



TRANSCEND

Ascot Vale Uniting Church Newsletter

OCTOBER
2017

Why Religion Matters- including Christianity

The basic goal of Jesus' life was not to die for our sins. He didn't come to be a sacrifice for our sins to God.

Regardless of the chest-poking and pious moralizing that accompanies such Christian teaching, those views lack critical scholarship- the backing of biblical evidence. Jesus scholars have said for a long time that the blood sacrifice view of atonement was not the voice of Jesus, but of certain Jewish-come Christian commentators.

Jesus came to show us a way to grasp our divine, essential nature and live deliberately from it; despite life's temptations, our demanding egos, our brokenness, and our spiritual blindness.

So it needs to be said, and it's a central biblical theme, that we are human but we are also divine.

Experts on the historical Jesus say that his goal was to help the disinherited of the world change from within, so they would be empowered to survive in the face of oppression- and one day uproot it, and achieve God's liberation.

Martin Luther King Jr's mentor and teacher was just such a man. He was a Christian mystic named Howard Thurman. He and King both studied the teachings of nonviolence and social change of Jesus and Ghandi. Thurman poetically described this high calling, and the importance of religious faith as,

"A love rooted in the deep river of faith which helps oppressed peoples overcoming persecution... It may twist and turn, fall back on itself and start again, stumble over an infinite series of hindering rocks, but at last the river must answer the call to the sea."

Personal and Political Transformation

'The call to the sea', the call of the creator to the created; it begins with the call to lay aside ego, and with the awakening to live by more than the ego. It's about desiring and choosing differently.

Though egoism is not a biblical word, it names a central theme of Christian thought about our condition. Egoism, is being driven by one's ego, which has been described by psychologists and theologians as being centered in the self and its anxieties, obsessions and pre-occupations. As I have written previously, it's the things that don't really matter that your mind attaches itself to. This way of being is living according the dictates of the fearful 'small self', 'the desires of the flesh.'

PTO

60 Maribyrnong Road,
Moonee Ponds
Services: Sundays at 10am



Rev. Ron Rosinsky

Coming Events

Sunday 8 October: Soul Group for spiritual formation, 11:30-1pm

Saturday 21 October: Men's Group dinner & discussion, 6-10 pm at the Manse

Saturday 28 October: Family Fish & Chips, 6-10 pm, Dine out, venue to be confirmed

Sunday 5 November: Exhibition of "Kids Uniting" activities

Sunday 26 November, 7:30 pm: A Quiet Christmas: music & meditation to prepare for the Christmas season.

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

ascotvaleuniting.org.au

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Alternatively, this way of thinking might express itself as centering oneself in the accomplished, successful and polished self, and its myriad achievements. Importantly, *having a strong sense of self is not bad*. The solution is *not* ceasing to be a self. But the challenge is the *kind* of self that you will be, that I am, and that we are as a community of people.

Our lives, rooted in the deep river of God's love, and our faith in a better world, finally overcome all social discriminations, including those based on sexual orientation.

'The call of the sea', God's call, echoes across the infinite hindering rocks. And it asks, *'will you let go of resistance to discovery of your deeper identity? Will you surrender your self definition so that God's intention can be realized?'*

Behold the testament of another man who heard the call, from a Birmingham jail. Religion still matters. It drives human progress in a way that nothing else can.

"Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men [and women] willing to be co workers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right."

Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals."

– Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*

Peace, Rev Ron Rosinsky

Worship Services & Themes- 10 am Sundays

8 October: Mental health Sunday (10th World Mental Health Day) *'Is mental health a vanishing commodity?'* Matthew 21: 33-46
Soul Group after the service.

15 October: *'Mental health & the healing influence of faith'* Matthew 22: 1-14- The great feast
Kid's Uniting recommences

22 October: *'Placing your stamp of authenticity on life'*
Matthew 22: 15-22- 'Render unto Caesar'

29 October: Rev. Mark Dunn; Matthew 22: 34-46

5 November: Communion and All Saints Sunday : *'Will we learn lessons from our heroes and enemies?'*
Matthew 23: 1-12

Congratulations to Jean Warriner. Jean was overwhelmingly elected to as a Church Councilor on Sunday, 10 September.

We all welcome Jean and look forward to her continuing outstanding contributions and leadership to our Church.



