

# TRANSCEND: OCTOBER

Ascot Vale Uniting Church Newsletter 2015

60 Maribyrnong Road, Moonee Ponds

Services: Sundays 10 am

## Finding yourself in the marriage and relationship wilderness- Part II Spirituality and Eroticism

*"They say that 'love is blind', but marriage is a real eye-opener."* -Anonymous

**Intimate connection with another first requires solid connection with yourself.** That's how marriage and being part of a church family are the same- they're about people making- soul making. Both summon us to stand up to our full stature and maturity. The latter, a church family, gives us the resources to do so. Both challenge us to emotional intimacy, and to be ourselves in the presence of another. Marriage and joining a church family are not for the faint hearted, or for the lazy, or for the rampant narcissist. For instance, someone who is selfish hasn't really struggled to bring forth a better more generous version of themselves. So they don't have a solid connection with their self. When one rampant narcissist marries another it doesn't last.

**In a long term relationship something wonderful and awful happens.** The partner becomes utterly unique to you; the one person with whom you can be truly yourself, while paradoxically, giving up the need to struggle for self-hood. You come to truly know yourself and each other. The power of intimate disclosure, being fully known and received by another, and giving that same gift- is central to what the word "grace" means. It gives a taste of something greater, a deeper presence of love which comes from the Holy Spirit. Grace transcends the relationship- yet is enlivened and given meaning by it. God's unconditional love or grace is shaped by the quality of our relationships. Yet, God's dependence on our ability to love is not total. But it is radical- it's interdependent.

**In addition to physical pleasure in marriage, there are other benefits that can endure for a lifetime.** Paul tells us in Ephesians that as you build a deep bond with another you and your partner find *"the gift of God's grace...and the wisdom of God in its rich variety...so that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through [God's] Spirit."* (Eph. 3: 7-21)

**That's the wonderful. And there's the awful.** We know that great mortal combat and hurt occur in marriages. Marriage forces us to see (if we have the courage to look) the worst, as well as the best parts of ourselves. It reveals our capacity for sadism and hatred, our desire to punish and control our spouses, our secret neediness and insecurity, and, most of all, our usually unacknowledged terror of being left alone to our own inadequate selves, of being rejected, of losing someone we love. **In marriage the challenge is to crucify or be crucified. That is, you die to that part of your personality that will likely damage your partner and your marriage, dying to your self-destructiveness so that your true self can be born.**

**The price of loving brings crucifixions of another kind.** The experience of an intensely intimate relationship paradoxically makes us feel with great vividness the terror of loss. *"To love is to be lonely,"* writes therapist Clark Moustakas. "Every love is broken by illness, separation, or death. The exquisite nature of love ... is threatened by change and termination, and by the fact that the loved one does not always feel or know or understand." When a loss of this kind occurs, there is a hole in the fabric of one's life that is not filled by another. One is left with a bounty of good memories and a wealth of pain.

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**The prize of a life full of affection and love is well worth the price to those willing to accept life on its own terms. But to risk intimacy takes courage, integrity, and a strong faith in one's ability to cope.**

**What is the nature and quality of the best intimacy?** The Biblical and religious principle upon which marriage is based is called a covenant. A covenant relationship is simple and difficult. It's the relationship that Jesus enacted with us through his spirit and body-'the new covenant' with God. It's to treat all people as your equal- especially your partner. And It means pledging your mind, body and soul to care for the mental and physical welfare of another. You take that person, in sickness and in health, for better or worse'. **And I would add, up until psychic death do you part, which is mental and emotional death- the death of your soul. Don't let it happen.**

A covenant type of commitment to another structures your life, giving it internal and particular order. The total inner landscape within you becomes altered by a central emphasis. **It may be that only in the experience of a committed relationship is an authentic sense of self born.**

**Here are questions that an individual can ask of themselves and in their answers find the meaning of intimacy.** With the exception of sex, these apply to all types of relationships.

