



# TRANSCEND: DECEMBER 2013

Ascot Vale Uniting Church Newsletter



## FROM TRIPLE R

*"It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,  
From angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:  
"Peace on the earth, goodwill to all from heavens all gracious King!"  
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing."*

**There must always be in every one's life some place for happiness**, a place for bliss, some place for that which is in itself breathlessly beautiful. Without a place in our life for 'the singing of angels' figuratively speaking, we lose our hold on life.

Christmas, despite our dysfunctional families and parliaments is such an opportunity. It's colour and music, and focus on the child reminds us that life is alive, that God is beauty and God is eternally young. And despite the worst circumstances of being born into a stable, life and compassion kept coming on; life keeps coming on- God arrived as a baby, and still comes to us in the form of a baby!

### Shaking the foundations

**During Jesus' lifetime there was an aggressive change** from a *traditional agrarian society* to a *commercial agrarian society*. In the former, the elites took the farmer's surplus- their surplus crops and produce. In the latter, a commercial agrarian society, the elites took not only the surplus but also the farmer's land. Many people working on their ancestral lands had their property taken from them by higher tribute, by sword or with both. They lost their property and their security, their past and their future. They became tenant farmers or worse.

**When speaking to his disciples** Jesus turned and pointed at the magnificent Temple in Jerusalem and famously said, "Not one stone will be left on top of another." It was a thinly veiled indictment against the accumulation of land and wealth by a few, as represented by the Temple and its wealthy religious elites. They excused and legitimated the Roman's unjust land grabs.

The Temple had become a well known symbol of these injustices; inside of it all the debt and tax records of Israelites were stored.

**God is beautiful in that God brings compassion and respect.** Witness Jesus the man. In his Jerusalem, awash with wealth and rich landlords, he preached *radical equality*. He used humility, humour and direct action to subvert the system. He led by example in ending tribalism by breaking down kinship codes, as well as racial and gender barriers. He would eat with anyone and heal anyone even when doing so was against strict purity laws.

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Services:  
Sundays at  
10am

*We wish you all a  
joyous Christmas  
and a peaceful,  
healthy and happy  
New Year*

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**The community that Jesus formed** around himself was a domain of outsiders and outcasts. It's members learned to have mutual respect if not reverence for one another and to treat each other as equals. Here was salvation- a direct experience of a transcendent spiritual power. This immediate experience of God was something Jesus proclaimed in stark contrast to Temple religion- which mirrored society's prejudices all too readily. In fact Jesus' life and teachings displaced Temple religion as the mediator of God's grace.

In story and parable Jesus spoke of the moral imperative of fighting for a better life for all the people. This abides as the blessing that God would pour out for all of us.

### **Christmas- once and forever**

**Out of a drab and commonplace scene** like a dirty Bethlehem stable, shone one white bright light of penetrating beauty and meaning. And then it passed. That was the life of Jesus. Even in the worst conditions something better arrived on the human scene. It still does.

Even now the spirit of Christmas, which is the Spirit of God, gathers up all in itself and ushers us into a new and creative relatedness. Behold Christmas: the spirit of charity! When you surrender to it and live according to it's moral imperatives you come back to life. The energy of Christmas is contagious because it comes from God's heart, which is unconditional compassion for all people, and forever playful; forever bearing hope.

**People who follow the Christmas and Easter way of life- the Christian way of life- come back to life.** They have a sparkle in their eyes, colour in their cheeks, a spring in their step. They have learned how to care again and to be unafraid of closeness. They have found life again in all its vibrancy and promise.

**This kind of energy is contagious.** It's one of the many advantages of Christians working together in a congregation. We see people change. Their spiritual development and their ability to cope with problems touches and inspires us. In this way the commonplace is shot through with new glory; old burdens become lighter; and deep and ancient wounds lose much of their old, old hurting.

Merry Christmas, equality and land reform for all, and a peaceful new year!

Rev. Ron

*"And you beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,  
who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow.  
Look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing;  
Oh rest beside the weary road and hear the angels sing."*

*Lyrics: Edmund Sears*



*"My heart is moved by all I cannot save:  
so much has been destroyed  
I have to cast my lot with those  
who age after age, perversely,  
with no extraordinary power,  
reconstitute the world."*

*- Adrienne Rich*

## STRATHMORE UNITING CHURCH PROPERTY WILL NOT BE SOLD

At the U.C property Auction on December 11th. there were 21 properties listed to be auctioned but nine were enough to cover the Uniting Church's requirements.

The church stopped the auction after reaching total sales of \$56 million. Strathmore and Glenroy were amongst those rerieved.