On the Grapevine:

“Faith and doubt both are needed- not as antagonists, but working side by side to take us around the unknown curve.”

- *Lillian Smith*

“Every man and woman is the unique creation of God, created to live a life characterized by joy, energy, and vitality-to succeed in all areas of life.”

-*Norman Vincent Peale*

“So God created man [and woman] in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female God created them.”

-*Genesis 1:27*



Ron congratulates Jean following her election to the Church Council.

SOUL GROUP

You are welcome to come along after the service on **Sunday 8th of October** for discussion, spiritual formation & inner well- being. 11.30—1pm middle room of church

Kid's Uniting

A modern Sunday school program
for children



Recommences on Sunday 15 October with
Cat & Fiona

Topics: All Saints Day & Advent - Christmas preparations.

Men's Group

All men welcome



Join us on Saturday 21 October, 6 - 10pm

At the manse - 50a Maribyrnong Rd.
Moonee Ponds

Dinner & Discussion

You're Invited!

Kid's Uniting will be having an Exhibition of their work on the November 5th.

It will be in the Kid's Uniting Rooms. Pop in after the service for a look.

Your interest encourages the children and their teachers..

'FISH & CHIPS NIGHT'

Come along to the
Family 'Fish & Chips Night'
Saturday 28th October 6-10pm
at church.

Bring something for dinner
(needn't be fish and chips) and have a
relaxing social night with friends.

Suicide and the Christian Message - Rev Mark J Dunn

Death is always difficult. The death of a friend is more difficult. The death of a friend who, in a moment of inexplicable despair kills himself is, frankly, the most difficult death to face. I have been a Minister for nearly 38 years and have conducted many funerals, yet the funeral for a younger person who has taken his own life still brings me to the edge of my own coping. Adam, a young man of thirty-two years, died by his own hand, leaving behind his wife Vanessa and three beautiful children. His wider family and all his friends were numb with shock.

As I faced this large congregation, I said to myself ***“What can I say to all of you who have gathered here today?”*** From a human point of view there was nothing good about what had happened. Everyone was stunned and perplexed. We could not understand why this had happened. There were many questions lurking in our minds for which answers were very difficult or impossible to find. My intention was not for a moment to judge, but to read this situation for the overflow congregation from the angle of honest faith – that was the only way I knew how.

Why did Adam commit suicide?

Did he not know what it would do to his family?

Did he not know the havoc and despair that this would bring?

Why would a person do this? I could think of only two answers.

1. **One**, none of us will ever really know why.
2. And **two**, it wasn't really Adam who did it.

This was not the Adam most of his family and friends had walked with through despair and struggle, through success and victory for half his life. This was not the Adam we knew.

I don't believe that Adam was himself on that fateful Saturday morning. He had been receiving help from me and other ministers, doctors, counsellors and Social Workers for some time.

I wondered if we failed Adam. I sat with my own guilt and maybe others did too.

He had been suffering mental illness for quite some time. On his worst days, he was driven by dark and sinister forces that I didn't understand. I could not explain it because I've never experienced it. It did not make logical sense. It cannot be analysed mathematically or analytically. All I know is that this brother of mine was sinking deeper and deeper into an abyss of despair, and in a moment of utter despondency, he did what he promised me he was never going to do - he took his own life.

When I asked ***“Why did he do it?”*** I faced the question with a deep sense of my own humanity. What if I were facing the same compelling forces in my life? - the curious mix of emotions and biology and chemistry and stress of life? What if I were sinking like the old prophet Elijah who said, ***“God, take my life,”*** or the celebrated London preacher Spurgeon who said, ***“I have gone through such despair and depression, I wish it on no one”?***

A wise teacher I follow once said; ***“Let the one who is without sin throw the first stone”***. (John 8:7) Why did he do it? I don't know. This is the kind of question we don't usually talk about publicly.

Some of that swollen funeral congregation were experiencing emotions they thought they had buried and forgotten. They were sensing them rising to the surface in the face of what had happened to this family, and some were asking with me, ***What could we have done differently?***

Two weeks before his funeral, Adam phoned me and with a cheerful voice; thanked me for the help I'd given him, offered me good wishes for the New Year and explained confidently that things were on the up. He even spoke of returning to the activities he loved most. Had I known what was to happen, I would have gone to his side, gotten down on my knees, kissed his feet and begged him not to do this.

