

TRANSCEND: MARCH

Ascot Vale Uniting Church Newsletter 2015

60 Maribyrnong Road, Moonee Ponds

Services: Sundays 10 am

FROM THE MINISTER - R.R.R

Contrast two ways of being with others;

First, are facts that represent the darker, snake-like side of human nature. The second are Judeo-Christian beliefs that should inform the mind and behaviour of Christians- a way of transcending snake behaviour for freedom and blessing.

1. Snake-like, lizard-like behaviour:

- On average one woman a week in Australia dies because of intimate partner violence;
- One in three women have been abused, physically, sexually or in other ways, by someone known to them. Children are exposed to this.
- “*Economic inequality* is structurally embedded in the U.S. economy. We must reconnect economic growth with broadly shared prosperity.” (Economist Jared Bernstein)
- When you look at the long-term growth income of *the top 1% of people* in Australia and the U.S., you see a distinct trend. People of this group are “clearly pulling away from the rest.” (Bernstein)
- Many multi-national companies, including large Australian ones, are sending their profits to offshore tax havens like Luxemburg, so that they have to pay as little tax as possible. In some cases they pay only 6% of the tax they should be paying by Australian law.
- We are handing our children a world that is overheating due to global warming, caused by our carbon emissions.

How well Paul described our fundamental challenge today: ‘Do not be conformed to this world [this age with its false values] but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God- what is good and acceptable and perfect.’ – Romans 12:2

2. Some core Judeo-Christian beliefs

Angel: “a spiritual being [humans are spiritual beings] that serve especially as a messenger from God or as a guardian of human beings; a person who is very good, kind and beautiful.”

A Covenant: the core relationship that saves A promise to bless in which two or more people treat each other as equals, and pledge mind, body and soul to care for each other’s good.

God’s covenant with Abraham:

“I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing...in you all the families of the earth shall find blessing.” (Gen. 12: 2,3)

Covenant: Freedom and Blessing

By making a covenant with Abraham, God promised to bless his descendants and the rest of the world. In God’s unconditional love, God established a covenant with people down through the ages. It has signified what Eternal Life, what God does: *blessing and deliverance*.

It has meant freedom from want, freedom from tyranny, freedom from fear. A covenant relationship between people is based on that unconditional love. And it brings *blessing and deliverance*.

Where there is God’s Spirit- God’s creative energy-within and between people, there is blessing and deliverance. Throughout history with God’s help people strive to set themselves free; freedom to thrive and to enjoy life’s basic gifts: land, food, and peace.

Contd.

The great prophets of all time disturbed the status quo so that life's blessings could be shared by the many, not just the few.

"This is the covenant that I will make...no longer shall they say to each other, "know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord." (Jeremiah 31: 33, 34)

Jesus and Paul, Prophets and Mystics of the 'new covenant'

The New Testament itself means "new covenant"; and it interprets the creative work of Jesus Christ as bringing this new covenant into being through his body, mind and soul. Jesus spoke of the inner and outer expression of God's unconditional love:

"The kingdom of God is within you and among you." (Luke 17: 21)

Paul the Apostle spoke of what he had experienced, the transformative power of blessing and deliverance based on unconditional love, in *1 Corinthians 13*. He encouraged his followers therefore to:

"Pursue love and strive for the spiritual gifts, and especially that you may prophesy." (1 Cor. 14: 1)

A compelling vision based on Christian values?

The Hebrew prophets attacked snake like behaviour with the tools of the Spirit. And Paul called the word of God the sword of truth. But a great many churches make the Bible say what they want it to. Historical evidence about what Jesus really stood for and died for is evaded or disregarded.

Rather than appropriating the teachings of our faith which tell us about saving the earth by living in harmony with it, Christianity has been silent as civilization dominates and destroys it.

Rather than standing against violence toward women, gay and lesbian people, and people of other faiths, countless congregations have perpetuated that violence. Sermons and teachings are often filled with veiled and unveiled contempt of these groups. *What does Christian immaturity, being driven by the dictates of the flesh- our untamed fears and small mindedness- tell all the world about our spiritual growth? Are we really becoming more God-like?*

What value does sexism, homophobia and 'salvation only through Christ' have no matter how it's dressed up? *Ever noticed how most Christian dogma is decidedly like a doughnut? It has a hole in the centre. It contains no statements about practical ethics, morality or social justice. It does contain lots of imaginative theological statements about 'virgin births' and Christ 'judging the quick and the dead' and how terribly sinful we are, but nothing about the actual public ministry and teachings of Christ.*

We say the emphasis should be on the latter, what the historical Christ really said and did, not on the former, on what he did not do.

