



TRANSCEND

MARCH
2019

Ascot Vale Uniting Church Newsletter

60 Maribyrnong Road, Moonee Ponds

Services: Sundays at 10am

Making a space for God.

Rev. Gordon Bannon

Let's make this Lent a Lacuna!

A few years ago the UCA Synod had a very radical idea. Concerned with the relentless busyness of church life, the church funded a group of people to produce a set of resources with a focus on seeking the Divine by taking some space.

The resources were titled 'Lacuna' which is a Latin word referring to a space or a gap.

The resources included prayers, songs and liturgies which I still find helpful.

In more recent years I have found it most useful to see Lent as a time of Lacuna; of making a space for the Divine.

The challenge about this Lacuna space is that it is not about doing something more. It is actually about doing less so that a space can be made for something else to enter. I remember about the same time that the Lacuna resource was put together, it was suggested that we intentionally take a month off church meetings. No Church councils; no Presbytery meetings, no Synod meetings. As I recall a valiant attempt was made but it was just too hard for most to stop. And lest you think that I am holier than that, let me shatter your illusions. I find it very hard to stop and just be. Like so many others I get my sense of self-worth from what I do and how much I do.

The old protestant work-ethic is well entrenched in my psyche. Even our prayers can be places of doing rather than making a space for God to enter. Our church services leave very little in the way of Lacuna. This why the Lenten space is important for me and perhaps for us all. Even when I am doing the things that I love I can become caught up in the doing and forget to make a space.

I love working in the garden but I can work for hours forgetting to absorb the beauty and power of the garden space I am working in.



To make a Lacuna in the garden is to stop and realise that the Divine is creating alongside me and that I am surrounded by gorgeousness.

Spending time in the garden can be 'just hard work' but it can also be understood as thanksgiving prayer. In nurturing and enjoying God's Creation, including by participating in planting and nurturing plants, we are watching and participating in the cycles of life and growth that are at the core of God's gifts to us.

It is also possible to move beyond seeing gardening as hobby to seeing it as a practise that takes us outside of ourselves in the same manner as prayer or meditation. When a person moves into the garden, this can be done with an awareness of God being present and active in the garden. The Zen tradition places great store in being fully present in whatever one is doing. By extension, this can be applied to the practice of being truly present in the experience of gardening. Rather than just 'doing' the gardening', we can practice truly feeling the earth with which we are relating, knowing the seed which you are planting, and loving the flower, or vegetable which you have nurtured. Perhaps by taking a Lacuna in the garden we could be 'praying the garden'. What is it to make a Lacuna space this Lent? It doesn't have to be in the garden. It can be as simple as pausing and really looking around. It can be making a space to be still or to listen to a piece of music or soak in a flower.

PTO

A lacuna space is a space of trust and mystery. You leave a space and you trust that it will be filled. So this Lent I invite you to do a bit more nothing. Make some spaces and don't fill them and see what happens.

May your Lent be a time of great Blessing
Gordon

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE MARCH 6th

I will be running an Ash Wednesday service at 7pm March 6th at the church.

It will be a fairly short reflective time to see in the Season of Lent. All are welcome. It will include the non-obligatory smudging with ashes and the focus will be on the inner journey rather than penitence.

I will also be making our Lent and Easter services a chance to explore the relationship of gardens and gardening to our spiritual life.

Gordon

Dear God,

We give thanks for places of simplicity and peace. Let us find such a place within ourselves. We give thanks for places of refuge and beauty.

Let us find such a place within ourselves. We give thanks for places of nature's truth and freedom, of joy, inspiration and renewal, places where all creatures may find acceptance and belonging. Let us search for these places: in the world, in ourselves and in others. Let us restore them. let us strengthen and protect them and let us create them.

May we mend this outer world according to the truth of our inner life and may our souls be shaped and nourished by nature's eternal wisdom. Amen.

(Michael Leunig)



Ascot Vale Uniting is a safe place for all people to worship regardless of age, race, creed, gender, cultural background, or sexual orientation

Garden Meditation.

Max Cootes

Let us give thanks for a bounty of people.

For children who are our second planting, and though they grow like weeds and the wind too soon blows them away, may they forgive us our cultivation and fondly remember where their roots are.



Let us give thanks;

For generous friends...with hearts...and smiles as bright as their blossoms;

For feisty friends, as tart as apples;

For continuous friends, who, like scallions and cucumbers, keep reminding us that we've had them;

For crotchety friends, sour as rhubarb and as indestructible;



For handsome friends, who are as gorgeous as eggplants and as elegant as a row of corn, and the others, as plain as potatoes and so good for you;

For funny friends, who are as silly as Brussels sprouts and as amusing as

Jerusalem artichokes;

And serious friends as unpretentious as cabbages, as subtle as summer squash, as persistent as parsley, as delightful as dill, as endless as zucchini and who, like parsnips, can be counted on to see you through the winter;

For old friends, nodding like sunflowers in the evening-time, and young friends coming on as fast as radishes;

For loving friends, who wind around us like tendrils and hold us, despite our blights, wilts and witherings;

And finally, for those friends now gone, like gardens past that have been harvested, but who fed us in their times that we might have life thereafter.