We feel for our friends at Strathmore Uniting who have been caught up in this painful process. It is difficult to imagine how they must feel, having their ministry devalued, their building taken, and then being rerieved at the last minute.

What damage has been done to this congregation, and in the end unnecessary!

Sadly, Ron and our own church were also caught up in this mess and have had many months of uncertainty as we awaited the outcome.

## Worship Services & Themes

Week	Bible Reading (s)	Worship theme- Spiritual Issue
December 15	Song of Solomon 7: 9-12 Matthew 11: 2-11	' Humility as earthiness: our earthiness as a blessing along with passion and simplicity'
December 22	Isaiah 35: 1-4a; 5-10 Luke 1: 46-55	' Cosmic, universalist: harmony, beauty, justice as cosmic energies'
December 25 <span style="color: red;">Christmas Day</span>	Hebrews 1: 1-4 Luke 2: 8-20	'Toward the breakpoint and beyond: ourselves as mothers of God and birthers of God's son'  <b>SERVICE TIME 9.00am</b>
29	Matthew 2: 13-23	' <b>Original Blessing:</b> Sin, salvation, Christ from the perspective of Creation theology'
January 5	Isaiah 60: 1-5 Matthew 2: 1-12 The visit of the wise men	Communion & Re-dedication Sunday- 'Faith as trusting the prophetic call of the Holy Spirit'
January 12	Acts 10: 34-43 Matthew 3: 7-17 The Baptism of Jesus	Lay Led Service – Devotional readings & meditation
January 19	T.B.A.	Reverend Keith Howden (Ron at Strathmore)
January 26	T.B.A.	Reverend Keith Howden (Ron at Strathmore)
February 2	T.B.A.	Communion Sunday  <b>Kid's Uniting Classes recommence for 2014</b>

# Vale Colin McNab



Colin was born in 1923 in Kilmore. His grandfather, Finlay, was 9 years old when he arrived with his family, from Scotland, as a colonist in 1839. His father, was a barrister and solicitor in Kilmore.

Colin had two brothers Bruce and Douglas. Colin went to Kilmore Primary School and then on to be a boarder at Scotch College in Melbourne.

At Scotch, Colin was an excellent scholar, doing especially well in mathematics and science subjects.

He was perhaps expected to follow in his father's footsteps and do law, but engineering won out.

After Colin matriculated he was to go on to Melbourne University to study engineering, but World War II was underway and he was called up in 1942.

He enlisted in the Citizens Military Forces. On turning 19 he joined the Australian Imperial Forces as a Private in the 232 Australian Supply Depot Platoon. He spent time in Townsville, the 17 Mile Supply Camp in Port Moresby, Milne Bay and The Admiralty Islands. He completed jungle training and as part of the Transport Company was sent to Wewak and Rabaul in New Guinea. Like many returned soldiers he rarely talked about his wartime experiences.

At the conclusion of the war he was discharged and he went to study engineering at the Melbourne Branch University in Mildura. He was there for 2 years but gave it up to return to Melbourne to work at Ampol in 1948.. He worked his way up in the company and was the Operations Manager at Ampol. In 1985, he retired at the age of 63 after almost 40 years of service.

Colin was married to Roma for 63 years. They were at Primary School together, went to the Kilmore Presbyterian Church and socialised at the dances in the Shire Hall. They married in 1950. They had two children, Susan and Sandy. They were a very loving family.

The McNab family has had a long connection to the Ascot Vale Presbyterian (Uniting) Church. Roma's parents were married here in 1924.

The family came to Church here and Colin became an elder in 1955. He served in this position for 58 years. Colin was on many Church Committees and fundraisers throughout his lifetime. He was a true servant of this church.

Colin was very interested in sport and, of course, followed the Essendon Football Club. He had a wide variety of interests including photography, stamp collecting and golf.

Colin was a quiet, unassuming man – he didn't always say much, but he was a good listener.

Duty, decency, reliability, honour, dignity, respect: these are all qualities that Colin not only held in high esteem, but practiced every day. He was a serious and disciplined man, but he could never resist the opportunity to have a laugh with friends and loved ones.

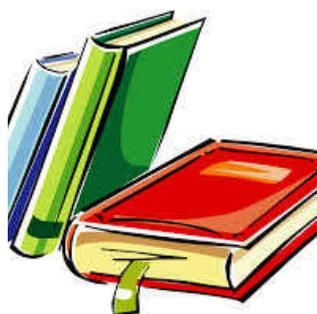
## Church Elders

Peter Macdonald (Chairperson), Dorothy Howes, Angelika Ranellone,  
Noel Lloyd, Michael Long, Melita Long.

## CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING NOV 27th.

1. We were expecting a visit from Anne Key one of the Presbytery Ministers. Unfortunately she was unable to attend.
2. Council is continuing to work out the most efficient way of organizing for when we move to half-time ministry. It was decided that we should expand the work of sub-committees so that more church members can be involved in the workings of the church. Subcommittees will meet informally, planning and assisting in such areas as music, finance, buildings, events, library, etc. This involvement will not be arduous and should be interesting and rewarding. Subcommittees will report to the Church Council which will meet formally on a regular basis and together with the Elders have overall responsibility.
3. Work on the manse is almost completed. The interior has been painted and floors resurfaced. Additional work was required to repair water leaks and carry out maintenance on the cooling system. We thank the Rosinsky family for their patience and assistance whilst this work has been done.
4. Ken Roberts will be drawing up a watering roster for the garden. If you can assist, even occasionally, please talk to Ken.
5. In addition, the garden needs a lot of weeding. If you can spare a little time to drop in to the church and pull out some weeds that would be helpful. Please don't walk past a weed. If you see one, show no mercy, pull it out!

## WELCOME TO ASCOT VALE UNITING'S LENDING LIBRARY!



Our library is ready to roll, with books sorted and labelled, and a borrowing book prepared for use.

The shelves and books have been arranged and marked as belonging to one of four categories:

CNF = Christian Non- Fiction (eg Bible commentaries, biographies of influential Christian people)

NCNF = Non-Christian Non-Fiction (other biographies, history books, etc)

CF = Christian Fiction (novels with a clear Christian message)

NCF = Non-Christian Fiction (other worthwhile, enjoyable books)

We have divided the books into the categories we felt most appropriate; but we realise you may disagree with some of our decisions, so please feel free to discuss your ideas with us; we are open to suggestion!

When you borrow, please record the details in the book provided, and return the book (which will have the category code pencilled inside) to the appropriate shelf.

Donations of books are always welcome – please give them to Jean or Dorothy, or leave in a labelled bag on top of one of the bookcases. Any duplicates or books which do not fit into one of our categories will be welcome on the Trading Table.

Thank you, and we hope the library proves interesting and helpful to members and visitors at Ascot Vale Uniting Church!

Jean Warriner and Dorothy Howes

### NEW CONTACT ADDRESSES

Rena Tytler  
Room 17, Rye Wing  
Domain By The Bay  
185 Racecourse Road  
Mt Martha Vic. 3934

Peter and Lyn Redding  
30 Armytage Street  
Winchelsea  
Vic. 3241



**Do you know the names of Santa's Reindeer?**

How many gifts would you receive if you received all of the gifts in the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas"?

'And all the bells on earth shall ring, on Christmas day in the morning...' is from which Christmas carol?

Which Christmas condiment is made from fruit sometimes referred to as marshworts?

Which British monarch (born 1865, died 1936) introduced the custom of giving thousands of Christmas puddings to staff?

What is the surname of the family in the 1989 film 'National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation'?

In which country is it said that finding a spider web on Christmas morning brings good luck, and so Christmas trees are decorated with artificial spider webs?

Under which Puritan leader did the English parliament pass a law banning Christmas in 1647?

Which traditional Christmas plant was once so revered by early Britons that it had to be cut with a golden sickle

Marzipan is made mainly from sugar and the flour or meal of which nut?

- Dasher*
- Prancer*
- Dancer*
- Vixen*
- Comet*
- Cupid*
- Donner*
- Blitzen*

Rudolf is a recent addition following the popularity of the song ("Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer")

- On the first day of Christmas, my true love sent to me:  
 A partridge in a pear tree.  
 2nd Two turtle doves  
 3rd Three French hens  
 4th Four calling birds  
 5th Five golden rings  
 6th Six geese a-laying  
 7th Seven swans  
     a-swimming  
 8th Eight maids a-milking  
 9th Nine ladies dancing  
 10th Ten lords a-leaping  
 11th Eleven pipers piping  
 12th Twelve drummers  
     drumming

- I Saw Three Ships**
- Cranberry sauce**
- King George V**
- Griswold**

- Ukraine**
- Oliver Cromwell**
- Mistletoe**
- Almond**

# Mental Illness and it's Repercussions.

I was six years old when I first became aware of mum's illness. I did not know what it was, I just knew, that something was not 'quite' right.

Mum often spoke to 'someone' in an empty room. One day I asked her who she was speaking to?

"Shh, child... don't be gross! "

I was angry with her - so, I walked around the room swinging my arms - **"There is no one here, mum!"**

"Who are you speaking to???"

Mum apologised to 'them' : 'she is just a little girl... she doesn't understand'...

My maternal grandmother was the one who 'provided' me with stability and sanity. She was loving, 'real' and always 'there'.

