

# The Fellowship Post

## Mira Vista United Church of Christ

July/August 2017

**Melinda's Musings: *Healing is impossible in loneliness; it is the opposite of loneliness. Conviviality is healing. To be healed we must come with all the other creatures to the feast of Creation.* – Wendell Berry, *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays***

Social isolation is one of the fastest growing health concerns in the U.S. According to a [2016 article](#) in the New York Times, the number of adults who say they are lonely has risen from 20% to 40%. Locally, the CDC reports that [20.9% of adults in Contra Costa County](#) have inadequate social support.

From increased risk of heart disease and stroke to exacerbated mental health problems such as depression, loneliness is making us sicker and sadder everyday. And again, according to the New York Times, "isolated individuals are [twice as likely](#) to die prematurely as those with more robust social interactions.

Traditionally, the Church was the place where you went in order to save your soul. In our own context, a healthy local church could be the place that might **save your life.**

The question for us, as we move forward towards creating a new model of being church is how we might reach those folks for whom being part of a healthy community could be life-saving.

At the same time, we have plenty of work to do



to maintain and strengthen our church's vitality.

***What keeps you coming back to Mira Vista on a regular basis? What gets in the way? What should we change or do differently? What do you value most about being part of this community?***

Love,  
Melinda

### ***Power Failure***

by Tom Emanuel, Associate Minister for Worship Arts

at the downtown café  
leaves patrons  
nervous, laughing, wondering  
when?  
lights will come on  
and we can resume  
electronic habits.

but windows offer  
sun and wind  
and the hum of  
Background Radiation,  
& by & by  
anxiety gives way  
to chattiness,  
the solidarity of  
disrupted expectations.

then! lights  
back up!  
and we revert  
(instantaneous)  
to laptops, sighing  
collective relief  
we need be plagued  
no longer  
by silence and conversation.  
...

April 2017  
Berkeley, CA

### Leadership Changes in the Mira Vista Community

At our Semi-Annual meeting on June 18th, **Brian Campbell-Miller** became the new **Moderator for Mira Vista Church**. Brian's background in law and real estate will no doubt be helpful as he seeks to lead the Church Council and the congregation into a new model of ministry. Brian and his husband Howard first came to Mira Vista in 2015 and were married here in the church on November 28th of that same year.

During the same meeting, the membership of Mira Vista renewed the **Designated Term Ministry of Rev. Dr. Melinda V. McLain** for another three years. This will allow more time for the implementation of **the GOOD table** keeping the option after these three years still open for converting to a settled call.

In addition, the Church Council has hired **Tom Emanuel** to be our new part-time **Associate**



**Minister for Worship Arts**. This new position is an 11-month contract and uses budget monies originally designated for another field ed

student plus funds from savings in the music leadership category. The position allows for about 10 hours a week of Tom's time and presence while he is in his final year of studies at Pacific School of Religion. Tom will continue to provide wonderful leadership in worship and will also assist in research and writing tasks associated with **the GOOD table**. Without the academic requirements associated with a field ed position, Tom will be more available to be engaged in these professional tasks.

And finally, the long transition and search for a **new Music Director** is complete. **Tim K. Murphy** joins our community on July 2nd. Tim is an accomplished pianist who has played for



ballet companies for many years and is currently on the staff of Marin Ballet and is the accompanist for our sister

congregation **Arlington UCC in Kensington**. He is well-versed in many genres of music and brings a wealth of experience providing music for diverse spiritual communities. Beyond bringing his musical skills to our worship, Tim is excited about the possibilities of **the GOOD table** and will help us grow our practices of prayer and contemplation through music. Tim also sings, plays the guitar and has some facility with tablas and harmonium. Welcome Tim!



## Good News Report: Creating *the GOOD table*

by Rev. Dr. Melinda V. McLain, *reprinted from MVUCC Semi-Annual Report, June 2017*

In the first year of my Designated Term ministry here at Mira Vista, we met to consider how we might create a new model of ministry that would: **reach out and serve more people in our community, meet our own spiritual needs, and be sustainable over time.** We also identified our three main passions: **food, justice, and the arts.** The emerging big idea then became that our church should become a **community café** that we are now calling ***the GOOD table: food for body, mind, and spirit.***

The **Lean Start-Up process** helped us begin to develop a business plan for the new enterprise and we were also fortunate to become clients of the **New Business Law** practicum at U.C. Berkeley's, Boalt Hall to learn more about the legal ramifications of being a non-profit church operating a business.

