

Toorak Uniting Church Newsletter

# Update 3 May 2026

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Sunday services:  
9am & 10:15am

Deadline for Update submission is 3pm on the Wednesday prior.



## TOORAK UNITING CHURCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

**To be held at 11:00am on Sunday 31st May 2026 (or so soon thereafter as the 10:15am service permits) in the Faichney Room**

The Annual General Meeting of the Congregation will be held at 11:00am on Sunday 31st May 2026 (or so soon thereafter as the 10:15am service permits) in the Faichney Room.

The agenda will be as follows.

1. Election of Elders and members of Church Council.\*
2. To consider and if thought fit to receive the Annual Report for 2025.
3. To consider and if thought fit to approve the Annual Financial Report for 2025.

Copies of these reports will be sent out to members electronically. Please contact the Church office if you would like a hard copy.

\* Nominations may be made on the form available from the Church Office and emailed to members of the Congregation. Nominations must be submitted to the Secretary of the Congregation, James Barber, **by 17th May 2026**, preferably by email to [jbarber@vicbar.com.au](mailto:jbarber@vicbar.com.au). Anyone with questions about what is involved in Eldership or membership of Church Council may contact the Chair of Church Council, Barbara McKinnon at [chair@toorakuc.org.au](mailto:chair@toorakuc.org.au).

## Understanding Your Window of Tolerance: A Workshop for Everyday Life

Toorak Uniting Church member, Executive Coach, and Somatic Therapist Rudi Doku runs a monthly online workshop that helps people recognise when stress is getting on top of them and find their way back to steadier ground.

It runs for 90 minutes online and is open to anyone, no background in psychology needed. Whether you're navigating a busy season of life or supporting someone who is, this workshop offers practical tools you can draw on straight away.

**Next session: 7pm on Wednesday, 20 May 2026**

For more information and to register, visit [rudidoku.com/workshop](http://rudidoku.com/workshop)

## **Mozart Great Mass in C Minor Concert | 5pm on Saturday, 16 May at St Paul's Cathedral, Cnr Flinders & Swanston Streets**

Victoria Chorale is excited to present the Great Mass in C Minor by much-loved audience favourite, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Described as 'Great' because of its sheer size, the Mass represents Mozart at his most daring and innovative. Soaring above the conventions of his time, he crafted the C Minor Mass to be a work of breathtaking scope and architectural grandeur featuring many virtuoso arias for soprano and mezzo soprano and a double choir with two separate four-part choirs (soprano alto, tenor, bass) that push the human voice to its limits.

Conducted by our exciting and innovative Musical Director, Mario Dobernig, we will be joined by the brilliant Art of Sound Orchestra and talented soloists, Molly Ryan, Soprano, Sally-Anne Russell, Mezzo Soprano, Jiacheng Ding, Tenor and Michael Lampard, Baritone.

A performance not to be missed!

Pensioner, student, and child discounts apply. To book, please visit [trybooking.com/DJDIF](http://trybooking.com/DJDIF)

### **Putting together an Argyle House Working Group**

With the closure of the Café, we have the opportunity to review and renew the purpose of Argyle House. Argyle House is currently used by Uniting AgeWell as a drop off and pick up point for its social connections program on Mondays and Tuesdays, for TUC groups including the Bible Explorers and Coffee Club, and Church Council meets there when meetings coincide with Dancing Class.

Argyle House can be used as a public gathering place – just like the church and the Wettenhall, Faichney and Hall spaces. It cannot be used for retail, as an office or as a café.

We have expressions of interest from Uniting and a Korean entrepreneur to run community programs on the site (see Church Council reports). With a projected operational deficit and the spire expenses looming, we also need Argyle House to be income producing. It is a lovely part of our site with significant potential.

If you would like to be part of a working group to evaluate the pros and cons of different proposed uses and report to Church Council (ideally for the next meeting on June 4), please email [chair@toorakuc.org.au](mailto:chair@toorakuc.org.au).

Please note that Exploring the Bible group will **not meet on Zoom this coming Tuesday evening, 5 May or on the following weeks until Tuesday, 26 May** as Rev Peter is away.

There will be a Monday meeting in Argyle House on 4 May, **after which there will be a break for two weeks until Monday, 25 May.**

## Roundtable Gathering for Climate Justice in the Uniting Church | Thursday, 21 May at 2pm via Zoom

As a Church, we are called not only to proclaim the Gospel, but to live it—responding to God’s love through our care for one another and for the whole of creation. There will be a series of three Assembly Net Zero Emissions online Roundtable gatherings focused on Climate Justice this year, each held via Zoom for two hours.

Together, these gatherings seek to:

- Equip the Church to respond faithfully to the call to Climate Justice
- Strengthen connection and shared purpose across our communities
- Encourage ongoing action in our local contexts and spheres of influence

The gatherings are an opportunity for us, as the Uniting Church, to deepen our shared commitment to this work—grounded in faith, shaped by the wisdom of First Peoples, and expressed through practical action in our communities. You are encouraged to take part in these important conversations and to invite others within your communities to join you.

The first session will be held on Thursday, 21 May at 2pm and explore how we, as a Church, are called to advocate for justice and how you can engage in this work within your context.

