



The Fellowship Post

Mira Vista
United Church of Christ

April 2012

LENT AS PRAYER

Prayer is sitting with your hands folded thinking "Help me!" and "Thank You," right?

Yes, that's the first thing we learn, and, yes, that's what you see in movies and on TV. But sometimes, for example when you are suffering and sitting with a friend, there is nothing that can or needs to be said. It is enough to be present, whether with a friend or with God.

Prayer can be a silent openness, a spirited dance, reading a psalm or gospel, quiet communion, a get-happy song, even digging in your garden or walking across the country. It's the attitude that makes it prayer, an attitude of relationship and communication and flow with the Source of all being, all energy, all love.

The season of Lent is a step deeper into prayer, a time to become a little more real, like the Velveteen Rabbit, to surrender our compulsive responses to life, and to renew our commitment to our place in the Body of Christ.

Richard Rohr, founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation, writes: "If there is nothing in your life to cry about, if there is nothing in your life to yell about, you must be out of touch. We must all feel and know the immense pain of this global humanity. Then we are no longer isolated, but a true member of the universal Body of Christ. Then we know God not from the outside but from the inside!"

And then we get real about what is necessary and essential in our lives.

Like the slow work of prayer, Lent's gift year after year is, in the words of Kay Lynn Northcutt, "the tender and hard work of fiercely loving what is essential.



"In Anne Michaels's novel *Fugitive Pieces*, the central character, Athos, seeks to 'make necessary what is beautiful, and to make beautiful what is necessary.' This is the work of living essentially. This is what Lent calls us to do — whether from the margins of disability or from the able-bodied active life. We are to

make necessary what is beautiful and to make beautiful what is necessary, so that we might make what Karl Rahner calls a resounding 'yes to life.'"

In Lent we are invited to strip down to our essentials, "to the holy, mundane essence so that bits of heaven on earth may be discovered: without and within."

And THEN we are ready for Easter!

In Easter season, which lasts from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday, celebrate every bit of new life: kiss babies, congratulate young lovers, welcome sprouts. Give thanks for resurrection, for Jesus, for life itself. Remember how it is to be born and reborn, to create and recreate. Join the fun with Earth herself!



Pastor
Susan

Logged on to Mira Vista



I don't have to tell you that there are a lot of exciting things happening at Mira Vista. There are a lot of great ways we get the word out, including this newsletter. One tool available to Mira Vista for getting the word out is social media. There are a lot of different ways for us to do this; some we are already using and some we can explore using. We as a congregation have also begun to use visual media in worship.

Media can be a powerful tool for us, but without a strategy about how to use it, the available possibilities combined with the limitations of our time can lead to a dead end. I am also aware that as my time as your Minister In Training comes to an end in May, some of you need to be trained if you plan to continue using visual media. For this reason I'm inviting you all to a workshop to explore Mira Vista's use of Media on Saturday, April 14th at 10:30am at the church.

This workshop will be a time to learn about media, to dream a little about using media, and to set down what is realistic for us to do now. I'd love to have your participation; coming to the meeting does not mean you are making a larger commitment, although we hope some of you will be willing and able to be a part of a Media Team that carries forward this new opportunity for Mira Vista.

This meeting is for you!!! Hope to see you on Saturday, April 14th at 10:30am at the Church.

~Chris~



Thank you to all of you who participated in allowing me to capture your picture on March 18th; they turned out wonderfully! I will again be taking pictures after church on April 1st and April 15th. I hope we get your great smiles on record.

~Cathy ~



We welcome our interim pianist, Margaret Halbig. Thank you for sharing your wonderful talent with us!

Mira Vista appreciates the new sound system in the sanctuary. We can certainly hear the better quality, and NO crackling! Our ears are loving it!!

We are just wrapping up the first quarter of 2012, can you believe it? Our pledges are almost on track. The congregation has provided just shy of 25% of the total. Thank you!

~Cathy Noble~



Patty Williams, founder and director, tells us that although she raised \$1 million, because of the economic recession she couldn't raise the total needed to build a permanent home for The Hatlen Center in El Cerrito. While she worked on this goal for three years, she says it wasn't a total loss, because she raised awareness of what they're doing, and what a great model they have for independence training for visually disabled young adults.