In developing the business plan, a triple bottom line emerged that our café would be **financially sustainable**, offer measurable

**social services**, and as a church, provide for the **spiritual well-being** of the community.

Our current version of the business plan for ***the GOOD table*** describes the new venture:

**Objective:** to create a sustainable model of community ministry for the members of Mira Vista United Church of Christ that will extend beyond the current members into the future.

**Goals:** reduce food insecurity,

encourage generosity, decrease social isolation, foster spiritual growth, and celebrate ethical living by creating strong community connections between diverse peoples.

**Solution:** develop and operate a community café utilizing the “pay-what-you-can” or “pay-it-forward” philosophy and innovative forms of public hospitality focused on food, education, justice, and the arts. We envision a coffee shop with **daytime co-working space, pay-what-you-can lunches, and a venue for live music, education, meditation, innovative worship, and special events.**

This past year has been spent **networking, refining the business plan, and creating “pop-ups”** of various parts of the proposed model. At the same time, we have begun to “monitor” the real estate market in El Cerrito/Richmond. **Colleen Rodger, Brian Campbell-Miller**, have met with **Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch**, member of the planning department for the city of El Cerrito to consider our real estate needs and develop a strategy. We have also legally secured the fictitious business name of ***the GOOD table*** in Contra Costa County with the assistance of **Patsy Severson.**

Some of the significant outside relationships developed include: **Dorene Allen** of PSR's Ignite Institute who also teaches social entrepreneurship at the University of San Francisco and at U.C. Berkeley. Dorene has

done a first pass of the business plan and believes we are 80% ready to move forward. **Jim Becker** of the **Richmond Community Foundation** has expressed his support on behalf of the foundation for the project. In particular, Jim believes that the foundation may be able to partner with us on a pop-up of the food model. We have received some consulting about food service from **Carol Gilliland**, a chef caterer who operates a business called **The Loveable Feast**.

We have now had multiple “**pop-up**” **live music events** on first Sunday evenings in partnership with our friends at **El Cerrito Natural Grocery (NGC)** with jazz duo, **Amy Ukena and Hans Raag** including a lovely evening on New Year’s Day! For these events, **Howard Campbell** created a logo for *the GOOD table* and some marketing materials. We have gotten a few names for our mailing list and very positive comments from folks about our proposed café during these events. We are considering offering another Sunday evening live music event with **Ray Capiral** going forward.

I have been holding **community office hours** on Thursday afternoons at Catahoula Coffee, a community-minded local coffee roaster that I hope will become our coffee supplier. This “pop-up” has been interesting and has attracted members, friends from the wider community, and occasional opportunities for ministry to strangers in the coffee shop.

The most financially risky part of the venture is **food service**. On the other hand, being able to serve food is critical to our social service goals, so it is a problem we definitely need to solve. It is unlikely that we will find a building with an existing commercial kitchen, so smart renovation and a well-defined plan are critical to our financial success.

Over the next few months, I hope to **design and implement a food “pop-up”** to test potential locations, experiment with “pay-what-you-can” vs. “pay-it-forward” and look for a signature cuisine that will be popular with the community, flexible, healthy, and easy to serve.

From our retreat with **Bob Pearson** of the **One World Everybody Eats** organization, we adopted some additional goals for our food service including **keeping food waste** at a minimum plus using **local, organic, and sustainable ingredients**. We would also like to use **minimal packaging** and **easily cleaned and/or compostable serving vessels**. While this part of the model still feels daunting, I am hopeful that it will come together before the end of the year.

On the marketing front, I have created a Facebook page for *the GOOD table* and am now using that to promote our pop-ups and to create an online presence for the project. A UCC colleague who does web consulting, **Bet Hannon**, also secured the domain name **thegoodtableca.org** for us for 99 cents.

