



# The Fellowship Post

Mira Vista  
United Church of Christ

January 2013

## PASTOR'S CORNER

Happy New Year! Time to celebrate new beginnings, new **openings** as a prelude to the days getting longer and the sunshine bringing – spring! Those of you who like to look ahead, make plans, see what's coming – read on for a taste of the coming five months of worship in the time and place we call Mira Vista UCC.

Six weeks ago we began the new *church* year with Advent: preparing for the birth of Jesus. Now we're already shifting together around the curve of our Christmas and New Year celebrations into a six-week **Opening** season, asking **"Who is this Jesus and why are we still talking about him 2,000 years later?"**

Donna Schaper writes *"In the church, we will celebrate Jesus the baby becomes Jesus the man becomes Jesus the Savior. Jesus the living becomes Jesus the dead becomes Jesus the living. Even something as lovely as singing Silent Night on Christmas Eve will not last forever. The candles will be extinguished, the cover put back on the organ, the hymnbooks rearranged in the pews. The show that opened will also close. The way Jesus lived, always **opening** every gate, refusing every lock down, became the pattern for a life that cannot die. Your best moments will evaporate and so will you. My best moments will evaporate and so will I.*

***"The pattern of Jesus opening the gate, silencing the night, and being vulnerable as a child, on behalf of children, who always open humanity's next gate: this will neither die nor leave. It will actually glorify God."***



*She ends with a prayer I like very much: "Let us so beware any sense of permanence that we can enjoy the fleet of life and pattern ourselves to one **opening** night after another. Amen."*

Sure enough, by February 17 we will enjoy another **Opening** – the six weeks of

Lent, during which we open to living in the Presence as we walk with Jesus along his final journey. For the six weeks of Lent through Easter we will refresh our understanding of the prayer we say every Sunday, the Jesus Prayer or Lord's Prayer, all in the context of **"opening, silencing, and being vulnerable as a child."**

Our final **Opening** season, just before summer arrives, will be keyed to the earliest Christian church and to the UCC's giant Earth Care project, **Mission 4/1 Earth**, a shared resurrection witness for Planet Earth during 50 great days of greening up, powering down, and shouting out for the environment! It will be a golden opportunity to live out our faith — in unity, as one church — for the sake of our fragile planet Earth.

Got that? Never mind, we will discover it all together, one step at a time. *Let us so beware any sense of permanence that we can enjoy the fleet of life and pattern ourselves to one **opening** night after another. Amen.*

*Let us "toast" New Openings!*

*Pastor  
Susan*

## Social Action Team Corner



Project Fleece Navidad was a success. Christmas Eve the scarves, socks, homemade cookies were packaged with

ribbon and a greeting from Mira Vista. The 60 packages were blessed during the Christmas Eve service and afterwards given to Thom Longino to be distributed through the San Francisco Night Ministry. There were many elves working on this project beside SAT members. Thanks to Wendy Wisely and her crew at *A Christmas Carol*, Deanna Osterberg who provided fleece and worked on the cutting, Barbara Cook for baking cookies and Beth and Virginia for helping to package the gifts. May these gifts provide blessings and warmth to those receiving them.

Fleece Navidad!  
Sylvia Sugg

## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS!

2<sup>nd</sup> Sara Anduiza  
15<sup>th</sup> Davena Hambrick  
16<sup>th</sup> Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch  
21<sup>st</sup> Betty Coates  
28<sup>th</sup> Virginia Carrieri

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## Amazing Graces

Dear Amazing Graces - I'm back and looking forward to leading you again. We will start Jan. 10th to prepare an anthem for the semi-annual church meeting on January 20th. Rehearsals will start at 7:30. See you then!

