



The Fellowship Post

Mira Vista United Church of Christ

August 2015

Melinda's Musings: why church?

Last month, I used this space to print the notes from our May retreat and some thoughts about our ongoing visioning for Mira Vista church. Some of our far-flung members sent words of encouragement and delight including **Carter West**, who wrote this preamble as he sent our article far and wide in UCC circles:

Obviously, this edition of a café church model exists only in possibility. And it has lacks, not the least of which is a theological underpinning. Remember, though: this is by no means a comprehensive proposal. Instead, it highlights what would be unique about this church's outreach, putting mission first, acts that would brand it indelibly as a vessel of love. Of course, this may never come to pass, not as the full expression of their congregation's life. What makes me lift my arms in celebration here, though, is that **somebody** is thinking outside the box of the traditional parish, offering free wi-fi, not just an empty and uncomfortable pew. They're not renovating within the old shell, which is so often crumbling irreversibly; they're raising something new outside it, something that hopefully furthers our traditions but isn't bound by them.

The "theological underpinning" that Carter mentions is, of course, not really missing from our conversations, just from the previous article! Still, we do have a lot more soul-searching to do before we can begin to make



decisions about our future model of ministry, let alone a decision to move to a new location.

One of the most important theological questions we need to consider is this: why church? There are great non-profit organizations doing social justice work. We know that there are many venues for spiritual development and

education available in our area. There are a number of community groups that draw folks together. What is different about being a "church" community and why would we want to share it with others? What "problem" could we uniquely solve? What do we really have to offer the wider community?

This month, I am designing worship around the question "why church?" and I invite all of you to think about what Mira Vista means to you AND what could Mira Vista church mean to others. Pivotal to my own understanding of "why church?" has been my own move from "faith" to "practice". I have become increasingly less interested in erudite theological musings about the nature of God and instead have come to believe that following Jesus might be as simple as doing more of what he did such as: **feeding, healing, blessing, loving, and serving**. In this way, instead of dreaming about the realm of God in some far away heaven, we might learn to embody the love of God right here. Right now.

I have been working on my own answers to this question for a longtime and I welcome you to the conversation.

Love and many blessings,
Melinda



Introducing: Tom Emanuel

In September, we will welcome Tom Emanuel as our field education student from Pacific School of Religion. Tom is an amazing young man who grew up in Deadwood, South Dakota. He is a lover of music and justice and has lived in intentional community with members of the Lakota Sioux tribe.

As an undergraduate, he was part of a unique program with the Taizé community in France that brought young people to South Dakota together for sung prayer.

During his first year at PSR, Tom has been engaged in a variety of justice struggles in the streets of Berkeley where he could be counted upon to bring his musical gifts to bear in difficult situations.

Since my first conversation with Tom, I have been struck by his depth of feeling and thoughtfulness. On Facebook he has posted a

number of wonderful poems and I know those of you who enjoy poetry will appreciate his skill and artistry.

Joan Thompson, Heinz Lankford, and Rev. Paul Honigs have agreed to be his support committee while he is sojourning with us.

Welcome to the community, Tom!



The Second Law of Aerodynamics by Tom Emanuel

Would you rather live in a world with pyramids or without?

Can you stand to inhabit a universe where humans swim through cloud-bright seas on the wings of their own exquisite folly— fireflies lighting the way to the grave?

Or would you trade the dream of flight and the bombshell-craters on the faces of the survivors for a more grounded existence? And would you not account yourself impoverished?

Yearning for that which is too beautiful will destroy you.

But yearning is the light-unbearable steel that rivets us together, the slipstream that deflects our limitations, that threatens to hurl us into the maelstrom – that enables us to fly.

And airplanes are only every destined to be swallowed in a God-opening sky.

So come!
Take my hand.
The wind is rising.
We must try to live.

News from the Pews (and beyond!)

Carter West, who now lives in Boston, was here in July and is in good health and better spirits! He reports that the past year has been somewhat difficult for his mother **Wilma West** as she dealt with various health issues.

Brian Miller and **Howard Campbell** are now planning a wedding for this Fall.
(YAY!) Date still to be determined.

Maria Lewis wants everyone at Mira Vista to know that she is doing okay, but her health does not often allow her to come to church on Sunday. The closure of Doctor's Hospital in Richmond has also been very hard for her. Drop her a note of encouragement, if you can.

Colleen Rodger and **Melinda McLain's** house renovation is moving along on schedule! They hope to move in late September.

Our new field ed student, **Tom Emanuel**, writes, "I have spent the summer reconnecting with family (both church and biological) in South Dakota and the Pacific Northwest; taking the last preaching class to ever be offered by PSR's longtime homiletics professor, Mary Donovan Turner, before she retires; and writing reams of poetry about love, God, and San Francisco (I am not convinced the three things are not one and the same, or at least Trinity-intimately related)."

August Celebrations



4th Rev. Susan Meeter
8th Rev. Thom Longino
18th Tharon McDavid
30th Michael Ozenberger



3rd Wendy & Michael Wisely
24th Patsy and Stan Severson

Lots of happiness to each of you on
your special day!

With love, Mira Vista

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Mira Vistans enjoying summer worship and a picnic at Bonnie and Dan Hariton's home in Pinole on July 19th. As part of the service, we dedicated their newly landscaped backyard to Bonnie's parents: Kermit and June Anderson.



Thank you Dan and Bonnie for opening up your home and hearts for this wonderful worship service.

Photos submitted by Brian Miller



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2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 12 Noon Worship & Holy Communion, Social Action Team during La Mesa	3	4 Mira Vista prepares lunch, GRIP Souper Center, 10am  Mindfulness Circle @ El Cerrito Royale, 7 pm			7 Mira Vista Leaders meeting, Obelisco, 11:30 am	8
9 12 Noon Worship & Holy Communion, Worship Team during La Mesa	10	11 Council meeting, El Cerrito Royale, 6:45 pm	12		14	15
16 12 Noon Worship & Communion followed by La Mesa	17	18 Mindfulness Circle, 7 pm	19		21	22
23 12 Noon Worship & Communion followed by La Mesa	24	25	26		28	29
30 12 Noon Worship & Communion followed by La Mesa	31					

Our worship life together . . .

Join us on **Sundays at 12 noon** for our celebration with music and preaching, then stay for lunch because our worship continues as we share food and friendship together at La Mesa. We celebrate the sacrament on Holy Communion every First Sunday in the sanctuary and during La Mesa on subsequent Sundays. All are welcome at our table!

This month we ask the question: **why church?** Each Sunday in August, we will look at a few different answers to that question drawing from the wells of scripture, poetry, song, silence, movement, and story.

August 2 Feeding: "The Bread of Life", John 6:24-35

August 9 Forgiving: "Throwing Rocks", John 8:1-11

August 16 Blessing: "Woe Be Gone!", Matthew 5:1-11

August 23 Healing: "Touching our Strength", Mark 5:24b-34

August 30 Serving: "The Greatest Gift", Luke 22:24-30

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Dated Material

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