



The Fellowship Post

Mira Vista United Church of Christ

February 2015

Melinda's Musings: *Towards a Community of Faith and Practice* by Pastor Melinda

As long as I can remember, I have always thought that going to church should make you a better person. And I do believe that most believers would agree with that statement. In the United Church of Christ this has become the motto, "To believe is to care; to care is to do". It is also true that the definition of becoming a "better person" varies a great deal from denomination to denomination and from church to church.

Our own beloved Mira Vista church has its' own motto: "God's Love in Action". I take this to mean that our belief emphasis is rooted in the two-fold commandment by Jesus to love God and then to love our neighbor as ourselves. It also means that we are to do our best to practice the love of God for the whole of God's creation right here and right now.

This places our theological emphasis and our definition of what it means to be a better person squarely within the definition of progressive Christianity. According to the recently deceased Biblical scholar Marcus Borg:

Progressive Christianity takes very seriously that Christianity is about a two-fold transformation of ourselves as individuals, and of the humanly-created world which has most often been a world of domination, injustice and violence – not meaning primarily criminal violence – but the violence of warfare and so forth. So, progressive



Christianity is passionate about transformation in the here and now, even as we recognize that that transformation is also long term, and not something that a generation can accomplish.

And it's not very much about what happens after death. It's not that all progressive Christians are skeptical about an afterlife, but for me, anyway, I'm very happy to leave what happens after death up to God. And then beyond that, I have no idea how anybody can know what happens after death, and you can't make something true by believing it.

So if somebody says, "I believe in Heaven," fair enough, you believe in Heaven, but that has nothing to do with whether or not there is one. And so the energy of progressive Christianity is not about believing something now for the sake of a reward later, or not even about being virtuous now for the sake of a reward later, but for being as completely present as possible to this life, and being open to the moving of the Spirit both within ourselves and our societies, and seeking to participate in that movement of the Spirit.

I sometimes speak of Christianity as being about participating in God's passion ... and I don't mean God's suffering, which is one possible meaning of passion ... but participating in what God is passionate about, which is the whole of Creation. In one sense we don't have to be terribly concerned about nature. Now here are the

qualifications: nature will do just fine on its own if we don't mess with it, and right now, of course we are messing with it, but the strongest passion of the God of the Bible is the transformation of the humanly-created world into a more just, compassionate, peaceful kind of world.

Read more:

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/faithforward/2012/10/the-heart-of-progressive-christianity-a-qa-with-marcus-borg/#ixzz3Q8KC91zp>

What do you think? Let's talk about it.

Much love and many blessings,
Melinda



Conversation Circles during La Mesa

At this month's Council meeting, we talked about how we might move forward on some of the wonderful ideas that surfaced during our December retreat. We decided to experiment with a version of "open space technology", a discernment system that simply names a location and time for a discussion and then allows for people to self-select as participants.

Beginning this **Sunday, February 1**, we will have one table designated at La Mesa to discuss Social Action. Hopefully all **Social Action Team** members will participate in this table discussion and others who have interest will come too!

On **Sunday, February 8th**, we will have a conversation circle on worship that will include the **worship team** and our new music staff members.

On **Sunday, February 15th** the **Good News team** will sponsor a mini-workshop on social media so that everyone who is interested can learn what we are doing to increase the church's presence online. Bring your laptops, smart phones, and iPads for this one!

Sunday, February 22nd will be a conversation circle for **sermon feedback and theological reflection** with Pastor Melinda.

It is our hope and desire that this format will allow for greater participation by all the community members! Got feedback or other ideas? Speak with Melinda or any of the Council members.



For God So Loved the Earth

*I thank thee God for most this amazing day
for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky
and for everything
which is natural which is infinite
which is yes - e.e. cummings*

On **Saturday, February 14th**, Interfaith Power & Light invites us all to stop whatever else we are doing at 12 noon and take a moment of silence and prayer for our earth in the midst of catastrophic climate change.

Then on **Sunday, February 15th**, do join us for Worship & La Mesa as we both celebrate the beauty of God's creation and pray to become healers of the earth in the midst of global warming.

Lenten Mid-Week Worship Opportunities

On **Ash Wednesday, February 18th at 7:00 p.m.**, we are invited to a joint worship service with Christ Lutheran that will include the imposition of ashes. Pastor Melinda will be preaching at this service. We are also invited to participate with Christ Lutheran in a weekly musical prayer service each Wednesday in Lent that begins with a soup supper at 6:00 p.m. followed by a half hour of Holden prayer. This is a beautiful musical tradition and will be a lay-led program. If you have interest in helping to lead one or more of these service, speak with Pastor Melinda for more information.

For La Mesa entrée signups, please see Marilyn Colbert.

Sanctuary 2014-15

Whatever happened to those children we heard about last summer who were risking their lives to cross the border into the US in order to escape the violence in their own country? They are here and they need our help. The Sanctuary Movement which provided support, protection and advocacy to refugees from Central America in the 80's is being revived all over the United States. The Social Action Team recommended to Council that we learn more about this issue and explore how we might respond as a congregation. Stay tuned.

