

Toorak Uniting Church

Update 07 August 2016

office@toorakuc.org.au
www.toorakuc.org.au

Phone: 9829 0300

Re-thinking— The Olympics

The first Olympic Games in the ancient world were held in 776BC and the last in 393AD. They were abolished by the Christian Emperor Theodosius I, because they were regarded as pagan. The ancient Olympics were principally a religious festival, centring on the God Zeus. Zeus was celebrated in ancient Olympia where a 15 metre high gold and bronze statue of him was erected in the temple. Only free men who spoke Greek were entitled to compete in the Games, however, when Greece was part of the Roman Empire these restrictions were relaxed. In the ancient Olympics a man would compete on behalf of his town or city and as an ancient historian wrote, "*by winning, athletes put their home towns on the map.*"



The modern Olympics, which recommenced in 1896, are of course very different from those ancient gatherings. Many of the events in which athletes compete today would be unrecognizable to the ancient sportsman. But one thing that they would be in accord with is the "glorification" of the athlete and the "religious" fervour expressed by the spectators.

The charter for modern Olympic Games stated that this was to be a secular event. But are the Olympic Games really non-religious? I don't mean the displays of religiosity we see in athletes as they cross themselves or bow in prayer. What I mean is, has sport in general and the Olympic Games in particular, developed into a pseudo-religious event for many people? If that is the case then the centre of the religion of sport is the performance of the human body.

Interestingly, when we need to give an example of Spirit we often use the image of "team spirit." And when we want to illustrate courage we talk about "the struggle of getting over the line," or "the triumph of the athlete who gave his or her all to win." We also expect sportsmen and sportswomen to be role models somehow above the rest of us. Perhaps as "organised" religion has faded from people's imagination, it has been replaced with "organized" sport.

It is very difficult in today's sporting climate for anyone to say, "It's just a game." In fact, for most of the athletes we are watching in London, this is not just a game, it is a very serious and costly business. It is actually a way of life. And yet with all the glorification of the winning athletes, we still enjoy and remember the losing performance of say, the Jamaican Bob Sled team, or Eddie the Eagle who Ski

Jumped for England, or my favourite, Eric Moussambani Malonga the swimmer from land locked Equatorial Guinea in Africa who finished minutes after the rest of the field and when interviewed said, "*we have many good swimmers in my country but we just don't have any swimming pools.*"

If I had to run an advertising campaign around sport, I would begin with the line, "sport is not for spectators." While it can be an enjoyable experience seeing athletes perform at their peak and watching our country win gold, we seldom recognise that there is a cost to our culture and to the athletes themselves when we give them Herculean status. Sadly, we may be drawing our spiritual nourishment from the shallow end of the swimming pool.



The John Macrae Centre

Invites you to join us in a celebration of Shakespeare's 400yr old legacy.

"The Globe Theatre & Shakespeare's London"

Presented by PATRICIA BEGG

When: Sunday 28th August 2016 at 3pm

Where: John Macrae Centre 603 Toorak Rd Toorak

Followed by a delightful Hotel Windsor Style High Tea

All enquiries to John Macrae Centre . Phone 9829 0320

Leaflets are available in church porch

Diary Dates

Mon	08 Aug	10.30-2	Drop-In Card Day	Faichney Room
Wed	10 Aug	6-8pm	Handbells	Wettenhall Room
Thu	11 Aug	7.30pm	Finance Committee	TBA
Thu	11 Aug	7.45pm	Toorak Ecumenical Council	TUC
Sat	13 Aug	10a-3p	Congregational Retreat	TUC
Sun	14 Aug	2pm	Organ Recital by Paul Dean	Church
Tue	16 Aug	7.30pm	Church Council	TBA
Wed	17 Aug	6-8pm	Handbells	Wettenhall Room
Wed	24 Aug	6-8pm	Handbells	Wettenhall Room
Thur	25 Aug	10.00am	Prayers for Christian Unity	St John's
Sun	28 Aug	3pm	Patricia Begg Shakespeare lecture	JMC
Mon	29 Aug	10.30am	Fellowship morning coffee	Faichney Room
Wed	31 Aug	6-8pm	Handbells	Wettenhall Room
Sun	04 Sep	3pm	Music For David concert	Church