Instead of a social gospel focussed on changing the social order as Jesus did, the church has offered an impotent culturally bound gospel. It's a spiritualized gospel in which Jesus is portrayed as being silent on the abuse of social and economic power; he's concerned only with the saving of souls. 'Spending time with God' is interpreted as altar calls and singing choruses, not engaging in acts of kindness like protecting a vulnerable child at risk.

All-revealing stories that show Jesus' confrontation with abusive authority figures (feeding the 5,000, healing on the Sabbath, kicking over the tables of the money-changers, arguing publicly with the scribes) are re-interpreted- or mis-interpreted. They are neutered because they are spoken of as demonstrations of Jesus' saving power only, defined as getting into heaven, or at best showing what God is like. *Almost never are these stories proclaimed as what they are: provocative acts in which Jesus' by inference is calling on all people to be instruments of grace and spiritual intensity to help others. We all have divinity within us, we can all show what God is like.*

A worthy destiny, the hero's adventure?

In our time, let us do something that God-willing will stand for all time. Let's offer a maturity that helps civilization to transcend and to thrive. *Let's put forth a compelling vision of how things could be, based on our understanding of the true teachings and values of our faith.*

Christendom has been obsessed with personal salvation for far too long. In so doing it has created more anxiety in its adherents about death and the after-life. It has defended its dogma and empty tombs and called it progress. What about the message of the Christ of history who summoned all people to be instruments of salvation? That meant helping all people to participate in the larger life of faith, justice and mercy. Let's clean our side of humanity's table by wiping away the crumbs of Christian prejudice. They hold only the bitter taste of sexism, homophobia and fake piety. It's a good thing to do.

Lent and Easter, deliverance and blessing

We need the season of Lent and Easter. It speaks to us of the reality of delivering ourselves and our children from evil, and of the blessing of living a life that counts. It tells us of covenant relationships that save.

And Lent reminds us of our true heritage, to throw off all that is false and dehumanizing so that we can enter the next chapter of life, which can and must be better than the last. That's our promised land. Lent helps us to loosen our grip on the secondary and superficial things to which we cling, and to find an ultimate source of hope- to help us move forward to the next stage of life. At times we all have a mind that is the opposite of Easter, it's like an empty tomb to which we have retreated. We have been set free from our self defeating thinking, but instead of walking forward we still retreat backwards into our empty tomb. It's familiar!

Why would the Hebrew slaves have left the terrible certainty of Egypt for the wilderness and the promised land? God promised a better tomorrow. Why would Jesus have gone to the edge of consciousness, into the harsh desert and wilderness to hear his inner voice, and to struggle with his own demonic desires for power? These were the three temptations of Christ. He believed that he could help make life better for his people. That was his faith. But first he had to find out what kind of man he could be. Would he exercise power over others through magic miracles, by having the angels bear him up when he threw himself down from the Temple?

*Or would he have relationships of equality without coercive power, power *with* others, not over them?*

In the wilderness and throughout his life Jesus had to become an authority for his own life by throwing off the burdens of false teachings. He had to cast off ways of thinking that would have led him to coerce and control others. He had to grow up. So do we.

Let's learn what Lent has to teach and use our goodness, kindness and beauty to become stronger guardians of human beings.

Rev. Ron W. Rosinsky

Worship Themes: Season- Lent and Holy Week

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

15 March: 'Finding your spiritual intensity'
John 3: 1-21 Nicodemus with Jesus: an awakening

22 March: 'Deliver us from evil: mental health and the power of beliefs'
John 12: 20-36

29 March: Palm Sunday- 'Deliver us from evil: Having hope when all seems lost'
Mark 11: 1-11

3 April: 9:30am Good Friday: 'The Service of the Shadows'
John 18 – 19:30

5 April: Easter Day & Communion Sunday - 'Deliver us from evil- becoming an authority for your own life'
John 20: 1-18

Dates for Your Diary

Monday March 9th.	Labour Day Holiday
Friday April 3rd.	Good Friday
Sunday April 5th.	Easter Sunday
Sunday April 19th	AGM
Saturday April 25th.	Anzac Day
Sunday May 11th.	Mothers Day
Monday June 9th.	Queens Birthday Holiday

'Fish and Chip Night'

Saturday 25th April
Anzac Theme Dinner



'Fish and Chip Night'

Saturday 28th March
Quiz Night



NOTICE: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Sunday 19 April after the service.

Please join us for the latest news and reports on the progress of our church.

THANKS JULIE!



We were fortunate to have Dr Julie Hall to conduct services on February 1st and 8th. Julie, who has an extensive range of qualifications is in the process of becoming ordained as a minister.