- Joan Thompson

On Feb 28, Ken and I will be accompanying refugees and their hosts to Alcatraz. I will get to know the family Beacon Presbyterian has accepted into sanctuary much better and may have some ideas to bring to Council after that time. I am fairly non-committal in what I wrote until I find out more info.

- Joan Thompson



Picture time again! Cathy Noble would like to update the MVUCC picture board in the Social Hall. I will take, or re-take, pictures on Sunday, February 8th after church. Come find me or I'll find you :)

- Cathy Noble



Cathy Noble is looking for an inexpensive, reliable used car. If you have such a thing, please contact her at 510-672-0626. Thanks!

Mindfulness Circle

Our Mindfulness Circle has decided to meet on both the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month @ Patsy Stubbs home. On Tuesday, Feb. 17th, we will begin a new book, *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* by Richard Rohr. This inspiring tome is great for anyone at any stage of life and faith! If you need a copy or want more information about the Mindfulness Circle, see Pastor Melinda.

February Celebrations



1st Barbara Cook
1st Adelle Lemon
25th Elizabeth Claman

Best Wishes and love from Mira Vista!



The Fellowship Post

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Interfaith Declaration on Climate Change

Stewardship and reverence for creation are central tenets of all faiths on Earth. Yet today we are endangering life on Earth with dangerous levels of greenhouse gas emissions. These gases are destabilizing the global climate system, heating the Earth, acidifying the oceans, and putting both humanity and all living creatures at unacceptable risk.

The extraordinary delicacy of Nature's balance is becoming increasingly apparent, even as human actions inflict ever larger, more dangerous and potentially irreversible changes on the indivisible web of atmosphere, earth, ocean and life that is creation. Today our faiths stand united in their call to care for the Earth, and to protect the poor and the suffering. Strong action on climate change is imperative by the principles and traditions of our faiths and the collective compassion, wisdom and leadership of humanity.

We recognize the science of climate change, and we call for global leaders to adopt strong, binding, science-based targets for the reduction of greenhouse gases in order to avert the worst dangers of a climate crisis. We urge the nations of Earth to ensure that those who will suffer under climate-induced changes such as more severe storms, floods, droughts and rising seas, be aided to adapt, survive and equitably prosper.

We recognize that climate change is not merely an economic or technical problem, but rather at its core is a moral, spiritual and cultural one. We therefore pledge to join together to teach and guide the people who follow the call of our faiths. We must all learn to live together within the shared limits of our planet.

We recognize that just as climate change presents us with great challenges, so too it offers great opportunities. Mitigating climate change can stimulate economies sustainably, protect our planet, lift up the poor, and unite to a common cause people threatened by a common danger. Assisting vulnerable communities and species to survive and adapt to climate change fulfills our calling to wisdom, mercy, and the highest of human moral and ethical values. We commit ourselves to action – to changing our habits, our choices, and the way we see the world – to learning and teaching our families, friends, and faiths – to conserving the limited resources of our home, planet Earth, and preserving the climate conditions upon which life depends.

In this spirit, we call upon our leaders, those of our faiths, and all people of Earth to accept the reality of the common danger we face, the imperative and responsibility for immediate and decisive action, and the opportunity to change.



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2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 12 noon Worship followed by La Mesa & discussion on Social Action 	2	3 Mira Vista prepares lunch, GRIP Souper Center, 10 am Mindfulness Circle @ Patsy Stubbs, 7 pm	4 Pre-council meeting @ Namaste, 12 noon	5 Amazing Graces, 7 pm	6	7
8 12 Noon Worship followed by La Mesa & discussion on worship	9	10 Council meeting @ El Cerrito Royale, 6:45 pm	11	12 Amazing Graces, 7 pm	13	14 Interfaith Power & Light invites us to a 12 noon moment of silence & prayer for our earth
15 12 Noon Worship followed by La Mesa Good News Team sponsors mini-workshop on social media	16 	17 Mindfulness Circle @ Patsy Stubbs, 7 pm	18 Joint worship service with Christ Lutheran, 7 pm 	19 Amazing Graces, 7 pm	20	21
22 12 Noon Worship followed by La Mesa & discussion on sermon feedback & theological reflection	23	24	25	26 Amazing Graces, 7 pm	27	28

Our worship life together . . .

Join us on Sundays at 12 noon for our celebration with music and preaching and then stay for lunch because our worship continues as we share food and fellowship together.

Sunday, February 1, Mark 1: 21-28, "The Adventure Begins", 4th Sunday after Epiphany,
Holy Communion

Sunday, February 8, Mark 1: 29-39, "Stalking Jesus", 5th Sunday after Epiphany

Sunday, February 15, Mark 1: 40-45 "A Loose-Tongued Leper", 6th Sunday after Epiphany

Wednesday, February 18th, Ash Wednesday, TBD

Sunday, February 22, Mark 1: 9-15, "Getting Lost", First Sunday in Lent



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Address Change Requested

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