



Toorak Uniting Church

Update: 28 February 2016



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Still Thinking: The Waiting Father by Christopher Page

In my teenagers later years we always had a \$20 note in the draw of the table in the front hall. The \$20 was for a taxi if one of the children had to come home late. In fact, it was more than that. By the time my children had reach 17 years of age we have very few rules for them to follow. My rationale was that if they had not learned responsibility by that age then either they would learn through life's experiences or they would never learn it at all. However, we had one rule that was never to be broken. If they or a friend had been drinking, then they were to leave the car at the party and get a taxi home (\$20 in the 1990s covered the cost) and there would be no questions asked. It was a sort of get out of jail free card, without going to jail.

My children's and the safety of other people's children was paramount. So if the taxi arrived in the middle of the night and the \$20 was used, then there was no cross-examination nor questions the next morning. I wanted them to know that home was a place where they were always welcome, regardless of what they had done or what they had been through.

I travelled around the world in 2007 on Sabbatical visiting, North America, England, Scotland and Israel. During that time I was homesick. I remember talking to one of the leaders of a retreat I was on, about being homesick. He said, "That's beautiful, your home must be a wonderful place to go back to." Those words stayed with me and made me feel happy while I was on the trip because I had been reminded that I had a wonderful place to go home to. It was a place where I would be welcomed.

But what if home is an unwelcoming place. I suppose then it isn't home. It is where you live, or reside. For home to be home, it must be a place where not only everyone knows your name (to quote the TV show Cheers) it must be where you are known at a deeper level and welcomed for who you are, regardless! The parable of the prodigal is as well-known as the parable of the Good Samaritan.

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.

But familiarity must not rob us of its radical message. We know that the wayward son was self-centred, opinionated, wilful; indulgent and self-seeking. In fact, he robbed his father and virtually said to him that he wished he was dead (that's the consequence of asking for his inheritance).

But two things coalesced. First and foremost, the father loved his son regardless of what he had done. He waited for him to return, even before the son had had a change of heart. And secondly, desperation lead the son to come home. The central focus of this story is not the son. Most of us will eat humble pie when we are desperate. But how many of us will continue to love and wait when love is not returned? This is unconditional love... "I am the prodigal son every time I search for unconditional love wherever it can be found." – *Henri J. M. Nouwen, Return of the Prodigal Son*

MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION AND CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

A meeting of the Congregation will be held on Sunday 17 April immediately after the 10.15 service. The agenda will be to elect various office holders, to receive the annual report for 2015, and to approve the annual financial report for 2015.

Copies of these reports will be available from Sunday 3 April.

Nominations are called for the position of elder and non-elder member of Church Council.

Nominations are also called for the positions of chair and secretary of the Congregation, as the current term of the existing incumbents expires on June 30.

Members considering accepting nomination for all these positions are invited to discuss the duties with the minister before accepting nomination.

Nomination forms are available from the office and must be returned to the office by Wednesday 30 March at 12.00 noon.



"For the Beauty of the Earth" by Angela Abbott

Exhibition on until March 24th.
Open 10am-3.30pm Mon-Fri.

"For the Beauty of the Earth" is inspired by Hymn lyrics by Follitt Sandford Pierpoint 1835–1917 (Hymn 137, *T/S*)



The strongest cyclone ever to hit the Southern Hemisphere recently tore through Fiji. **We urgently need your help to provide emergency relief.** With gusts of up to 325km/h, the cyclone cut a path of destruction across Fiji's islands. A 30 day state of emergency has been declared. Our partners are now assessing damage and providing relief where it is needed most. **Please make a make an emergency gift today.** As well as helping the people of Fiji, your gift could also help affected families in Tonga.

www.actforpeace.org.au. Free call: **1800 025 101**

TODAY: Morning tea and Discussion in the Faichney Room 11:45am-12:15pm
Chris will lead a discussion on themes from February's sermons. All welcome.

Wolfgang Stahlberg Health Update

Wolfgang continues to improve and has been moved out of intensive care after his emergency heart surgery . Liliana thanks TUC for their support and asks you continue to include him in your prayers.

Fellowship Luncheon Success

A highly enjoyable fellowship lunch followed the whole church family service last Sunday. Barbara McKinnon would particularly like to thank Thomson and Jemima Sennitt for their assistance with setting up, Anna Field, Jean Prest, Jacki Simonson, Christine Brown, June Downes and Fiona Thomas for the delicious salads and cake they provided. Their assistance along with that of Jenny Stewardson and Lyn Petersen made the lunch run very smoothly. Lenore Newnham deserves a special thank you for laundering the table cloths.

Easter Services

The week before Easter:

Palm Sunday, 20 March

9am Service:

10:15am Service: Communion

Theme: Growing Peace

Maundy Thursday, March 24

7:30pm – A service of Readings and Music

Good Friday, March 25

10:15am Good Friday

(Note time change to 10:15am!)

The story of the cross through r readings and music

Easter Sunday, March 27

10:15am Easter Service

(No 9am Service)

Theme: Life's Great Contradictions

ANNUAL REPORTS ARE DUE!

Please email to the office

Fellowship Team – Welcome Aboard!

Barbara McKinnon is proposing to convene a Fellowship team. It will maintain a yearly calendar of fellowship events and coordinate catering, setting up, serving and cleaning up at these events. If you would like to be added to a list of volunteers willing to assist in any or all of these areas, please contact Barbara on 0405 987 890 or email: barbara.mckinnon@bigpond.com

Diary Dates

Wed	09 Mar	6.30pm	Handbells	Wettenhall
Sun	13 Mar	9.30am	Church fundraising stall	
Mon	14 Mar		Labour Day Holiday— office closed	
Thu	17 Mar	10.00am	Morning Group	Faichney
Thu	31 Mar	10.00am	Prayers For Christian Unity	St. Peter's
Sun	17 Apr	11.15am	Congregation AGM	Church
Sat	30 Apr	4-8pm	Kinross fundraising Scottish Dance	Hall

Kinross
Arts



Caledonia
Ceilidh Band
& Colin
MacLeod -
Scottish Fiddle
Guru

Special Fundraising Event

Ceilidh - Scottish Dance

Saturday 30th April 2016

**Fabulous Live Music, Dancing
and Scottish Fayre**
4pm - 8pm

Toorak Uniting Church Hall
603 Toorak Road, Toorak
(opposite Irving Road; Tram Stop 39)

\$30 Adult or \$50 for 2 people
\$20 Concession ; \$60 Families

Bookings

<http://www.trybooking.com/KOTE>
Enquiries 03 9829 0340
Email manager@kinrossarts.org.au
www.kinrossarts.org.au