

TRANSCEND: MARCH - 2016

Ascot Vale Uniting Church Newsletter

60 Maribyrnong Road, Moonee Ponds

Services: Sundays 10 am

A RECKONING IS NEEDED

Rev. Ron Rosinsky

It would appear that Cardinal Pell is an innocent victim. This week he has been giving evidence before a royal commission into child abuse. He's telling what he knew about certain paedophile Catholic priests who were moved from parish to parish, particularly in the 1970s and 80s. Even people at the local pub knew of the abuse occurring in the diocese of Ballarat back then.

Pell says he was kept in the dark about local priests' offending and didn't ask questions. He claims that he was the victim of a gross cover-up, orchestrated by his boss, Bishop Mulkearns. But Pell's memory, credibility and truthfulness have been challenged by the royal commission.

And one has to ask, how does the command and control structure of the Catholic Church and its leadership contribute to this? Is it a culture of cover-up, of crime, of don't ask, don't tell? Too much power is concentrated in the hands priest and bishop, not enough transparency to protect innocent children.

For centuries up until now Catholic lay people wouldn't dare question the authority of their priest, let alone his theology, and certainly not the team of Catholic clergy that backed him. Now that may change; the kingdom of heaven may break across the Catholic Church and demolish it in its present form. Unlikely. But hopefully the leadership will at very least undertake serious reform.

And we have to ask of ourselves: do we have inclusive and accountable leadership?

We must continue to ensure that our denomination and congregation are transparent and accountable, while protecting the vulnerable, and that power is decentralized and not in the hands of a few. There's room for improvement.

As we listen to the awful evidence of Pell and other Catholic priests before the royal commission, we may also hear the angry footsteps of at least a generation of Catholics who will now turn their back on the church and walk away. And it may not be just the Catholic Church.

One woman on talk radio said she was raised as a Catholic. She said it was good to have a faith of some kind, faith or belief in the good and the decent in life; something to give you hope. But she said, that after listening to Pell, she wouldn't be surprised if people raised Catholic have no belief in anything. And maybe faith in nothing.

We approach Palm Sunday...Good Friday...Easter. We recall that Jesus protested. He protested on Palm Sunday and Good Friday against Pilate, Herod and Caiaphas. **He protested the degradation of the individual, of his or her dignity, spirit and divinity. Jesus exalted the worth of the common man and woman, and of the vulnerable child. He championed their causes.** And on Good Friday Jesus dramatized the impact of one individual on the system. Or did he? He was crucified; his followers were crushed. But his followers rose up. Easter came. It's coming now.

There is an Easter radiance and glory in the darkness of the royal commission hearings, though at times hard to see. To see we have to look. It's the glory of the victims refusing victimhood, particularly child abuse survivors, having the courage to endure and to make the system pay, with justice. We should honour them by ensuring it never happens in our midst.

Witness these abuse survivors of Catholic priests who now demand truth and straight-talking from the institution and officials who long ago could have intervened, but looked the other way. Tragically the agony is theirs in an unrelenting way. But their heroism brings radiance. The radiance is theirs and theirs alone, the survivors of abuse, for surviving and standing up to power and the black heart of an institution. I admire them. I beseech you to look.

On the Grapevine

"It's a sad story and it wasn't of much interest to me...I have never suggested that I knew nothing about Ridsdale [a convicted paedophile priest].

I have never suggested that I didn't inquire generally...

But I had no reason to turn my mind to the extent of the evils that Ridsdale had perpetrated."

- **Cardinal George Pell**, giving evidence before a royal commission into child sex abuse in the Catholic Church. Ridsdale had told the commission that church authorities know of his offending as early as the 1960's. Pell served as a priest in the same diocese as Ridsdale.



"I could stand in the middle of 5th Avenue and shoot somebody and I wouldn't lose voters."

"The concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive."

- **Donald Trump**, front-runner for the Republican Party presidential nomination



Worship Themes- 10 am Sundays

13 March: Family Service- & Commemorating International Women's Day- 8 March

'The practice of His Presence/ Practices to Achieve Transcendence'

Isaiah43: 16-21; John 12: 1-8- Mary, the first apostle?

20 March: Palm Sunday- & Celebrating Australia's Harmony Day- 21 March

'Palm Sunday's Peaceful Protest: 'I fight authority and authority always wins' '- Luke 19: 28-48

25 March: Good Friday Service- 9:30am- The Service of the Shadows

Featuring Readings from John's Gospel & Hot Cross Buns after the service.