But I've learned a lesson in ministry: I've come to terms with an especially important principle for those of us who sometimes think we need to fix everybody, and the principle is this: ***“I can do only what is right.”*** Now listen to the rest of it: ***“I cannot change or control the choices of another person.”***

I can only do what is right for me to do. To Adam's family and close friends who loved him and shared daily life with him, who prayed for him, who encouraged him, who counselled him, who laughed with him, who talked with him and got pissed off with him, I must say, ***“We can do only what is right to do. We cannot control or change the choices of another person.”***

PTO

There was a sense in which Adam was not responsible because he was driven by the dark forces of depression. In a clear rational moment, he would not have done this. But there is another sense in which, as a human being created by God, he is responsible for the choice he made. I must not—I cannot, I should not, I dare not—accept the guilt and the responsibility for the choice Adam made. I hope this does not sound uncaring: but he made the choice. I must keep reminding myself of that because the question that continually troubles us is, ***“What could we have done differently?”*** Answer: **Nothing!**

Some theologians believe that if you commit suicide, you forfeit heaven because the last thing you did was take your own life. Apparently, those theologians have never read the Bible because that’s not what the Book says. Let me remind you what the Bible says: ***“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? (What could I do that would alienate me and separate me from Christ’s love?) Shall trouble? Hardship? Persecution? Famine? Nakedness? Anger? Sword?”***

No, no, Paul writes. ***“In all of these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any other power (including the inexplicable power of depression) neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, (including what Adam did) will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”***

Jesus once said to a scruffy little tax cheat called Nicodemus: ***“God loved the world so much that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not be lost but may have eternal life”*** (Jn 3:16).

Yes, it was a tragedy. Yes, it would be better if Adam was still with us. Yes it would have been great for his wife and children to keep enjoying the company and the presence of a devoted husband and father. Yet the honest reality is different.

However, even though what happened was tragic, God, because of God’s amazing care and affection, is still saying to Adam and to all of us ***“Hey, all is not lost. I still care. Irrespective of whatever happened this is still my beloved son. I care about him. Trust me”.***

Sometimes we get caught in a situation of darkness. It is very difficult at times to break from our own cycles of sadness and difficulties on our own. We long to live in the peace and tranquillity which Adam craved, yet we very often find ourselves caught in situations where we can’t even see how to move forward.

I beg you to reach out and find the deeper connections we need to sustain our living and loving. Resources are available: Visit beyondblue.org.au for a start or reach out to someone you can trust. We’ve had RUOK Day recently (14th September) but if you have any concern, ask that question as often as seems right.

I believe that the life giving presence of God is found in our hearts because that is what makes us completely human - and on his many good days, Adam knew and lived that out and that was the best of what we celebrated that day – even in our sadness.

Amen!! Thanks be to God!!

Rev. Mark Dunn

Cards are available for those using Direct Debit to place in the collection bag. They are on the table near the name tags.

‘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. To receive a monthly copy of Transcend by email Contact: avuniting@hotmail.com



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.

Can you help?

Dear AVUC friends

I'm walking 35 kms on 5th November to raise funds for the work being done by the Australian Mitochondrial Disease Foundation to help those suffering from this serious disease.

So far I've raised \$869.20 of my \$1,000 target. If you would like to support this worthy cause you can donate on-line at

<https://give.everydayhero.com/au/padre-mark-s-team-effort-1>



Rev. Mark

Mitochondrial disease (mito) is an inherited chronic illness that can be present at birth or develop later in life. It causes debilitating physical, developmental, and cognitive disabilities with symptoms including poor growth; loss of muscle coordination; muscle weakness and pain; seizures; vision and/or hearing loss; gastrointestinal issues; learning disabilities; and organ failure. It is estimated that 1 in 4,000 people has Mito. It's progressive and there is no cure.



Looks for a cure

Explains what mito is

Supports thousands of Australian sufferers and their families

Enables further research and funding

A GIFT OF FRIENDSHIP - Pauline Murphy



The renowned deaf-blind trailblazer Helen Keller once said "I would rather walk with a friend in the dark, than alone in the light".

One of Keller's lifelong friends was her mentor Anne Sullivan. Sullivan helped Keller overcome the language difficulties imposed by her disability and paved the way for her to become the first deaf-blind person to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree.