**To register, please visit <https://uniting.church/join-the-journey-to-net-zero-2026-roundtables/>**

## The Royal Gala VIP Concert | Saturday, 13 June at 4pm, Lincoln of Toorak, 445 Toorak Rd

This is a formal, alcohol-free event featuring gospel artist Fiston Mbuyi aimed at bringing together churches and multicultural communities from across Melbourne. Organised by Hope Multicultural Community Association Inc., it will be a night of worship, joy, and non-stop celebration. To book, please visit <https://shorturl.at/3y0e0>

### May Diary Dates

Sun	3 May	9:00am	Worship in the Round	Rev Gillian
Sun	3 May	10:15am	Worship Service	Rev Gillian
Sun	3 May	11:15am	Morning Tea	Hall
Mon	4 May	10:30am	Exploring the Bible	Argyle House
Tue	5 May	7:30pm	Christian Meditation group	Church
Wed	6 May	7:00pm	Handbells	Wettenhall
Sun	10 May	9:00am	Worship in the Round	Rev Sylvia
Sun	10 May	10:15am	Worship Service	Rev Sylvia
Sun	10 May	11:15am	Morning Tea	Hall

## **Call for Nominations for Election to Eldership and/or Church Council**

On Sunday, 31st May 2026 we will have the Annual General Meeting of the Toorak Uniting Church Congregation at which we will receive the church accounts for approval and vote for Elders and Church Councillors.

**Elders** and **Church Councillors** serve on **Church Council**, unless otherwise authorised by Presbytery. The nominated term is for between one and five years, after which they may stand for re-election.

The priority of the **Church Council** is to build the congregation up in faith and love.

The responsibilities of **Church Council** include<sup>†</sup>:

- Sharing with the ministers in the encouragement of faith and love to all Church members; assisting the ministers with worship, particularly at Communion, Baptism, Confirmation and other special occasions.
- Assisting on rosters of welcome, vestry duty.
- Making decisions in keeping with regulations: managing financial affairs and general administration: arranging for audit, presentation and examination of the accounts; preparing and presenting annual reports to the Congregation.
- Managing and controlling property.
- Referring matters to Presbytery as required.
- Exercising discipline on behalf of the Congregation as appropriate.
- Managing Child Protection Reporting; ensuring the Church is a safe place for all people.

In addition, **Elders** “assist in the spiritual oversight of the congregation” through

- Attending regular bi-monthly Elders’ meetings.
- Pastorally caring, encouraging and supporting their assigned congregational members.
- Serving communion and preparing the table and the elements.
- Being a point of contact for baptismal parents and assisting with baptism.

*If you would like to be nominated as an Elder, please arrange to speak with Rev Syliva 'Akau'ola Tongotongo or Rev John Edwards.*

## **Who can be members of the Church Council?**

Confirmed members & members in association; Elders or leaders; any ministry agents in placement.

The Church Council meets bi-monthly.

The terms of office of one current Elder, and two current Members of Church Council not being Elders, expire on 30th June 2026.

Church Council exercises oversight of both the smooth running and mission direction of TUC and renewal of its membership strengthens our congregation. You are invited to consider whether this is a way in which you can contribute to the life and work of the Church.

Nominations need to be received in writing by the Secretary of Congregation, James Barber, **by 17th May 2026**, preferably by email to [jbarber@vicbar.com.au](mailto:jbarber@vicbar.com.au).

<sup>†</sup>See Reg 3.1.2(a) and 3.1.2(b) of the Regulations of the Uniting Church in Australia

## **Summary of update on Renew 603 project from April 26**

During morning tea following the Anzac Sunday service, Barbara updated those present with the latest news from the Renew603 committee.

The committee began an official masterplanning process for the site with MGS architects, assisted by Presbytery and Synod representatives at the beginning of 2025. The initial planning phase was shared with the congregation for feedback in September, at which point the possibility of a Bensen-style retirement living complex was discussed and received with some enthusiasm by the congregation. Subsequently, Uniting AgeWell were approached to gauge their interest in being a potential development partner in such a project. Their executive team visited TUC in December and recently their CFO, Scott Cumbrae-Stewart met with the Renew603 committee to discuss Uniting AgeWell's requirements, in particular that they would wish to enter a ground-lease or have equivalent security over the title of all of the site, with the exception of the church building, should we wish to proceed with them as a development partner. This is in order to ensure that they can meet the obligation of a retirement facility operator to guarantee life-time occupancy to residents. Uniting AgeWell is enthusiastic about the potential for redevelopment, but would be proposing to build at a larger scale than the Bensen complex and would likely be aiming to build a 5-storey structure in the area currently occupied by the kindergarten and Faichney room. The creation of a retirement village centred on a church and congregation would be a new model for Uniting AgeWell and a theme emphasised by Scott Cumbrae-Stewart was the need for the project to integrate with TUC life and TUC's vision for its future.

Barbara noted that TUC has a number of options, including (1) actively pursuing the Uniting AgeWell proposal, (2) completing the masterplanning process with MGS architects and then reconsidering, (3) reducing the scale of plans to simply focus on redeveloping Kinross House, and (4) doing nothing. With the scope and cost of works on the spire becoming clearer now that firm quotes are being received, the next step is to assess the effect of the spire project on TUC's financial position. Then we will be able to better understand the consequences of the options listed above. The Uniting AgeWell proposal is attractive because of its potential to create a community on the site that is possibly better placed to support each other into the future. Nevertheless, there is considerable ground to cover to ensure that the TUC community is in fact strengthened by entering into such an arrangement.

The update was for the purpose of information sharing. Barbara emphasised that it will be important for the spire appeal to raise as much as possible.

Barbara concluded with an open invitation for volunteers to join the Renew603 committee as it grapples with evaluating these important questions.