



TRANSCEND

Ascot Vale Uniting Church Newsletter

SEPTEMBER
2017

The Christian case for enacting same sex marriage

“When any society says that I cannot marry a certain person, that society has cut off a segment of my freedom.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., 1958

How long will some conservative Christians oppose same sex marriage based on irrational misrepresentations of the bible?

I endorse what an Irish archbishop said during that country's plebiscite on same sex marriage. He called for the church to take “a reality check”.

To bar the institution of marriage from gay and lesbian people based solely on their sexual orientation is discriminatory.

The key biblical question when it comes to the marriage covenant has nothing to do with whether marriage is between a man and a woman, or a same sex couple. Rather the question is about their character, and the quality of their commitment to each other. That's the reality check.

What about a fact check? Is what some outspoken Christian conservatives assert about the bible factually true? It isn't.

The ultimate authority for some Christians appears not to be God, but of course the bible, and it's said to be against the practice of homosexuality. But as a whole the bible does *not* condemn the practice of homosexuality. But it strongly condemns the treatment of others in word or deed that amounts to discrimination. And it condemns behavior in its many forms that demeans others. By implication the bible is against prejudice in the form of homophobia, or statements from pulpits that would incite prejudice against same sex couples.

Homosexual acts are mentioned in only seven bible passages.

Conservatives have often used these passages as tools of a homophobic polemic that claims too much. It's long been understood by mainstream scholars that the authors of these passages were in fact chastising specific incidents of sexual aggression such as rape; sexual exploitation of boys by men; and the practice of homosexuality within cultural groups with whom some Jews and Christians were intent on demeaning.

Jesus talked about the quality of a relationship, not its form. Jesus didn't mention homosexuality; he didn't say a word against it. Nor did it rate a mention in the list of “Thou shalt not's” found in the Ten Commandments. Some will say, ‘Jesus didn't say anything against taking drugs but that doesn't make it right’.

But a better approach is asking, is it right to appropriate the ancient bitterness of select biblical authors from over 2,000 years ago?

Especially since there is no solid ground to do so? Should we not ask whether their views accord with our conscience and common sense, and with humanitarian values?

Continued next page

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



Rev. Ron Rosinsky

Coming Events

Sun 3 Sept - Father's Day

Sat 9 Sept - Men's Group

Sun 10 Sept - Soul Group

Thur 14 Sept - RUOK Day

Sat 16 Sept - Cake Stall

Sun 17 Sept - Interview -
Rosemary Broadstock

Sun 24 Sept - Spring Festival /
Interview Megan Calcaterra
& Harvest Swap

Sat 30 Sept - 'Fish and Chip'
social night

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

From page 1.

For example, in some places the bible overflows with the prejudice and cultural bias of its authors, some who wrongly endorsed slavery and the subjugation of women. Do we want to champion those principles in the name of biblical authority? What about the more important biblical imperatives of equality and building compassionate relationships?

Way back in 1980, John Boswell of Yale published '*Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*'. Copiously documented and densely argued, Boswell employed his knowledge of classical and medieval languages to investigate the history of Christian attitudes toward same-sex couples. He concluded that it was not all hellfire and brimstone. In fact, Boswell found scant evidence that the early church condemned homosexuality before the Middle Ages. Provocatively, Boswell ventured that some Christian churches actually blessed same-sex unions during the first millennium of Catholicism.

Boswell's book argued that discrimination against homosexuals was not part of the natural order. Instead, it was the arbitrary intervention of a particular time and place- the violent medieval church.

Is our concern for a fair society, one committed to 'a fair go', to a person's potential and self-esteem, to authenticity and human flourishing? If so, then all institutions built on prejudice and discrimination, repression and guilt, and held together by authoritarianism come sharply into question.

Supporting marriage equality is surely one issue where all people who care about the institution of marriage can join together, be they conservative or progressive. At a time when the ideal of marriage has been weakened, extending the marriage covenant to same sex couples who want to commit to each other is a positive move. Particularly in this age of relationship uncertainties, if conservatives truly care about traditional relationships, then they should welcome same sex couples seeking to honour an ancient tradition- marriage.

In many states in America, and elsewhere throughout the world, tens of thousands of couples have been lawfully joined, and the sky hasn't fallen in. And nowhere have churches who disapprove of same-sex civil marriages been forced to recognize them.