27 March: Easter Day: 'Making a Good Choice and Life When Torn by Cross-Purposes'

1 Corinthians 15: 42-50; Luke 24: 1-12

3 April: Communion Sunday 'Easter: Sustaining the Dignity and Integrity of the Common Person' Acts 5: 27-32; John 20: 19-31

NOTICE: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sunday 17 April after the service.

Please join us for the latest news from Ron and the Church Council on the progress of our church. The Annual Report will be presented.

Everyone is welcome to attend.



Kid's Uniting (early primary age children) & Confirmation classes (older primary and secondary aged children)- Sundays at 10am- all welcome

Kid's Uniting: study topics- Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter

Teachers: Caterina, Fiona and Isabella

Confirmation: on the second and fourth Sundays monthly

Study topic: 'Not Just Yes and Amen', key principles of the Christian lifestyle

Teachers: Caterina, Maria and Claire

Soul Groups recommences- 6th and 20th March

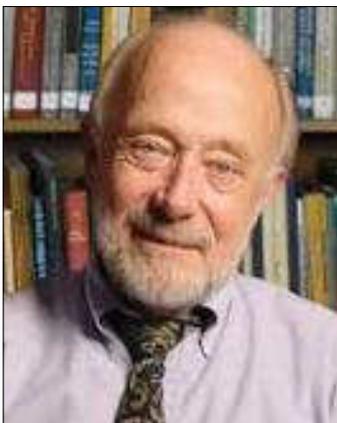
How? Study and discussion, prayer and meditation, with a caring and discreet group of people; inspired by the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and Wesley's covenant groups.

Why? For personal development and spiritual formation.

When? 11: 30- 12:45, in the middle room at church on the first and third Sundays monthly with Rev. Ron

What: current study topic- '*Embracing an Adult Faith: Marcus Borg on What It Means to Be Christian*' & devotional readings.

Some Quotes from Marcus Borg



"The Christian life is not about pleasing God the finger-shaker and judge. It is not about believing now or being good now for the sake of heaven later. It is about entering a relationship in the present that begins to change everything now. Spirituality is about this process: the opening of the heart to the God who is already here."

"People who think of God as a warrior may become warriors themselves, whether in a Christian crusade, a Muslim jihad, or an apocalyptically oriented militia. People who think of God as righteous are likely to emphasize righteousness themselves, just as those who think of God as compassionate are likely to emphasize compassion. People who think God is angry at the world are likely to be angry at the world themselves."

"The Bible is a human product: it tells us how our religious ancestors saw things, not how God sees things."

"Christianity's goal is not escape from this world. It loves this world and seeks to change it for the better."

Church Retreat on 13 February at RAAF Williams, Laverton

We really enjoyed each other's company and all fifteen participants worked hard. Candace impressed by riding her bike from Ascot Vale to Laverton! There will be action points coming out shortly from our retreat. Three points were:

- At the beginning of each year we could make one statement from our Church Mission Statement our focus for worship and programs for the entire year;
- There's scope to develop our visitation in the local community: Corandirk ?
- Development of a greater digital, on-line presence for AVUC.



Take a moment to grade our church on six key relational characteristics, as we did at the retreat. Ask *what strengths and gifts do you have to develop these characteristics?*

Central Characteristics of Successful Churches

From, 'Effective Church Leadership', by Kennon Callahan

Relational Characteristics

	Low	Medium	High
1. Specific, Concrete Missional Objectives			
2. Pastoral/Lay Visitation in Community			
3. Corporate, Dynamic Worship			
4. Significant Relational Groups			
5. Strong Leadership Resources			
6. Solid, Participatory Decision Making			



Building Manager's Report

Our achievements

Gardens

Contrary to a popular belief – not one plant was lost during this Summer season

And this result is mainly due to the donation of mulch by Judy. Our plants thrive and multiply, without much encouragement. It is a huge saving to us and beautiful gardens to own.

Water Tank

My eternal gratitude for the installation of the Water Tank goes to Bob.

It was due to his perseverance and dedication to us that we now have an alternative water supply.

Bob is not a member of our church, but he is our very valued supporter.

Vegetable garden

The family to give our thanks to:

Candace and her family created a very healthy veggie garden.

Not a small achievement and it is one that follows the tradition of the Garden of Eden.

