Melinda’s Musings:
by Pastor Melinda

God is a verb, not a noun. – Buckminster Fuller

It strikes me that any attempt to describe God is futile. Some poets and psalmists get close, on occasion, but the best descriptions, in my view are woefully in adequate. And so I love Buckminster Fuller’s wise words that “God is a Verb”.

Of course, this is not an original thought. Ancient Kabbalah, the system of esoteric Jewish mysticism also asserts that God is a Verb and many other wisdom traditions teach this in one form or another.

I have said in a number of settings that we are a community of faith and practice because I believe our response to God ought to be one of movement, practice, and action that mirrors the example of the Divine incarnate, Jesus.

During the Season of Epiphany, we will explore ways of embodying our faith so that we too might further develop our practice of “Love in Action”.

What difference does it make when you stop trying to take a “snapshot” of the Divine and instead start to look for God in action? How does your spiritual life shift when you stop trying to understand God and simply start to follow Jesus? How

might we leverage this key understanding to invite others in who are turned off my “dogma” and “doctrine”?

Open Door Interfaith Zen
by Melinda

We continue to meet on Thursday evenings from 6-6:45 and we have been blessed by the presence of the Rev. Kevin Omi and several of the members of our nearest UCC neighbor church, Sycamore UCC. This practice of sitting and meditating on a koan taken from the teachings of Jesus and/or other spiritual traditions is a wonderful respite of quiet and connection with others who love silence in community. Join us!

Michael D. Miller and Kathryn Burroughs celebrated the birth of a new grandchild on December 7, Marley Janea, daughter of Zay and Darcy.
News from the Pews

**Pastor Melinda** will make a quick trip to New York for the Opera America New Works Forum, Jan 15-20. While there, she will also have a chance to meet with her composer for *The Broken Land*, Sarah Hutchings, and she will see at least seven new operas in various stages of composition!

**Bonnie Hariton** fell and broke her left wrist just after Thanksgiving necessitating surgery to install a titanium plate. She is healing well and her new name is “Bionic Bonnie”.

**Nancy Lemon**, Legal Director of the Family Appellate Project, chalked up yet another 3 victories in December! In two of them, the Appellate court ordered the trial court to enter Restraining Orders protecting battered mothers; and in the third, the trial court was ordered to hold a full and fair hearing regarding whether sending a young girl back to her father in Denmark presented a grave risk to her safety.

Our Minister-in-Training, **Tom Emanuel** will travel to South Dakota over the holidays to preach at his home church and to hopefully be accepted as a minister in discernment. Tom’s pastor at Vermillion United Church of Christ, the **Rev. Steve Miller**, recently gave a TEDx talk on “Millennials as Spiritual Free Agents” that is worth a look on youtube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=csiiHqB5wAA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=csiiHqB5wAA)

Holy Saturday

*by Tom Emanuel*

I never feel alone in an empty church.

Even when there’s nobody there, the pews still creak like geriatric joints.

Even when the nursery has finally gone quiet, the hymns are still playing hide-and-seek between the bellows of the pipe organ.

Even when Pastor Steve locks up early on Sunday afternoon so he can drive his youngest son to Little League, if I squint I can still see his sermons hovering over the chancel like holy ghosts.

Even when the last candle has been snuffed out, the wicks are still kneeling in whispered prayer.

And even when the only answer I get to my midnight lamentations is my own hollow voice echoing in negative space, I know that Somebody’s listening—even if Somebody is just me.

*November 2015*  
*Berkeley, CA*

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**January Celebrations**

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

**Best wishes, with love from Mira Vista**

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**Mira Vista United Church of Christ**

**Semi-Annual Meeting & potluck lunch**

**Sunday, January 24, 2016**

Our 2016 budget is the agenda for this meeting, right after church.
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<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
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<tr>
<td>3 12n Worship with Holy Communion followed by La Mesa</td>
<td>4 Mira Vista prepares lunch, GRIP Souper Center, 10a&lt;br&gt;Mindfulness Circle @ El Cerrito Royale, 7p</td>
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<td>17 12n Worship followed by La Mesa with Holy Communion</td>
<td>18 Martin Luther King Day</td>
<td>19 Mindfulness Circle @ El Cerrito Royale, 7p</td>
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<td>24 12n Worship followed by Semi-annual meeting &amp; Potluck</td>
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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 Epiphany begins on the 12th day of Christmas, January 6, and stretches until Ash Wednesday (in 2016 Feb. 10) and the beginning of Lent.

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<tr>
<th>January 3</th>
<th>“Follow the Light”</th>
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<td>Feast of the Epiphany</td>
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<td>“Take the Plunge”</td>
<td>Luke 3:15-16; 21-22</td>
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<td>Baptism of Jesus</td>
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<td>January 17</td>
<td>“Drink the Wine”</td>
<td>John 2:1-11</td>
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<td>Tom Emanuel preaching</td>
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<td>January 24</td>
<td>“Catch the Spirit”</td>
<td>Luke 4:14-21</td>
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Mira Vista United Church of Christ
780 Ashbury Avenue
El Cerrito, CA 94530

Address Change Requested