The institution of marriage should be extended to same sex couples. A realistic reading of the bible affirms it. And rather than promoting discrimination based on sexual orientation, Christians could lead the way in ending it.

All the best, Rev. Ron Rosinsky

Worship Services & Themes- 10 am Sundays

3 September: Communion Service & Father's Day- Rev. Mark Dunn

10 September: Family Service - '*Being a real father; you and your father*'

1 Kings 2: 1-6; 10-11 ;Matthew 5: 1-10 - Soul Group, after church till 1pm

17 September: '*The warrior and the woman; men, women and relationships*'

Matthew 18: 21-35- the unforgiving debtor. Rosemary Broadstock, Presbytery

Development worker - discussion and refreshments.

24 September: **Spring Festival-** Ron interviews Megan Calcaterra, of Uniting World.

Matthew 20: 1-16- the vineyard workers- all equals! - Harvest Swap after church in the garden. Last day of Kid's Uniting- term 3.

1 October: Communion Service- '*The historical Jesus- claiming your authority is a moral duty*'

Matthew 21: 23-32 The authority of Jesus challenged



On the Grapevine:

“When the Father sends the Advocate as my representative- that is, the Holy Spirit - he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

I am leaving you with a gift - peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid.”

- John 14: 26-26

“In Spiritual guidance the journey often begins with the person's yearning for coherence and communion, searching for God and ultimate personal meaning. This yearning is marked by a sense of shallowness or loss of soul and disillusionment.

The process of spiritual guidance includes, letting go of resistance to discovery of deeper identity evoked by God. Unlike counseling which seeks to strengthen the 'will' and ego-management within the person, in spiritual guidance the heaviness of ego is reduced: “Now I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me.” (Ga. 2:20) This stage of spiritual growth involves desiring and choosing differently, for example choosing the values represented by the beatitudes.

- Ron R.

“The main avenue into the kingdom of God is for a person to absorb and live the Spirit of Jesus Christ.”

- Norman Vincent Peale

The end goals of spiritual direction are:

- to help a person live by more than the ego, and the negative voices of others.
Ego can be defined by the false and superficial things that our mind attaches itself to;
- to dialogue in the presence of mystery, and value the need for a sense of the sacred or transcendent to help reshape one's life.
John Wesley saw four avenues for the transcendent to be experienced: scripture, traditions, reason and personal experience;
- sharpening the ability to listen to one's unique inner voice, an echo of God's voice, 'the voice of conscience';
- the willingness for God's intention to be realized through surrender of self definition, and courageous service leading to universal fulfillment.”

- Roy Fairchild & Ron Rosinsky

“Human progress does not just roll in on the wheels of inevitability.”

- Martin Luther King Jr.

Kid's Uniting



A modern Sunday school program for children -
Kid's Uniting last Sunday, 24 September - 15 October resumes.

1 and 8 October: no Kid's Uniting - School holidays.

Acknowledgement of Country

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.



LESS THAN TWO WEEKS TO GO!



Be seen, be known:

It has been wonderful to see so many new people visiting or joining our church over the last few months. However for newcomers it can be a daunting task trying to remember all our names! Please help our visitors feel more at home by wearing your name badges. If you haven't a badge yet, or have lost yours, speak to Robin – he will be delighted to make one for you.

Let's get together and celebrate!



At AVUC we love birthdays, and birthday cakes! So if you are happy for us all to share your birthday celebration, please write your name in the calendar which hangs in the morning tea alcove behind the serving bench.

We sell cakes, biscuits, jams, jellies and preserves as well as some hand-made items. No fresh cream cakes, no raw eggs, nothing perishable.

If you wish to provide anything for sale, please contact Candace so that she can let you know the health and safety requirements and give you the appropriate labels to use.

If you don't like to cook but can spare some time to help set up, price items for sale, or sell or pack things away that would be great.

It is a fantastic way to get to know other members of the congregation as well as to meet members of our community.

This is a great fundraising opportunity for our church community and we need everyone's support.

Time: 8:15 to 12 or 1pm

Place: In front of Happy Receptions (201 Union Rd) Ascot Vale

R U OK Day is Thursday September 14th.