For all these we give thanks. AMEN

Vale- Lloyd Geddes

It is with sadness that we record the death of Lloyd Geddes. He passed away on Sunday 24th. February.

The funeral was held on Friday March 1st at the church. We extend our sympathy to Judith and their family and friends.

From the Church Officer - Candace

Solar panel installation failed to go ahead on Tuesday this week. Hoping for next Tuesday....

The manse is getting close to being ready for Gordon and Sue to move in. Renovations are done. Painting is done. Carpet installation is Friday. Waiting for blinds to arrive and be installed hopefully in 2 weeks' time.

Manse cleaners needed:

The final thing to do is to clean up. I need helpers willing to clean windows and to wipe out cupboards, and wipe down shelves. If everyone can pitch in, it isn't such a big job.

We could do it after church on Sunday March 17th for instance?

To control weeds we will be putting a layer of newspapers/cardboard under the garden mulch. We will need a lot so please save and bring to the church.

The Rector responds to concern that Lent is a downer



'Transcend' is published on the first Sunday of each month except January. Articles, photos and other contributions are welcome. Email them to the Editor, Robin Waltrowicz no later than the Wednesday before publication at : avuniting@hotmail.com

PHOTOS FROM GORDON'S INDUCTION ON FEBRUARY 3rd



Working hard in the garden



Garden Swap

The next Moonee Valley Garden Group Garden Swap will be on Sunday March 31st. following the service at 11.30am.

Bring anything garden or food related to swap with others. Seeds, seedlings, fruit, veggies, cuttings, succulents, worm juice, fertilizer, gardening magazines and books, jam, chutney, favourite recipe, eggs, pots, tools etc.

Come along and share your knowledge and learn from others.

For further information speak to Eileen Ray.



The Moonee Valley Garden Group has a Facebook group with 1365 members.

Members post items for sale, gardening tips and questions, recipes etc.



Kid's Uniting

We have a modern Sunday school program held during the service. Our teacher Fiona provides a program featuring yoga and guided meditation, and learning about key Biblical stories in a supportive and creative environment.

The program runs during the school term.

Congratulations



Congratulations to Jenny Roberts who received an Australia Day Award in recognition of 30 years service to the community as a volunteer. Jenny has kindly provided the following account of the service she and Ken have undertaken through the Lions Club of Glenroy.

I had much pleasure in accepting this award and feel very humble and proud. Ken and I are health & welfare to members of the Lions Club of Glenroy, for those members who are unwell or having a bad trot in life. I am known for making meals etc. and delivering them with Ken. We support local schools in Moreland and Hume. We are contacted by school welfare officers for a variety of needs such as clothing, food for families that are in need, school books, funds for school camps for disadvantaged children. We help families doing it tough, we hear many sad cases. We provide scholarships to year 6 primary school students to help them in their transition to Secondary Colleges. The auxiliary works very closely with Jacana School of Autism, we have a great relationship with this wonderful school. The auxiliary restocks Ronald McDonald House pantry 3 times a year while families are staying so they can make simple quick meals. I enjoy volunteering to the needy and disadvantaged of our community and beyond.

Jenny Roberts.

THE TRUE MEANING OF HOMELESSNESS

Dorothy Howes

Sometimes it's hard to grasp what a situation may really mean for a someone, unless you meet a real person in that situation. I'd had only a vague concept of what it must be like to be homeless until I met Skye Murray.

A few weeks back, on my way to a film, I saw a young girl painting beautiful Aboriginal pictures outside the Nova cinema. I really wanted to buy one for a friend, so I went over to ask the price, and we got into conversation.

She said she was happy to accept whatever I wanted to give. She was mainly painting to use her time in a worthwhile way. I asked her how she had learnt to paint. She said, from watching her mother painting, before she died. When did her mother die? "About ten years ago. I was nine at the time."

Had she any other family? "I've got a twelve-month old daughter, but she's in foster care. They took her from me when she was born, because they said I couldn't give her a proper home. I'm trying to earn enough money to be able to get her back."

Then she added, with a mixture of sorrow and bitterness, "If only the Government had got involved sooner, and helped me to find a home, instead of waiting till after I'd had the baby, I wouldn't have had to lose my daughter."

