



Toorak Uniting Church

Update: 20 September, 2015

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Still thinking — Keeping a journal

I have kept a journal for over thirty years. I still have the first journal I wrote in when I was a young minister at Gales Baptist Church in Queensland. I don't usually share what I write in my journal but here is an entry from September 1981, *"the obsession with some people in studying the Bible and failing to appropriate it in their lifestyle seems to encourage an obsession with knowledge rather than experience."* Oh dear, most of those early writings were about what I thought other people should be or do. They were my "considered" opinions, with a good dose of preachiness and pomposity about how the world should be.

The turning point in my journal writing came when I stopped writing my memoirs and started to honestly explore my truth. I realized that the only audience for these writings was the God I encountered in my inner most being. So for me writing became more prayer, meditation and contemplation. I could write about anything and everything and most importantly I could be honest even when the truth comes out in a confused, chaotic and inarticulate way.

Someone said that everyone needs a private place because if our lives were completely public, completely open, then we could never be truly honest. I feel sorry for people in the public eye, for politicians and celebrities who have involuntarily relinquished much of their private lives. They clean their teeth in the morning with a concern about who is watching and what they will say about how they are doing it. When public life collapses into the private we feel robbed of authenticity and somewhat shamed because there is no longer a safe place of absolute refuge from the "madding crowd" - no place where our thoughts can be real, naked and raw.

Recently, there has been a debate about the difference between biography and autobiography. Some contemporary authors have called their reflections on their own lives biography, where as traditionally it would have been called an autobiography. I hold the peculiar view that biographies written by a second person about the life of a particular person are often more accurate and engaging than the same content written in the first person. It has to do with perspective. A self portrait must always be painted by observing one's self in a mirror. So the left side of the face becomes right and the right side becomes the left and there is the ever present desire to remove all the warts. But as any artist will tell you, the best parts of any portrait are the warts, just as they are the best parts of a biography. A reviewer of an autobiography will often state that the author was **courageous** in

describing his or her faults. That statement reflects the fact that most often we don't tell the awful truths about ourselves and certainly not for the world to read about.

So to be whole and healthy, we need a place where we can face difficult and hard truths about ourselves - a safe place away from the prying eyes of others. A place where we are not judged, condemned, or ridiculed for our half baked ideas and our partially formed thoughts. A place beyond ideas of wrong doing and right doing as the mystic Poet Rumi suggests, where others are not trying to fix us, but where we can trust that the inner presence of the spirit of God will do its loving work, and for me, this place has been writing in my journal.

Christopher

Time For Fellowship Lunch Mon. 28 Sept, 12-2pm. Topic is "Advice from a male forebear." All welcome.

Attention kitchen users: Please take care with freezing food, gently moving the drawers and ensuring that the freezer is securely shut before you leave. Thank you.

***** **TOILETS** *****

While construction is in progress, men are encouraged to use the Kinross loos and women the disabled loos off the Faichney Room.

(Entry via the concrete ramp at the Eastern entrance.)

Renovations should be completed by mid-October.

**TUC SPRING BREAKFAST,
8am, Wednesday, 7 October.**

**Our American Exchange Minister,
Rev Dr Wolfgang Stahlberg,
turns political as he speaks on:**

**"THE INTEREST OF THE
U.S. CHURCHES IN THE
PRESIDENTIAL RACE."**

**This is an opportunity to clarify
some of the mysteries behind
the US Elections!**

**Come and enjoy a special breakfast
in Kinross House, Hodges Gallery,
Cost \$20.**

**Please Book via the TUC
Office by Friday, October 2.**

Welcome to Toorak Uniting Church

We welcome all people irrespective of race, religion, political views, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, or age. Wherever you are on your faith journey, wherever you have come from and wherever you are going to; whatever you believe, whatever you do not believe, you are welcome here at Toorak Uniting Church.

Please come and join us after the service for fellowship and a cup of tea or coffee.

Visit of Jim Diers to Australia, November, 2015

The dynamic workshop presenter and facilitator, Jim Diers, from Seattle, USA will be back in Australia from 19-20 November, 2015. Jim is an entertaining and powerful teacher about effective community building. So many Australian and New Zealand communities have benefitted greatly from his input.

Visit <http://bankofideas.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Jim-Diers-flyer-4.pdf>

to read more about the tour and the workshop themes Jim is willing to present. If interested in using Jim in your community, contact Peter Kenyon at pk@bankofideas.com.au

Church Fundraising Stall

Sunday 15 November

9.30-12.00.

Donations of
cakes and produce
essential!

Contact Lyn McA. or
Lenore N.



John Macrae Centre's Annual

Spring Dance

Tuesday 22nd September 2015

11.30am-2.30pm

Toorak Uniting Church Hall

603 Toorak Road, Toorak

COMMUNITY EVENT

Featuring: Les Salisbury

Light Lunch Door Prizes Raffle

Entry \$5.00

Bookings: 9829 0320

Morning Group

On Thursday 15 October,
Christy Faulks will be updating us on SOSK, her charity in Kenya.

Revs. Wolfgang and Liliana Stahlberg will also be there.

10.00am, followed by lunch.
All welcome.



CONCERT TODAY:

Daydreams and Torments of Love - TUC 3.00pm

A romantic literature and musical event dedicated to Frédéric Chopin's 205th anniversary. Featuring Sergei Suetin, pianist. Call Sergei on 0402 831 304 for details. Tickets at the door: \$25 / \$20 (conc).

Diary Dates

Wed 02 Sep – Sun 25 Oct	Wolfgang Stahlberg on Roach Exchange at TUC
Sun 20 Sep 11.30am	coffee & discussion Faichney Room
Sun 20 Sep 3.00pm	Chopin & Poetry Concert Church
Tue 22 Sep 11.30-2.30	JMC Spring Dance Hall
Thu 24 Sep 10.00am	Prayers for Christian Unity St Peter's Church
Thu 24 Sep 6.00pm	Church Council dinner Faichney Room
Thu 24 Sep 7.30pm	Church Council meeting Faichney Room
Sun 27 Sep 11.30am	coffee & discussion Faichney Room
Mon 28 Sep 12.00pm	Time for Fellowship lunch Faichney Room
Sun 04 Oct 11.30am	coffee & discussion Faichney Room
Wed 07 Oct 8.00am	Breakfast w. Rev Dr Stahlberg Kinross

A new Congregation Directory is now available from the office. For privacy reasons, **only those whose names appear in the Directory will receive a copy.** Please dispose of your 2014 directory by shredding it. You're welcome to bring it to the office where Kimberly or Catriona can shred it for you.

Manse Gallery Café will be shut in the September school holidays, Monday September 21 – Friday October 2.



ROACH MINISTERIAL EXCHANGE:

The Roach Exchange provides a wonderful opportunity for our congregation to experience a minister from a different country and tradition. The Messiah Community Church in Denver is well established and well attended with similar worship and activities to TUC. It is a church in the Lutheran tradition and affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America - a progressive denomination in a traditional environment.

SUNDAYS AFTER THE 10.15am SERVICE

11.30 am – Coffee and Discussion with Rev Dr Stahlberg.

THURSDAY 24 SEPTEMBER

6.00pm Church Council dinner – with Rev Dr Wolfgang Stahlberg. \$20 per person, Faichney Room.

7.30pm Church Council meeting – with Rev Dr Wolfgang Stahlberg

WEDNESDAY 7 OCTOBER,

8am BREAKFAST IN KINROSS with Rev Dr Wolfgang Stahlberg speaking on aspects of American life.