

# The Fellowship Post

## Mira Vista United Church of Christ

February 2016

### Melinda's Musings:

by Pastor Melinda

As a community, this Lenten season will be one for the history books!

**We have been accepted as a "client" by the Business Law Practicum at U.C. Berkeley Law School!** As such, these talented graduate students are going to work with us to further develop our vision for a Café Church by developing a legal and business strategy for calculated success. Many, many thanks to **Nancy Lemon**, who has taught a practicum on domestic violence issues at Berkeley Law for 25 years, for connecting us with the practicum.

How will this work? Over the course of this Spring semester, **Bonnie Hariton, Colleen Rodger, Tom Emanuel, and I** will work with the students on behalf of Mira Vista to develop a realistic business plan and legal work so that at the end of this process, the members of Mira Vista can make an informed decision about moving forward. We will keep the Council fully in the loop and will schedule further meetings with the congregation if big changes to our initial vision are afoot.

Because the pay-what-you-can cafe idea is central to our vision, we will also be scheduling a **retreat with Bob Pearson of the One World Everybody Eats** foundation to help us - and the students - fully understand how to implement this part of the idea. Look for more



information about this part of the process soon.

If you have questions or concerns, do let anyone of us know. If you would like a copy of the application that we sent to the law school, do ask Melinda to send it in digital form.

Meanwhile, pray that this process will be successful in answering our questions and will produce a plan that ensures a sustainable model for ministry for Mira Vista that will honor the legacy of those who founded the church while

providing a great future for those who will come after us.



### News from the Pews

We bid adieu to **Marilyn Colbert** who is moving to Paradise (near Chico) to be closer to her grandchildren. She is excited about her new house and the lower cost of living outside the Bay Area. Marilyn will be missed although our love and prayers for her continue always.

Many members of Mira Vista were saddened to learn of the death of **Jim Young**. His memorial service was held on Jan. 30 at Arlington Church. Do keep **Linda, Zeb, Zura, Zion**, and all of Jim's family and friends in your hearts and prayers.

**Melinda** is beginning physical therapy soon to cope with tennis elbow in her right arm. Too bad there was no tennis involved - the injury is a result of lifting too many heavy boxes. Boo.

**Brady Morales-Woolery** has a new job acting in videos to train hotel workers in how to offer outstanding hospitality. Congratulations Brady!



## No One is Beyond Redemption

By Nancy Lemon

For years I have enjoyed going to see the various movies in the *Star Wars* series, rooting for the hugely outnumbered and out-gunned good guys of the future and hoping they would survive as they took on the forces of evil. While we knew that some of the heroes would probably die, we also had faith that at least some of them would survive and carry on, and indeed this was the case. And we liked the humor in many scenes, the amazing special effects, and the cool sets.



So when the latest in this series, *The Force Awakens*, started showing in theaters,

I set up a date with my husband, son, and his girlfriend to go see it at the Cerrito Theater. We enjoyed it a lot.

While I have enjoyed all the *Star Wars* movies, perhaps because I have been attending Mira Vista weekly now for several years, I saw something different this time.

Many movies have a basic plot of outnumbered good guys fighting back against the much larger, better-armed oppressive forces controlling their world. This is why people love John Wayne movies so much – we love to see him, a decent guy, show up and help the settlers get rid of the bullies, building a peaceful community.

But what I noticed this time is that the *Star Wars* series has a spiritual message that most

action or Western movies lack. In this series, many of the characters are aware of “*The Force*,” a universal, omnipresent and very powerful force that some humans can tap into in order to achieve seemingly miraculous outcomes. While this force can be used for good or for evil (“the dark side”), it seems clear that its essential nature is positive. It also appears that the Force probably created the universe and may be sustaining its existence.

The *Star Wars* series also contains a clear message of redemption – even the most twisted and evil characters are presented as still reachable, as still having hearts that can come back to the side of good. And the good guys reach for the bad guys, over and over, often at great peril to themselves.

Another aspect of the plots in this series is that there are instances in which a character who we thought had died turned out to still be alive, essentially rising from the dead. So even if someone appears to die in one movie, we fans maintain hope that she or he might in fact not be dead, and will appear again in a future movie. And our faith is sometimes well placed, with “dead” characters (or even “dead” starships and robots) re-appearing, coming to life, and playing key roles on the side of the good guys.

Another part of the message of this series is that in the struggle to save the planets and the good guys, the heroes recognize that very different species of humans and non-humans, even robots, are all valuable and must work together.

*The Force Awakens* also uses the image of the Sun as a huge source of power, which the bad guys are attempting to drain, plunging that part of the universe into total darkness forever. There is a lot of imagery of light and darkness, and the good guys fighting to keep the light going.

I think what attracts so many millions of people to this series is this spiritual component. In an era where few people in the US go to church, we are all still hungry for spiritual nurturing.