While my mum walked the dark corridors of her mind... tunnels that none of us could go through... places none of us could reach; my grandma provided me with the opposite - safety and reality.

I learned to live with my mother's mental illness.

But, I also learned to appreciate that the effects of mental illness are unpredictable and unlimited.

Mental illness invades your life.

And, not only your life, it effects many other lives... it effects more then the life of the sufferer. All family members: mothers, fathers, children, partners, siblings, friends... all of them suffer.

Yet, the one aspect that, to me, was truly bizarre was that those, close to the mentally ill person, would try to be there for them... and, in attempting to understand 'where the mentally ill person was at', they often tried to 'follow them' there. It was not possible.

Their journey, as opposed to the journey of 'the one who suffered', could never be the same.

I tried and I know.

Eventually, I became aware of the genetic aspects of some mental illness. In my mother's 'blood line' there were numerous recorded suicides.

I was lucky. In my case the gene skipped a generation. However, when I was old enough to start a family, I was troubled.

The silent question I asked myself was: "Do I have the right to pass this gene onto another 'unsuspecting' individual - in this case - my child???"

I decided to go ahead and have children. One of my boys was unaffected; the other one suffered a great deal.

He was an exceptional human being. After numerous unsuccessful attempts at suicide, he ended his life.

I can only hope that the 'gene' is not passed on to my grandchild.

Mental illness, the dark corridors, the ghosts, the legacy, the responsibility, the fear...

If you have never experienced the horror I'm describing, consider yourself lucky.

Pray for your loved ones.

And pray for those, who walk the dark tunnels of their mind. For they need you and they need your prayers.

**And they need to see the light.**

Dina

## SOME QUOTES FROM NELSON MANDELA



I am fundamentally an optimist. Whether that comes from nature or nurture, I cannot say. Part of being optimistic is keeping one's head pointed toward the sun, one's feet moving forward. There were many dark moments when my faith in humanity was sorely tested, but I would not and could not give myself up to despair. That way lays defeat and death.

I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.

When a man has done what he considers to be his duty to his people and his country, he can rest in peace.

Real leaders must be ready to sacrifice all for the freedom of their people.

A fundamental concern for others in our individual and community lives would go a long way in making the world the better place we so passionately dreamt of.

Everyone can rise above their circumstances and achieve success if they are dedicated to and passionate about what they do.

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.

Do not judge me by my successes, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again.

There is no passion to be found playing small – in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living.

We must use time wisely and forever realize that the time is always ripe to do right.

Man's goodness is a flame that can be hidden but never extinguished

Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies.

A good head and a good heart are always a formidable combination.

When people are determined they can overcome anything.

An ecumenical Memorial and Thanksgiving Service for Nelson Mandela will be held at St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne on Sunday 15 December at 6pm. The celebration of the life of former President Mandela will continue in Federation Square afterwards.

The service will be conducted by Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr Philip Freier, and the Dean of St Paul's, Dr Andreas Loewe. The Acting South African High Commissioner, Mr Ray Sithole will deliver a tribute.

Members of the Victorian African community, as well as political, community and faith leaders, will also take part in the service.





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# PHILIPPINES TYPHOON EMERGENCY RELIEF

SHOW THEM YOUR SUPPORT

UnitingWorld have set up a Philippines Emergency Relief Appeal, with funds raised going to the UCCP for their emergency ministries program. Money will be distributed and used in the community, for practical support, to provide food, shelter and to begin the rebuilding process.

You can support this appeal through SHARE by sending a cheque or money order to:

SHARE - Philippines Typhoon Appeal

PO Box 24154

MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Alternatively, you can ring this toll free number **1800 668 426** or donate online at [www.shareappeal.org.au](http://www.shareappeal.org.au)

100% of donations will be forwarded to UnitingWorld.

THANKS AND CONGRATULATIONS TO CLAIRE FOR  
ORGANIZING A SUCCESSFUL RED MORNING TEA  
AT CHURCH ON DECEMBER 1st.  
IT WAS A LOT OF FUN AND RAISED \$125 FOR THE  
AIDS APPEAL

## Worship Roster

The new worship roster for mid January through April will be available early January.

## Offering Envelopes

There are still a few sets of offering envelopes for the current financial year available on the table in the gathering space. Please take a set or see Peter Macdonald or Ted Jennings.

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Newsletter of Ascot Vale  
Uniting Church  
Editor: Robin Waltrowicz

Minister: Ron Rosinsky  
Ph: 0393703181  
Mob: 0425803862

avuniting@hotmail.com  
[www.vicnet.net.au/~avuc](http://www.vicnet.net.au/~avuc)