

The Fellowship Post

Mira Vista United Church of Christ

June 2015

Melinda's Musings:

"To everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven." – Ecclesiastes 3: 1

Summertime in the church is a time of great change as members travel and patterns of attendance at worship and for meetings fluctuates. The choir takes the summer off. The kids are out of school. Grandparents often get more time with their grandchildren and all of us enjoy the longer days!

While this kind of change is expected and seasonal, other changes take place slowly and over time. Churches are great places to observe such slow changes. I know for myself that the church I was raised in barely resembles most of the churches where I have worshipped and served.

Even in my lifetime, women did not wear pants to church and still wore hats and gloves each Sunday. Everyone was of Euro-American descent – there was never any "diversity", churches were strictly segregated - even in California. Men were always attired in a suit and tie and their hair never touched the collar of their shirts. I still remember the furor in the First Presbyterian Church of Midland, TX when a man showed up in a "leisure suit" in the 1970's and then, when the youth minister decided to grow a beard "like Jesus", he was eventually fired.

The form and content of worship was also very controlled in those days. We sang the same responses every Sunday in the same way. We



stood for the reading of the Gospel and then for the Gloria Patria. The words and form of the Doxology were sacrosanct. Hymns were slow, hard to read and there were often too many "these", "thous" and "sendeths" to make much sense. As a child, I was usually bored and as I looked around the room and saw how many people were asleep, I knew I was not alone.

But things change. Worship in churches now strives to be relevant and timely, even as it preserves tradition and practices that still serve. And the generations that were bored as children now look with awe and fear to see young people bored again and unengaged.

Here at Mira Vista United Church of Christ, we are blessed to have developed a willingness to explore and experiment in worship. As a group, you are so easy-going that I am now on my third truly different order of worship and no one is complaining or throwing a fit! (phew!)

One of the biggest changes we have made is to celebrate communion every Sunday since the beginning of Lent. Some of you, particularly those with deep history in the Roman Catholic or Disciples of Christ tradition have loved having the sacrament of eucharist moved to the center of our worship.

Others have told me that the tradition of having communion only on the first Sunday would be just fine and in fact makes the sacrament feel more "special". No one is willing to fight for or against this proposition, but we are not of one mind about whether or not to have communion every Sunday.

At our recent retreat, we listened to one another and considered various ways for everyone to get their needs met. As a result, we will experiment with having communion at one of the tables during La Mesa during our summer worship series, *Passport to Palestine*. Simply look for the table with the chalice and bread in the center and join us. The celebration of the sacrament will be brief and then we can disperse for other meetings or to sit elsewhere as desired.

Have other feedback about worship? Do speak with Pastor Melinda or any member of the Council so that your voice will be heard.

Love and many blessings,
Pastor Melinda

June Semi-Annual Meeting & Potluck

On June 14, we will hold our semi-annual meeting and election. At this meeting we will

- Elect a vice moderator
- Re-elect the moderator
- Vote to support our minister with a short term loan toward rebuilding the house in El Sobrante.
- Receive reports

See you there!
-Bonnie Hariton, Moderator

Passport to Palestine: Our Summer Worship Fun!



Have you been to the Holy Land? Would you like to go without having to sit on a plane for 18 hours? Then plan now to be present on Sundays @12noon for our summer worship series, *Passport to Palestine*.

For six weeks, we will “visit” a different city or town in first century Palestine in order to understand the places where Jesus lived and

traveled and the first disciples preached the Gospel. This interactive, yet worship-filled, series will allow us to learn about the ancient place and the current reality of life in this trouble region of the world. Perfect for all ages!

This series of worship experiences is mostly-based on Bruce Chilton’s wonderful book, *Rabbi Jesus: An Intimate Biography*. This is an amazingly-accessible attempt at filling in the gaps in what we know about the life of Jesus. What happened between the curious story in Matthew when Jesus was 12 and then the beginning of his ministry around age 30? The Bible is silent about these years and on many other questions about the human journey of Jesus. Most of this book is educated conjecture, but just considering the possibilities presented in this book helps to make Jesus as a person come alive. So pick up your “passport” on June 21st and get it stamped each week to win a prize at the end of our tour!

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|---------|---------------------------------|
| June 21 | Where is Bethlehem? |
| June 27 | A “Mamzer” from Nazareth |
| 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 |

The Spiritual Practice of Walking Together

“Walk together children, don’t you grow weary” is one of my favorite African-American spirituals. Walking is also incredibly good exercise and even more fun when shared! I propose to have a group walk on Wednesdays at 6 pm, location TBD beginning on June 10.

Want to jumpstart your walking? Plan to come on the June 20th Refinery Healing Walk with Colleen and Pastor Melinda. (see article)

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

Look for information in the social hall about the benefits of walking. Let's move!

Refinery Corridor Healing Walk on Saturday, June 20th



There are 5 oil refineries along the Northeast San Francisco Bay: Tesoro - Shell - Valero - Conoco Phillips 66 and Chevron, plus a proposal for the WesPac oil terminal in Pittsburg. These are nonviolent walks Led by Native American Elders in prayer as we walk and pray for:

- Clean Air, Water & Soil
- Safe Jobs, Roads, Railroads & Waterways
- A Vibrantly Healthy Future for All Children
- A Just Transition to Safe & Sustainable Energy

There is a long history in Native America of these types of healing walks. *The Refinery Corridor Healing Walks* were inspired by the Tar Sands Healing Walks in Alberta, Canada,

the Longest Walks, and the Peace & Dignity Journeys.

In January of 2014, Idle No More SF Bay decided to organize a series of healing walks along the refinery corridor of the Northeast San Francisco Bay.

