



# Toorak Uniting Church

## Update 11 September 2016

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### Re-thinking — How do we talk about God today? ~ *Christopher Page*

Recently a friend said to me, “I wish you could talk to my teenage son about Christianity and how you understand God and Jesus. He is so negative about anything spiritual and just sees it as all fiction, made up by the church and not rational.” Our conversation had come after we talked about the idea of a God who is exclusively expressed in the Bible and seems so remote from the world most young people occupy. Attempting to engage young people today about faith, religion and the Spirit is a very difficult task. First, there is an avalanche of criticism of organised religion within our society – might I say much of it is deserved. But secondly, there is a lack of courage among many religious people to explore a new and vital way of engaging the world of faith and religion.

Sadly, our greatest asset is our greatest weakness. Religion has always promoted a strong and determined face to the confusion and questions of human life. We have built buildings that speak of power and permanence. We have spoken words of hopefulness and certainty. And our hymns sing about triumph and victory in all of life’s experiences. But in an age of shattering belief systems and collapsing institutional structures, those who have the courage must pay more attention to the questions being asked than the predetermined answers we have previously given.

The best advice on this dilemma comes from the early nineteen hundreds and is so appropriate to the 21st century. The German poet and philosopher Rainer Maria Rilke wrote in 1903 in his *Letters to a Young Poet*.

*...have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and to try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language. Don't search for the answers which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer.*

But of course, no self-respecting young person would tolerate waiting for an answer to emerge in many years time. He or she needs at least a direction in which to move. So in the next few weeks I would like to give, without fear or favour, what I believe each young person wants to hear about the best and worst of Christian faith. The exclusive image of God and faith that has held sway for most of Christian history needs today to be tempered and informed by

philosophy, science and evolution, psychology, the social sciences and dare I say popular culture.

But perhaps most significantly we, the “gatekeepers” of Christian faith must show humility and openness to new expressions of spiritual life; willing to say we don’t know but also willing to wrestle with the questions young people ask and to give our opinions on the subject. I wonder if we should begin with a “ban” on the word God in our conversations and seek another way of framing the questions of life that perplex us.

As we move into a new level of understanding in the 21st century perhaps we should pay attention to the words of Albert Einstein, *“No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.”*

The new **Congregation Directory** is now available. Please collect your named copy from the rear of the Church this morning or from the Office on weekdays.



### Morning Group

10am Thursday 15 September in the Faichney Room. Come and hear

**Dr Victoria Clayton**

speaking on Life on an archaeological dig in Israel and Jordan

**Everyone Welcome**

### PETITION TO KEEP MALVERN SAFE

Our community is under threat from rising levels of violent crime.

Under the Andrews Labor Government, **crime in the Malvern electorate has increased 10%** with violent crimes – including home invasions and carjackings – putting our safety at risk.

Despite growing crime, Premier Andrews has weakened laws, cut frontline police and **closed police stations**.

The residents of the Malvern electorate (Armadale, Glen Iris, Kooyong, Malvern, Malvern East and Toorak) are at risk from the Andrews Labor Government’s soft on crime approach.

We, the undersigned, call on Premier Andrews and his Labor Government to immediately:

- **Guarantee Malvern Police Station** as a 24 hour a day, 7 day a week station;
- **Increase police numbers** to patrol our community;
- **Strengthen bail laws**, especially for juvenile gangs; and
- **Restore powers to Victoria Police** to tackle public order offences.

Sign the petition to save Malvern Police Station and keep our community safe!

First Name:

Surname:

Address:

Mobile:

Email:



**How to return the petition.** Email a photo or scan this survey to [malvern@michaelobrien.com.au](mailto:malvern@michaelobrien.com.au) or tear-off this card and post as a Reply Paid envelope – no stamp required.

Authorised by Michael O'Brien MP, 313 Waverley Road, Malvern East 3145. Printed by Fuji Xerox DMS 213-215 Robinsons Road, Ravenhall 3023. This material is funded from the Parliament Electorate Office and Communications Budget.

### Baptism, Confirmation, Membership:

If you are considering one of these Christian practices please feel free to see Chris to discuss it further. Remember there is no age limit on any of them!

## A word from Wolfgang

It is hard to believe it been a year since our minister, Christopher Page left to go on ministerial exchange, and we welcomed Pastor Wolfgang Stahlberg, along with his wife Liliana, and granddaughter Rebecca.