*The Force* is what we at Mira Vista might call God or the Divine.

We Mira Vistans also believe, as do the heroes in the movie, that since everyone is a child of God, they continue to be human in spite of anything they might have done, and that they can still be reached.

We believe that building alliances between different groups of people, and between people and non-humans (animals, plants, the planet) is essential.

We also believe that God is more powerful than death itself.

And we believe that the Light shines in the Darkness and the Darkness cannot put it out.



## February Birthdays

1<sup>st</sup> - Adelle Lemon  
1<sup>st</sup> - Barbara Cook  
25<sup>th</sup> - Elizabeth Claman

wishing you  
the **BEST**  
birthday  
ever!

## Under Pressure

by Tom Emanuel, Minister-in-Training

Love's such an old-fashioned word, but that doesn't stop us wanting the neurochemical combustion and codependence for which we have learned to mistake it. We find ourselves driven to the hunt because we are hunted ourselves by a Happily-Ever-After that we know, deep down, is a lie or at most a sunny gloss on a life of unquiet desperation and fierce compromise. But we are creatures of habit, and we desire that which we have been taught to desire. So we career through the forest, hound-tracked and harried, somewhere between blackout and white-knuckle, legs atremble for fear that if we stop chasing Love, it might overtake *us*— not the needy kind we have grown up pursuing, but Real Love, the kind that will not permit us to keep running, the kind that roots us to the spot and dares us to change our way of caring about ourselves, the kind that does not fill our empty places but forces us to love the emptiness itself.

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January 2016  
Berkeley, CA

*The Fellowship Post*

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published monthly by Mira Vista  
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“What we play  
is life”  
Louis Armstrong



Hans Raag  
&  
Amy Ukena

Heart & Soul  
Valentine's Day  
Feb. 14, 2016  
2:00 pm

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XOXO  
**FEBRUARY**  
  
**2016**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 Mira Vista prepares lunch, GRIP Souper Center, 10 am Mindfulness Circle @El Cerrito Royale, 7p 	3	4 Open Door Interfaith Zen, 6p Amazing Graces, 7p	5	6
7 12n Worship with Holy Communion followed by La Mesa 	8	9 Mira Vista Council meeting, 7p	10 Ash Wednesday Taizé Service, 7p 	11 Open Door Interfaith Zen, 6p Amazing Graces, 7p	12	13
14 12n Worship followed by La Mesa with Holy Communion Amy Ukena in concert, 2p	15 	16 Mindfulness Circle @El Cerrito Royale, 7p	17	18 Open Door Interfaith Zen, 6p Amazing Graces, 7p	19	20 Installation for NCNC Conf. Min. Rev. Diane Weible @ FCC, Berkeley, 4p
21 12n Worship followed by La Mesa with Holy Communion	22	23	24	25 Open Door Interfaith Zen, 6p Amazing Graces, 7p	26	27
28 12n Worship followed by La Mesa with Holy Communion	29	SAVE the DATE: Saturday, March 5, NCNC Church Day, 9-4				

**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 of Holy Communion every First Sunday in the sanctuary and during La Mesa on subsequent Sundays. All are welcome at our table!

The **liturgical season of Lent** begins on **Ash Wednesday, February 10**. In our Sunday worship we will be tracing the **Legacy of Love** by focusing on the Hebrew texts from the lectionary paired with poetry, drama, and music to inspire our own sense of legacy as a community of faith and practice.

February 7	“Too Much Light” The Feast of Transfiguration	Exodus 34:29-35
February 10	Ash Wednesday Taizé Service with Christ Lutheran, 7p The Beginning of Lent	
February 14	“The First Fruits”	Deuteronomy 26:1-2
February 21	“An Enduring Legacy” Tom Emanuel preaching	Genesis 5:1-5
February 28	“Good Food”	Isaiah 55: 1-3; 8-9

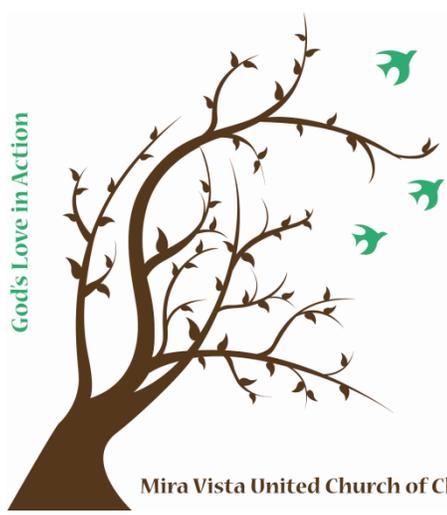


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*Mira Vista United Church of Christ*  
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Address Change Requested

**Dated Material**  
February 2015



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