



The Fellowship Post

Mira Vista
United Church of Christ

April 2013

PASTOR'S CORNER

Three approaches to Eastertide, or Easter season (the 50 days between Easter and Pentecost):

1. I've heard this all already; I know what it means (yawn).
2. I just can't swallow the idea of a bodily resurrection (let alone resuscitation) of Jesus, so the stories of Jesus' post-Easter appearances do not matter (frown).
3. I don't understand how Jesus showed up so powerfully after his death, but the stories tell of a new reality and new life, and every year I go a little deeper with them (eyes wide).



Read on to choose the third approach with your pastor, who is studying "The Wisdom Jesus," by Cynthia Bourgeault (all quotes are from her). I am excited about taking her wager that "Jesus, the living master, is real, alive, intimately and vibrantly enfolding you right now. He is more present, in fact, than even your own breath and your heartbeat. But to really know this presence you need to tune in... to your heart frequency where this Jesus connection broadcasts...."

I don't want to miss meeting this mystical, post-resurrection Jesus, miss seeing light through Jesus' light, miss experiencing the wellspring of joy – I don't want to miss this ancient wisdom connection with the living Christ.

Here's the catch: you have to abandon your binary operating system for 50 days. You have to be able to bear not knowing the right answer. If we are able, Bourgeault promises we will receive this deeper knowing with more and more of our beings engaged.

In our Mira Vista spiritual community, we'll talk about how to: practice opening the minds of

our hearts; taste and see the stories; and receive communion for the very first time, again.

So this Easter season we'll meet Jesus in his teaching and spiritual transmissions. "Jesus is heading somewhere amazing during these fifty days," Bourgeault promises. We'll open to a new, deeper truth, and "catch the drift of what Jesus is really inviting us to." Our capacity for available, transformative energy

will grow.

Come along to explore Jesus' resurrection appearances, listening with the ears of your heart. Meet the archetypal, ageless Jesus in this subtler form. Each Sunday hear stories of the difficulties the disciples have with spiritual recognition, and watch Jesus help them recognize that death cannot be the end. Explore what prevented his followers from recognizing him and what inhibits you. Discover this Presence from the inside; "recognize him in all times and places."

Amidst our personal tides of grief and loss, perhaps we will sense how paper thin are the walls between realms. Perhaps we will explore the many rooms, the many mansions Jesus promised, and touch their interconnection. And most wonderfully of all, may we find ourselves joining the long, long line of Christian mystics who "proclaim with one voice that our whole universe is profoundly permeated with the presence of Christ."

May Easter abide with you,

Pastor
Susan

MISSION 4/1 EARTH:

50 Great Days

Social Action Team Corner

The Social Action Team brings you ideas and plans for the UCC's **Mission 4/1 Earth**: "50 Great Days" of environmental activism – from *Easter through Pentecost!* We have begun brainstorming creative ways that each and all can contribute hours of active earth care. Here are just a few of the ideas and plans in progress:

- To commemorate **Earth Day**, the Social Action Team is planning a dog and Earth blessing for April 20, 10 am at Point Isabel Dog Park. Permission from Pt. Isabel is in process.
- Betty Coates' great idea is the **Penny Pines Reforestation Program**, founded in 1941 through the US Forest Service. On Easter, SAT members will present "pennies from heaven" options for our congregation to raise money for this program.
- **Rebuilding Together**, a day of rebuilding homes in the East Bay, is on April 27. It's most fun when lots of us work together: talk to Sylvia Sugg to sign up.
- **What do you already do?** Patsy Stubbs is sending out an email to survey what we are already doing to make earth care a priority in our lives. Here is a list we have begun, to stimulate ideas of your own:

Recycling; buying locally-grown food; reusable grocery bags; growing gardens; shopping at farmers' markets; composting; using cloth rather than paper napkins. Using a drip watering system instead of the hose; cutting back to one family car; taking public transit when at all possible; using only environmentally safe home cleaning

products; hand-washing or refusing to buy dry-clean-only clothes; washing clothes in cold water; drying clothes on a clothesline; changing all light bulbs to CFLs; putting on a sweater instead of turning on the heat. We look forward to hearing what you do in your households!

In other news: Amy and Susan represented MVUCC at the **Lawrence Livermore Lab Good Friday protest** and SAT donated \$50.00 to be listed as a supporter.

April Birthdays!

