



# The Fellowship Post

Mira Vista  
United Church of Christ

August 2012

*NOTE: Billions of people around the world are tuning in to the 2012 Olympic Games this August. Are you? If so, Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat offer ways to deepen your experience.*

## **Watching the Olympics as a Spiritual Practice (abridged and adapted)**

- Stay present as you watch an event, doing only this one thing at this moment.
- Pay attention to all the small details; notice how the athletes get ready, how they calm themselves and recover.
- Savor the beauty of exceptional speed, rhythm, balance, or strength. As former basketball star Bill Russell put it: "My own view is that athletics is an art form. As a fan I watch in the same way that I imagine an art connoisseur studies a painting."
- Notice connections between what is happening at the Games and what has happened or is happening in your own life.
- Hearing expressions of gratitude, e.g., an athlete thanking a coach or team member, do the same for someone who has had an influence in your life.
- Practice hospitality to all the athletes from the different countries, learning about home countries and cultures.
- Feel joy with all the participants, not just for those from your country.
- Keep a journal close by to record moments of meaning for you. Notice which of your own emotions come up as you watch.



- Let the athletes reintroduce you to playfulness, and to childlike awe and wonder.

- Consider these well-trained athletes as spiritual teachers modeling perseverance, discipline, and honoring our bodies. Make a commitment to care for your body.

- Notice and cherish the unity that is essential to teamwork in certain events. Call or write someone on your own "team" and express your appreciation.

- Tune in to events that most arouse your sense of wonder. What is it that moves you?

- Notice how little control athletes ultimately have over results – life is a mystery! In order to compete at their best, they must let go of the past and live in this current moment. Anything for you here?

- Honor the big dreams that have brought these men and women to the Olympic Games; remember your big dreams, and honor those.

- The spiritual practice of *zeal* means to be fully aroused by life. Irenaeus stated: "*The glory of God is the human person fully alive.*" Keep track of athletes who demonstrate this aliveness and write about them in your journal. Reflect on what makes you feel fully alive – and practice it!



Happy Summer,

Pastor  
Susan

## SASHA'S PANAMA TRIP

Dear Mira Vista UCC,



I am so thankful that you assisted me on my trip to Panama with Global Medical Brigades. In the week that I was there

we saw over 700 patients in 3 different locations. Our brigade had 4 doctors and 3 dentists. We also began to assist community members with sustainable living. The latrine I worked on is shown completed with the family who also helped to build it. We helped build 3 latrines in the week we were there and Global Brigades is working on more to help communities maintain clean drinking water in rivers and streams.



This was an unforgettable experience for me, I feel that I have grown and matured in several aspects. I truly enjoyed working and helping alongside everyone I met on the trip. I would like to thank you again for this trip as an opportunity to give back to such a wonderful and hardworking community in Panama. I have attached a few photos so you can see where I was and what I did.

Thank you again. I cannot appreciate your generosity enough.

*Love, Sasha Yovanovich*

## A LA MESA

### *At the Fellowship Table*

It's been a great summer so far! A picnic at Bonnie & Dan's after an awesome worship in the orchard, a potluck with the Christ Lutheran congregation followed by live music, and great fellowship lunches after worship on Sundays. Thank you to the many folks who help to bring this all together!



In the last few months a couple of people have come to me after the fellowship lunch and said that if they had known that I was bringing whatever it was I brought, they would have brought a complementary dish. And indeed, as it goes,

what we have for lunch on Sundays *is* a mystery until everyone gets there and we see what we've got. Nothing wrong with that and it has been working just fine. But what if there was a way, earlier in the week, for you to see some of the dishes that I or other people were planning on bringing? Well, now there's a way.

Pastor Susan set up a place for me on the website to post what's being planned for lunch on Sundays. On our website, [miravistaucc.org](http://miravistaucc.org), go to the left side and click on "*what's happening*;" find "*a la mesa*" under that heading and click. There you'll see the dates and what is being planned.

I'll try to post what I plan to bring by Wednesday afternoon. Also, anyone can call me to post what they are planning to bring as well. In addition to this, we can post recipes that people ask for.

If knowing what's a la mesa (at the table) is something you'd like, check it out on our website! Let me know what you think of it.

Welcome home. I love you. Supper's ready!