Many thanks Candace and husband, Rachel, Clara

Pergola

Finally, we are getting closer to submitting our plans for the proposed pergola.

And, if we were to succeed, this achievement would not be possible without Fiona's hard work and dedication.

Fiona put her heart and soul into this project. She organized meetings, filled in applications to our local council, she periodically informed us... and she worked on this project alone, without any input - yet, she never gave up.

Building users 2016

The majority of our present tenants renewed their contract. In addition we have engaged a new tenant – Ms. Katrina, a music teacher.

Problematic aspects:

We experienced some minor issues with members of the NJC.

A locked cupboard, designated for our individual use, seems to have resolved these problems.

Last, but not least – I would like to thank you all.

Dina



Harmony Day is held on March 21 in Australia.

Harmony Day is intended to show cohesion and inclusion in Australia and promote a tolerant and culturally diverse society.

Harmony Day began in 1999, coinciding with the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and each year, it is marked by people coming together and participating in local activities.

The continuing message of harmony Day is

'Everyone Belongs'. It is about community participation, inclusiveness, celebrating diversity, respect and a sense of belonging for everyone.

Orange is the colour chosen to represent Harmony Day. Australians are encouraged to wear orange clothing and/or the distinctive orange ribbon to show their support for cultural diversity and an inclusive Australia.



OUR FIRST 'HARVEST SHARE'

Thank you Eileen for arranging our first share on Sunday Feb 28th. It was a good start and it was pleasing to see people not only sharing their produce but also sharing their interest and knowledge about gardening.

Future Harvest Swaps will be held from 11.30 am - 12.30 pm on the 4th Sunday of the month at Ascot Vale Uniting Church.

Please join in and bring along your surplus produce, plants and the like. If you have nothing to share, come along anyway.



Congratulations

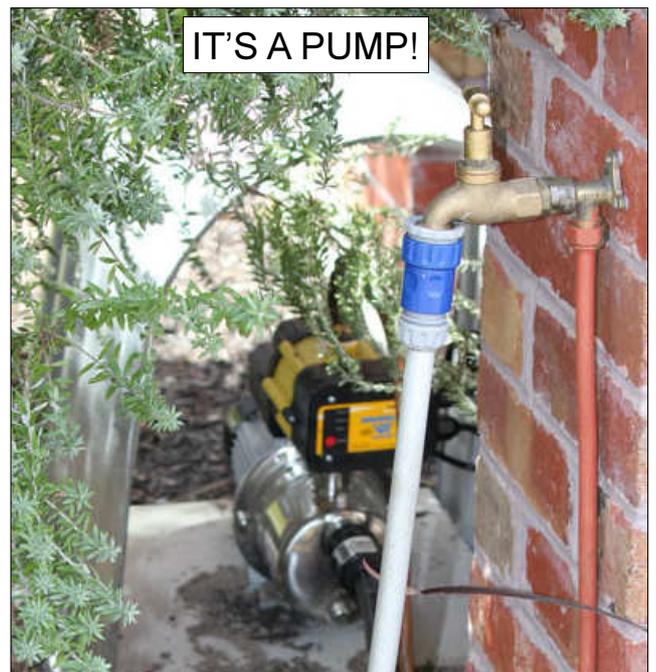
Melita and Michael recently celebrated their 7th Wedding Anniversary.

Congratulations from us all and we wish you much happiness in the future.

Fresh Herbs and Vegetables

Do you use fresh herbs such as parsley, mint, coriander, basil, thyme etc. It's easy to grow your own and cheaper and more convenient than buying them. All of these will grow well in a pot. Keep out of direct sun if we have a very hot spell and water when dry.

Autumn is a good time to plant some vegetables such as Chinese cabbage, spinach, tatsoi, rocket, silverbeet, broccoli, spring onions.



Our new water tank has an electric pump that comes on automatically when a garden tap is turned on. It ensures that there is sufficient pressure.

Treasurer's Report

Offering envelopes

Plenty of Offering envelopes for the period through May 2016 are still available on the front table at the entrance of the church. Please take a set.

Direct Credit

Several members are now using direct credit, using electronic funds for offerings.

This has significantly increase our offerings in 2015.

If you are interested please see Peter Macdonald.