- **Have you given up the notion that your partner is a fused part of yourself?** Have you learned to recognize another as a separate individual, with competing preferences and agendas? Have you relinquished the infantile hope of being unconditionally loved by a totally gratifying partner—the ideal, perfect parent you never had?
- **How is your mental health?** Can you develop better interpersonal skills, like active listening? Do you have the capacity for emotional and physical intimacy- as an equal with your partner? The health of your mind and soul, and that of your partner will determine the health of your marriage.
- **Are you able to stand alone as an individual?** Can you hold onto yourself and your values while you struggle through your fears? How do you master anxiety rather than masking anxiety in your relationships? Do you knuckle under the demands and tantrums or manipulations of others?
- **Do you have an internal sense of self, a core identity that you value?** Do you know what is acceptable and unacceptable in relationships and why? Are you a centred self or just self-centred?
- **When you fight with your partner or others do you fight fair** and keep it to the issue(s) or do you engage in character assassination?
- **Do you have a natural inclination to resent others** and hold them in contempt for minor things? If your answer is yes, then I have the name of a good divorce lawyer.
- **Are you sexually compatible with your partner?** If not, then as above, I have that lawyer's name. Couples who are in trouble in this area have a marriage that is in the danger zone, if left un-addressed. They have work to do. Are you mentally distant from one another, playing hide and seek with each other in your physical intimacy? **Your emotional bond determines your sexual bond. Sexuality and spirituality are deeply connected, they're about the desire for union, for knowing and being known.** Here poor body image and low self-esteem are demons to be looked at and worked through.

**The act of love, at best, is an unveiling.** Layer after layer of custom and appearance are stripped away. "For me, the erotic encounter is ecstatic in the dictionary sense of the word," writes journalist *George Leonard*. "It permits me the unique freedom of stripping away every mask, every facade that I usually present to the world, and of existing for a while in that state of pure being where there is no expectation and no judgment... My freedom lies precisely in surrender, in my willingness to relinquish even my hard-won personality (*persona*, Greek for 'mask'), my image of who I am in the world and what I should be—my ego.

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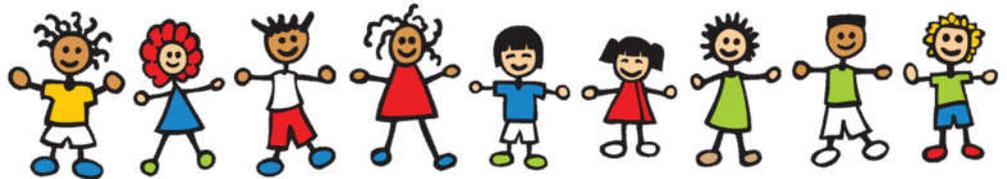
**"And it is in this state of surrender, of not-trying, that my full erotic potential is realized.** For I am now willing to lose everything and find nothing. All that has maintained me in the ordinary world is of no use here. Through the tumult of love, we have arrived at a radiant stillness, the center of the dance. Seeing nothing, hearing nothing, I am totally connected with my love and, through her, to all of existence. What was veiled is unveiled, what was hidden is revealed; beneath all customary distinctions, there is a deeper self that wears no mask. **In the darkness, there is an illumination. I love, I have found nothing and all things."**

That pretty much describes the experience of Christian spirituality, at-one-ment with God (a deeper connection); an illumination and inspiration- our mind is cleared and still; a transcending of our attachment to ego and mask; and finding our deeper self while safe in God's love for us.

May this experience be yours,

*Rev. Ron Rosinsky*

## KID'S UNITING



**Kid's Uniting commences on Sunday 11 October for term Four**

Join your teacher Caterina for fun and learning about,

- \* The early church and ecology;
- \* The importance of having a hero: 'All Souls Day'; and
- \* Christmas preparations.

*All children are very welcome*

## Worship Themes and Readings

**11 October: "Spirituality and Eroticism"**

Song of Solomon 5: 1-8; Mark 10: 17-27 The rich young man

**18 October: "Finding yourself in the relationship wilderness"**

Song of Solomon 8: 5-7; Mark 10: 35-45 'Soul Groups' after church

**25 October: "Finding that experience that shapes our inner landscape"**

Hebrews 8: 1-7; Mark 10: 46-52- Blind Bartimaeus

**1 November: All Saints Day- Celebration of Communion-  
"Mental habits that help us move forward"**

Hebrews 11: 8-16; Mark 12: 28-34 The greatest thing in life

'Soul Groups' after church.

