

# The Fellowship Post

Mira Vista  
United Church of Christ

March 2013

## 'CLIFF NOTES,' LENT to EASTER

Students have always looked for shortcuts; before the internet, Cliff Notes were a way to skip the boring stuff. Cliff Notes summarized whole novels and plays – just in case we hadn't yet finished our reading before the class or exam.

We're halfway through Lent as I write this, so this morning I pulled together ALL the texts to see the theme emerging – and made a little "cheat sheet." *You're welcome.* Here it is, the last-minute-saint's guide to Lent and Easter (with thanks to The Message translation of Luke):

*Humans have a tendency to hang out with (to be preoccupied with) signs of death rather than signs of life. According to Jesus, that's stealing from the earth, when we could be sprouting our one wild and beautiful life. To get out of our death ditch, we need our enemies (aka "neighbors") to help us get on out of there. Even though we've already been raised into a blessed new life, like the lost boys of scripture we tend to spend a lot of time worrying over who's worthy, who belongs. You know the answer!*

*All together we are the communion, the body of Christ. We are at the same moment brave hens and scared chicks who run to safety in the love and mercy of God.*

*Use every adversity to stimulate you to creative survival – living, really living. Nothing is lost or wasted, so everything that happens is useful for the kingdom – now! Everyone's desperate for restoration, no matter what we*



*name it, so go ahead and call it out loud and clear. Help me live! Resuscitate my soul!*

*Back among Jesus' followers we call out 'Blessed is he who comes in God's name! All's well in heaven! Glory in the high places!' on the way into Jerusalem.*

*Sitting tombside, we watch as Jesus lets go, surrenders, gives it all over. He's showing us the way to move on. He's showing us that this wonderful thing called life is going somewhere good!*

*But there's a catch: "transformation and 'crucifixion' must intervene in between life and Life. Loss always precedes renewal in the physical and biological universe." [Fr. Richard Rohr, Immortal Diamond]*

*Jesus heard the call to glory, Jesus passed over, passed it on. He invited all of us to eat and drink at his table. Strengthened, we receive authority and responsibility for tomb opening. Give life -- you already know the way!*

*Doesn't seem real? Can't see the life after death? Watch Silver Linings Playbook – a real resurrection of a movie.*

*Finally, give up the destructive habits and stick with the rituals that renew. Rinse. Repeat. Happy Easter!*

*Pastor  
Susan*

## Social Action Team Corner

**Mission 4/1 Earth!** Your Social Action Team is eager to tell you about our spring earth-loving project. We're joining with the whole United Church of Christ on **Mission 4/1 Earth**. For the 50 days between Easter and Pentecost, **4/1 Earth** will bring us together in a common focus on the repair of our planet; each congregation will post their hours of activities online for one grand tally on the ucc.org website. We've done a little brainstorming on how we could participate as a congregation. Here are our first thoughts:

- Purchase and give away commemorative cards that pay for the planting of a tree in one of our national forests
- Hold a Sunday service at Point Isabel, which is on landfill
- Engage in environmental community service as a congregation
- Participate in local Earth Day activities together
- Identify a degraded plot of land and clean it up
- Join an April 27 Rebuilding Together project
- Volunteer in a local urban gardening project
- Write environmental advocacy letters as a congregation
- Order materials to help our congregation's kids get involved
- Watch and discuss films related to care for our earth

Consider this your invitation to participate! If you have ideas to share, please speak with Elizabeth Claman, Patsy Stubbs, Amy Ukena, Sylvia Sugg, or Pastor Susan.



### Charlotte Maxwell Complementary Care Fund Raiser

You've done it again, Mira Vista family! We were asked to raise funds in honor of Shirley Anderson for this clinic serving low-income women with cancer. (Shirley helped us organize our amazingly successful New Orleans fund raiser a few years back.) Our Social Action Team wrote a check for \$250, but then we asked you to chip in personally. All together Mira Vista UCC contributed something like \$900 to the Charlotte Maxwell Clinic. Thank you all for your generosity on behalf of this clinic that serves some 700 Bay Area women, many critically ill, with 6 staff and 350 volunteer practitioners

### *March Birthdays!*

*1<sup>st</sup> Howard Mackey*

*5<sup>th</sup> Patsy Severson*

*7<sup>th</sup> Patsy Stubbs*

*7<sup>th</sup> Claire Cotton*

*12<sup>th</sup> Kathe Kiehn*

### *The Fellowship Post*

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**United Church of Christ**

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## One Great Hour of Sharing – March 10, 2013



By working with local, national, and international partners, One Great Hour of Sharing provides support to health, education, refugee, agricultural and emergency relief initiatives in 138 countries. It is administered by Wider Church Ministries, Global Sharing of Resources.