Fortunately, positive neighborhood changes are contributing to greater stability and safety where they are, and their landlord has increased repair and maintenance on the apartments. They are now raising funds to convert one of their apartments into a wheelchair accessible apartment so they can remain where they are for now.

Most of The Hatlen Center's funding is state and federal; private donations fund a smaller part of their operating budget, but are greatly desired for scholarships and outreach.



Thanks for Your Generosity!

Thanks to everyone for their prayers and support for the mission of One Great Hour of Sharing last month. Our Treasurer, Kathe Kiehn sent a check for \$501.25 to the Northern California Nevada Conference for our collection in addition to the \$120 previously collected for the US spring storm/tornado relief. We want to get this money on its way to helping, but we can always send more, so if you didn't get a chance to donate you can still send in a donation or bring it to Church with you. Make checks payable to Mira Vista UCC and write OGHS in the memo line or SPRING STORMS if you want it specifically designated to that use.

My bookkeeper nature always wants a "paper trail" to track, but gifts of prayer operate on another plane. Thanks to all of the people who have offered up those gifts. Prayer is the currency that gives spiritual value to our monetary gifts.

Peace,
Barbara



I would like to thank the church for their contribution to The Black and White dance. The dance was on the 16th and was a lot of fun. Teenagers from all over northern California came to support our cause. Little Flock is an orphanage in India that needs a lot of help. My Interact district takes on a project every year to help and has been raising funds all year long. This orphanage is especially needed in India because it is also used as a home for children who are becoming acclimated with the idea of their parents no longer being with them, as many people there suffer from HIV and aids. Thank you all so much for the contribution, it is well appreciate by my club and the orphanage.

-Andrew Noble

IMPORTANT UPCOMING EVENTS

Beyond Memorial Day: Understanding the Hidden Wounds of War, presented by Interfaith Center at the Presidio, Thursday, April 26, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Orinda Community Church in Orinda (10 Irwin Way). Registration is required: online, by phone or by snail mail. See bulletin board or call our office.

Sacred Snapshots: A Sampler for the Spirit

Saturday, April 21, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Pacific School of Religion, 1798 Scenic Ave., Berkeley

This day-long event will celebrate spiritual practices from a range of religions and traditions. There will be drumming, Taize chant, Tai Chi, and dance, as well as poetry, gospel and chant mantras and labyrinth walking. Learn Buddhist, Sikh or Hindu meditation. Join Christians for prayer and devotional song. Study the Quran. Experience Shabbat. Immerse yourself in 12-step spirituality or yoga. Develop a shamanic journey practice. To register, go to www.sacredsnapshots.org.

HOLY WEEK SERVICES NEARBY

Christ Lutheran Church

Maundy Thursday, Apr. 5: Meal followed by worship with Communion, 6:30 pm

Good Friday, Apr. 6: Worship with Communion, 1 pm; Worship Service, 7:30 pm

Holy Saturday, Apr. 7: Stations of the Cross, 9 am; Easter Vigil @ sundown

Pacific School of Religion/New Spirit Church

Maundy Thursday, April 5, Footwashing and Lord's Supper, 7pm

Good Friday, April 6 services in PSR chapel, 1798 Scenic Ave., Berkeley

Noon: Reflections on the Seven Last Words of Christ, including our own Chris Hockley performing "*The Second Month of Mourning*," by Tony Kushner

7pm: Bishop Yvette Flunder, City of Refuge UCC & musical guests

- Charlene Moore & City of Refuge Choir
- Transcendence Gospel Choir
- First Congregational Church of Oakland Praise Team



Ion Hariton, father of Dan Hariton, passed away on March 24, peacefully, in his bed at the Vale Care Center in San Pablo. He was 91.

The family is planning a private burial at the Fernwood Cemetery in Mill Valley on Thursday, and a small family gathering at home on Saturday, at which Bonnie says: "we will serve some of the Romanian foods that he made for us in the past, and celebrate his long life."

Carmen Anduiza has a new address: Sun Valley Residential Care, 67 College Way, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Wilma West has recovered from her recent illness and is looking and sounding pretty chipper these days.

Elizabeth Severson came to visit from Seattle one recent Sunday, along with her proud mother Patsy; she looks wonderful!