Front-line activists living along the corridor joined them and created the Bay Area Refinery Corridor Coalition (BARCC). Working together, these two groups organized the healing walks to bring attention to the health risks and dangers that the refineries pose and the explosive crude by rail coming through the communities from the Alberta tar sands and the Bakken oil fields. The groups also decided to begin a process to envision a just transition to a clean and safe energy future and an economy that supports everyone. Walkers are invited to write or draw these ideas on muslin squares at the end of each walk. These squares will be sewn into quilts. The quilts from 2014 will be shown at all of the walks.

We are walking as a commitment to Mother Earth and life on her beautiful belly. We walk as a commitment to clean air, soil and water. Members of Idle No More SF Bay conduct prayers at each refinery and toxic sites along the way. Prayers for the waters are conducted by Native American women at the beginning and end of each walk.

You are invited to join us on Saturday, June 20th at 8:00 a.m. to walk from Ninth Street park in Benicia and the Valero Refinery to Lone Street Park in Rodeo and the Conoco Phillips 66 Refinery. The walk will be approximately 14 miles with the option of taking breaks to ride in vans accompanying the walk. There will be medics and appropriate support for a walk of this nature. Those who wish to be of support could help transport walkers to the start of pick them up at the end. If you wish to come for the prayer service at 8:00 a.m., but forego the walk, that is also an option.

Pastor Melinda is planning to walk and would welcome any Mira Vistans who would like to participate in any way.

Welcoming New Member Ken Alborn

Even though it is hard to think of Ken as “new”, our dear brother and friend did join the Mira Vista church as a member on Pentecost. Self-described as not being a “joiner”, Ken chose to join us and we are glad!

Ken is a man of deep faith and spirit with willing hands to work. He is already engaged in Mira Vista in many ways. He assists his spouse Joan Thompson in breaking down the sound system on Sundays and then is usually the chief dishwasher in the kitchen during La Mesa. He bravely and fiercely faced multiple juniper stumps during our recent Rebuilding Together and has promised to help Colleen & Melinda continue to develop our new home in El Sobrante.

Do include Ken in your prayers and in your hearts. Welcome Ken!

News from the Pews

It's graduation time! **Chris Hockley** received his M.Div. from Pacific School of Religion on Sunday, May 24th. Our current music director, **David Joon Song** received his teaching credential from Cal State East Bay. Former music director, **Cindy Acker** graduated from U.C. Berkeley with a doctorate in educational leadership.

Brian Miller hosted a celebration of the life and legacy of Harvey Milk at the Hercules Library on Saturday, May 29th. Brian serves as president of that library.

Our pianist/organist **Ray Capiral** is producing wonderful concerts at his other church Open Door Methodist each Second Sunday evening.

Amy Ukena continues to perform often at the Baltic and other spots with her jazz guitarist accompanist Hans Raag.

Colleen Rodger and Melinda McLain are now in full remodel mode with their new house in El Sobrante. Lots of Mira Vistans came and worked hard in their new backyard on Saturday, May 23rd. They hope to move in late September.

The Amarillo Opera has agreed to apply for a commissioning grant to produce **Melinda McLain and Sarah Hutchings'** opera about the American Dust Bowl entitled, *The Broken Land*.

Matilde Hollander will be reading from her new book during the Bat Area Book Fest on Saturday, June 7th at 3:00 p.m.

Got more news? Let Pastor Melinda know.

June Celebrations

Birthdays

12th Olivia Wisely
15th Cathy Noble
17th Randi Nielsen
21st Alice Parks
28th Wendy Wisely



Anniversaries

17th Susan & Barbara

*Best wishes to each of you with
love from Mira Vista!*



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2015

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--------|--|-----------|--|--------|----------|
| | 1 | 2 Mira Vista prepares lunch, GRIP Souper Center, 10 am Mindfulness Circle, 7pm | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 12 Noon Worship & Holy Communion, Social Action Team during La Mesa  | 8 | 9 Council meeting, El Cerrito Royale, 6:45 pm | 10 | 11 Annual Gathering @ Sonoma State thru June 14 → | 12 | 13 |
| 14 12 Noon Worship & Holy Communion; Semi Annual meeting during La Mesa → | 15 | 16 Mindfulness Circle, 7 pm | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 12 Noon Worship & Holy Communion followed by La Mesa  <i>Passport to Palestine begins</i> | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 General Synod in Cleveland, OH thru June 28 → | 26 | 27 |
| 28 12 Noon Worship & Holy Communion followed by La Mesa → | 29 | 30 | | | | |

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!

June 7, Pentecost 2, Mark 20: 31-35, "Beyond the Box", Social Action Team during La Mesa. Final Sunday for the Amazing Graces before their summer hiatus.

June 14, Pentecost 3, Mark 4: 26-32, "Parabolic Growth", Semi-Annual Meeting during La Mesa

June 21, Passport to Palestine: Bethlehem, followed by La Mesa. (see article)

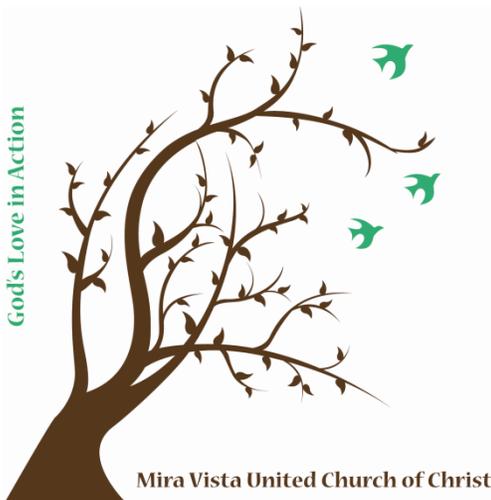
June 28, Passport to Palestine: Nazareth, with Sermon feedback and theology circle during La Mesa.



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Address Change Requested

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