Who will you ask?

R U OK Day is a national day of action dedicated to reminding people to regularly check family and friends to see how they are.. Regular, face-to-face conversations can help people feel valued and supported.

It is about encouraging all people to regularly and meaningfully ask 'are you ok?' to support anyone struggling with life.

www.ruok.org.au

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

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 (\$19,079 through July) 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 –July 2017

Offerings	\$ 2276
Fundraising	\$ 200
Appeals	\$ 0
Donations	\$ 100
Building Users	\$ 6452
<u>Total Income</u>	<u>\$ 9028</u>

Ministry	\$ 3738
Mission & Service	\$ 0
Property	\$ 4883
Other	\$ 908
<u>Expenses</u>	<u>\$ 9529</u>

Deficit for July is \$ 501

Deficit for year through June is \$19,079

Job Descriptions –Treasurer’s Functions

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

If you can help in undertaking these essential functions please talk to Ron Rosinsky, Michael Long or Peter Macdonald.

UCA Funds Management – Annual Investor Briefing

UCA Funds Management – Annual Investor Briefing was held Tuesday Aug 8th. I attended on behalf of the congregation. Much of the time was spent reviewing ethical investing .Performance outlook for funds invested was also reviewed.

Finance Committee

The next finance committee meeting will be during October- date to be advised

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

Continued on Page 6

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

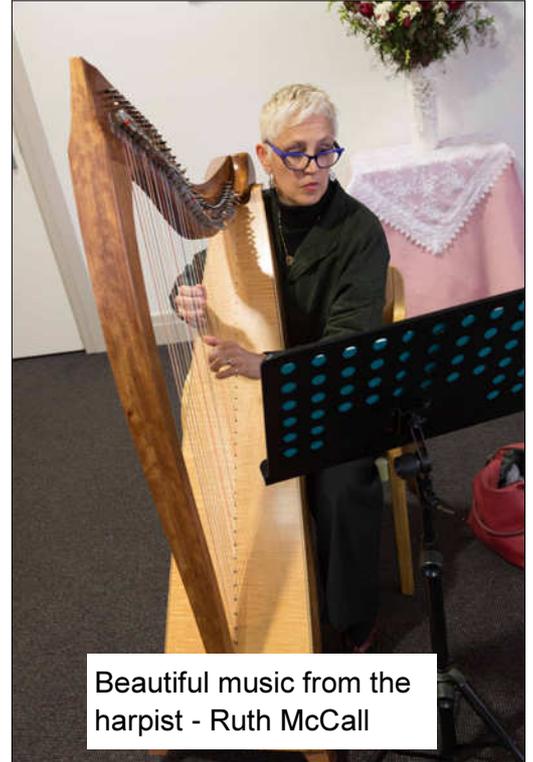
- COORDINATE ALL PAYMENTS
- ARRANGE BANK AND SYNOD SIGNATORIES (BIANNUAL)
- IMPLEMENT DIRECT CREDIT FOR REGULAR PAYMENTS (AS REQUIRED)

4. REPORTING

- COORDINATE ALL REPORTING FUNCTIONS
- PRESENT REPORT TO CHURCH COUNCIL

Estimated time one hour per week

Service on August 27th - 13th Anniversary of the Fire



Beautiful music from the harpist - Ruth McCall



The congregation sincerely thanks David Shaw for his outstanding and relevant contribution to the service on Sunday 27 August. David, a former mental health nurse, was interviewed by Ron about matters including: the elements of good mental hygiene; his work in the area of mental health, and the dangers of isolation to mental health. Of particular value were David's insights into his own journey of recovery and striving for better mental health. We thank David for his honesty, wisdom and eloquence, and for sharing his life story with us.

★ HAPPY BIRTHDAY! ★
Tim, Gerry and Fiona



JOHN NYUOTH - A GREAT AND GOOD MAN

Some time ago Ron and I had the honour of being present at a Memorial Service for an 82-year-old South Sudanese man whose eulogy told an inspiring story.

He was born into the chieftainly family of his tribe, and nominated as Chief at the age of forty-one. But even before he became Chief he showed qualities of leadership, and a dedication to the well-being of his community, which were exceptional.