By the time you read this, **Wendy Wisely** will have concluded the performance run of "Godspell" at Las Positas College in Livermore. Some of us are hoping to make one of the last performances. Congratulations, **Wendy**, on your efforts over the past three months to help your students sort out the scriptural references and theology of this play.

Diane Young, our long-time office administrator and wise heart, has been suffering with an injured trapezius muscle for over a month now, and is in considerable constant pain. **Pastor Susan** is completely dismayed that **Diane** is now planning to retire in order to find healing. Please pray for rapid healing for **Diane** and also for our congregation as we seek a wise solution to this new challenge.



Keeping in Touch

Rev. Jennifer Mills-Knutson, former in-care seminary student at Mira Vista UCC, has been posting updates on her Facebook page about tornado recovery efforts around her

Jeffersonville, Indiana community. Her congregation has been very active in recovery efforts; their youth group raised \$1,650 through a spaghetti dinner and their adults have been busy offering comfort and assistance since the storm. **Jennifer** has volunteered to serve on the Spiritual and Emotional Recovery team of the Coalition of Organizations Active in Disaster for the next 12-18 months.

She also reports that their church phone is ringing off the hook with UCC churches wanting to come and give time for repair efforts in the area; they plan to house volunteers in their church through the summer.

"When people ask me where God is in all this destruction, I tell them God is in the help, the comfort, the generosity, the faith, the volunteers, the support, the love that comes in response to such a terrible time. In times like these, people need the church. I am grateful St. Luke's is here to serve. We have been serving our community for more than 150 years, through floods and storms and wars. We will continue to serve in this disaster until every last family, every last person finds healing and home again."

When told Mira Vista had sent out \$500 for recovery efforts, and would be donating more, **Jennifer** said, "Oh **Susan**, I'm so touched to hear that. Please send my love to all the Mira Vista folks. I remember them so fondly."

Davena Hambrick, our 2010-2011 ministry intern, had her Middler Review on March 19 and was much praised and admired for her work at PSR, her faith and character, and for her skill and patience with managing the multiple demands on her time. She is greatly excited about graduating in May!

Congratulations to Pilgrim Community Church, UCC SF, **Davena Hambrick's** home church, on their fifteenth anniversary ministry celebration of **Rev. Dr. Harold Pierre** and **First Lady Sister Brendia Pierre**, "who have shared continued spiritual guidance, higher consciousness and dedicated leadership" with their community. We at Mira Vista are all invited to attend the celebration on April 29 at 3 pm.



Dear Friends,

As I write this, the sun is finally coming out again after a few days of rain. It feels good to walk in sunshine again.

This month's article is to let you know what the Amazing Graces will be singing this month and to send an announcement/reminder to the Graces concerning the rehearsal schedule for the next few weeks.

April 1, 2012 - "Holy". This is a lovely piece that combines a melody written in the 16th century with an accompaniment written in the 20th century. The words are ancient – "'Holy Lord, Holy God of Power, Holy God of Might. Heav'n and earth are full of Your glory.'" We will sing this in response to the crucifixion of our Savior.

April 8, 2012, Easter Sunday- "The Risen Christ". This anthem is a call for commitment to transformation in the face of Christ's resurrection. It is an anthem of hope and faith. May it be a vehicle for reflection and praise.

To the Amazing Graces: *Thank you for your hard work, your dedication and the joy you bring to each rehearsal and worship service. You are a blessing to us all.*

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: Tuesday, April 3rd – the choir will rehearse in the sanctuary on Tuesday instead of Thursday that week. No choir rehearsal on April 5st or, April 12th.

In peace,
Amy



He is Risen



SPRING MEANS BASEBALL SEASON

Batting

Toward the end of winter I came upon the Lord on a diamond, batting.

I said, "Lord, what are you doing?"
"These are your sins," he said,

As a shadowy figure on the mound with a vicious arm pitched.

He had no instinct: swung at everything, even dirtballs. And hit 'em every time.

He had a beautiful swing, fluid, sure, and joyful.

He hit pitch after pitch, endlessly. I lost myself, watching.

"Out of the park" he said, his eye on a nasty looking knuckleball,

and swung like a dancer, gracefully unwinding. Chock!

