



Toorak Uniting Church

Update: 27 September, 2015

ToorakUC@bigpond.net.au
www.toorak.unitingchurch.org.au

Office: 9829 0300
Minister: 0417 506 338



Still Thinking — Inspiration

Some years ago, the Australian Chamber Orchestra under the guidance of the musical director Richard Tognetti produced a programme that included three pieces by JS Bach. In the programme notes for the evening's concert the author wrote that Bach in his first year as the Cantor of St Thomas' Lutheran Church in Leipzig, produced one of the *"greatest artistic achievements of all Western music, the creation of a cycle of church cantatas for every Sunday and feast day of the ecclesiastical year. This he did not once, but five times, composing over 300 cantatas of which about two-fifths are now lost."*

This remarkable accomplishment was achieved while he wrote many other pieces for church and concert hall. As I listened to some of the most moving and profound music of the last 400 years, I wondered why, in our day, our most important musicians, composers, painters, writers and philosophers have deserted the church.

There is a small remnant of artisans who are inspired by the spirit of Christian faith today, but most are not, and certainly not in the way the 17th and 18th century composers were inspired. It seems to me that as the Christian faith retreated into private beliefs, personal morality and evangelical antagonism, we lost our place as a mediator of the sacred. Our vision for humanity became too small to be a cradle for human inspiration.

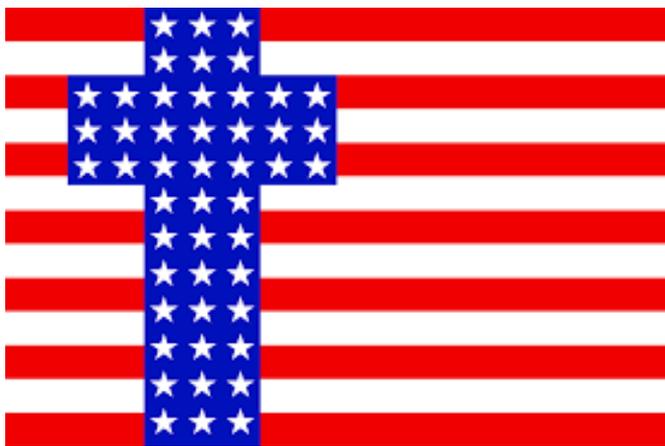
Around the same time I attended the ACO concert, I was interviewed by the *Manningham Leader Newspaper* about my work with the *Manningham Interfaith Network*. I spent over an hour with the journalist and photographer from the paper talking about the contemporary experience of Christian faith and its relationship with other religions. Neither were church goers but both were keenly interested in how the church could recover its spiritual and creative vitality without continually collapsing into dogma and moralism. The photographer and I talked about the world of nature and how it can take you into the deepest places within yourself. He had just returned from an eight day trek through the fierce landscape of South-West Tasmania. As we talked we both realized how much we longed for a "faith" that was inspired by the big picture of our encounter with God through the sacred space and places.

There is no desire in me to return to a golden age of Christianity. The truth is that inspiration never leads us backwards, rather it encourages us to gather the best of the past - shape it in the present and release it into the future. Inspiration is by

definition a "breathing into" and artists often speak of being inspired by an event, or a view or an experience and the great artists are able to transcend their own personal or individual experience and project that encounter onto a much greater canvas of life. They also talk of inspiration as coming from outside themselves. That is not so much a special revelation, as if there is something outside them sending creative breath into them. Rather, it is the sense that they could not have brought about this creation by themselves or as a lone individual.

The Christian faith as understood in the 18th century inspired JS Bach to create some of the greatest music ever composed. Today, in the 21st century we need a vision of, and a shape to Christian faith that can do the same. It will not look the same as Bach's faith but it will inspire this generation.

Christopher



**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.

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.

***** 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.

John Macrae Centre's Annual General Meeting

will be held on Thursday 8th October at 4.00pm. All are welcome to come to the AGM and a talk from our guest speaker, followed by delicious refreshments from chef Bill.

Guest Speaker: Ms Robyn Johnson, a former clinical nurse in ophthalmology at the Eye and Ear Hospital and nurse administrator, now volunteers for "Eyes For Africa". She will talk of her life-changing work there.

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



New conversation series with Rev. Dr. Wolfgang Stahlberg:

Please join us on Tuesdays 6, 13 and 20 October at 10am – 11.30am for "Conversations with Wolfgang".

Tuesday 6 October: "How I learned what matters most" - in the Faichney Room

Queries: ring Isobel Negri on 9882 2117

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.

To read more about the tour and the workshop themes Jim is willing to present:

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

If you're interested in using Jim in your community, contact Peter Kenyon at pk@bankofideas.com.au.

Diary Dates

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|-----------------------|---------|---|---------------|
| Wed 02 Sep—Sun 25 Oct | | Wolfgang Stahlberg on Roach Exchange at TUC | |
| 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 |
| Tue 06 Oct | 10.00 | “Conversation with Wolfgang” | Faichney Room |
| Wed 07 Oct | 8.00am | Breakfast w. Rev Dr Stahlberg | Kinross |
| Thu 08 Oct | 4.00pm | JMC AGM | JMC |
| Thu 15 Oct | 10.00am | Morning Group | Faichney Room |

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 closed for the
September school
holidays.
Re-opening
Monday 5th October.



Celebrate Mental Health Week with Prahran Mission and St Michael's Grammar School Chamber Choir

St Michael's Grammar School year 7-9 Chamber Choir will be singing at Hartley's Reduced Cost Canteen Prahran Mission 211 Chapel Street Prahran Thursday 7 October 12.30 pm – 1.00 pm. Eat your lunch to the sound of music!

(Ian Savage chaplain Prahran Mission 03 9692 9500)



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.

TUESDAY 6 OCTOBER,

10am Conversation with Wolfgang Stahlberg on What matters most.

WEDNESDAY 7 OCTOBER,

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