



Toorak Uniting Church

Update 6 November 2016

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Phone: 9829 0300
Sunday services 9am & 10.15am



Still Thinking – Measuring Belief— Christopher Page

I was recently re-reading some of the statistics of Religious belief from the Christian Research Association, for an article I am writing for the UCA.

Of course statistics are only as good as the interpretation placed on them. For example, the Christian Research Association has told us that from their research, there is a decline in the proportion of Melbournians identifying themselves as Christian. The article goes on to say that this does not mean everyone is an atheist. In fact according to the statistics, 4% believe in a personal God; 34% believe something is out there; 22% say they just don't know what to believe and 40% say they simply don't believe at all.

So what does that really mean? Apart from the fact that it is hard to believe that only 4% of people believe in a personal God; I've met many people in our culture who have little or no contact with the church and religion and still have a belief in a personal God.

The Christian Research Association like many religious survey groups is still measuring beliefs and church attendance when the rest of the world has moved on. It is quite obvious that, for example, young people do not have the same beliefs and belief systems as their parents and dare I say are often bemused by the importance their religious parents place on beliefs. When many 20 something young people are asked, "do you believe in God?" their scepticism; their disillusionment with organized religion and their natural wariness of such questions, causes them to answer, "No!" But if the inquirer engages them in a conversation; if the person doing the survey took the "non scientific" time to listen to the murmurings in their lives, they would discover that these young people have a sense of God named in perhaps new and imaginative ways.

Some years ago Anne and I had all our children and their partners for lunch. That's eleven people around the table. Anne and I represent the church going generation. The late 20 something "children" do not go to church. In the conversation I mentioned that I go to the Cistercian Abbey at Tarrawarra in the Yarra Valley for a two day retreat every couple of months. The ears of the young

people pricked up. “What do you do there?” “Can anyone go?” “Do you have to be religious or a Catholic?” and so forth. They were most intrigued by the idea that in the stillness, quietness and reflection of that place one could sense/ experience/feel and intuit a presence that I called God. What they seemed to focus on most in their lives was not a belief in God, but an encounter with that which is beyond explanation, that we in the church going generation call God. And I believe that surveys that asked whether or not you believe in God at best distort this experience and at worst alienate the next generation from an authentic encounter with the sacred.

Food for Friends Dec. 2016—A Toorak Churches’ Ecumenical Community Project

This year, the “Food for Friends” appeal takes place from Fri. Dec 2nd - Sun. Dec. 11th.

During the appeal, volunteers attend the Safeway Hawksburn and Toorak Village Woolworths supermarkets and accept donated grocery items purchased by supermarket customers. The ten day appeal is divided into two hour shifts and we are looking for two volunteers to fill each shift.

The appeal usually collects over \$40,000 worth of groceries, which are then distributed to front-line charities such as Uniting Church Connections.

We need your help and would very much appreciate it, if you could volunteer your time for one or more of the following shifts:

Woolworths Toorak Village

Fri 2 nd Dec	9am -11am	11am -1pm	1pm – 3pm	3 pm – 5pm	5 pm – 7pm	7pm – 9pm
Sun 4 th Dec			12pm -2pm	2pm – 4pm	4pm – 6pm	6pm – 8pm
Wed 7 th Dec	9am -11am	11am -1pm	1pm – 3pm	3 pm – 5pm	5 pm – 7pm	7pm – 9pm
Sat 10 th Dec			1pm – 3pm	3 pm – 5pm	5 pm – 7pm	

Safeway Hawksburn

Sat 3 rd Dec	9am -11am	11am -1pm				
Mon 4 th Dec	9am -11am	11am -1pm	1pm – 3pm	3 pm – 5pm	5 pm – 7pm	7pm – 9pm
Thu 8 th Dec	9am -11am	11am -1pm	1pm – 3pm	3 pm – 5pm	5 pm – 7pm	7pm – 9pm
Sat 10 th Dec	9am -11am	11am -1pm				

Please add your name to the sign up board outside the church or contact me directly.

I look forward very much to hearing from you,

Barbara McKinnon

21 Hazeldine Road, Glen Iris 3146

Ph: 9885 3031 or 0405 987 890 | Email: Barbara.mckinnon@bigpond.com

We are looking forward very much to the Grandparents' service on November 13th, which will be followed by a special morning tea. Anyone who would like to contribute a savoury or sweet plate to the morning tea, please contact Barbara McKinnon (mob: 0405 987 890 or email: barbara.mckinnon@bigpond.com).



13 November, 10.15am

Whole Church Family **Grandparents / kids service** and special morning tea.

Please bring a small plate of sweet treats to share.

Tell your friends, everyone's welcome!

What's On at Kinross Arts Centre

Advent House Opening: Friday 2 Dec., 2.30pm - 4.30pm. Celebrate Advent with an art and garden tour, gourmet afternoon tea and time to mingle with friends. \$50 per ticket. All funds assist 2017 outreach and creative programs at Kinross.

Fellowship Morning Coffee

Mon. 28 Nov. at 10.30am in the Faichney Room. Please make a special effort to come because this will be our last gathering. ☺
Discussion: "A Snake Story!"

In our thoughts and prayers:

Alec Barber, Alexandra Legge & Jemima Sennitt completing Year 12 exams.

Family and friends of Jennifer Taplin.

Act for Peace's 2016 **Gift for Peace** catalogue features goats, nutritious food, medicine, education classes and much more...with every item transforming the life of someone affected by conflict or disaster. Each gift comes with a beautiful gift card and its very own fridge magnet so your friends or family can be reminded of the difference their gift is making every day. To order your Gift for Peace for Christmas please visit www.actforpeace.org.au/gifts or call 1800 025 101.

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	13 Nov	10.15am	Grandparents/kids whole church family service	
Sat	26 Nov	10-12.30	Retreat "Seeing Advent with new eyes"	
Sun	27 Nov	9 & 10.15	Advent 1	Church
Thu	24 Nov	10.00	Prayers for Christian Unity	St Peters
Mon	28 Nov	10.30am	Final Fellowship Morning Coffee	Faichney Room
Fri	02 Dec	2.30-4.30	Kinross Advent House Opening	Beggs home
Sun	04 Dec	9 & 10.15	Advent 2	Church
Sun	11 Dec	9 & 10.15	Advent 3 & Communion (date change)	Church
Sun	18 Dec	9 & 10.15	Lessons and Carols service	Church
Sat	24 Dec	6.00pm	Family Carols in the Courtyard	Courtyard
Sat	24 Dec	8.00pm	Australian Christmas Carols Service	Church
Sun	25 Dec	10.00am	Christmas Day Service	Church
Tue	27 Dec	7.00pm	TEC Advent Service	St Peters

Services in January are at 9.30am.

Courtyard Rejuvenation

The Gardening Committee is continuing with the planned rejuvenation of the courtyard as an area that is inviting and comfortable to use for coffee after Sunday Worship and for gatherings throughout the week. Now the weather is finally warming up the Committee seeks donations to enable the acquisition of suitable furniture and plants to complement the new landscaping. The Gardening Committee will be most grateful for your support to create this special outdoor space for the enjoyment of our TUC community. Donations may be forwarded to Pamela Wilson, Nina Mumford/Jon Sennitt or the TUC Office. With our thanks.



Church Fundraising Stall!

Sunday 11 December.

Please purchase some of our delicious home made goodies.



Toorak Ecumenical Op-Shop has moved!

It is now bigger and better, and can be found at 1a Carters Avenue, Toorak. Ph. 9827 3172.
Do drop in!