Lots of fun but not much skill at the Barefoot Bowling night. Join us at our next 'Fish and Chip' Night. At the Church April 25th.

THE BAPTISM OF CHARLIE PETER PALMIERI



Rev. Ron baptising Charlie at the service on February 22nd.
Charlie's mum Melinda is the daughter of Chris and Robin Waltrowicz.
Charlies dad is Peter Palmieri



Another beautiful christening cake crafted by Isabella.

REPORT FROM SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

In response to an appeal from the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, and to the Human Rights Commissioner's recent report "The Forgotten Children", the SEJC has drawn up a letter which we hope you will consider signing, and asking your friends to sign as well.

The letter is to the leaders of the three major political parties. It calls on them to unite in a decision to **immediately end off-shore detention** of all asylum seekers, and to **end all detention of children** and families.

We urge this because of reports of terrible conditions on Nauru and Manus Island, and the severe impact that detention has been found to have on children.

For example, in off-shore detention centres there has been murder, death from medical neglect and sexual exploitation of women. Water is scarce, and sanitation inadequate. Children in detention are enduring an alarming rate of sickness and sexual abuse, and it is predicted that at least one-third of them will develop severe psychological illness as a result of their detention experience.

We believe this treatment is unworthy of our nation. Australia can do better than this. Please help us to work towards a change in policy by signing the letter you will be offered at church, and take a copy for others to sign too. Thank you, and God bless!

Dorothy H.

The Australian Human Rights Commission has called for all children held in immigration detention in Australia and Nauru to be released into the community.

The recommendation was made in [The Forgotten Children: National Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention 2014](#), which was tabled in Parliament last week.

Australian Human Rights Commission President Professor Gillian Triggs welcomed the release of children in immigration detention over recent months, but said the Commission remains concerned about those remaining in detention.

"Recent data from the Department of Immigration shows that 211 children remain in detention in Australia and a further 119 are held in Nauru.



"When our Report was written last October, these children had been detained for an average of 14 months. Today their detention has lengthened to 17 months. "It is our hope that the remaining 330 children will be released with their families as soon as it is safe to do."

The report provided unprecedented first-hand evidence of the impact that prolonged immigration detention has on the mental and physical health of children.

It also identified the impact of detention on the key developmental stages of children as infants, pre-schoolers, primary aged children and teenagers.

Professor Triggs said the findings on mental health disorders among children in immigration detention were "deeply shocking".

"34 per cent of children detained in Australia and Christmas Island have a mental health disorder of such severity that they require psychiatric support," she said.

(www.humanrights.gov.au)

A Snapshot from December and January's worship themes: 'The Secrets of Happy Children', Steve Biddulph

1. **The family narrative/story** is the result of family relationships and interactions over a long period of time. The narrative becomes *your* life story; **biography becomes biology**. But through your spiritual practice it can be changed, amended.

2. **How you feel and express your emotions** is shaped by family and culture to an enormous degree. *But from deep within yourself you have the power to choose*; how you will be in your relationships; how you will respond to heartbreak.

Feeling and expressing your emotions in a healthy way, in an assertive not an aggressive or manipulative way, is what it means to claim your self in the presence of another, to stand up to your full stature as a good person.

3. **Active listening (as opposed to patronizing, lecturing or distracting) - helps a child deal with an unkind world:**

- Do listen to children. Ask leading questions about their feelings;
- Get them to think about the consequences of their actions; how others might feel.
- It allows you to enter more deeply into your child's world;
- It shows your child that their thoughts are important, leading to self respect;
- Ask yourself: 'Could my child benefit, in the long run, from solving this problem for himself/herself?'

Spiritual growth occurs through your active listening which shows God's grace. It allows your child or partner to really talk over the problem and be heard.

3.1: Seeds in the mind

Choose your times and mean what you say. If it's not true don't pretend.

Don't gush. Don't engage in *character assassination* of your child or partner. Keep your criticism to the behaviour at hand.

3.2: What if we carried these messages?

- I am a good person;
- I can usually figure things out;
- I have a good brain;
- I can get on well with most people;
- I'm really creative;
- I like the way I look

Ron Rosinsky

"Try *not* to become a person of success, but rather try to become a person of value."

Albert Einstein

'Survival is a matter of your attitude to everything and to the situation. And the situation changed every five minutes. It depends on me whether life is good or not, not on life, but on me.'

Alice Sommer, 109 years, Czeck Holocaust survivor

OUR GUILD IS 80 YEARS OLD 1935-2015



At the Guild Meeting, on Monday February 23rd. Chris, Jill, Joyce and Heather spent time reflecting on the wonderful contribution the Guild has made to this church over the past 80 years.