*1st Dan Hariton
4th Joan Thompson
7th Bill Willcuts
7th Paul Honigs
10th Cordell Britt
13th Bishop Edwina Perez-Santiago*

The Fellowship Post

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Letter from Our New Member



March 20, 2013

Hello Mira Vista, this is Maria Grace, one of your newest members!

I am writing this letter to you during a very special time in my journey. In response to my call to serve Latino immigrants, on April 7th I will be ordained in Oregon at my home church, Medford Congregational UCC.

In 2012 I wholeheartedly accepted an invitation to teach Christian Family Counseling and offer counseling services to Latino congregations, through ELET, a Spanish-speaking seminary for Latino lay ministers, at 545 Ashbury Avenue in El Cerrito. The progress of my ministry requires that I be ordained and installed in a covenant among four partners: my home church in Medford, your own California Bay Association, a local Bay Association congregation, and me. I searched for a Bay Area UCC congregation that would accept me openly and be sensitive to the needs and realities of Latinos.

God blessed me with you, Mira Vista. You are a congregation that, every Sunday, reads the gospel in English *and* Spanish. In those moments, you make room in the sanctuary for the entire world of Latinos to spiritually join you in prayer and worship. The first time I heard the Word read in Spanish in Mira Vista, I felt as though the heart of the congregation was reaching out to all those Latino immigrant men, women and children for whom the struggle for liberation from injustice, poverty and marginalization is not a topic of conversation, but a daily reality.

On February 24 I became a member of Mira Vista UCC, a living organism that the apostle Paul called the "body of Christ." I am nourished by the Word alongside you, and together we grow serving God and one another through actions of peace, love and justice. It is a privilege to follow the teachings of Jesus in this organic "togetherness" founded on the promises of our covenant and fostered by our mutual commitments. Even when we disagree, this body holds us together. We are its members.

For the present I am living and working in San Diego, and teaching at ELET once a month. I will be with you as often as I can, in as many ways as my schedule allows. I need you and you need me, as we are all being called out by name to love, to serve, to heal, and to include the "other" in this Body that knows no prejudice, discrimination or hate, but only love.

And as we give extravagantly this love that feeds us to those who hunger, we make God smile and keep shining God's light on us with blessings, blessings, and more blessings...

In Love,

Maria Grace





Notes from the Music Stand

Dear Mira Vistans,

The Amazing Graces will take the first Thursday in April off for a well-deserved vacation after singing every Sunday for 7 straight weeks.

That is dedication. That is love. And wasn't that wonderful?

We start up again on April 11th to prepare for Earth Sunday. Come join us for 3 weeks while we learn an anthem for that Sunday. We'd love to have you.

We have been singing a few hymns lately by Fanny Crosby and so I thought I'd tell you a bit about her.

Frances Jane Crosby (March 24, 1820 – February 12, 1915), usually known as **Fanny Crosby** in the United States and by her married name, **Frances van Alstyne**, in the United Kingdom, was an American [Methodist rescue mission](#) worker, poet, lyricist, and composer.

She was one of the most prolific hymnists in history, writing over 8,000 hymns, with over 100 million copies of her songs printed. With the possible exception of [Isaac Watts](#) and [Charles Wesley](#), Crosby has generally been represented by the largest number of hymns of any writer of the twentieth century in nonliturgical hymnals. In fact, she wrote so many hymns that publishers became unwilling to publish so many by the same name, so she wrote under 200 different pseudonyms.

Not bad for a woman who was blind from birth.

Some of her hymns are "Blessed Assurance," "Jesus is tenderly calling you home," and "Pass me not, O gentle Savior."

I'm sure we'll sing more of Mother Crosby's hymns in the months and years ahead.

As we go into this next month, I ask that you prepare.... listen.... expand.... "And from our slumber make us rise/That we may know the risen Christ." (Keith Getty & Phil Madeira)

May it be so.
Amy

Connor Gass

Bio written in June 2008

by Virginia Carrieri

During breakfast at Carrows one Friday, Connor Gass was talking about his life and we were so interested, I knew I had to do a biography on him.



Connor's mother, Margret, as an orphan child was sent on the orphan train with her brother, Bob, and sister, Sady, -- from New York to Iowa. Bob and Sady were adopted right away into different families. Margret, the oldest, lived with different families until she finally ended up with a family called Murphy. Although the Murphys paid for her to go to college, Sady worked for several years as a telegraph operator for the railroad. When she graduated, she taught school in Iowa.

