

Toorak Uniting Church Update 25 December 2018

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Phone: 9829 0300
Sunday services 9am & 10.15am

Toorak Uniting Church wishes you all a love-filled Christmas



TUC Office Summer Hours:

CLOSED 22 December 2018-
6 January 2019

OPEN Tue. & Thu. Only,
7-31 January 2019

OPEN Mon. to Fri. from
1 February 2019

Kinross House Summer Hours:

Closed after Fri. 14 December 2018
Open (TBC)

Manse Café Summer Hours:

Closed after Fri. 21 December 2018
Open Mon. 14 January 2019

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.

A Christmas message from Rev. Dr Christopher Page
(based on an article by- Don Richard Riso)



Christmas is a time to remember and celebrate many things; coming together with family and friends; giving gifts to loved ones; reaching out to others who are less fortunate, creating warmth and togetherness and looking forward to the new year with its opportunities and challenges.

At the centre of the season's activities, millions around the world mark the birth of a child. Indeed, it is actually somewhat odd that the emphasis is not on the adult man and his extraordinary life. But rather on the birth of a baby in the highly unpromising conditions that surrounded his arrival in the world. So much is made of the swaddling clothes, picturesque mangers, sanitized donkeys, and swooping angels - all in neatly arranged tableaux that include uncomprehending shepherds and gaudily dressed Magi. There are probably several historical reasons why Christian faith has focused on the birth of the Baby Jesus - despite the potential for sentimentality, trivialization, and the call to worship of an untested child, the fact is that, at the Nativity, Jesus did nothing more than be born. Why the focus on the Baby Jesus instead of on the life and achievements of the adult? What is the inner meaning of the birth of this child?

Perhaps the unconscious power of the Nativity lies in the fact that it reminds us that whenever we are in touch with our True Nature, that we, too, are being born. This birth happens

every moment we come into contact with what is most real and essential in ourselves...that is the source of all Being. When we contact this, the eternal is once again born in the material. But, and here is why the symbol of the birth of a baby is so appropriate, like the birth of a baby, the birth of new life is something that happens in time and in the world. For virtually everyone, the birth of new life in us is too soon lost in a "death" of our awareness, in a forgetting of our True Nature and of our own divine centre.

No matter what else he was, Jesus was an extraordinary example of the growth of divine consciousness in the world. The wonder is that, in Jesus, unlike us, it never went out again. Even with his very first appearance in the Gospels, we see someone who always remembered who he was and who always acted in alignment with the Truth. He was always rooted in the power and dignity of his divine origin, which is why people were so affected by him.

From this point of view, Christmas is not primarily an occasion to become gooey and sentimental about the birth of a baby, but it is an occasion to see this birth as the model of a much deeper kind of birth: the birth of consciousness, of being truly alive, the penetration of the darkness by the Light, the birth of the divine in the human, and a decisive reorientation of our lives, once and for all.

“May the holidays be an opportunity to remember and give time to the truths which touch our hearts. No matter what our personal beliefs about Jesus, may these holidays, as a celebration of the light in the darkness, call us toward deeper presence, peace, and hope in the limitless depth of God and reality.”



Save The Date!

“The Bible and Secular Australia — Are they Compatible?”

Thursday 21 February, 7:30pm at TUC

Reverend Dr Robyn Whitaker

Senior Lecturer at Pilgrim Theological College
University of Divinity

Please join us for an inspirational talk from one of Australia’s most highly regarded Christian theologians.

INAUGURAL ROACH LECTURE

Music Services in 2019

20 January 2019: Guest musicians duo Dorthe Zielke (Trumpet) and Søren Johansen (Organ) will perform during the 10.15am service. A 30-minute recital will begin immediately after the service which will be followed by morning tea. The duo visited TUC two years ago and performed a music service with paintings and music. They are returning this time with a very different program including excerpts from symphonies and operas.



2019 Concerts:

2019 will mark the **40th anniversary** of the installation and inauguration of the TUC pipe organ. A series of 5 concerts are planned. Our TUC Soloists and Justin Jacobs (piano) will give a spectacular concert with opera excerpts, duets, trios, quartets, and their showy pieces that you won’t hear at all on a Sunday service. Please save the date now in your diaries and come to support the TUC music team.

A number of groups meet regularly at TUC. If you are interested in joining any of them, the Office staff can provide contact details.

Australasian Native Orchid Society	7.00pm	1 st Friday of month
Beaurepaire’s Bridge (classes)	12.30pm	Thursdays
Brown’s Bridge (supervised play)	9.00am	Wednesdays
Ceramic & Glass Circle	7.00pm	2 nd Monday of month
Dickens Fellowship	6.30pm	3 rd Wednesday of month
Feldenkrais (various groups)	Irregular	check online calendar.
Ikebana International	9.00am	2 nd Tuesday of month
Soozexercises	9.30am	Mondays & Fridays
Tai Chi	10.30am	Thursdays
TUC Dance Classes	Irregular	check online calendar.
TUC Handbells	6.00pm	Wednesdays
TUC Morning Group	10.00am	3 rd Thursday of month
Weight Watchers	5.30pm	Tuesdays
Yoga Mitra	9.30am	Mondays & Thursdays