Society has changed and many Guilds (including our own) are steadily fading away. However we should all appreciate the wonderful service they have given. Unfortunately Iris, the longest member was not able to attend.

The Early Days of the Guild.

The Guild was formed in Ascot Vale Presbyterian Church in 1935. Following church union in 1977, it became the Ascot Vale Uniting Church Guild. It first met on Monday evenings, then much later moved to daytime meetings. There were guest speakers from missionaries and a variety of humanitarian organisations as well as craft and social events.

.... "in raising funds, the guild has been most ingenious using everything from mystery trading parcels for one shilling, musical afternoons, casserole suppers, Halloween parties, making something new from something old, recycling rags and paper, concerts, sale of recipe books and cards. Preparing for the annual fete took lots of baking and craft activities, and an afternoon tea tent and plant stall which ran Friday evening and all day Saturday. Just as diverse is the way the guild has disbursed its funds:- buying pianos for the Sunday School and church, furnishings, amplifiers. Hymn books have been supplied and replaced many times. Also supplying those accessories necessary for running the church – crockery, clocks, heaters, vacuum cleaners, ceiling fans, printing devices, vacuum cleaners, and chairs."

The AVUC Centenary Celebration Booklet

Longest serving member Iris recalls the celebration of the century from the laying of the foundation stone in 1887. To mark the occasion the guild gave the church a 'spring clean'. Curtains were washed, brass was polished, windows cleaned. etc. until the church was sparkling clean.

The ladies have helped with refurbishing the manse at times curtains, furniture, and kitchen items. Two nursing homes Marivale and Coranirk were built and then supported with gardening, visiting and donations of cash and goods. Many other charitable causes or appeals were supported by the guild. The church football, tennis, cricket teams enjoyed many home cooked meals.

The Guild has catered for almost every event held by the church. This includes breakfast, supper, funerals, picnics and social events. The floral arrangements for all occasions were managed by the Guild.

In recent years, the Guild has dwindled in membership but has continued support the church.

Today's church members have a different lifestyle but face the same challenges.

It is pleasing to see all our members undertaking different responsibilities and everything seems to get done!

Did you hear about the scarecrow that won an award?

He was outstanding in his field.

Two cows were out in a field eating grass. One cow turns to the other cow and says, "Moooooo!" "Hey", the other cow replies.... "I was just about to say the same thing!"

JESUS AND MARY WERE REFUGEES

Jesus, Joseph and Mary fled for Egypt without the necessary or relevant papers.

They did not wait in a queue. Waiting their turn to be attended to or processed. They fled for their lives and stayed there.

They were accepted and not placed in a detention centre for years, awaiting decisions on their lives.

Jesus grew up with the experience of being (for a time) a refugee.

Talk about a poor refugee boy made good!

Unfortunately some members of our society need an excuse or someone to blame as a deflection for their own shortcomings.

The Europeans arrived in Australia as did the Vietnamese, with the majority coming by boat. They have been instrumental in their contributions to Australia. They have expanded our cultural horizons. We are all richer for knowing them and welcoming them into our lives.

Our country is based on Christian ethics. I would hope that we extend our hearts to love thy neighbour as thyself and welcome the refugee to our shores.

Fiona P.

Women's breakfast



Saturday 14th March

8.00 – 9.30am

Speaker: Mrs Nicole Coultres

My story isn't a remarkable one, but then perhaps that is why I would like to share it. Faith presents in many different ways and we should celebrate the simplicity of faith.

I am married 'forty something' mother of 2 beautiful daughters. Typical of my generation in many ways – I am time poor and technologically savvy. I've been a recent participant on a mission to the Philippines.

Donation \$10

RSVP by March 12th

Bev Penna 9351 6550

Carol Coon 9337 6643



Keilor East – Airport West Uniting Church

Cnr Roberts Road and Glenys Avenue Airport West

SAY NO TO FAMILY VIOLENCE



Community Forum Organised
By Keilor East Airport West Uniting Church

Wednesday 25th March at 7:30pm
Penleigh Essendon Grammar School
Rachelle RD Keilor East

Panel.

- M.P. Fiona Richardson
Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence.
- Tim Cartwright APM
Acting Chief Commissioner Victoria Police.
- Nathan DeGuara
Manager "No To Violence Men's Referral Service."
- Rosie Batty
Australian of the year 2015.

Moderator -

- Rev Jean Beale Chaplain Aitken College

A donation at the Forum, to "The Luke Batty Foundation" would be appreciated.

ROSTER	SERVICE/ LEADER	COMMUNION ELDER	DUTY ELDER	MUSIC	WELCOMER	READER	MORNING TEA
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

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