



The Fellowship Post

Mira Vista United Church of Christ

January 2015

Melinda's Musings: *Creating a 21st Century Church* by Pastor Melinda



At our retreat on December 6th, we met at beautiful Skyline UCC, Oakland to explore a new study from the Center for Progressive Renewal <http://www.progressiverenewal.org> that looked at *New Ministries in the Mainline* (oldline) church. The study provides a great “leaping off” point to potentially rethink our efforts to become a sustainable and thriving congregation going into the future.

We began by examining the study's description of the move from “broadcasting” to “narrowcasting”. For churches that wish to renew and revitalize, it is important to understand the cultural shifts brought on by changes in media and commerce. Just as our television choices have gone from 3 or 4 stations to hundreds, churches need to understand their “niche” and audience in way more specific terms. We cannot simply say we want “young families with children” to join our community.

In an era of “narrow-casting” and social media (see accompanying article on social media), it is essential to understand and identify a target market and then tailor communications to reach them by knowing their specific needs and desires. This sort of research has been used by sister churches in the UCC with great results. For example, one congregation discovered that neighbors were concerned about a lack of arts education in the local

schools and they offered an after-school arts program that filled the gap. Now they have a mid-week dinner and worship experience for those families that attracts *more people* than their Sunday morning service.

It was clear then that to be able to thrive and grow, we need to do more demographic research to

understand the profound shifts that are happening rapidly in the greater El Cerrito area. For example, just a cursory review of available data via <http://www.city-data.com> shows a “hockey-stick” rise in home prices and that a great turnover in population is occurring. While it is difficult to “narrow-cast” who these new residents will be over the next five years, they are definitely wealthier and many are younger professionals engaged in high-paying jobs – mostly in the tech sector.

During the retreat, we speculated about more data points easily available including religious affiliation (only 37% in Contra Costa County), common industries broken down by gender, and marital status. We learned, for example, that according to the 2010 census, 29% of folks in El Cerrito have *never* been married. Truthfully, however, we need to do more research to effectively match our gifts to the changing needs of our potential new members. Do speak with Melinda or the council if you would like to help do some of this research for the congregation.

We also looked at the data in the study about new types of ministry that are succeeding. Of the churches studies, the potential models that seem like a match would be those focused on

When it arrives in their mailbox, they can choose to join (or not) and easily unsubscribe at any time without any hassle.

I intentionally focus the devotionals in this weekly email to be very friendly to new members. In previous churches where I have done this practice, it has proved to be effective as a way for folks to easily connect and “lurk” for a few weeks before actually attending a service or event. It gives a simple “taste” of the theology and practice of the congregation and is hopefully inspirational for members and friends alike!

By developing this weekly content, I can spread it through our various portals to provide a consistent (and persistent) message. I continue to work to make this even more automatic and easy to do. If you are NOT receiving the “This Week at Mira Vista” email each Tuesday, so let me know. I also invite “like” our facebook page AND leave a review (!) and/or follow us on twitter @MiraVistaUCC. If you use yelp, search for our page and leave a review of why you love Mira Vista and any helpful hints you might have for potential visitors.

I'd be delighted to share the techniques involved with any of you who would like to understand the world of social media better. Just ask! If several are interested, we could also do a roundtable discussion during La Mesa.



From the Personnel Committee

The personnel committee is busy interviewing candidates for pianist/organist. Today we will interview the fifth and final candidate. We are fortunate to have very talented musicians interviewing for this position. A new pianist/organist should be in place in January. We begin to interview for the Music Director position after Christmas. We already have a couple of interested candidates.

Respectfully submitted
Sylvia Sugg

Volunteer Training for Cash for College Workshops

Are you good at filling out government forms? Want to REALLY help young people in the community go to college? Volunteers are needed to help high school seniors fill out their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or California Dream Act applications at free Cash for College workshops on one or more evenings on **January 13, 21, 22, 29, February 3 or 5** in West Contra Costa County.

A volunteer training will be held on **Thursday, January 8 from 3:30-6:00PM at Richmond Community Foundation**, 1014 Florida Avenue #200, Richmond. Please **RSVP by January 5** to Ed Fund College Access Coordinator Veli Waller at vwaller@edfundwest.org or (510) 233-1464 ext. 105. www.edfundwest.org.

Mira Vista United Church of Christ

Semi-Annual Meeting
& Potluck lunch

January 25, 2015

Our 2015 budget is the agenda for this meeting, right after church

See you there!

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Happy Birthday

January Saints!

- 7th Colleen Rodger
- 15th Davena Hambrick
- 16th Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch
- 21st Betty Coates
- 28th Virginia Carrieri



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January 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 	2	3
4 HOLY COMMUNION Worship 12 noon 	5	6 Mira Vista prepares lunch, GRIP Souper Center, 10 am 	7 Leaders' meeting @Namaste, 12:30 pm	8 Amazing Graces, 7 pm	9	10
11 12 Noon Worship	12	13	14	15 Amazing Graces, 7 pm	16	17
18 12 Noon Worship	19 Martin Luther King Day 	20 Mindfulness Circle @ Patsy Stubbs, 7 pm	21 Council meeting, El Cerrito Royale, 6:45 pm	22 Amazing Graces, 7 pm	23	24
25 12 Noon Worship Semi-Annual meeting & Potluck	26	27	28	29 Amazing Graces, 7 pm	30	31

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, January 4, Matthew 2: 1-11, "Stardust and Us"

Sunday, January 11, Mark 1: 1-8, "Wade in the Water"

Sunday, January 18, Matthew 5: 43-45, "The Theory of Everything", MLK Sunday

Sunday, January 25, Mark 1: 14-20, "Ecstatic Following", Semi-Annual Meeting

Sunday, February 2, Mark 1: 21-28, "Miraculous News"



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Dated Material
January 2015

