



# Toorak Uniting Church

## Update 22 July 2018



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

Phone: 9829 0300  
Sunday services 9am & 10.15am

### Still Thinking - Embracing Symbol and Ritual – Christopher Page

Last week I spoke about the significance of symbols and rituals in our lives. So, if you want a richer and more meaningful life, then pay more attention to the rituals and symbols around you. Sadly, too often we live our lives on the shallow plane or on the surface of life either unable or unwilling to go deeper. Of course, going deeper can be both difficult and dangerous as we have seen in a physical sense with the rescue of the boys from the cave in Thailand.

Anthropologist Clifford Geertz defines religion as "a system of symbols" used to clarify the universe and to eliminate chaos. I would go further and say that a meaningful life is a life of rich symbols and rituals. To use a non-religious symbol, for example, of a kiss, it is easy to see how this symbol/ritual points beyond itself. In most cases the kiss points to love. An emotion that transcends words and is dependent on symbols for expression.

To return to religion, there are many symbols that we will experience this morning and they will all be a part of the rituals we use. Ritual has had a bad press in recent years because it has often collapsed into "ritualism." By this I mean the mouthing of words without the engagement of the heart (the center of our being)

Ritual is a part of most of the world's religions and also of everyday life and involves activities that symbolize sacred time and sacred place. Anthropologist Victor Turner wrote that symbols are the basic molecules from which the meanings of religion and life rituals are constructed. A Baptism is where we "reenact" the spiritual birth of a child or adult. Holy Communion is where we symbolically recreate the Last Supper, reinforcing the importance of Christ's presence with us in bread and wine to symbolize his body and blood/life.

For me the power of symbol and ritual is seen as a child bows his or her head in prayer. Or a moment of silent gratitude before we eat a meal. The "ritual" reading of a book before a child goes to sleep at night. These are significant pauses in life's daily routine and they make our lives richer.

And then there are the big rituals like baptism and communion. They are meaningful and transforming because they come from beyond us. These and other religious rituals are "cosmic." They draw together the individual, family and friends, the faith community, the past and the future in an encounter with the divine – that which nurtures us and yet is beyond our imaginings. That why symbols are so important - the inarticulate speech of the heart.

This week I hope to look at how brokenness and suffering can be integrated into the wholistic life.

## Diary Dates

Thu	26 Jul	10.00am	Prayers for Christian Unity	St. Peter's
Thu	26 Jul	7.30pm	Church Council meeting	Faichney Rm
Sun	29 Jul	10.15ap	Service incl. Farewell to Raz Psonis & Family	Church
Sat	11 Aug	2.00pm	Wedding of Stephanie & Jamil	Church
Tue	14 Aug	4.30pm	Management Team meeting	Wettenhall Rm
Thu	16 Aug	10.00am	Morning Group "Bring and talk about your favorite things"	Faichney Rm
Sun	26 Aug	10:15am	Baptism Reunion Family Service	Church
Thu	30 Aug	10.00am	Prayers for Christian Unity	St. John's
	Aug		Church Council Retreat - details TBC	
Sat	18 Aug	11.00am	Wedding of James & Yvette	Church



Please join with us to celebrate

## Baptism Reunion Sunday

**Sunday 26 August, 2018 at 10.15am**

**Followed by a family lunch!**

**All are welcome**

RSVP for catering please.

9829 0300 or [office@toorakuc.org.au](mailto:office@toorakuc.org.au)

## In our thoughts and prayers

Anne Booth-Clibborn and the Boyd family  
Kimberly Hobbs, recovering with a broken ankle  
Ted Billson and Margaret  
Charmaine Cornford

# A WINTER CONCERT TO WARM THE HEART

A fundraising event for Uniting AgeWell's Music For David,  
a program supporting people with dementia and their  
carers through music at home.



SUNDAY, 19 AUGUST, 3PM  
15 WATSON STREET, GLEN IRIS  
ADMISSION: \$35 / \$30 CONCESSION  
(includes refreshments)

Listen to works by Mozart, Brahms, Grieg, Finzi and Rodgers & Hammerstein,  
performed by outstanding musicians: Tomas Dalton – tenor;  
James Emerson – baritone; Nicholas Waters – violin;  
Rhodri Clarke – piano; David Ross-Smith – piano



BOOK ONLINE:  
[unitingagewell.org/mfd](http://unitingagewell.org/mfd)

Inquiries: 0429 907 908



## 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.

Toorak Uniting Church has been a proud member of the Toorak Ecumenical Movement since signing the Ecumenical Agreement in 1980. We pray for our partner churches: St Peter's Roman Catholic Church, St John's Anglican Church and the Swedish Church.