Connor doesn't know how his parents met, but they were married in Iowa. His father, George, was offered to take care of an orchard with a small house on the property and so they came to California in 1923.

Connor was born July 5, 1925 in what is now Corning, CA in a small clinic started by a Dr. Caroline Howe. In those days, it wasn't unusual for mother and child to stay in the clinic for two weeks before going home.

In 1931, they moved to a bigger place closer to town. Connor remembers watching well-diggers drilling a deep well, necessary for a property with olive trees. There was no kindergarten and so he didn't start school until the first grade. It was traumatic for him being away from home.

When the railroad came through town in 1891, a station was built and Corning town was started. Soon there were many churches, a main street with stores and lots of new homes.

Connor went all the way through 12th grade in Corning. He remembers doing special things with some of the teachers like helping a 6th grade teacher set up a place to raise pheasants. In the 12th grade, a woman coach became the men's coach because the man coach was drafted.

In 1943, Connor joined the army. He was sent to the induction center in Monterey. Passing the tests, he was assigned to the air force and sent to Wichita Falls for basic training. From there, he went to Texas Tech for cadet flight training. And then he was assigned to 18 weeks for aircraft mechanic school. After that, he went to more mechanic study in Burbank, CA. Aerial gunnery for B17s was next in Las Vegas. He then went on to Lincoln, Nebraska -- where crews were put together to drop bombs on Germany. The European War was then over and he was sent to Memphis, TN and assigned to move planes sent from Europe for recycling.

When the war in the Pacific was over, he was still in Memphis, but was shortly transferred to air-command in Miami, FL. He was assigned to a crew in the same model plane that President Roosevelt used. In a government- run-airline, they flew all around the world – South America, French West Africa, etc, and even the route Amelia Earhart took. One stop was the Ascension Island based between Natal and Africa. After many flights they ended in Casablanca while an engine leak was repaired. While there, they tried to find "Rick's," but after two weeks they were not successful. They ended up at night watching the turtles coming ashore to lay their eggs.

. . . to be continued



April 2013

Mira Vista United Church of Christ

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Yoga, 5:30–6:45pm	2 Mira Vista prepares lunch, Souper Center, 10am 	3	4	5	6 Yoga, 9-10:15 am 11am Home Team @ Bonnie's House
7 Holy Communion 12 Noon Worship  Bay Association Spring Meeting, Benicia	8 Yoga, 5:30–6:45pm	9 Bible Study, 1pm	10	11 Amazing Grace Rehearsal, 7pm	12	13 Yoga, 9-10:15 am
14 12 Noon Worship SAT Meeting	15 Yoga, 5:30–6:45pm	16 Bible Study, 1pm Mindfulness Group @ Pastor Susan's, 7pm	17 Council Meeting, 7pm @ Virginia's	18 Amazing Grace Rehearsal, 7pm	19	20 Yoga, 9-10:15 am Earth Blessing @ Point Isabel
21 12 Noon Worship Earth Day Sunday; I ♥ Mother Nature Raw Food Lunch	22 Yoga, 5:30–6:45pm	23 Bible Study, 1pm	24	25	26	27 Yoga, 9-10:15 am Mira Vista helping rebuild homes @ National Rebuilding day
28 12 Noon Worship	29 Yoga, 5:30–6:45pm	30 Bible Study, 1pm				

Worship for April 2013

April 7, 2013, 12 noon

Holy Communion

Luke 24:13-35

Seeing New Life in Broken Bread

April 14, 2013, 12 noon

John 21:1-14

Fish Breakfast with Jesus

April 21, 2013, 12 noon

Earth Day Sunday: "I ♥ Mother Nature" Lunch

Hosea 4:1-3; Acts 9:36-43; Psalm 23

Reading Earth's Text in a Forgotten Language

April 28, 2013, 12 noon

Psalm 148; Acts 11:1-18

Peter's New Spiritual Practice



EASTER SEASON IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Our biblical texts for the 2013 Easter Season will aid us in exploring what dies, what lives, and what or where new life is possible. Our focus is the UCC Mission 4/1 Earth, which is a kind of six-week Earth Day. We will listen in on poetry, music, the word of earth herself, and our own experience in our Easter Season worship. Come!

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Address Change Requested

Dated Material

April 2013