Seeing the need for better connections to the outside world, he planned, and led men from his tribe out to build, a port, an access road and an airstrip, as well as a local hospital. He also personally paid the workers in the form of large numbers of bulls (the currency of his people) to feed them during the construction period.

He was baptised at the age of fifty-six, and lived out his Christian faith through his generosity and ability to forgive. For example he donated four canoes to enable newly initiated young people to start up as fishermen. Most impressively, he used his example and influence to prevent a revenge attack organised by family members when his own nephew was killed.

Another nephew, our friend James Deng, said of him, "In a hundred years you would not find another such man". On behalf of you all, I express our admiration and sympathy to James and Deborah and their family on the loss of their uncle John Nyuoth, after whom their fourth child is named. He was a truly great and good man.

Dorothy Howes

A PLEA FOR HELP!

The Government has just announced that it will no longer provide accommodation or a living allowance to asylum seekers who were brought to Australia from detention on Nauru for medical treatment.

Initially 100, but eventually up to 400, people will be left destitute and homeless. The intention appears to be, to force them to return to Nauru, where physical and sexual abuse are rife, or to their country of origin, where they are in danger of persecution, torture or death.

We cannot let the government proceed with this "unspeakably cruel act", as asylum seeker advocates have described it. On the next three Sundays you will be offered a copy of a letter of protest addressed to the Prime Minister, along with a stamped envelope. If you feel able, please sign and send the letter, ideally with a brief comment of your own (to make your letter more effective). A number of envelopes will hopefully have more impact than one envelope containing a petition with the same number of signatures.

Australia's inhumane treatment of asylum seekers has gone on too long. But more and more people are starting to speak out. We WILL win the battle to bring an end to this shameful episode in Australia's history. Let's make it sooner rather than later!

Thank you in anticipation of your support – Dorothy Howes

AVUC ROSTER, September 2017

	LEADER	COM-MUNION	DUTY ELDER	MUSIC	WELCOMER	READER	MORNING TEA
3 September Communion	Rev Ron	Dorothy	Dorothy	Rob	Robin	Chris	Bente/Chris
10 September Family Service	Rev Ron		Michael	Julian	Peter	Melita	MaryCon/Barbara
17 September Kids Uniting on Holiday	Rev Ron		Noel	Dorothy	Judy	Ken	Angelika/Dina
24 September	TBA		Dorothy	Candace	Cally	Barbara	Chris/Judy

From the Church Council

Keeping Children Safe: Our Contact People, Eileen and Rob

Each Uniting Church needs to have a member willing to act as “**Culture of Safety Contact Person**” – the one to whom anyone can go, who has any concerns about the safety of any child in the church community.

Eileen Ray and Rob Allen have kindly offered to take on this role. Please speak to one of them at any time if you are worried that a child may not be safe at our church.

Heartfelt thanks to Rob and Eileen for being willing to take on this role.

Dorothy Howes
Secretary, Church Council

Ascot Vale Uniting Church This is a statement of our commitment to keeping children safe



**Keeping
Children
Safe**

We are committed to implementing the Keeping Children Safe Policy of the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria.

All children who are involved in any of the Uniting Church’s activities, services, events or programs have a right to feel and be safe.

We are committed to providing safe environments where children are cared for, respected, nurtured and sustained.

We have zero tolerance of all forms of child abuse and will do all in our power to safeguard children from abuse.

We are committed to creating and maintaining a child-safe culture to ensure the care, protection and safety of all children engaging with the Church in any of its entities.

Abuse thrives on secrecy. To prevent child abuse across the Church, we are committed to providing clear leadership and open and transparent governance to combat secrecy.

We clearly affirm the Church’s commitment to upholding the law. This includes the requirement to report abuse to the appropriate authorities.

We commit to the following actions, as appropriate in our situation, to keep children safe:

- Promote strong leadership and governance and a culture of child safety
- Promote access, equity and diversity
- Promote appropriate behaviour amongst adults and children
- Recruit, train and supervise workers well
- Manage risk, promote safety and respond to concerns
- Promote child, family and community participation

**This Statement of Commitment was formally adopted by the Church Council
and will be renewed annually**

**Our Child Safety Culture of Safety Contact persons are Eileen and Rob Allen.
For further information or to report a concern about child safety contact speak to Eileen or Rob.**