When Sullivan later became ill, her beloved student was by her bedside, comforting her as she passed away.

If we take a look at Jesus' ministry, we learn that friendships can sometimes be hard. Jesus was mocked for dining with tax collectors, sinners and other marginalised people. When we become friends with people who are unpopular, we may be ostracised for showing solidarity with them.

Friends can also let us down. Jesus' disciples fell asleep in Gethsemane on the night he was arrested. Judas betrayed Jesus to the Romans. Peter denied Jesus three times.

But on the cross, Jesus asked God to forgive those who crucified him. He gave his life for all of us, so that we can be saved from our sins. Truly, there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for his friends (John 15:13).

Reflection:

We have a friend in Jesus who will always walk with us in the dark. How can we walk with our friends when they are going through tough times?

UCA victas Pew Sheet August 2017

FROM THE TREASURER – Peter Macdonald

Offerings

There is only a minority of our membership contributing with regular offerings either direct credit or regular weekly envelope giving. The opportunity to give regularly by direct bank offering was introduced two years ago but only a small number of people have taken up this system.

Please see Peter Macdonald if you are interested.

Our envelope giving has reduced significantly over the last two years, both in terms off the number of envelopes and the offering contributed. There are a still number of envelopes available on the table in the gathering space.

We are running at a deficit (\$23,485 through August) and we need to build our income in addition to controlling expenses.

Our request is that you consider a regular offering –either direct credit or envelope giving.

Contributions do not have to be large, only what you feel you can give. Please consider.

Income and Expenses - August 2017

Offerings	\$ 2173
Fundraising	\$ 0
Appeals	\$ 0
Donations	\$ 100
Building Users	\$ 1316
<u>Total Income</u>	<u>\$ 3589</u>

Ministry	\$ 4982
Mission & Service	\$ 1375
Property	\$ 1492
Other	\$ 146
<u>Expenses</u>	<u>\$ 7995</u>

Deficit for August \$4406

Deficit for year through August \$23485

Job Descriptions –Treasurer’s Functions

Job descriptions detailing differing aspects of the treasurers functions and estimated time required are again included in this Transcend .

Our church still needs volunteers to carry out these essential tasks.

If you can help please talk to Ron Rosinsky, Michael Long or Peter Macdonald.

Finance Committee

The next finance committee meeting will be held Thursday October 26th 7.30 pm at the church

ASSISTANCE NEEDED TO UNDERTAKE ASPECTS OF THE TREASURERS ROLE

If you can help with any of these tasks speak to Ron, Michael or Peter

OFFERINGS AND BANKING

1. OFFERINGS

COLLECTION AND COUNTING EACH WEEK

- Counting to be done in collaboration with at least one other person.
- Record amount of offerings between open plate, envelope giving, fundraising, donations and other.
- Return direct debit cards to table.

Estimated time -15 minutes

2. BANKING OF OFFERINGS EACH WEEK

Take collection to bank each week and deposit.

Estimated time -30 minutes

AT THE END OF EACH MONTH ADVISE

TREASURER-RECORDS -DETAILS OF OFFERINGS EACH WEEK BY TYPE OF GIVING - OPEN PLATE, ENVELOPE GIVING, FUNDRAISING, DONATIONS AND OTHER.

Estimated time -20 minutes

PAYMENTS

- RECEIVE BILLS AND FOLLOW UP FOR OUTSTANDING BILLS (AS REQUIRED)
- WRITE AND POST CHEQUES
- MARK UP INVOICES WITH CHEQUE DETAILS AND DATE
- FOLLOW UP FOR PRESENTATION OF CHEQUES (AS REQUIRED)

There are approx. 200 bills per year (17 a month, 4 or 5 a week)

All cheques require two signatures. We currently write 90 % of our cheques after church each Sunday.

A payee for any amount cannot be a signature for that cheque.

All postage costs (envelopes and stamps) will be covered by the church

Estimated time one hour per week

- Maintain summary of payments through each month (date, cheque number, payee and amount each month to provide immediate picture of payments.
- Mark up invoices for those payments made by direct debit with date of payment and include such payments in monthly payment summary and files

Maintain files of all invoices.