## Dates for Your Diary

Thursday October 10th.	Finance committee Meeting 7.30 pm
Sunday October 11th.	<b>Stand Up for Refugees Rally</b> at the State Library at 2.00 pm
Saturday October 24th	United Nations Day
Saturday October 31st	Dinner and Movie Night at the church at 6 pm
Saturday October 31st	Halloween
Tuesday November 3rd	Melbourne Cup Day
Wednesday November 11th	Remembrance Day
Friday November 27th.	<b>People's Climate March</b> at 5.30 pm, at the State Library

## COME ALONG TO THE INTERNATIONAL DINNER AND MOVIE NIGHT

**Saturday October 31st - Starting from 6 pm - At the Church  
(Our "Fish and Chip" Night)**



Bring along a plate of food to share.  
Perhaps a favourite childhood dish or a traditional  
dish from your country of origin

After enjoying food and fellowship we will  
watch a movie with an  
international flavour

Everyone Welcome!                      Entry free

## Soul Groups

**'Soul Groups'**- A Program of Spiritual Formation and Personal Growth  
The group has been discussing the book:

*'Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life', by Karen Armstrong*

**3, 17 October: Study Topics: 'How Little We Know; How Should We Speak to One Another'**

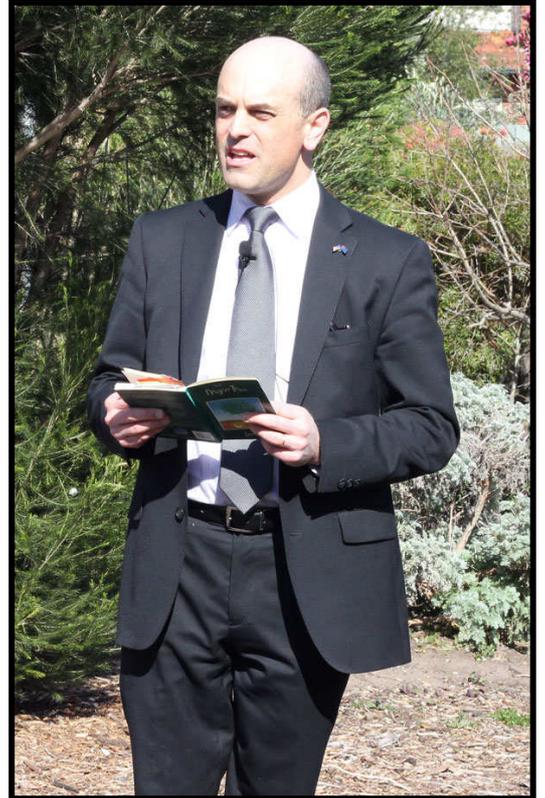
The Group meets after the Sunday Service 11:30-12:30- in the multi-purpose room.  
This is an informal group and anyone interested is most welcome to come along.



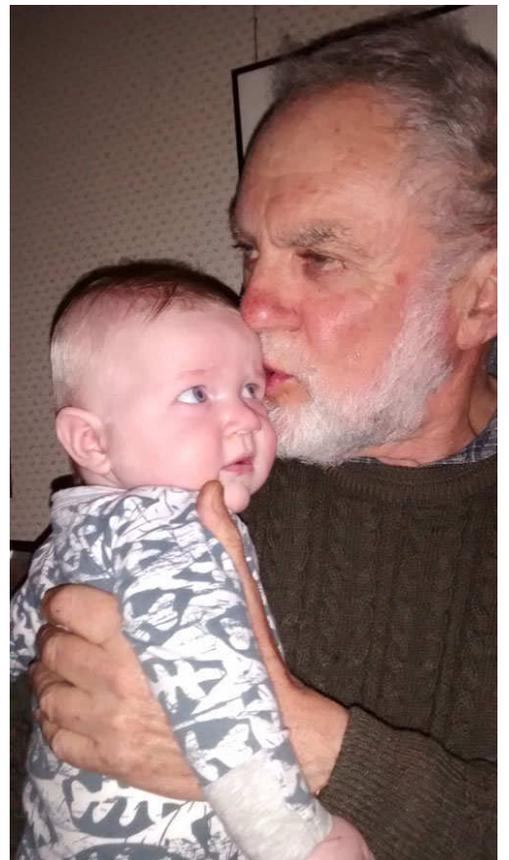
## THANKS DINA!

**On behalf of us all, thank you Dina for the  
wonderful work you have put into  
improving our church building and  
garden.**

## CELEBRATING NEW LIFE



Planting a tree as part of the Special Spring Service.



A new and much loved grandson for Dorothy and Michael. Thomas is now 3 months old.

# SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE REPORT, October 2015

## Justice and Compassion for Asylum Seekers:

1. Along with millions of Australians of good will, we applaud the Government's decision to accept 12,000 Syrian Asylum Seekers. They will of course need a great deal of support to settle into our community, and there are many ways in which we can help. Some of us may feel able to offer short-term accommodation to a family or couple in our homes. Or we might be able to supply food and clothes, or help organise a welcome function for them.  
If you would like to be actively involved in any way in easing their transition into the Australian community, you can visit [www.aylanslist.com](http://www.aylanslist.com), or pass on your details to me to do so for you.
2. However both the Government and the Opposition still support Offshore Detention. Yet on Nauru and Manus Island systematic sexual abuse and other brutalities continue unchecked.  
So, many thanks to all those who recently signed the UCA's petition urging the Government to immediately close the Nauru Detention Centre, which the Senate Select Committee Report condemns as inadequate, inappropriate and unsafe.
3. Regrettably, instead of addressing the problems in Detention Centres on Nauru and Manus Island, the government has chosen to threaten doctors, nurses, teachers and counsellors with jail if they talk about what they witness. This not only condones and perpetuates a situation of official abuse, but is an attack on democracy itself. To show your objection, join us at the Stand Up for Refugees Rally at the State Library at 2.00 pm, Sunday 11 October.  
Hear noted asylum seeker advocate Julian Burnside speak on "Let's Make Compassion the Fashion" at High St Rd Uniting Church, 482 High St Rd, Mt Waverley, 3-5 pm, Sunday 1st November.

## Climate Change:

While UnitingCare (the UCA's Overseas Agency) works hard to help Pacific Islanders cope with the flooding and salt damage caused by global warming, our new Prime Minister has declined to make any commitment to tackle Climate Change. We can show him, and other world leaders, that we want immediate and effective action to halt climate change, by taking part in a **People's Climate March at 5.30 pm, Friday 27 November**, at the State Library. This has been timed to coincide with mass rallies overseas for the start of international climate talks in Paris. Please join me if you can!

## Let's Work Together!:

You may remember Norman Warren, lay preacher from Strathmore, who has led services for us, in which he taught and played his own songs. Well, Norman has called a meeting of interested northern suburbs churches, to discuss how we can co-operate to support **Lentara, the Uniting Church Asylum Seeker support centre** in Brunswick. It will be at **2.00 pm, Monday 28 September**, in Sunbury.

For a small group, working with others seems like a good option. If you would like to come with me and find out more, please see me, or ring 0432 397 359.

*Your friend in Christ, Dorothy*

Visit our Facebook site Uniting Church Ascot Vale and post some comments about church happenings, Social Justice or Environmental Issues. It helps if you add a "like" to our page.



# FAMILY FUN AT THE TEN-PIN BOWLING NIGHT



## ANOTHER GREAT 'FISH AND CHIPS NIGHT' ON SEPT 26th.

Welfare worker Harjono gave us an interesting photographic presentation and insights from his travels in India and Vanuatu .

<http://www.djoyobisono.com/>

*"Inspirational Gathering:" Reflections on the conference: "What kind of Australia do we want to be?" which she and Dorothy attended.*

Social Justice looks into the areas of significance that resonate with us in our lives and cry out to be addressed.

I feel we need to see that all people have worth and value. We also need to get rid of labels. They are a prison to those labelling as well as those being labelled. Acceptance of the individual and also offering to celebrate all of our uniqueness; recognises that we all have something to give.

We also need to challenge the symposium of this elusive regime that is imposed upon us, to maintain the fabric of society.

We need to build peoples' self-esteem through genuine support, recognition and give all people genuine respect.

There needs to be a shift in our imposed judgements. The sentiments of I appreciate you and thank you for being a part of my/our world needs to seep into our earthly souls. To increase self-esteem there also needs to be awareness that we are all a part of society and all of us are making a contribution.

Training our minds into appreciation and thanks for having the courage to be you can be achieved by saying "I value you". This is a start in the right direction. By being aware of judgemental thoughts and putting a stop sign (!) to these thoughts of an imposed value system; creates a process of change to our judgements and misguided perspectives and becomes embracing of all people.

Instead of seeing people as poor or rich, see the humanity that we all have by being part of our shared Earth. We are stewards and what we do today impacts on our future. We are all in this together and we all need each other to survive on this planet.

See the similarities not the differences. However celebrate the diversity and really accept people inside our hearts and minds.

Diversity promotes original thoughts and we are a better people for them. One example is the use of plastic bags and their decline in our society due to the detrimental effect on our environment. Initially it was a bunch of Lefties and I would be looked at peculiarly by the shopkeeper for refusing them. Now it is common place.