I couldn't help agreeing with her. What a tragedy – and apart from the personal suffering involved, what a recipe for disaster in the community; a child growing up, quite possibly shuffled from pillar to post and without family support, vulnerable to addictions or mental illness; a young woman probably doomed to long-term unemployment (how can you present yourself for a job interview when your opportunities for hygiene, clothing and public transport are limited and your health probably affected by poor or inadequate food?) What a waste of potential!

Surely, I thought, in a state recently judged to be the equal most prosperous in the country, we can do better than this.

If you feel similarly, would you be willing to sign a letter to the Premier asking him to make low-cost housing an urgent priority? Thank you so much in anticipation.

THE MEDEVAC BILL - ARE WE SATISFIED NOW?

The answer is a resounding NO!

While all children on Nauru have been brought to the mainland, this does not mean

they are out of detention. Some are in detention centres in Australia, others in

community detention – which means, if they are lucky enough to be able to go to

school, that they have to go accompanied by guards. Further, there are still some

children who remain separated from their families.

The group “Grandmothers Against the Detention of Refugee Children”, and other

asylum seeker support organisations, have four urgent demands of the 46 th

Australian parliament.:

1. End all forms of detention for refugee children.

2. End refugee family separations.

3. Get all refugees off Manus and Nauru to safe settlement (many of the men in

offshore detention are young, and some were actually children when they were first

incarcerated there).

4. Ensure refugee children and their families seeking asylum are held longer

than 72 hours to enable basic identity and health checks (we know this can be

done; it has been done for many years in enlightened countries like Sweden)

The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre has further demands of the Government:

1. An end to offshore detention altogether.

2. Access to a fair legal process.

3. Access to permanent protection offering security and safety (we know that

prolonged uncertainty about their future is a leading cause of mental illness in

asylum seekers in Australian detention)

4. Respect for basic human rights (like clean water, working sanitation, adequate

food and shelter – many of which were not being provided on Manus and Nauru).

5. A regional humanitarian approach to the resettlement of refugees (if the

government would offer to the UN the billions of dollars they are willing to spend on

indefinite detention of asylum seekers, their claims could be processed much faster).

Yes, the passing of the Medevac bill is cause for rejoicing. But there is a lot of work

still to be done to ensure we treat all asylum seekers fairly and compassionately.

I will keep you posted!

Dorothy



THE KENSINGTON CHAMBER PLAYERS
in partnership with
CHRIST CHURCH KENSINGTON
present an
**asylum
seeker
benefit
concert**

Date: 5pm, Saturday, 23rd March 2019
*Beethoven cello and piano sonata
Popular Solos for flute
Chamber ensemble*

Venue: **Christchurch Kensington
76 McCracken Street, Kensington.
Melways Ref. 42 K2**

Entry fee is whatever you can afford. All proceeds go to the
Kensington Neighbourhood House Language Program
Supporting people in our community.



We acknowledge and give thanks that the land on which our church building stands is country for which the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation are the traditional custodians. We honour their elders past and present and commit ourselves to work for reconciliation and justice.

AVUC ROSTER March – April 2019.

LEADER / COMMUNION		DOORS	MUSIC	COUNT	READER	WELCOME	MORNING TEA
March 3 6 Ash Wed	Gordon Angelika	Fiona	Rob	Benson	Kate	Judy	Chris/ Kate
March 10 Lent 1	Gordon	Candace	Julian	Judy	Angelika	Peter	Judy Tupu
March 17 Lent 2	Ian Pearse	Dorothy Chris	Dorothy	Robin	Chris	Robin	Chris Ruth
March 24 Lent 3	Gordon	Candace Michael	Candace	Michael	Melita	Michael	Hamid Marjan
March 31 Lent 4 Plant Swap	Gordon	Fiona Angelika	Rob	Jean	Benson	Ken	Ken/ Jenny
April 7	Gordon Dorothy	Dorothy	Julian	Benson	Chris	Judy	Kate Benson
April 14	Gordon	Candace	Candace	Robin	Rachel Clara	Robin	Chris Tupu
April 19 Good Fr.	Gordon 9.30am	Dorothy	Dorothy	Jean	Chris	Michael	No MT
April 21 Sunday	Gordon	Michael	Rob	Judy	Angelika	Ken	Ken Jenny
April 28	TBA	Fiona	Julian	Jean	MaryCon	Robin	MaryCon Chris
May 5	Gordon Angelika	Dorothy	Dorothy	Peter	Kate	Peter	Hamid Marjan

Roster for February March.

Thank you to all the people who let me know they were unavailable for various dates.

Please talk to Dorothy if you feel you could open the church or lock it up sometimes on Sundays.

Rob always appreciates help with the plant swap tables

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