Offerings	\$1,977	Ministry	\$3,875
Fundraising & Appeals	\$ 0	Mission & Service	\$ 0
Donations	\$1,600	Property	\$2,434
Building Users	\$ 614	Water Tank	\$ 0
Other	\$ 0	Other	\$ 0
Total Income	\$4,191	Total Expenses	\$6,309

Deficit for 2016 through January \$ 2,118

2016 Budget

Church budget for 2016 has been developed by the finance committee for submission to the March Church council meeting .

This reflects projected income of \$61,000

Expenses \$ 96,000

Deficit \$35,000

Donation

Recognition is made of the contribution of the Melbourne Heart Institute (Professor Keen Soon) who made a further donation of \$1,500 on February 1st.

Finance Committee

The next Finance committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday May 12th 7.30pm at the church.

Kind Regards, Peter Macdonald

Statement from the Presbytery of Port Phillip West

"As many of you are aware, Uniting Church congregations, agencies and schools across Australia are standing in solidarity with 267 people who are seeking refuge in our country.

Our highest priority is the welfare and human need of these asylum seekers particularly children.

Many church members have joined with people across Australia in a campaign to "let them stay".

The President of the Uniting Church, Stuart McMillan, has issued a pastoral letter calling on prayerful support of the 267 asylum seekers and the "let them stay" campaign.

A number of Uniting Church congregations are also offering their church building as a place of 'sanctuary' to these asylum seekers. This includes Uniting Church members across our Presbytery of Port Phillip West. There are also many other ways that church members are supporting asylum seekers across our Presbytery including the asylum seeker network.

The legality of the church building as a place of 'sanctuary' is unclear, and the people who have taken this step, do so after much struggle and prayerful reflection.

As the Presbytery of Port Phillip West, we are committed to joining in with God's mission. This mission includes offering sanctuary, care, protection and hospitality to the persecuted, asylum seekers, our neighbours, prisoners and the marginalized, as we witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ and risk persecution for the sake of the Gospel.

The Presbytery of Port Phillip West stands in solidarity with our Uniting Church members who, as an act of following Jesus, are offering their church building as a sanctuary and supporting asylum seekers in different ways.

We call on Uniting Church members across Port Phillip West to pray for and, if needed, offer practical support to those who are offering sanctuary to asylum seekers across the Presbytery of Port Phillip West."



Reflections

My eyes fell in peace

And rested on

The landscape

Before me

The bridge of

Spirituality

Beaconed me

And

I was

Tantalized

By

Nature

God playing with

Colour

Reflecting

Mother Earth

Father Sky

Birds calling

In the wind

I am kissed

By

God's breath

And

I know

I am

Alive

Fiona M. Prendergast



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The Pancake Day was a great success.

Approximately \$103 was raised for the UCA Lenten Appeal for Sri Lankan Churches.

Thank You to those who bought pancakes and for the generous donations received.

Thanks also to Chris for providing, cooking and selling the pancakes.



The ten pin bowling night was a lot of fun for young and old.

"Fish and Chip Night"

19th March Easter Theme Fish & Chip Night with
Easter Egg hunt for the kids (big & small)
6pm - 9pm



BYO food and drink
(Feel free to bring some hot cross buns)
A movie will be shown on the night from 7:30pm

Who Are Melbourne's Homeless?



They may be buskers or beggars or the silent majority. Buskers may have real talent and truly earn their income as a fair wage.

Beggars are often a pest because of their use of harassment, open hostility, and sometimes threats of violence. Observe how they are dressed and if they have many possessions nearby. They may not be in real need. Some may be greedy or lazy.

The truly homeless will most likely be sitting on a box or on the pavement in some sheltered spot leaning against a shop front or other building. They are likely to be accompanied by all their worldly possessions, including bedding and sometimes a pet cat or dog. They usually have on display a cardboard sign telling of their status and need. After dark they may often be found wrapped up in a doona or sleeping bag surrounded by their things, in a doorway or some other sheltered spot.

These people usually are not criminals, drug addicts or alcoholics. Some may be sick, either physically or mentally or both, but they don't get sick on purpose. The homeless are generally needy people with nowhere else to live. Rents are high. Jobs are scarce and to get one, you need an address. The Salvation Army helps where they can, but there is so much need and too little money and other resources to spread among so many.

I would like to ask those who can afford as little as \$1 a month to help a homeless person. A practical way to do this could be to select a homeless person you know about and get to know that person and what their needs are. Maybe you can spare some money, or maybe you can give someone in need what you were planning to give to an Op Shop. Many things people throw out could be valuable to these people. Their needs may include a friend, or someone to go to an appointment with them. Other needs may include a coat, thermos flask, gloves, sun hat, beanie, shoes, socks, and books. These people don't need luxuries. What they need are the necessities of life that most people take for granted.