It rose up over the fence, over the trees, released from all earthly bonds,

floating free until it disappeared, infinitely gone, still rising.

He watched it go, as if he'd never seen such a beautiful thing.

"I love this game," he grinned, and set for another pitch.

I think he was honestly pleased with himself.

-Steve Garnaas-Holmes



The Conference Office is saddened to report the death of the Rev. Larold K. Schulz, age 77, on Feb. 21, 2012. A memorial service will be held at 3:00 PM on Saturday, April 14, 2012 at [First Congregational UCC](#), 1912 Central Ave., Alameda, CA 94501. Larry is survived by his wife Donna Danielson, sons Karl and Keith, and daughters Kristin, Melissa, and Karen. Condolences may be sent to Donna Danielson, 559 Harrison Ave., Claremont CA 91711. Larry graduated from Chicago Theological Seminary and was ordained in 1963. He served as Executive Director of the UCC Office for Church in Society and as President of Mid-Hudson Community Development Consultants, both in New York. He served churches in Wisconsin and Montana before coming to First Congregational UCC in Alameda where he served from 1985 to 2002. Larry was a fierce advocate for social justice issues in the Alameda community and beyond. Under his leadership, FCC Alameda became the 15th UCC church in the nation to become ONA. We thank God for the life and work of Larold Kuhrt Schulz.

Hat crocheting is starting again!

Anyone with unused yarn taking up storage space we'd be glad to make it into hats for Souper Center. Joyce Hutson said last year's hats were well received. She put out a variety of colors for three different days and they all disappeared, people went away happy.

If you need a pattern check with Amy.

Thanks,
Betty



April Birthdays

- 1st Dan Hariton
- 4th Joan Thompson
- 7th Bill Willcutts
- 10th Cordell Britt
- 13th Bishop Edwina Perez-Santiago



*Happy Birthday to each of you
with love from Mira Vista*

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 12 noon HOLY COMMUNION Worship Service Team Huddle Palm/Passion Sunday 	2 Yoga, 7-8:15 pm 	3 Mira Vista prepares lunch, GRIP Souper Center, 10 am  Amazing Graces rehearsal, 7:30 pm	4	5 No Choir rehearsal 	6 	7 No Yoga? 
8 12 Noon Worship EASTER 	9 Yoga, 7-8:15 pm	10 Bible Study, 1:30 pm	11 Council meeting, 7 pm	12 No Choir rehearsal	13	14 Yoga, 9-10:15 am Media meeting, 10:30 am
15 12 Noon Worship Social Action team	16 Yoga, 7-8:15 pm Susan on vacation thru Apr 22	17 3 rd Tues Bible Study with Christ Lutheran, 1 pm	18	19 Yoga, 6-7:15 pm Amazing Graces rehearsal, 7:30 pm	20	21 Yoga, 9-10:15 am Sacred Snapshots, 9 am – 6 pm
22 12 Noon Worship → Susan returns Chris preaching	23 Yoga, 7-8:15 pm Chris on vacation thru April 29	24 Bible Study, 1:30 pm	25	26 Yoga, 6-7:15 pm Amazing Graces rehearsal, 7:30 pm 12 noon, UCC Gathering thru April 29	27	28 Yoga, 9-10:15 am
29 12 Noon Worship Susan returns →	30 Yoga, 7-8:15 pm	31 Bible Study, 1:30 pm				

April Worship

Glory be to You, who laid your Cross as a bridge over death, that souls might pass over it from the dwelling of the dead to the dwelling of life!

-Ephraem the Syrian (ca306-373)



April 1, 2012, 12 noon

Holy Communion

Passion/Lament Sunday

Stories from Mark 11-15

My God, My God! Why did you abandon me?

April 8, 2012, 12 noon

Easter Sunday: Resurrected Life!

Mark 16:1-8

You show me the path to Life

God Sends a Season of Refreshment!

April 15, 2012, 12 noon

Resurrection/Creation stories

John 20:19-31

April 22, 2012, 12 noon

Resurrection/Creation stories

Earth Day

Luke 24:36b-48

April 29, 2012, 12 noon

Resurrection/Creation stories

John 10:11-18

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Address Change Requested

Dated Material

April 2012

