

Toorak Uniting Church

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Phone: 9829 0300
Sunday services 9am & 10.15am

Still Thinking—The Absences of God: Christopher Page



“Of course I’ll hurt you. Of course you’ll hurt me. Of course we will hurt each other. But this is the very condition of existence. To become spring, means accepting the risk of winter. To become presence, means accepting the risk of absence.”

~Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

I have spoken with several people the last few months who have asked the question, “Where is God in my times of loneliness, illness and disappointment?” It is a very important question that I suspect one that Christian theology has failed to answer. Our brand of faith tends to be triumphalist and therefore we are uncomfortable with questions that express doubt and uncertainty – well many of us at least.

I don’t have any simple answers to such questions and I am suspicious of those who do. The 20th Century journalist, satirist, social critic Henry L. Mencken once said, “For every complex problem there is an answer that is clear, simple, and wrong.” Complex questions require thoughtful and reflective answers. And those answers are not always satisfying to the questioner. Sadly, (but remarkably) that is the human condition.

Nevertheless, I do believe that “God” is in the great silences and absences of life. However, we have to look in the right places to “see” and experience that presence. If we are seeking a God who will save and rescue us for our personal struggles and difficulties, then I think we will be disappointed and disillusioned. I have often quoted Paula D’Arcy’s words, “God comes to us disguised as our life.” Life is the theatre of God’s activity and life can bring us experiences that are painful, uncertain and downright awful! But let’s not forget that from time to time we are also immersed in love, hope, wonder and beauty.

I have recently discovered the American theologian John D. Caputo. In the legacy of the great German/American theologian Paul Tillich, Caputo attempts to resurrect the notion that God is most often found in weakness rather than in strength; in failure rather than success and in disillusionment rather than in certainty. These are not ideas that are popular in our culture nor our religion. But to me they seem to be true and particularly true to the life of Jesus. In fact, God is often found in the depths of life rather than in the highest points of life. Caputo says:

The best interests of theology lie not in God in the highest but in the depths of God, something deep within God, even older than God, or deeper than God, and for that very same reason, deep within us, we and God always being intertwined.

~John D. Caputo, *The Folly of God: A Theology of the Unconditional*

Previously advertised Oct. 20-21 Retreat is **CANCELLED**.

MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

A meeting of the Congregation will be held on
Sunday 21st October 2018 in the Faichney Room at 9.30am.

Agenda items will comprise the adoption of the budget for 2019
and to appoint TUC representatives on Presbytery.

Mrs Alison Legge and Mr Christopher Begg are willing to serve in this capacity.

Copies of the budget and explanatory notes are now available.



You are warmly invited to TUC's
Whole Church Family
"Grandparents & Families Service"
on Sunday 28 October at 10.15am
Tell your friends, everyone is welcome!
The service will be followed by a special
morning tea. Please bring a small plate of
sweet treats to share.

☺ Congratulations to TUC organ scholar Anna Duan who won Second Prize at the Sydney Organ Competition (15yrs & under section). Jennifer was with Anna to support her. There were 10 youngsters competing in the junior section, so it was a real opportunity for Anna to meet her equals who also are learning to play the organ.

☺ Not to be missed! Save the date! In just two weeks on Sun. 21 Oct. at 2pm, the first of a small series of organ concerts to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the TUC Peter Collins will be given by Elizabeth-Anne Nixon. The program will feature a number of influential women composers from around the world. Come along and bring friends and families with you to support the TUC concerts! (*details back page.*)

☺ On Remembrance Day Sunday 11 November, the TUC choir will sing the Missa Brevis in D minor KV 65 by Mozart, accompanied by a small ensemble.

☺ This Christmas Eve, the TUC Choir will perform the Christmas Oratorio by Saint-Saëns together with harpist Megan Reveal, organ and string ensemble. Do come with family and friends for this special Christmas celebration. ~Jennifer Chou



Reading the Bible in the 21st Century

In various ways, Jesus communicated the Kingdom of God is present in the here and now. His first words were "The time has come; the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mk. 1:15) There is a new kingdom and a new realm of time and space revealed. There is a radical paradigm change in how we engage and perceive life. It is the Eternal Now of the Kingdom of God.

Thursdays **Oct. 12, 19, 26, 7:30–9:00pm** in **Kinross House**. All welcome. (No cost.)



The Morning Group Christmas Party will be held on Sunday 2 December, 5-7pm at the Beggs' home.

In our thoughts and prayers:

Patricia Begg and Chris.

Graham Menzies, recovering from pneumonia in Cabrini.



Stonnington's **Seniors Festival 2018** program guide is now avail. online or from Stonnington libraries. Call 8290 1333 for info, bookings for 130+ events, or a copy of the guide. <https://online.flippingbook.com/view/976091/>
Free public transport for Seniors Card holders 7-14 Oct.!

