



Toorak Uniting Church

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Still thinking—Is Confession Good for the Soul? by Christopher Page

In recent years several studies have shown that confession is good for the soul, however it is not quite that simple. In a 2005 article for *Spiritual Health*, the psychologist, Aaron Murray-Swank suggests that confession to another person or to God must be linked to a sense of forgiveness and even absolution. Now the key to understanding this is that we should all have a “healthy” sense of guilt when we have wronged another person. But many, also have an “unhealthy” experience of guilt that is disproportionate to the harm caused. Murray-Swank quotes William Sneck, a psychologist and Jesuit priest, who suggests making a distinction between “healthy guilt” and “toxic guilt.” Healthy guilt, says Sneck, is felt in proportion to the harm done. Healthy guilt is not fixated on the self, but reaches outward to address the harm that one has caused.

For confession to be good for the soul, it has to be life-giving and life-enhancing. Confession most often is directed toward reconciliation and healing of a relationship. While it is obvious that I may confess to my wrong doing, either to the person I have harmed or to a third person about my guilt for my behaviour, reconciliation with another may not occur. So this is what puts confession into a much broader and higher context. I believe there is value in making a confession to God about the harm I have caused regardless of the outcome.

Guilt which leads to confession acknowledges human imperfection. To feel guilty about consciously harming another is healthy. To feel guilty about displeasing another is unhealthy. Of course we can use guilt as a way of controlling and managing others - “I hope you feel guilty. You have hurt my feelings!” The weak “confessional” response to that comment is, “Oh I am so sorry, I didn’t mean to hurt your feelings.” The strong “confessional” response is, “That wasn’t my intention. Why were your feelings hurt?” Ummm, now that should open up the conversation.

But most importantly, guilt can lead to spiritual maturity. From my personal

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.

experience it is often easier to bury or deny my complicity in the suffering I have caused. But when I recognize and reflect on my life and what I have done, it can give rise a healthy confession that unshackles me for remorse, blame and regret. Spiritual maturity comes from opening my eyes not from closing them!

TUC Lending Library We have reactivated our Church lending library on a table in the Faichney Room this morning. Please peruse the books and borrow any you would like to read. There is an exercise book in which you can record the book you are borrowing. The loan is suggested to be for two weeks and can be renewed after that. There will be new books added over the months ahead and if you read a book and would like to write a short 100 word review and submit it to the office that would be very helpful.



Found: A black “Virgo” hooded lightweight overcoat/rain jacket, with tan trim. Ladies size 10. Please contact the TUC office.

ANNUAL REPORTS ARE DUE!

Please email to the office.

Today after morning tea there will be an ‘after church discussion’ in the Faichney Room . Christopher will lead the conversation around the themes of Sir Lloyd Geering’s ‘Exploring The Future of Religion’.
11:45am— 12:30pm. All welcome.

Planned Giving Envelopes for 2016 are now available. Please collect your set. If you would like to join the Planned Giving Stewardship Programme of TUC, please contact Stan Laugher on 9813 5242 or email stanlaugher@acslink.net.au.

Greetings from Liliana and Wolfgang Stahlberg in Denver, Colorado

We are delighted to pass on to our congregation the Christmas and New Year Greetings from our recent Roach Exchange Minister, Rev Dr Wolfgang Stahlberg and his wife, Liliana. They both fondly recall the wonderful times they had at TUC and thank everyone for their hospitality and loving care of their family while they were here. They have been busy resuming their lives in Denver and holding their own Christmas celebrations with their congregations. For Wolfgang, January is particularly busy as he plans for his retirement from the Denver Community Church at the end of January 2016. He will then continue to do interim work for local congregations in transition. Liliana is enjoying being back with her congregation in Denver and plans to continue her ministry for 6 or 7 more years, as well as continuing research studies about how to link childhood development with ways of presenting Christ’s message.

From the Roach Exchange Committee

In our thoughts and prayers:

John Boykett, who is mourning the death of his brother David on Wednesday morning.

Wolfgang Stahlberg, who on Wednesday underwent emergency heart surgery in Germany. We will keep you posted as we hear further news.