Toorak Uniting Church Council & Congregational Retreat

At TUC next Saturday, August 13 from 10:00am – 3:00pm

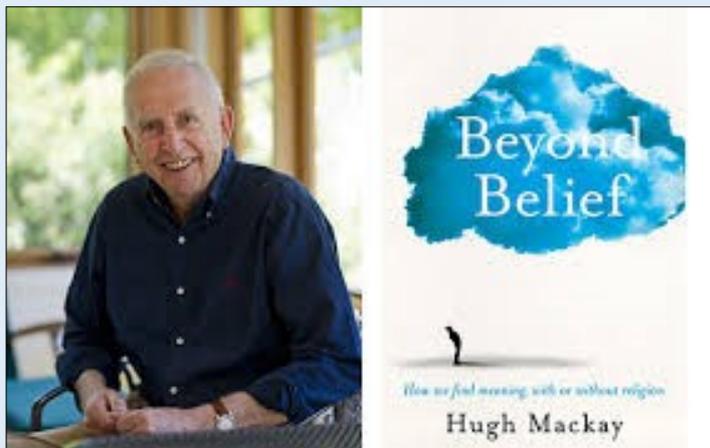
with fellowship & coffee from 9:45am.

The topic for discussion will be reflections on Hugh MacKay's recent book *Beyond Belief: How we find meaning with or without religion*.

Lunch will be served – \$10.00 is asked to help cover costs.

Everyone is warmly encouraged to attend. All welcome!

Please RSVP to the office. 9829 0300.



Lady White Memorial Organ Recital: next Sunday, 14 August at 2:00pm

An all Bach recital by Paul Dean (London):

Fantasia & Fugue in G minor (BWV 542)

“Herr Jesu Christ, dich uns zu wend” (BWV 655)

“O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde groß” (BWV 659)

Trio Sonata V (BWV 529)

“Allein Gott in der Hoh sei Ehr” (BWV 662)

Prelude & Fugue in E minor “The Wedge” (BWV 548)



Paul Dean is the Director of Music at St Michael's Church, Highgate and Deputy Director of Music at 'The Hall', Hampstead – one of the leading boys' preparatory schools in London. He's had considerable success in international competitions over the years, winning the Third International Organ Competition in Biarritz, the 1997 Royal College of Organists Performer of the Year Competition and the First International Organ Competition in Warsaw. In 2009 he undertook his first solo concert tour of Australia to critical acclaim and is delighted to be back making a return visit!

TICKETS AVAILABLE at <https://www.trybooking.com/LNVX> or

In our thoughts and prayers:
Andrew Blackburn, undergoing treatment for myofibrosis.
Angela Abbott, continuing treatment for cancer

Wanted: recent contact details for Wendy Eadie. Last known in Edithvale.
Please contact the office with information. Thank you.

Fellowship Morning Coffee Mon. 29/08, 10.30am, Faichney Room.
Discussion: "Childhood Impressions of Poverty". All welcome!

HEAVEN to HEAVEN - ISLAMIC CULTURAL & INTERFAITH EXHIBITION & EVENT at KINROSS ARTS CENTRE



When: Thursday 11th at 5pm - 8pm

5pm - 6pm Facilitated Conversation by
Tasneem Chopra (Senior Curator) Islamic
Museum of Australia with Tom Toby
(Photographer) and Sayyed Hamid Mo-
stajab (Film Maker)

6pm - 8pm Reception and Refreshments
with the Artists & Tasneem Chopra

About the Artists

Heaven To Heaven are a team of documentary makers from Australia casting light on the greatest unknown pilgrimage in the history of the world. The Pilgrimage of the Arbaeen of Imam Hussein. An event that last year alone attracted 27 million people in one day. Walking and traveling 89 kilometres from the Shrine of Imam Ali in Najaf Iraq, to the Holy shrine of Imam Hussein in Karbala also in Iraq.

Please come along to to this unique cultural and interfaith event. Generously supported by Toorak Uniting Church and the Islamic Museum of Australia, Thornbury.

Friends of Kinross and TUC Members - Free. General Public - \$10 per person.

Image: "Imam Ali" Najaf, Iraq (2014) by Tom Toby

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.