To promote worth in our society perhaps the unemployment benefit could be seen as a wage, for artists and environmental workers. There are young people engaged in a movement called "Food not Bombs". They feed street people for free and are not a part of any religious organisation. There are also many people employed on a volunteer basis in the area of welfare to the community.

We also would want to inspire future generations and aid our children's dreams. Eliminate "The Tall Poppy" syndrome. Let us celebrate each other instead.

As far as the environment is concerned, I feel engagement with our indigenous Australians could enlighten us on how to manage our joint land properly.

There is a need for equality of all people and that this notion becomes a part of our new fabric of society.

**Is Social Justice an elusive dream? I hope not.**

**As Jesus said "Love thy neighbour as thyself".**

**When we look into the eyes of a stranger, we see ourselves.**

# FROM THE TREASURER

## Offering envelopes

Plenty of Offering envelopes for the period June 2015 through May 2016 are still available on the front table at the entrance of the church.

Please take a set, alternatively see Peter Macdonald or Ted Jennings.

## Direct Credit

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

If you are interested please see Peter Macdonald.

## July and August Income and Expenses

	JULY INCOME	AUGUST INCOME
Offerings	\$1,496	\$1,699
Fundraising	\$ 100	\$ 100
Donations	\$ 100	\$2,250 (includes \$2000 from Melbourne Heart Foundation)
Building Users	<u>\$6,205</u>	<u>\$ 773</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$7,901</b>	<b>\$4,822</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>\$16,879</b>	<b>\$5,259</b>

*\*Professor Kean Soon and the Melbourne Heart Foundation have now donated \$8,200 to our congregation since the start of last year.*

## Finance Committee

The next finance committee meeting is Thursday Oct 8th 7.30pm at the church.

*Peter Macdonald, Treasurer*



Certificates of Appreciation were awarded for service to our congregation.

Joyce, (seated) Bente, Dorothy, Dina

Professor Kean Soon  
(Melbourne Heart Foundation)

Maria (Church Chairperson)

Reverend Ron Rosinsky

# WORTH V UNWORTHY

## Unworthy

Steve prays, I thank you God that I am not like other people, I don't swear, lie, get drunk, take drugs, go to bed with other people's wives, or have mental problems.

Rather, I am faithful to my wife, I give lots to worthy causes and to the church. I am in the choir, preach, teach and chair the church council.

Richenda prays, God I confess that I cheat on my tax returns. I don't give much to worthy causes and none to the church.

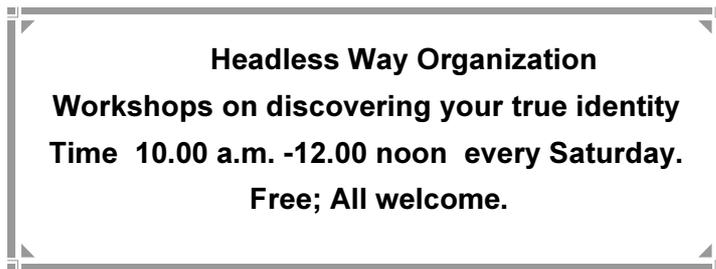
I am going to make the assumption that Steve and Richenda are suffering acutely from feeling unworthy, a feeling of which they are unaware.

We all want to have a sense of worth. Feeling unworthy or inferior, or only of worth when we are of use to others is unbearable.

Steve seeks to get rid of the exceedingly painful state of unworthiness by asserting that he is better than others. He feels worthy or good when he puts people down, and thereby affirms his goodness. He keeps on doing this year after year. It appears then that his sense of rottenness, or of being worthless, a sense of which he is unconscious, is still troubling him.

Richenda seeks to get rid of the depressing feeling of unworthiness, a feeling of which she is unaware, by confessing to wrong-doing. Yet she keeps on going to confession every day.

## Worthy



Steve was on his way to church when he noticed a sign in front of a shop window:

'What next. More fools,' muttered Steve.

He started to move on when he noticed a picture underneath the sign. A paper bag open at both ends with a person's head partly in the bag at one end and another person's head partly in it at the other end.

He hastened his steps towards the church. But his curiosity was aroused.

On Saturday, he went to the next workshop. He watched incredulously as a man and a lady looked at each other through opposite ends of a paper bag.

He heard one of them exclaim! There's nothing looking at you Bill . You're seeing my head aren't you?'

'Of course,' replied Bill.

'Phooey. That's a relief. Yet there is an emptiness ever so bright looking at you. My head is not on view.'

Bill said , There's no emptiness here, I'm looking at you.'