**This is a big dream and a big project for such a small community. As we go forward, I am hopeful that we will find all the expertise and human resources we need to make it a reality.**

*For a copy of the full report produced for the Semi-Annual meeting (digital or hard copy), contact Diane Young in the church office.*



## News from the Pews

Mira Vista celebrated **LGBTQ Pride** in our sanctuary and through our support of **United in Spirit** and the presence of our own **Patsy Severson** at the San Francisco parade. Patsy may be close to setting some sort of record by consistently attending the San Francisco event for 15 years.

**Tom Emanuel** will be headed to South Dakota in July to visit family and his home church of United Church of Christ, Vermillion. While there he will meet with his advisor for the ordination process, the **Rev. Jean Morrow**, who some Mira Vistans will remember from her time in this community while she was a student at PSR. Small world, eh?

We happily welcome **Evelyn "Sara" Brogden** into the community. She is a community organizer and political activist who has recently relocated to Berkeley from Florida.

We will celebrate the life of longtime member **Virginia Carrieri** on **Saturday August 12th at 11a** with a mostly music service followed by lunch together. Save the date and plan to attend. If you'd like to sing in the choir that day, be in touch with **Amy Ukena** or **Melinda McLain**.

**Joan Thompson** is reading a book about the Amish in preparation for a trip to Ohio with **Ken Alborn** that will include a visit to an Amish community.

For those who are not regularly present on Sundays, the congregation now includes three avid punsters: **Brian Campbell-Miller, Ken Alborn, and Tom Emanuel**. The groaning has become so acute, that a policy of three puns for free has been instituted. Any additional puns bring a fine of \$5 *per pun* to be placed in the offering plate immediately.

**Colleen Rodger, Melinda V. McLain** and **Amy Ukena** will be traveling to the Tanglewood Music Festival in Massachusetts July 26. Melinda and Colleen will then go on to visit friends in Portland, ME returning home on August 4.



*New Moderator Brian Campbell-Miller, Colleen Rodger, Melinda V. McLain and Tom Emanuel celebrate Pride Sunday on June 25*

## July Celebrations



13<sup>th</sup> Brady Morales-Woolery  
23<sup>rd</sup> Wilma West  
24<sup>th</sup> Barbara Bly

Happy Birthday to each of you

♥With love, Mira Vista♥

## August Celebrations

### Birthdays

4<sup>th</sup> Rev. Susan Meeter  
8<sup>th</sup> Rev. Thom Longinc  
18<sup>th</sup> Tharon McDavid  
19<sup>th</sup> Ardith Hyaes  
30<sup>th</sup> Michael Ozenberger



### Anniversary

3<sup>rd</sup> Wendy and Michael Wisely  
24<sup>th</sup> Patsy and Stan Severson

Lots of happiness to each of you  
on your special day!

♥With love, Mira Vista♥

July 

Mira Vista United Church of Christ

780 Ashbury Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530  
 phone: (510) 526-0110 fax: (510) 526-0110  
 email: office@miravistaucc.org  
 website: www.miravistaucc.org

2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
<b>2</b> 12 Noon Worship & Holy Communion, Social Action Team during La Mesa Live jazz w/ Amy Ukena and Hans Raag @El Cerrito Natural Grocery, 6-8:30p <i>FREE - invite your friends!</i>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> Mira Vista prepares lunch, GRIP Souper Center, 10a 	<b>5</b> Mindfulness Circle, El Cerrito Royale, 7p	<b>6</b> Community Office Hours with Pastor Melinda each Thursday @Catahoula Coffee, 2-5p Interfaith Meditation @Sycamore UCC, 6p	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b> 12 Noon Worship followed by La Mesa	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Community office Hours, 2-5p Interfaith Meditation @Sycamore UCC, 6p Council meeting, 7p	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b> 12 Noon Worship followed by La Mesa	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> Mindfulness Circle, El Cerrito Royale, 7p	<b>20</b> Community office Hours, 2-5p Interfaith Meditation @Sycamore UCC, 6p	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b> 12 Noon Worship followed by La Mesa	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> Melinda on vacation thru Aug 4 	<b>27</b> Interfaith Meditation @Sycamore UCC, 6p	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> 12 Noon Worship followed by La Mesa 	<b>31</b>					