If you cannot help an individual homeless person, but would still like to help one of them, two or more people might like to assist one person, or to give money or goods to the Salvation Army who will then make a difference themselves.

Personal Interviews:

I interviewed five people 10/2/2016 and revisited each location 15/2/2016. On my second visit, one person was missing, one was antisocial and three were happy to see me. Here are their stories:

Person 1 had 2 dogs and had been homeless for 14 years. He was no longer there.

Person 2 is Summer – a 20 year old young woman who has lived on the streets continually for 2 years, and on and off, for 8 years before that. She has a young tortoise shell cat called Nala as her constant companion who can only eat certain foods. Summer sometimes has to go without to feed her cat who is her only family.

She cannot get official assistance because she has no form of identity and does not know where she was born. She was raised in DHS. She would like some blankets and books.

Contd. next page

Person 3 was a woman with a dog. She would not talk with me.

Person 4 was a man who had been homeless about for about 12 months. He would like a warm coat.

Person 5 was Dave, who because of great personal loss, could not cope, lost his job, and 6 months later, his home. He has been homeless for 8 months. He needs a large backpack to hold all his clothes and bedding etc. (over 60 litres). He would need to choose it himself.

Locations will be supplied on request. DO NOT GIVE DOG FOOD AS TOO MANY DO.

Written by Jean.

LET THEM STAY

Social and Environmental Justice Group News

First, Fiona and I have been really encouraged by the support of members of the new **SEJC Email Team**, and we thank them very much for their interest and ideas. And it's never too late to join! If you want to see "justice and kindness" (Micah 6:8) prevail in our community, our nation and worldwide, and to ensure God's creation is cherished and protected, speak to, or email, us. Then you can have input into what issues we should try to tackle, and how. Our present focus is on these areas:

Let Them Stay banner. This refers to the 267 asylum seekers who have been living in the community, or brought here for medical treatment, and whom the government now wants to send, or return, to offshore detention on Nauru. They include babies born in Australia, successful secondary school students whose friends and teachers are devastated at the prospect of losing them, and children and women who have been sexually abused on Nauru, where their attackers are still at large.

We believe that, whatever any of us may think about Australia's asylum seeker policy in general, we must agree – and show that we agree - that to send these 267 people to Nauru would be cruel and pointless. A groundswell of opposition to their proposed deportation has seen doctors, nurses, teachers and principals, lawyers and professors, as well as many other individuals of good will AND many churches, unite in a large and growing "Let Them Stay" movement around the country.

We sought Church Councillors' approval to put up a banner to show AVUC's support for this movement, and invited those at church on Sunday to comment. As there was considerable enthusiasm, and no dissent, the banner went up yesterday; and we thank Chris sincerely for her work in fixing it to our front fence. We hope you feel proud to be part of this passionate and compassionate community movement.

Homelessness. Walking through the city, it's impossible not to notice the many homeless people on the streets, and be concerned about the misery they endure. In September last year 34,000 Victorians were on the waiting list for public housing. And while our population grows, the number of public housing properties is falling.

Research shows that homelessness causes or aggravates physical and mental health problems, and can lead people into crime or drug abuse. But something can be done. "Common Ground", a project supported by governments, Melbourne city council, private developers and community housing groups, now houses 131 formerly homeless people. And as a spokesperson for the San Francisco Housing First project has said, it is better to "spend a dollar on developing a long-term home for a person than \$20 dealing with that person in an emergency room".

It seems the Victorian government now has a plan to invest in more public housing. **Please all sign the letter** you will soon be offered, praising this initiative and encouraging them to expand it, and the Federal government to support it. Meanwhile, some of our members are already setting inspiring examples of how we can help homeless people. **Ask Judith about the 30 blankets she has made** to be given out at a St Vincent's soup kitchen by her son and daughter-in-law! And read of the needs of **homeless people Jean has befriended**, in her article in this issue.

Advance Notice: Palm Sunday Walk for Justice for Refugees, Sun 20 March, 2 pm, State Library, cnr Swanston & Latrobe Sts (I will be marching in Canberra!)