The Lenten Offering is an annual event in the life of congregations within the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania. It is conducted during Lent and Easter at a time of reflection, renewal and recommitment. There is a brochure outlining SHARE projects, with envelope attached, with this morning's Update.

Whole Church Family Service

Our First WCF Service will be on Sunday February 28 at 10:15am (there will be no 9am service that morning). The service will be followed by a light lunch in the Faichney Room—all welcome.



Women and Wellness

Cost: \$300/6 wks for 2hrs/wk plus \$50 materials

Casual: \$50 plus \$10 materials

min 4 – max 12 people

Thursday 18th February - Thursday 24th March

Time: 10:30am – 12:30pm

Enquiries: Mandy – 0417115886 (m)

Tracey – 0459290232 (m)

Weaving the Threads through Basket Making group offers an opportunity for participants to quieten the mind, nourish the spirit and connect through the slow craft and beauty of weaving. Coming together with hands and hearts engaged allows time to quietly celebrate the joy of creative connection with others.

Studio 1, Kinross Arts & Spirituality Centre

Diary Dates

Sun	14 Feb	9.00am	Family worship service	Wal Baker
Sun	14 Feb	10.15am	Morning worship service	Christopher Page
Tue	16 Feb	4.30pm	Management Team	Wettenhall Room
Thur	18 Feb	10.00am	Morning Group	Faichney Room
Sun	21 Feb	9.00am	Family worship service	Christopher Page
Sun	21 Feb	10.15am	Morning worship service	Christopher Page
Sun	17 Apr	11.15am	Congregation AGM	Church

Time for Fellowship

We have discontinued the monthly luncheon, but instead will hold morning tea at 11:00am on the last Monday of each month (Feb 29). Everyone welcome. Ask Lenore or Jean for details. The topic for February will be: "What I did after Christmas"





A Compleitive Circle at The Wellspring Spirituality Centre, in Y St Ashburton

**Wednesday, February 17, 2016
from 10am – 12:30pm**

A Contemplative Circle draws on Parker Palmer's bestselling book, *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey toward the Undivided Life*, and is a place to explore one's inner life with others through readings, poems, symbols, story and conversation.

By accessing ancient and contemporary wisdom, a deeper spiritual approach to life can develop. The Circle meets on the third Wednesday each month and uses the "outer landscape," such as ocean, mountain, desert, forest and the seasons as metaphors and images of our inner life.

Parker Palmer is an author, educator and activist who focusses on issues in education, community, leadership, spirituality and social change.

All are welcome

The cost of each session is \$22:50 for concession and Wellspring members and the full price is \$28:00. There is also an annual retreat in Glenburn in the Yarra Valley and all are welcome to attend

For more information call Chris Page on 0417 506 338

What you are in love with and what seizes your imagination, will affect everything in your life. It will decide what gets you out of bed in the morning; the person you are and the care you will show to others...

(paraphrase)

Pedro Arrupe: Compassion in the Heart

Room 8 is proud to present the much-loved rock opera GODSPELL - a timeless tale of kindness, tolerance and love - coming to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, on 21st, 28th February and 13th March. Tickets at <http://www.ticketmaster.com.au/event/13004F7EF707CA2F?did=subscribe> .

GODSPELL IN THE GARDEN will take the audience on a magical ride of peace, love and joy.

GODSPELL first appeared off Broadway in 1971 when a lot of young people wanted to leave the church, but not all of them wanted to abandon Christianity. With music by legendary composer Stephen Schwartz (Pippin, Wicked) it quickly became a favourite amongst Christians looking for a new way to celebrate their religion and lovers of theatre, and proved to be one of the most popular musicals ever staged in Australia. The brainchild of John-Michael Tebelak, **GODSPELL** was based the story on the Gospel of St Matthew. Stephen Schwartz wrote the music and a hit was born. **Day By Day** - a power ballad from the show - went on to become the biggest-selling Australian single of the year. Featuring songs **Day By Day**, **Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord**, **Save the People**, **All For the Best** and more, this vibrant, joyful show is set to once more thrill Australian audiences.

GODSPELL is about community and what we as a community can do to for all to make this world a better place.

Please come along and be part of **GODSPELL IN THE GARDEN**. www.godspellaustralia.com.au .

