



# Toorak Uniting Church

## Update: 26 June 2016



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*Still thinking: Youth, Conversion, Freedom – Christopher Page*

I was 16 years of age when I first responded in a Baptist church to an invitation to follow Jesus. It took a lot in me to overcome my embarrassment at claiming my private conviction in such a public way. Some would say that that is the point. There are no secret followers of Jesus, so overcoming one's natural shyness catapults a person to a new and higher level of religious commitment.

As a deeply religious young person, I was always seeking a kind of religious perfection. I knew that I was not as faithful as I could be; I knew that I had been sinful and failed to meet God's standards. But really, preaching about sin to adolescents is like shooting fish in a barrel, you know you will always hit a good number of them.

As I reflected on those experiences some forty-five years ago, I realize that they probably kept me in the church, but sadly truncated my experience of life and of God, Jesus and the Spirit. It took some years to experience what the apostle Paul called in Romans 8:21, "the glorious liberty of the children of God." That experience came with the realization that it was not so much that I need to be "saved," but rather what I craved was to be liberated; to be set free from that which bound and limited me in my spiritual and daily life. And one of those things I needed liberation from, as I discovered later, was religion. Now that may sound strange coming from a minister, but if we recognize that Jesus never established a religion and was in fact critical of binding oneself to rules, codes and religious practices, then freedom from religion is the goal of the good news that Jesus preached.

Don't get me wrong I love the church. I love the rich and diverse history that covers the last two thousand years. And I am very aware that we need an institution that gives shape to the Body of Christ. However, if the church is a formal, boundary setting, belief-testing institution, then we all know it is off track. But if it is the living, breathing spirit of Jesus, alive in the world, then we are on track.

Religious educators tell us that young people need strong, challenging and decisive institutions that give them boundaries and yet freedoms within those boundaries. Young people want to be part of a movement, but they also want to know what the ground rules are. As they mature they crave that strange paradox of wanting to belong and yet desiring unlimited freedom. We know that young people, particularly young males are risk-takers and this can cause them and

others a lot of heart ache. But it really can't be any other way and the church needs to provide for both aspects of youthful maturation. While what we call "conversion" is an important experience for young people it should be associated with claiming the good news of life lived fully through Jesus and not the limited moralist, sin-based view that many of us passed through in our teenage years.

**Fellowship lunch:** You are warmly invited to participate in a hearty soup and cake lunch following the Whole Church Family service today

### Save the date!

The Toorak Uniting Church Council Congregational Retreat will be held on August 13 from 10:00am—3:00pm. This year the Retreat will be held at Toorak Uniting.



### TUC CONGREGATION DIRECTORY

It's time for the next edition of the Directory— with updated contact details so we can continue to keep in touch with one another easily.

Forms have been emailed out and are also available at the rear of the church today. Please feel free to pass one on to someone you think may like to be included!

More **Bric A Brac** requested for the Election Day Stall please!



### Election Day Cakes, Jams & Produce Stall

What could you make, bake or pick for the stall?

Cakes are much in demand—also shortbread and loaves. Gluten free goods are in demand, also lemons and herbs.

**OH&S NOTE:** All items must be well-sealed and have all ingredients listed on the label, with the initials of the maker. Pre-made labels available from Lyn McAlister.



## CONGREGATIONAL UPDATE – ELECTION DAY FAIR 2 JULY 2016

As we enter the last week before the election preparations are being finalised to ensure the day is a great success for TUC.

### What You Can Expect

Weather permitting we will use the lawn for food and hot drinks purchased from the café.

Apart from the usual favourites, be sure to check out two new stalls:

Craft with Spirit stall - offering handcrafted objects, small woven baskets, artist's books and works on paper made by the group of art therapists from Studio 1 in Kinross House. This stall is operated by the therapists who offer weaving workshops, journal making, sensorimotor art therapies and individual art psychotherapy sessions and is one of the outreach activities supported by TUC through Kinross Arts and Spirituality Centre.

Manse Gallery Café stall - offering a tempting selection of gourmet delights alongside our very own cakes & preserves stall.

### What We Still Need

We still need to borrow large umbrellas for shading the stalls and out-door table and seating furniture for use on the lawn. We can collect if you cannot drop off at TUC on the day before the election.

We also need assistance on the day from 3pm with cleaning up and especially with packing up the 2<sup>nd</sup> hand stall [many hands make light work].

If you wish to assist on any stall please contact the stall co-ordinators listed below.

#### ***BRIC A BRAC***

Lenore Newnham      9509 0496      newnham.brian@gmail.com

#### ***CRAFT & SEWING***

Nina Mumford      0422 228 416      nina.mumford@optusnet.com.au

#### ***CAKES & PRESERVES***

Lyn McAlister      9822 2832

#### ***2<sup>ND</sup> HAND STALL***

Stan Laughter      0427 401 299      slaughter@tpg.com.au

### Donations

Please deliver all donations of cakes & preserves to the stall in the morning of the election. All other donations can be delivered to the TUC office during office hours or please contact the Stall Co-ordinator to make alternate arrangements.



**In our thoughts and prayers:**

Angela Abbott, coping with treatment for cancer.  
The family of Pat Holmes as they grieve.  
Lucy Lewis coping with a setback after surgery



**Help Needed**

We are looking for helpers to assist on the Bric a Brac and Sewing Stalls. Please contact Lenore and Nina if you can assist on 2 July.

We are looking to borrow large umbrellas to shield the stalls and out-door furniture and umbrellas as weather permitting, we will set up tables and chairs on the lawn. Please contact Michael or Jon as soon as possible if you can assist.

We are looking for helpers to assist in packing away the cakes, bric a brac, craft and 2nd hand stalls from 3pm – 5 pm on 2 July. Please contact Michael or Jon as soon as possible if you can assist.

**Diary Dates**

Mon	27 Jun	11.00am	Fellowship Morning Coffee	Faichney Room
Thu	30 Jun	10.00am	Prayers for Christian Unity	Swedish Church
Sat	02 Jul	All day!	FEDERAL ELECTION & TUC FAIR	
Sun	17 Jul	11.45am	Interment—Anne Parratt	Memorial Garden
Thu	11 Aug	7.45pm	Toorak Ecumenical Council	TUC

**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.