At the invitation of the leader Steve decided to have a go. ' I'll straighten out this nonsense,' he muttered to himself'.

He placed his face at one end of the bag and Myrtle did likewise at the other end.

The leader said, 'What do you see at the other end of the bag Steve?'

'Why, I see Myrtle's face of course. Silly question, 'snorted Steve.

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'Okay. Then what do you see at your end of the bag? Do you see your face there or is there an emptiness and the absence of your face?'

Steve said, 'I'm flabbergasted. I can't see my face, it's rather like Joe said, 'A face-less reality is shining on Myrtle's face.'

Myrtle replied, 'I don't see my face, I'm not anatomically structured so that I can see my face.'

Six days on Steve remembered what he had prayed: 'I thank you God I am not like.....he paused. and looked inwards as he had done in the paper bag experiment. A faceless reality, the same crystal clear reality he had experienced in the bag experiment at the workshop, was observing what he was remembering.

Thoughts floated up from this seemingly infinite hole.

"I am not like you Steve.

I am in total contrast to all human beings and all creation.

I am wide open to you Steve and all that exists.

I am nearer to you than your jugular vein.

I love you and all that exists, not myself.

I love you for yourself, not for myself.

Hence I am selfless love."

'Wow!' exclaimed Steve. 'What value! What worth! All creation is so valuable that the billions of dollars in the world could not buy it. The *infinite whole* closer than our jugular veins is present, loving all creation for ourselves.'

'I won't be making out that I am better than others any more. We are all of infinite worth.

A week later Steve read, ***Till we see our nothing, we cannot understand the value of our being,*** ***Traherne.***

*Doug Lloyd.*

*August, 2015.*

## PHOTOS & ARTICLES FOR TRANSCEND PLEASE?

Robin would love to have more photos and articles to put in Transcend. Lots of people now have a camera in their phone. Photos of church activities, church people doing interesting, clever or amusing things etc would be suitable.

Just email them to me with some basic information or a caption.

[rwaltrowicz@gmail.com](mailto:rwaltrowicz@gmail.com)

### ELDERS

Dorothy Howes  
Angelika Ranellone  
Melita Long  
Michael Long  
Noel Lloyd  
Dina Monaghan

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

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**ROSTER FOR OCTOBER 2015 TO JANUARY 2016.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Communion</b>	<b>Duty Elder</b>	<b>Music</b>	<b>Welcomer</b>	<b>Reader</b>	<b>Morning Tea</b>
October 4 Communion	Rev Ron	Dina	Dina	Dorothy	Peter	Peter	Marycon and Fiona
October 11 Family Service	Rev Ron		Dorothy	Maria	Ken and Jenny	Ken	Ken and Jenny
October 18	Rev Ron		Dina	Dorothy	Dina	Barbara	Dina and Barbara
October 25	TBA		Noel	Candace	Robin	Chris	Angelika and Chris
November 1 Communion	Rev Ron	Michael	Dina	Maria	Michael and Melita	Melita	Fiona and Marycon
November 8	Rev Ron		Angelika	Maria	Cally	Cally	Barbara and Judy
November 15 Family Service	Rev Ron		Dina	Dorothy	Dina	Candace	Angelika and Dina
November 22	Rev Ron		Michael and Melita	Candace	Ken and Jenny	Barbara	Ken and Jenny
November 29	TBA		Dorothy	Maria	Michael and Melita	Angelika	Marycon and Fiona
December 6 Communion	Rev Ron	Noel	Dina	Dorothy	Peter	Peter	Dina and Barbara
December 13	Rev Ron		Noel	Maria	Robin	Chris	Angelika and Chris
December 20	TBA		Dina	Candace	Ken and Jenny	Ken	Ken and Jenny
December 25 Christmas Day	Rev Ron		Michael and Melita	Dorothy	Michael and Melita	Candace	Marycon and Dorothy
December 27	Rev Ron		Angelika	Dorothy	Peter	Angelika	Angelika and Dina
January 3, 2016 Communion	Rev Ron	Dorothy	Dorothy	Rob	Cally	Cally	Fiona and Judy
January 10 Family Service	Rev Ron		Noel	Maria	Ken and Jenny	Michael	Ken and Jenny
January 17	Rev Ron		Dina	Dorothy	Robin	Chris	Chris and Barbara
January 24	Rev Ron		Michael and Melita	Maria	Michael and Melita	Barbara	Marycon and Angelika
January 31	TBA		Angelika	Candace	Peter	Peter	Dina and Fiona