Diary Dates

Wed	10 Oct	6.00pm	Handbell rehearsal	Wettenhall Rm
Thu	11 Oct	7.30pm	Bible Study	Kinross
Mon	15 Oct	2.00pm	David Watts memorial service	Church
Wed	17 Oct	6.00pm	Handbell rehearsal	Wettenhall Rm
Thu	18 Oct	10.00am	Morning Group	Faichney Rm
Thu	18 Oct	7.30pm	Bible Study	Kinross
Sun	21 Oct	9.30am	Congregation meeting	Faichney Rm
Sun	21 Oct	11.30am	Interment of Ann Read	Memorial Gdn
Sun	21 Oct	2.00pm	Organ Concert—Elizabeth-Anne Nixon	Church
Sun	21 Oct	2.00pm	Interment of Shirley Allard	Memorial Gdn
Wed	24 Oct	6.00pm	Handbell rehearsal	Wettenhall Rm
Thu	25 Oct	10.00am	Prayers for Christian Unity	Swedish Church
Thu	25 Oct	7.30pm	Bible Study	Kinross
Sun	28 Oct	10.15am	WCFS Grandparents & Families Day	<u>NO 9am</u> Church
Wed	31 Oct	6.00pm	Handbell rehearsal	Wettenhall Rm
Tue	06 Nov		OFFICE CLOSED for PUBLIC HOLIDAY	
Wed	07 Nov	6.00pm	Handbell rehearsal	Wettenhall Rm
Sun	11 Nov	10.15am	Centenary of Armistice	
Sun	11 Nov	2.00pm	Organ Concert—Myfanwy McIndoe	Church
Wed	14 Nov	6.00pm	Handbell rehearsal	Wettenhall Rm
Wed	14 Nov	7.00pm	JMK Parent information night	Faichney Rm
Thu	15 Nov	10.00am	Morning Group	Faichney Rm
Fri	16 Nov	10.00am	Interment of Ted Billson	Memorial Gdn
Wed	21 Nov	6.00pm	Handbell rehearsal	Wettenhall Rm
Thu	22 Nov	7.30pm	Church Council meeting	Faichney Rm
Nov	24 Nov	all day	ELECTION DAY FAIR	TUC campus
Wed	28 Nov	6.00pm	Handbell rehearsal	Wettenhall Rm
Thu	29 Nov	10.00am	Prayers for Christian Unity	St Peter's
Sun	02 Dec	5-7pm	Morning Group Christmas Party	Beggs' home
Sun	09 Dec	10.15am	WCFS Nine Lessons and Carols	<u>NO 9am</u> Church

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 TUC. Please come and join us after the service for fellowship and a cup of tea or coffee. TUC 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.

ELECTION DAY FAIR 24 NOVEMBER 2018

Preparations are underway for making TUC's Election Day Fair on Saturday 24 November a successful fundraising and community awareness event.

We plan to have stalls selling Cakes & Preserves; Quality bric a brac; Craft and Sewing; 2nd Hand books, CD's, DVD's & computer games. Refreshments will be able to be purchased from a sausage sizzle and from the café in Kinross House which will be selling coffee, other hot & cold drinks and snacks.

What Can We Do? To ensure a successful Fair, we must have sufficient cakes and preserves to sell on the day. In the past we have sold out by mid-morning so the more donations of cakes and preserves we receive on the morning of the Fair the better! If you can assist by donating home baked cakes or biscuits, or by making preserves, please start planning now.

We are also seeking donations of items to be sold at the bric a brac, craft & sewing and 2nd hand book stalls. These stalls are very successful but rely on there being a large range of items to attract the voters! If you can assist with suitable donations, please store the items if possible until the day before the Fair and then drop them in to the church office.

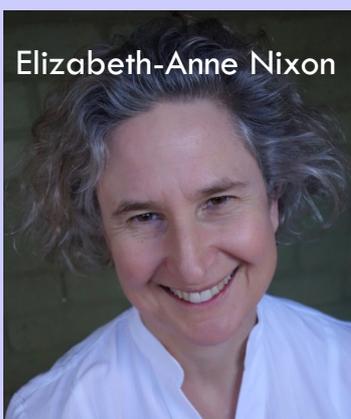
We would prefer all donations to the cakes & preserves stall be dropped in to the stalls after 8:00 am on the morning of the Fair.

Further Assistance To protect the stalls from the weather we are seeking to borrow any large umbrellas [and stands] you might have. We also intend once again to use the lawn as seating area. Accordingly we are seeking to borrow outdoor furniture so people can relax and enjoy refreshments on the lawn. If you are able to lend TUC a large umbrella and stand, and outdoor furniture [chairs and tables], please contact Jon Sennitt on jon.sennitt@gmail.com or text or call Jon on his mobile [0478809678](tel:0478809678). Thank you for your support!

TUC, Sunday 21 October 2018, 2:00pm: *Illustrious Women from Around the World*

French composer Nadia Boulanger was notable for having taught and influenced many of the leading composers and musicians of the 20th century such as Aaron Copland, Astor Piazzolla, Virgil Thomason, and Daniel Barenboim. She taught in the most famous institutions around the world, and from her apartment in Paris, until her death at the age of 92.

Grammy award-winner Libby Larsen is one of America's most performed living composers. With over 500 works spanning virtually every genre, she is constantly sought after for commissions and premieres by major artists, ensembles, and orchestras around the world. She is a vigorous, articulate advocate for the music and musicians of our time.



Elizabeth-Anne Nixon

Join us with **organist Elizabeth-Anne Nixon** for a program dedicated to five illustrious women composers including Nadia Boulanger and Libby Larsen. Ms Nixon is Director of Music at St George's Anglican Church, Malvern. After completing her Bachelor of Music degree in Brisbane, she undertook extended studies with John O'Donnell (Melbourne) and Lorenzo Ghielmi (Italy), Daniel Roth (France) and David Sanger (England). Elizabeth-Anne has divided her time principally between teaching, accompanying and organ performance.

Tickets at the door: \$20 / \$15 (student) / U18 free