Thank you and God bless – your SEJC Spokesperson, Dorothy



One of the beautiful stained glass windows at St Marks

A Quiet Day with Jeanette Ackland

— Fiona M. Prendergast

I was introduced to the Chapel of Saint Marks Community Church in Clifton Hill. That initiated my day with God and the Holy Spirit. I allowed the quietness of the day to permeate my being and entered into this initial sacred place. I lay on the floor and focused on the stained glass windows of our native gumtrees, flickering in light. I perused a book of poems and recorded the words that spoke to me. They were –

1. "Let yourself be silent.....Drawn by the stronger pull.....Of what you truly love"
2. "Your vision will become clearer.....Only.....When you look into your heart.....Who looks outside dreams.....Who looks inside awakens."
3. "Hearing the silence.....Still in the arms ofExpansive breath.....Here among the shards.....Of earth.....May all the tears.....Empty us out of ourselves."
4. "What is before me.....Increasingly comes into meaning.....As I remain with it.....As I linger in its presence.....As I open myself to it.....As I focus on it.....In its manifold appearancesIn its dimensions.....And as a whole."
5. "Eternal spirit.....Earth maker, pain-bearer, life giver.....Source of all that is and.....That shall be.....Father and Mother of us all.....Loving God.....In whom is heaven.....The hallowing of your name.....Echo.....through the universe"
6. "But even more.....To take our place beside her.....At the jubilee loom.....And weave with her.....The tapestry of thenew creation."
7. "Let yourself.....be silently drawn by the.....stronger pull.....of what you.....truly love."
8. "An artist is a.....Nourisher.....And a Creator.....Who knows that.....During the art of creation.....There is.....Collaboration.....We do not create alone."

(From the book, 'The Spirituality of Art', By Lois Huey-Heck, Jim Kalnin)

I left the chapel and carried its sacredness with me into the next space that spoke to me.

I was in a garden and found peace and connectedness with it. I stayed with it and was suspended in time, of the image before me.

I was in the zone and proceeded to make art in response to these two places. I offered a prayer in the format of art to our Creator. Who encouraged me to whole heartedly participate with the day and carry the days good wishes with me as I was homeward bound.

Ascot Vale Uniting Church

Rev. Ron Rosinsky

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

Email to the Editor
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ROSTER: MARCH TO MAY 2016

	Leader	Com-munion	Duty El-der	Music	Welcomer	Reader	Morning Tea
13 March Family Service	Rev Ron		Dina	Rob	Peter	Candace	Dina & Jenny
20 March Palm Sunday	Rev Ron		Noel	Candace	Michael & Melita	Angelika	Angelika & Bente
25 March Good Friday	Rev Ron		Dorothy	Maria	Ken & Jenny	Bente	Ken & Jenny
27 March Easter Day	Rev Ron		Angelika	Dorothy	Peter	Peter	Marycon & Angelika
3 April Communion	Rev Ron	Dorothy	Dorothy	Rob	Robin & Chris	Chris	Judy & Chris
10 April Family Service	Rev Ron		Dina	Maria	Judy	Marycon	Dina & Marycon
17 April: AVUC A.G.M	Rev Ron		Noel	Dorothy	Cally	Cally	Angelika & Bente
24 April	TBA		Angelika	Candace	Ken	Ken	Ken & Jenny
1 May Communion	Rev Ron	Michael	Michael & Melita	Rob	Robin & Chris	Michael	Chris & Marycon
8 May	Rev Ron		Dorothy	Maria	Peter	Peter	Barbara & Judy
15 May Family Service	Rev Ron		Noel	Dorothy	Michael & Melita	Judy	Bente & Chris
22 May	Rev Ron		Dorothy	Candace	Judy	Barbara	Marycon & Judy
29 May	TBA		Michael & Melita	Maria	Cally	Candace	Jenny & Ken

Have you ever wondered ????

Why do we press harder on a remote control when we know the batteries are flat?

Why do Kamikaze pilots wear helmets?

Why is it that people say they 'slept like a baby' when babies wake up every two hours?

Do married people live longer than single ones or does it only seem longer?

Why do toasters always have a setting so high that could burn the toast to a horrible crisp, which no decent human being would eat?

Why is there a light in the fridge and not in the freezer?

Why does Goofy stand erect while Pluto remains on all fours? They're both dogs !

Did you ever notice that when you blow in a dog's face, he gets mad at you, but when you take him on a car ride, he sticks his head out the window?

Does pushing the elevator button more than once make it arrive faster?