

The Fellowship Post

Mira Vista United Church of Christ

July 2015

Melinda's Musings

The Emerging Path: Café Church?

At our retreats on December 6th and May 16th, we began to take stock of our situation and then to imagine a new path in ministry for Mira Vista UCC. Using the Lean Start-Up process that is regularly used by silicon valley companies to test new ideas and products, we have begun testing an idea to become a "Café/Cabaret Church.

I believe that as a community, we have three primary passions for putting our faith into action: food, justice, and the arts. All of those passions would be well-served by being in a restaurant "café" space. On the 16th, we had a grand time imagining what such a space might offer to our surrounding community and what needs we could meet by creating this venue. In the Lean-Startup parlance, this is what is called The Problem, as in, what is missing, needed, and/or desirable for your surrounding community of potential customers. As we worked in small groups, we identified a few of the problems we see in the greater El Cerrito area. We see a need for:

- "Hang-out" space during the day that is comfortable and has fast wifi
- Beautiful, welcoming space to relax and just be
- Cabaret space in the evenings for live music and a glass of wine



- Café with a pet-friendly outside patio
- Lovely space for meetings of small groups such as writer's group
- A space for cooking classes for low-income women to learn catering
- Commercial kitchen needed for food truck entrepreneurs
- Location for seniors to play games and do handwork or simply socialize
- A place for family game nights
- Venue for poetry readings and reader's theater
- Safe space for LGBT teens to "hang out" and potentially receive counseling
- Pay what you can for lunch days so that eating out need not be cost prohibitive
- Spiritually enticing space that welcomes all seekers
- Pay what you can yoga space geared towards seniors and those with health issues
- Co-working space for telecommuters and entrepreneurs
- Easy space for educational events
- Location for community fundraisers and supportive event space

Being able to offer solutions to these "problems" could help ease community and individual issues such as: isolation, lack of belonging, loneliness, "silo-ed communities" and food insecurity. As a church, we would also be able to offer prayer, worship, informal

pastoral care and counseling without the burden of negative images in the culture attached to “church”.

As a church, we also have some unfair advantages such as: *our non-profit connections, our commitments to diversity, our existing connections in the arts, and our own in-house artists, writers, and musicians.*

The group gathered on May 16th was energized by the idea and agreed that as a church we should continue to explore the idea. Next steps include:

- Visiting a café church that is meeting in Pinole on Sunday evenings
- Developing a list of customer segments for these problems
- Creating a set of interview questions for the customer segments
- Devising a strategy for conducting interviews with desired customer segments
- Identifying potential partners for such a project within our networks

Further steps will also include being able to identify our *unique value proposition, the solution and then cost structure, revenue streams, and channels for reaching our desired customer segments.* All of this process is critical before we even consider thinking about real estate or another location.

We also agreed on a few preliminary principles. We agree that any new ministry model we pursue should be:

- Self-sustaining and must have potential ongoing revenue streams beyond stewardship built-in to the plan
- Focus on partnering with rather than simply renting to our groups
- Provide services that serve diverse communities

Do you find this idea intriguing? Are there other problems out there that we need to

consider? Would you be interested in being part of this ongoing process to determine our future as a church?

The Spiritual Practice of Walking Together



Concurrent with *Passport to Palestine*, you are invited to walk (or do whatever exercise you can) for the six weeks of the program so that we can symbolically walk the distances between the places we will visit.

I am challenging us to collectively walk/run/bike/swim/exercise 60 miles per week for the six weeks of the worship series. Your “passport to palestine” will also include a chart to track your miles so that on Sundays we can add our miles together to reach our goals.

If you aren’t a walker, here are some equivalent activities:

- 20 mins yoga = 1 mile
- 20 mins exercise = 1 mile
- 20 mins swim = 1 mile
- 2 miles biking = 1 mile
- 1 mile running = 2 miles

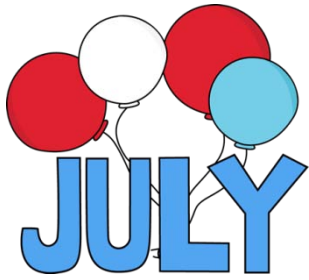
Here are the locations for our group walks:
Thursday, July 2, @Kennedy Grove, 6p
Thursday, July 9, @Alvarado Park, 6p
Thursday, July 16, @Point Isabel Dog Park, 6p
Thursday, July 23, @Albany Bulb, 6p

News from the Pews

Beth Koutz, Virginia Carrieri, and Sylvia Suggs received handmade prayer bracelets in thanks for their many years of service on the Mira Vista Council.

Bonnie Hariton will be attending the General Synod of the UCC in Cleveland while visiting her son Eliot.

Our pastor, **Melinda V. McLain** has been selected to attend a spiritual retreat for church musicians hosted by the amazing Ken Medema at Mercer University near Atlanta, July 13-16.



Mira Vista United Church of Christ

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2015

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|---|-----------|---|---|--|
| | | | 1 | 2 Walking together @ Kennedy Grove, 6 pm | 3 | 4  |
| 5 12 Noon Worship & Holy Communion, Social Action Team during La Mesa | 6 | 7 Mira Vista prepares lunch, GRIP Souper Center, 10am  Mindfulness Circle @ Patsy Stubbs, 7 pm | 8 | 9 Walking together @ Alvarado Park, 6 pm | 10 Leaders' meeting, Obelisco, 11:30-1:30 pm | 11 |
| 12 12 Noon Worship & Holy Communion, Worship Team during La Mesa | 13 Pastor Melinda on study leave @ Mercer University thru July 16 | 14 study leave @ Mercer | 15 | 16 Walking together @ Point Isabel, 6 pm | 17 | 18 |
| 19 Worship & lunch @ Dan & Bonnie's in Pinole, 10 am | 20 | 21 Mindfulness Circle @ Patsy Stubbs, 7 pm | 22 | 23 Walking together @ Albany Bulb, 6 pm | 24 | 25 |
| 26 12 Noon Worship & Holy Communion followed by La Mesa | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | |

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. All are welcome at our table!

Passport to Palestine: Our Summer Worship Fun Continues!

Have you been to the Holy Land? Would you like to go without having to sit on a plane for 18 hours?

- | | |
|---------|---------------------------------|
| July 5 | A Pilgrimage to Jerusalem |
| July 12 | Take Me to the Jordan River |
| July 19 | The Flight through Samaria |
| July 26 | Capernaum, the Jewel of Galilee |

July Celebrations

Happy Birthday

23rd Wilma West
24th Barbara Bly
29th Chris Hockley



Lots of happiness to each of you on
your special day!
With love, Mira Vista

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780 Ashbury Avenue
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Address Change Requested

Dated Material
July 2015

God's Love in Action



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published monthly by Mira Vista
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