well.

If I go to the shops you're there.

Wherever I go you're there .

You're everywhere all the time.

St. Paul: We live and move and have our being in God.

Nothing can separate us from the love of God.

The Koran. God is nearer than your jugular vein.

The poet, Tennyson: God is closer than breathing and nearer than hands or feet.

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MVCC Workshop: All about solar: Buyers checklist

When: 6pm-8pm, Thursday 9 June. **Where:** Council Chambers, Civic Centre, 9 Kellaway Avenue, Moonee Ponds.

How do you sift through all the solar PV options on the market and know which one is the right one for you? Is tile okay to put panels on? Is your roof orientation okay? How many kilowatts will you need? What sort of inverter is reliable? What about warranties? This free workshop is for those who need impartial expert advice on what system best suits them.

Note also that the Moonee Valley City Council is running a solar bulk buy initiative - you can find out more about it at this workshop.

This is a FREE event. Bookings essential call 9243 8888.

AVUC ROSTER, June-September

| | LEADER | COMMUNION | DUTY ELDER | MUSIC | WELCOMER | READER | MORNING TEA |
|---|---------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 5 June 2016 Communion | Rev Ron | Noel | Noel | Rob | Ken/Jenny | Chris | Ken/Jenny |
| 12 June Family Service | Rev Ron | | Dorothy | Maria | Peter | Peter | Bente/Judy |
| 19 June Start Refugee Week | Rev Ron | | Noel | Dorothy | Robin/Chris | Marycon | Marycon/Chris |
| 26 June Garden Swap Kids Uniting on holiday | TBA | | Dorothy | Candace | Ken and Jenny | Bente | Ken/Jenny |
| 3 July Communion | Rev Ron | Dorothy | Dorothy | Rob | Judy | Barbara | Judy/Bente |
| 10 July Family Service | Rev Ron | | Noel | Maria | Peter | Candace | Chris/Barbara |
| 17 July Kids Uniting resume | Rev Ron | | Dorothy | Dorothy | Ken/Jenny | Judy | Ken/Jenny |
| 24 July | Rev Ron | | Dina | Candace | Cally | Dina | Judy/Marycon |
| 31 July Garden Swap | TBA | | Michael/Melita | Candace | Robin/Chris | Michael/Melita | Chris/Angelika |
| 7 August Communion | Rev Ron | Angelilka | 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 |

Please make your own arrangements for any necessary exchange of dates.