



# Toorak Uniting Church

## Update: 6 September, 2015

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### *Still thinking — Gathering together around the centre*

I have the most wonderful memories of youth camps in my teenage years. Spending a weekend at Binna Burra or O'Reilly's on the Lamington Plateau in the Gold Coast Hinterland was life changing. Our youth camps would take months to organize because we would camp in tents. The six or seven ex-army tents with the necessary pots, pans and provisions would be packed on to a couple of large trailers and hauled up the mountain. The programme was like most youth camps, Bible study, morning and evening devotions; swimming, hiking, camp fires, sing-a-longs, and worship in the outdoors. Living arrangements were simple and clear, boy's tents to the left and girl's tents to the right. Of course that didn't dissuade us from finding creative ways to get together.

Strangely, the Bible studies, the devotions and the worship seemed to have more relevance in that context than back home in the city. We would sit by the campfire late at night and looking at the stars in that warm darkness, sharing our deepest and sometimes most intimate thoughts and feelings. Everything seemed "more" real. God was closer; the Bible made sense; friendships were stronger and emotions higher. Perhaps it was an encounter between the adolescent world and the world of the Spirit. Whatever it was, it was both real and enduring.

It is a rare person who can find God outside of community. While it is possible, human development has brought us to the place where we need both the wisdom of the tradition and the warmth and intimacy of community to access the inner life. It is why in church we need to encourage small group gatherings. On Sunday morning we come together with friends and acquaintances on a journey into the sacred. Often it is a very personal experience and can be like being alone in the community. While there is time for fellowship in these gatherings, our souls crave a deeper more intimate experience of meeting each other. Small groups can be such places, where we can be intentional about meeting each others deeper needs. This is where Parker Palmer's Circle of Trust can be of great benefit. He suggests that when groups meet they should be (and here I paraphrase)

Open to new discoveries and learning  
Hospitable, safe and trustworthy for all who are present  
Inviting to those who want to be honest  
Honouring of each person's story and the Great Story  
Supportive of both conversation and silence

When small groups gather they are often places where the how, when, where and

why of life's great questions can be explored. But in an intimate sharing group perhaps the most important question is the "who" question, "Who am I at my very centre?" "Who am I in relation to others in this group and the world around me?" These are the kinds of questions we discussed as sixteen year olds, gazing into the night sky around the camp fire. Yes at those youth camps there was plenty of discussion about this and that (and he and she) but our greatest question really was "who am I." For me the answer in my teenage years came in the last line of Francis Thompson's epic poem, *The Hound of Heaven*, "Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest, I am He whom thou seekest."

Christopher

### **In our Thoughts and Prayers:**

Family of Joyce Hill, especially her daughter Glenda Benness, following Joyce's death.

Ian and the Mackay family following Patricia's death.



*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**

**Attention kitchen users:** This week we have had a freezer failure in the main kitchen due to overloaded drawers, a build-up of ice, and the door not properly closing. People shoving the drawers in has also broken them. The freezer has been emptied and defrosted and we believe it is now working again. Most of the freezers contents were more than two years out of date. Please take care with freezing food, gently moving the drawers and ensuring that the freezer is securely shut before you leave. Thank you.



**MISSING from TUC archives:** Videotape of a Service recorded 3 Sep, 1978, telecast on ABC TV, 11 Feb, 1979. Sadly, the ABC no longer has a copy in its archives either. I am hoping someone might have a videotape of this Service and allow me to borrow it to convert to DVD. This recording is significant. Not only was it David Hodge's last televised Service before his retirement in 1983 (including his excellent sermon 'Man and Society'), but it is also an historic document. This video will show images of the interior of the Church before refurbishment in 1979, with the old pipe organ and choir stalls in the east transept! If you can help, please contact 9809 0550 or 0429 907 908. Thank you. *David Ross-Smith*.