*Barbara*

## SOCIAL ACTION TEAM (SAT) CORNER

Rebuilding Together (RT) had a successful work day in April and now is planning another for the Fall which will include a Richmond project. We will let you know when a date is finalized. This will be a nice opportunity to work on a local one day project.



## STOPPING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN CALIFORNIA



The **CASE (California Against Sexual Exploitation) ACT, Proposition 35** on our November ballot, addresses the critical need to take action against human trafficking in our state.

According to the FBI, San Francisco, San Diego, and Los Angeles are three of the 13 worst concentrations of child sex trafficking in the U.S. Victims are first trafficked for sex at an average age of 12-14.

This proposition creates laws that promise to help stop the abuse of these vulnerable children within our own borders. Among other things this initiative will

- Increase prison terms for human traffickers.
- Require convicted sex traffickers to register as sex offenders.
- Require all registered sex offenders to disclose their internet accounts.
- Require criminal fines from convicted human traffickers to pay for services to help victims.
- Mandate law enforcement training on human trafficking.

For more information visit [www.caseact.org](http://www.caseact.org), where you can find major sponsors and supporters, the reasons for using the ballot, and the full text of the initiative.

## \*FORECLOSE ON THE BOMB, NOT THE PEOPLE\*

This August will mark the 67th anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and YOU ARE INVITED to join hundreds of peace & justice advocates at the Livermore Lab

**Date:** Sunday, August 5, 2012 from

**Time:** 4 PM – 6 PM

**Place:** Wm. Payne Park in Livermore, located near I-580 on Vasco Rd. & Patterson Pass Rd., across from the Livermore nuclear weapons Lab.

Check [www.trivalleycares.org](http://www.trivalleycares.org) or call for details. For more information call (925) 443-7148.

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## GRIP's ANNUAL "HARMONY WALK"

The Greater Richmond Interfaith Program (GRIP), has taken a stand to fight hunger and



homelessness. They will be hosting the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Harmony Walk to End Hunger on Saturday, October 20, 2012. The theme of

this year's event is "Roll, Walk, Race to End Homelessness." The Harmony Walk is a 4-mile walk in which community stakeholders walk to run/walk to raise funds to support GRIP's homeless assistance programs. This year's event will entail a new 10k run along the Richmond Marina. Last year's Harmony Walk raised \$80,000. This year, we have a fundraising goal of \$100,000.

If you have any questions, please contact Kia Croom at [kcroom@gripcommunity.org](mailto:kcroom@gripcommunity.org) or call (510) 233-2141, ext. 304, You may visit GRIP online at [www.gripcommunity.org](http://www.gripcommunity.org) to download sponsorship and walk forms for your convenience.

## CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF STEVEN TAYLOR KOUTZ

Steve passed away on July 10th peacefully at home with his family at his side after a brave battle with cancer.



He is survived by his wife of 41 years, Janel, his two devoted daughters, Lindsey and Amber and son-in-law Scott Lewis, treasured grandchildren, Annabel and Wyatt, his mother, Beth, three brothers, Dave and sister-in-law Carole, Paul and Jeff. Also by his nieces Tara, Megan, Elizabeth, Jaclyn and nephews Jason, Collin and Spencer, and his puppy sidekick, Lily. He was preceded in death by his father, Homer, sister, Cheryl, and brother, Marty.

Family and friends were always a priority for Steve. His hobbies included backpacking, camping, fishing, woodworking, stained glass work, music events, and getting together with family and friends for a great meal. Most of all, Steve loved to pack up the truck, pile in the family and turn an unplanned road trip into a memorable adventure.

Steve enjoyed working at PacBell for 28 years and retired in 2001. He began as one of the first male switchboard operators in Fairfield. Most of his career was spent as a cable maintenance technician, working throughout Solano County.

Family and friends are invited to a celebration of his life on August 8th at 11am at the Brazilian Room at Tilden Park in Berkeley <http://www.ebparks.org/activities/corpfamily/br>.

## CAN WE TALK – AND READ?



For some time I have been talking with you one at a time about a small group we'd like to start at Mira Vista UCC. You and I have expressed interest in a small group to support each other around times of transition. Some of us are ready for a playful

“retread” of how we live our daily lives. Some of us are planning to retire or wanting to reshape this time that may last many decades. Others of us are hoping to use a time of illness or grief as a foundation for renewal. If you're itching for change in your life and want the support of your friends, let's talk!