*Mira Vista*  
**United Church of Christ**  
 780 Ashbury Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530  
 phone: (510) 526-0110 fax: (510) 526-0110  
 email: [office@miravistaucc.org](mailto:office@miravistaucc.org)  
 website: [www.miravistaucc.org](http://www.miravistaucc.org)

2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
		<b>1</b> Mira Vista prepares lunch, GRIP Souper Center, 10a	<b>2</b> Mindfulness Circle @ El Cerrito Royale, 7p	<b>3</b> Interfaith Meditation @Sycamore UCC, 6p	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	
		Melinda on vacation July 26 thru August 4 <span style="font-size: 2em;">→</span>					
<b>6</b> 12n Worship with Holy Communion followed by Social Action Team @ La Mesa	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> Community Office Hours with Pastor Melinda each Thursday @Catahoula Coffee, 2-5p  Interfaith Meditation @Sycamore UCC, 6p  Council meeting, 7p	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	
<b>13</b> 12n Worship followed by La Mesa	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> Mindfulness Circle @ El Cerrito Royale, 7p	<b>17</b> Community office Hours, 2-5p  Interfaith Meditation @Sycamore UCC, 6p	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	
<b>20</b> 12n Worship followed by La Mesa	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> Community office Hours, 2-5p  Interfaith Meditation @Sycamore UCC, 6p	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	
<b>27</b> 12n Worship followed by La Mesa	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> Community office Hours, 2-5p  Interfaith Meditation @Sycamore UCC, 6p			

# 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 our common table, **La Mesa**. Feel free to bring food to share as you are able. We celebrate the sacrament of **Holy Communion every First Sunday**. All are welcome at our table!

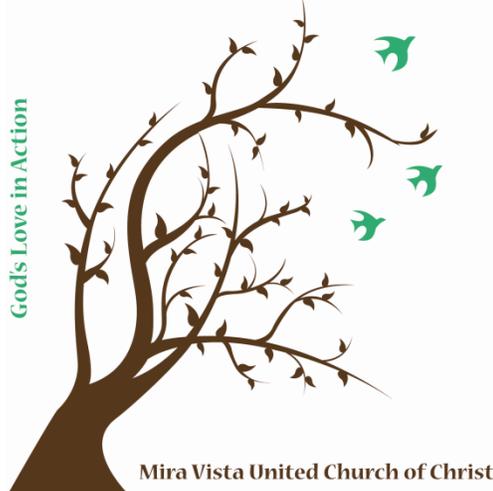
July 2	“Prophesying Peace” <i>Social Action Team meets during La Mesa</i>	Jeremiah 28: 5-9
July 9	“Prisoners of Hope”	Zechariah 9: 9-12
July 16	“Clapping Trees	Isaiah 55:1-10
July 23	“Solomon’s Wisdom”	1 Kings 3:5-12
July 30	“Great Small Things” <i>Tom Emanuel preaching</i>	Matthew 13:31-33. 44-46
August 6	“The Miracle of Food”	Matthew 14: 13-21
August 12	Celebration of the Life of Virginia Carrieri, 11a	
August 13	“Wind-Tossed by Faith”	Matthew 14: 22-33
August 20	“Spiritual Blindness” <i>Tom Emanuel preaching</i>	Matthew 15:10-14
August 27	“Spiritual Vision”	Matthew 16:13-20

\*\*\*\*\*

*Mira Vista United Church of Christ*  
780 Ashbury Avenue  
El Cerrito, CA 94530

Address Change Requested

**Dated Material**  
July/August 2017



*The Fellowship Post*

Editor: Diane Young  
published monthly by Mira Vista  
United Church of Christ  
An Open and Affirming Congregation  
780 Ashbury Avenue  
El Cerrito, CA 94530  
(510) 526-0110  
office@miravistaucc.org  
www.miravistaucc.org

Rev. Dr. Melinda V. McLain, pastor  
melinda@miravistaucc.org