## Can Christianity and Islam Co-Exist?

Join us to hear two eminent scholars, **Rev. Prof. James Haire AC** and **Prof. Azyumardi Azra CBE** discuss key issues for a multi-cultural, multi-faith Australia. This important and timely dialogue will seek to build fresh understanding of how people of different faiths and cultures can grow together in understanding and appreciation of one another. **FREE Admission, bookings essential.** Register via email [nceis-office@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:nceis-office@unimelb.edu.au) **Monday 7 September 6.30pm – 8.30pm.** Yasuko Hiraoka Myer Room, Level 1, Room 106, Sidney Myer Asia Centre, University of Melbourne. Facilitated by distinguished journalist **Jim Middleton.**

### \*\*\*\*\* TOILETS \*\*\*\*\*

Renovations should be completed by mid-October. *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.)

## Daydreams and Torments of Love

A romantic literature and musical event dedicated to Frédéric Chopin's 205th anniversary. Program features Sergei Suetin, pianist. TUC, September 20th at 3.00pm. Call Sergei on 0402 831 304 for details. Tickets at the door: \$25 / \$20 (conc).



*Snowball Effect* is a solo exhibition by established artist, Anne Cuming. The exhibition is a collection of evocative paintings from 2008 to 2015. Through the use of colour, composition and subject matter Anne's work portrays sentiments about happiness, loneliness, reflection and contentment and the momentum of life.

Morning Coffee with the artist will be on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August 2015 at 11.30am.  
Image: Mum's Orange Vase, oil on canvas (2015) [www.annecumingart.com.au](http://www.annecumingart.com.au)

Exhibition Dates: 6<sup>th</sup> August – 11<sup>th</sup> September 2015  
*Snowball Effect* by Anne Cuming

Kinross Arts Centre, 603 Toorak Road, Toorak

8.30am – 3.30pm M-F

03 9829 0340

**Strength and Vitality Foundation: Supporting women newly diagnosed with breast cancer**  
**Why do we need emotional Healing?**

- Help with dealing with anxiety and depression
- Help your best friend to cope with fear of the future
- Shift emotional awareness from fear to love and healing
- Help women find their emotional strength and freedom



Fundraising event: **Help us build our resource centre in St Kilda supporting emotional healing.** **Where:** Manse Gallery Café, Sunday 13th September, 2.30-4.30pm. **Cost:** \$35. **RSVP 8th September. Limited numbers—booking essential.** Contact *Michelle Sorensen* 0405 040 217. [www.strengthandvitalityfoundation.org.au](http://www.strengthandvitalityfoundation.org.au).

## 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.

## *Diary Dates*

Wed 02 Sep—Sun 25 Oct	Wolfgang Stahlberg on Roach Exchange at TUC
Sun 06 Sep 11.30am	Welcome morning tea Faichney Room
Thu 10 Sep 11.15am	Ladies Coffee and light lunch Faichney Room
Sat 12 Sep 10.00-12.00	PB Handbells rehearsal Wettenhall Room
Sun 13 Sep 2.00pm	Organ Students' Concert Church
Mon 14 Sep 10.30am	Drop In Card Day Faichney Room
Tue 15 Sep TBC	Management Team Wettenhall Room
Wed 16 Sep 6.30-9.00pm	PB Handbells Wettenhall Room
Thu 17 Sep 10.00am	Morning Group Faichney Room
Sat 19 Sep 10.00-12.00	PB Handbells Church

**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.

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

## **ROACH MINISTERIAL EXCHANGE:**

**Our Welcoming Services today will be followed at 11.30 by a special morning tea.** Come and join us in providing a warm greeting to Wolfgang, Liliana and Rebecca! 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 (ELCA) - a progressive denomination in a traditional environment.

### **THURSDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER**

11.15am Morning Coffee Welcome to meet with Rev Liliana Stahlberg—by the ladies of TUC .

### **SUNDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER**

9am Service – Rev Wal Baker, 10.15am Service – Rev Dr Wolfgang Stahlberg

11.30 am – Coffee with Discussion with Rev Stahlberg, light lunch.

### **THURSDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER**

10.00am Congregation Morning Group meeting – Welcome to Revs Wolfgang and Liliana Stahlberg with discussion on what led them to the ministry and how their congregation in Denver functions.

### **ADVANCE NOTICE: WEDNESDAY, 7 OCTOBER,**

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