Perhaps we (you and anyone you know) could begin by reading/discussing the work of Eckhart Tolle (*The Power of Now/ A New Earth*). Joan Thompson suggests the daily meditations of Richard Rohr, Center for Action and Contemplation (available by email, [www.cac.org](http://www.cac.org)), as a complement. Both teachers are inspired by Buddhism and Christianity: Fr. Rohr's ground is Christian; Mr. Tolle's is interspiritual.

Please call, email, or text me about your interest in such a group. As Joan says “...suffering is...part of our life experience. We can let it control us, or we can learn what lessons it has to teach us. But living in the Now and stepping outside to observe how Ego controls us is part of this transformation.”

I'd like to begin this in September, perhaps meeting once a month at my home. Keep in touch!

Pastor Susan

*First Lady Michelle Obama: "You know, you are not born an Olympian. Many of them started out just like you. When they fell short or got tired and frustrated, they didn't give up. It's hard work ... you keep pushing and you never give up."*

# YOGA FOR ACTIVE SENIORS

at Christ Lutheran/Mira Vista Church  
780 Ashbury, El Cerrito, 94530

## Monthly Schedule for

August 2012

**Patsy Stubbs, RYT**  
**Registered Yoga Teacher**  
**(510)-367-6523**



Mondays, August 6, 13, 20, 27

### Time:

7 p.m. until 8:15 p.m.

Saturdays, August 4, 11

9 a.m. until 10:15 a.m.

(on vacation August 25. and can use the space on 18<sup>th</sup>)

### PLEASE NOTE:

Classes are appropriate for beginning/intermediate levels.  
Poses (asanas) can be modified to fit individual needs

### Suggested Donation:

\$7-10.00 a class

\$55.00 for 6 classes

**Please let instructor know of injuries, special needs or for any questions.**

# August 2012

*Mira Vista  
United Church of Christ*

780 Ashbury Ave.,  
El Cerrito, CA 94530

phone: (510) 526-0110 fax: (510) 526-0110

email: [office@miravistaucc.org](mailto:office@miravistaucc.org) • website: [www.miravistaucc.org](http://www.miravistaucc.org)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4 Yoga, 9-10:15 am
5 Holy Communion 12 Noon Worship 	6 Yoga, 7-8:15 pm	7  Mira Vista prepares lunch, GRIP Souper Center, 10 am	8 Celebration Honoring the Life of Stephen Koutz, 11 am	9	10	11 Yoga, 9-10:15 am
12 12 Noon Worship	13 Yoga, 7-8:15 pm	14 Bible Study, 1:30 pm	15 Council Meeting, 7pm	16	17	18 Worship Team Retreat  No Yoga
19 12 Noon Worship SAT Meeting	20 Yoga, 7-8:15 pm	21 Bible Study, 1:30 pm	22	23	24	25 Yoga, 9-10:15 am
26 12 Noon Worship	27 Yoga, 7-8:15 pm	28 Bible Study, 1:30 pm	29	30	31	

# Worship for August, 2012

August 5, 2012, 12 noon  
Holy Communion  
*Living with Humility*  
2 Samuel 11-12

August 12, 2012, 12 noon  
*Living with Regret*  
2 Samuel 18



August 19, 2012, 12 noon  
*Living with Hope*  
1 Kings 2-3

August 26, 2012, 12 noon  
*Living with the Holy Presence*  
1 Kings 8

## AUGUST CELEBRATIONS!

### **BIRTHDAYS!**

4<sup>th</sup> Pastor Susan Meeter  
8<sup>th</sup> Thom Longino  
16<sup>th</sup> Nan Smekofske  
18<sup>th</sup> Tharon McDavid  
19<sup>th</sup> Ardith Hayes  
30<sup>th</sup> Michael Ozenberger

### **ANNIVERSARIES!**

3<sup>rd</sup> Wendy & Michael Wisely  
22<sup>nd</sup> Barbara & Bob Bly  
24<sup>th</sup> Patsy and Stan Severson

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*The Fellowship Post*  
Editor: Latifah Abdullah  
published monthly by Mira Vista  
United Church of Christ  
*An Open and Affirming Congregation*  
780 Ashbury Avenue  
El Cerrito, CA 94530  
(510) 526-0110  
office@miravistaucc.org  
www.miravistaucc.org

Rev. Susan Meeter, pastor  
revmeeter@miravistaucc.org