AT THE END OF EACH MONTH ADVISE TREASURER-RECORDS -DETAILS OF PAYMENTS - DATE, CHEQUE NUMBER, PAYEE,AMOUNT AND GST.ALSO INVOICES IF REQUIRED

Estimated time -20 minutes per month

TREASURER COORDINATION

1. ADMINISTRATION

- CASH FLOW –ENSURE SUFFICIENT FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE TO COVER FUTURE OPERATING COSTS (MONTHLY)
- CHAIR FINANCE COMMITTEE (QUARTERLY)
- SECRETARY FINANCE COMMITTEE (QUARTERLY)
- ESTABLISH BUDGET(ANNUALY)
- MONITOR ACTUAL INCOME AND EXPENSES AGAINST BUDGET
- ARRANGE AUDIT (ANNUALY)
- ATTEND UCA FUNDS MANAGMENT BRIEFINGS (ANNUALLY)
- ORDER OFFERING ENVELOPES (ANNUALY)
- ARRANGE MINISTERS STIPEND WITH SYNOD (AS REQUIRED)
- ARRANGE SIGNATORIES FOR BANK AND UCA SYNOD ACCOUNTS (BIANNUAL)
- ENSURE ALL RECORDS OF RECEIPTS, PAYMENTS AND REPORTS ARE MAINTAINED IN ACCORDANCE WITH REGULATIONS.
- MAINTAIN ASSET REGISTER (AS REQUIRED)

2, RECEIPTS

- COORDINATE OFFERING ARRANGEMENTS
- COORDINATE RENTAL RECEIPTS
- ASSIST PARISHIONERS IMPLEMENT DIRECT CREDIT (AS REQUIRED)
- CLAIM FOR REIMBURSEMENT DEFENCE FORCES (AS REQUIRED)

3. PAYMENTS

- COORDINATE ALL PAYMENTS
- ARRANGE BANK AND SYNOD SIGNATORIES (BIANNUAL)
- IMPLEMENT DIRECT CREDIT FOR REGULAR PAYMENTS (AS REQUIRED)

4. REPORTING

- COORDINATE ALL REPORTING FUNCTIONS
- PRESENT REPORT TO CHURCH COUNCIL

Estimated time one hour per week

AVUC ROSTER, Oct 2017 – Jan 2018

Please arrange swaps as necessary

DATE	LEADER	COMMUNION	DUTY ELDER	MUSIC	WELCOMER	READER	MORNING TEA
1 October Communion	Rev Ron	Noel	Dina	Rob	Ken /David	Angelika	Ken/Jenny
8 October Family Service	Rev Ron		Michael	Julian	Dina	Marycon	Marycon/David
15 October KU resumes	Rev Ron		Noel	Candace	Judy	Anneke	Judy/Bente
22 October	Rev Ron		Dina	Candace	Noel	Bente	Hamid/Rashed
29 October Garden Swap	Rev Mark		Michael	Rob	Peter	Noel	Dina/Angelika
5 November Communion	Rev Ron	Angelika	Dorothy	Julian	Robin	Chris	Chris/Francois
12 November Family Service	Rev Ron		Noel	Rob	Judy	Angelika	Marycon/Judy
19 November	Rev Ron		Michael	Dorothy	Michael	Candace	Bente/Anneke
26 November Garden Swap	Rev Eileen		Dina	Candace	Ken/David	Ken	Ken/Jenny
3 December Communion	Rev Ron	Dina	Dorothy	Julian	Peter	Peter	Chris/Angelika
10 December Family Service Kids Uniting finish	Rev Ron		Noel	Rob	Noel	Anneke	Anneke/Francois
17 December	Rev Ron		Michael	Candace	Cally	Cally	Judy/Marycon
24 December Christmas Eve	Rev Ron		Dina	Julian	Robin	Chris	Hamid/Rashed
25 December Christmas Day	Rev Ron		Dorothy	Rob	David/Dorothy	David	Bente/Angelika
31 December 2017 Garden Swap	Rev Mark		Noel	Dorothy	Judy	Barbara	Judy/Marycon
7 January 2018 Communion	Rev Ron	Dorothy	Dorothy	Candace	Ken	Ken	Ken/Jenny
14 January	Rev Ron		Michael	Julian	Michael	Melita	Chris/ Angelika
21 January	Rev Ron		Noel	Rob	Cally	Cally	Bente/David
28 January	Rev Eileen		Dorothy	Candace	Noel	Noel	Anneke/Francois