- In harmony, Amy

*Note of thanks from Melinda . . .*



I have so enjoyed this brief time working with the Amazing Graces! You are such a lovely bunch of singers and I will miss you. It has also been an enormous pleasure to

make music with Wendy and worship with Pastor Susan. As you know, this small sojourn with Mira Vista has come at a turning point in my ministry and it has truly been a gift to be surrounded by such supportive and wise women as I move back into doing music as my profession again. I am glad that Amy is healing well and will be back at the helm so you can keep singing together. It has been an honor to make music with you all and you will all remain in my heart.

## Health Benefits of Singing:

- \* Reduce stress and improve mood.
- \* Lower blood pressure.
- \* Boost the immune system.
- \* Improve breathing.
- \* Reduce perceived pain.
- \* Improve a sense of rhythm.
- \* Promote learning in children.
- \* Forge comforting memories.
- \* Promote communal bonding.
- \* Provide comfort.
- \* Motivate and empower.

ENCYCLOPEDIA  
OF  
ENTERTAINMENT

\*Sounds can influence brain wave frequencies and promote well-being

## Sustainable Pace and the 80% Rule

–by Dustin Bauerle



Let me see if this sounds familiar to you:

You're pretty busy. Not only are you good at finding things to do to fill up your calendar, but there are always people asking for more. More of your time, and more of your abilities. At work, there's a new initiative that you're being asked to be a part of. Your church is getting ready for an event and they want you to serve, not only on a committee, but also at the event. More, more, more.

No wonder burn-out is such a growing epidemic in our culture.

Over a year ago, I learned an idea from a couple very wise people that I've since shared with others. I call it the 80% rule. It works.

Take a good look at your capabilities. Look realistically at your calendar. Find your capacity. What does a 100% wide open throttle look like in your life? Then find what 80% of that capacity would look like. Then strategically aim for only 80% capacity in a "normal" schedule. Choose what you say "no" to.

Why only 80%? Because you will inevitably have seasons in your life where you need to go up to 100%. For me, those seasons are as we approach Christmas and Easter. But here's the problem. We're really good at operating at 100% all of the time! If we're already at 100% when we get to a busy season, there is no margin available! And then we wonder why we burn-out!

So when you're operating at that 80%, and someone asks you to do something else, realize that you're going to have to STOP doing something that you're already doing if you do actually take on the new task.

80%. It's not laziness, it's smart and strategic scheduling.



Celebrating Epiphany, January 6, with the 3 king's initials – Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar – chalked over the door; also means *Christus mansionem benedicat*, or "may Christ bless the house."

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### **Joan Chittister's favorite prayer, by Mary Lou Kownacki.**

*Dedicated to my friend Barbara Nixon, who is travelling to South India in January.*

I bow to the one who signs the cross.  
I bow to the one who sits with the Buddha.  
I bow to the one who wails at the wall.  
I bow to the OM flowing in the Ganges.  
I bow to the one who faces Mecca,  
whose forehead touches holy ground.  
I bow to dervishes whirling in mystical wind.  
I bow to the north,  
to the south,  
to the east,  
to the west.  
I bow to the God within each heart.  
I bow to epiphany,  
to God's face revealed.  
I bow. I bow. I bow.

## Worship for January 2013

Who is Jesus and why are we still talking about him 2,000 years later?

January 6, 2012, 12 noon  
Holy Communion

**Luke 3:1-22 The dawning of a new age**  
*Jesus is baptized by his cousin John*

January 13, 2013, 12 noon

**Luke 4:14-30 Fierce resistance to the new age**

*Jesus' first sermon at Nazareth*

January 20, 2013, 12 noon

SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING after church

**Luke 5:1-11 First disciples called**  
*Simon Peter has a great catch.*

January 27, 12 noon

Thom Longino preaching.

**Luke 6:1-16 Who does Jesus think he is?**

*You who promised that your **glory should be revealed** and that all flesh should see it together: set a restlessness stirring in our hearts, a waiting for the light that will break into our darkness, a wondering before the innocence that will address our broken world, a waking to the hope that will dispel our weariness in seeking your kingdom above all things. **Glory to God in the highest!** Amen. together*



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