Wolfgang has contacted the office to send warm greetings to the congregation of TUC. It has been an eventful year for the Stahlbergs. Following his retirement on 31 January, Wolfgang travelled to Germany in early February to visit his mother, and while there suffered a huge aortic aneurysm, which required 8 hours of surgery and countless months of rehabilitation to recover from. However, Wolfgang is now fit again, and has even climbed to the summit of Mt Evans (14,130 feet). Just last Sunday, Liliana was inducted as Pastor to a new congregation, the Lord of the Mountain Lutheran Church in Dillon, which is about 1 hour's drive into the mountains from their home Denver.



Wolfgang and Liliana remember their time in Melbourne with fondness and send warm greetings to you all.



**Manse Gallery Café** will be closed from Tue 20 Sept to Mon 3 Oct during the school holidays. It will be open on Mon 19, Wed 21 & Wed 28 September for you enjoyment though!

**In our thoughts and prayers:**  
Catriona DeVere recovering from foot surgery.

**Fellowship Morning Coffee**  
Monday 26 September at 10.30am, Faichney Room

John Macrae Centre's Annual  
**Spring Dance**  
Tuesday 20th September 2016  
11.30am-2.30pm

 Toorak Uniting Church Hall  
603 Toorak Road, Toorak 

**A COMMUNITY EVENT**

Featuring: Les Salisbury  
Light Lunch. Door Prizes. Raffle  
Entry \$5.00

**Bookings: 9829 0320**



## 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.

### Diary Dates

Sun	11 Sep	9.00/10.15	Rev Wal Baker / Mary Williams preaching	
Mon	12 Sep	10.30-2.00	Drop-In Card Day	Faichney Room
Tue	13 Sep	4.30pm	Management Team	Wettenhall Room
Wed	14 Sep	6-8pm	Handbells	Wettenhall Room
Thu	15 Sep	10.00am	Morning Group	Faichney Room
Sun	18 Sep	9.00/10.15	Rev John Edwards preaching	
	19-30	September	Victorian public school holidays & Café closed.	
Tue	20 Sep	11.30am	JMC Spring Dance	Hall
Tue	20 Sep	4.30pm	Management Team	Wettenhall Room
Wed	21 Sep	6-8pm	Handbells	Wettenhall Room
Thu	22 Sep	7.30pm	Church Council	Faichney Room
Mon	26 Sep	10.30am	Fellowship Morning Coffee	Faichney Room
Tue	27 Sep	10.00am	Elders Meeting	Faichney Room
Wed	28 Sep	6-8pm	Handbells	Wettenhall Room
Thu	29 Sep	10.00am	Prayers for Christian Unity	Church
Sun	16 Oct	11.15am	Congregation Meeting	Church
Sun	13 Nov	10.15am	Grandparents/kids whole church fam. service & lunch	

### What's On at Kinross Arts Centre

#### Heaven to Heaven Documentary Film Viewing

Fri. 16 Sep. at 10.30am - 11.30am in the Hodges Gallery. Come to the Kinross Office at 10.30am and let us know you are here for a viewing. The documentary is by a team of Australian Islamic artists/film makers who filmed the Arba'een Pilgrimage walk from Najaf to Karbala and included interviews with scholars and pilgrims.

#### New Exhibition: *Birds of the Air - Portraits in Feathers*

6-28 October 2016 Featuring wood block prints, drawings, bronze and stone sculptures inspired by Australian birdlife.



#### Boutique Afternoon Performance: *"A concert of birdsong"*

by Jacqui Rutten (singing; guitar; tin whistle) and Livia Judge (flute; singing)

Sun 23 Oct, 2pm - 3pm. \$20 Adults; \$15 Conc./Pensioner; Children Free.

Tickets at the door or email [info@sacredstage.com.au](mailto:info@sacredstage.com.au)

#### SAVE THE DATE - KINROSS OUTREACH FUNDRAISER

Advent House Opening with Private Art & Garden Tour in Toorak

View a unique ceramic collection and enjoy a gourmet afternoon tea in a beautifully restored and decorated 1879 family home. Fri 2 Dec 2.30pm - 4.30pm.

\$50 per ticket. Bookings: [manager@kinrossarts.org.au](mailto:manager@kinrossarts.org.au)

Program Enquiries: Tel 9829 0340 or Email [manager@kinrossarts.org.au](mailto:manager@kinrossarts.org.au)