The theme to this year's One Great Hour of Sharing campaign is "Sharing Brings Joy." I can't help but to some degree, see our giving campaigns as just so much marketing for a product -- that product being good feelings about saving the world. And when that idea dominates my head, I'm... well cynical. It doesn't help that I always struggle with the idea of "charity" as putting the giver in a one up position of power and shining a bright light on the 'disempowered recipient.' It all gets tangled in a philosophical, political, ethical mess in my head -- then I'm happy to write the check just so I don't have to think about it anymore.

But, in my position here, I am rather forced to think about it and further, to tell you what I'm thinking. So, here's what I have for you. The charity thing triggers me because it presumes an "us" and a "them." "Us and them" has a single story attached to it and that story is *always* "us" saving "them." When that story of "us saving them" is replaced, with say, a story of kindness and an understanding of our connection to one another, then it feels right to extend a helping hand.

When we were kids, we fell down, fell off of things, got bullied, got hurt, got disrespected and suffered losses. We got more careful as we got older, and at least, don't fall down as much. We also try really hard to protect ourselves from the other hurts and pains of living. But, if we are alive, we get hurt. The

hurts we experience are generally different from the hurts described in the One Great Hour of Sharing literature. Respecting those very real differences, getting hurt is only part of the experience. Experiencing the sorrow of getting hurt is also part of it -- that part seems more universal to me. I don't think sorrows can be measured against one another; I don't think they are qualitatively different. It's not "poor nation/rich nation" sorrow. Sorrow is sorrow. Like it or not, it happens to us all. But, hey, wasn't I talking about kindness in the last paragraph?

Read this excerpt from a poem by *Naomi Shihab Nye* to help with the connection:

Before you know kindness as the  
deepest thing inside,  
you must know sorrow as the other  
deepest thing.  
You must wake up with sorrow.  
You must speak to it till your voice  
catches the thread of all sorrows  
and you see the size of the cloth.

Then it is only kindness that makes  
sense anymore,  
only kindness that ties your shoes  
and sends you out into the day to mail  
letters and  
purchase bread,  
only kindness that raises its head  
from the crowd of the world to say  
it is I you have been looking for,  
and then goes with you everywhere  
like a shadow or a friend.

So, I'm not asking you to be charitable. Just think about the time(s) you "woke up with sorrow." Think about the size of that cloth. It's not tragic; it's an understanding of our common ground of being. Don't try to save the world. Offer kindness. A donation to One Great Hour of Sharing is one way. But, as Naomi Shihab Nye suggests, kindness will go with you everywhere like a shadow or a friend. Don't miss any opportunity to lead with kindness.

*Peace,  
Barbara*



## *Notes from the Music Stand*

Dear Mira Vistans,

Here we are, once again well into the Lenten season and the Amazing Graces have helped to prepare us for worship with two beautiful pieces, “God Be in My Head” by Andrea Ramsey and “Esto Les Digo”, by Kinley Lange. The women in our Amazing Graces choir have worked hard to create a loving, reflective space for us as we enter together into worship. It is good to be here, with them, now.

The Graces will continue to sing every Sunday during Lent – straight through until Easter, March 31<sup>st</sup>. Then they will take a week off and start up again on April 11<sup>th</sup> to prepare for Earth Sunday. We extend an open invitation to women to join us if you’d like. We’d love to have you.

Last Easter, we sang an anthem called “The Risen Christ.” I’d like to reprint part of the lyrics here for your meditation as you go through this season.

“O Breath of God, come fill this place.  
Revive our hearts to know Your grace.  
And from our slumber make us rise  
That we may know the risen Christ.”

On a personal note, I would like to extend my gratitude to Mira Vista for giving me a spiritual home, a place that allows me to explore my personal theology and musical gifts, as well as expand my idea of what a “family” is. Thank you. And thank you for the way you minister to each other. You teach me about community.

Namaste,  
Amy

## Keeping in Touch



**Mary Taylor**, long-time member of Northminster Presbyterian Church and more recently a member of Mira Vista UCC, passed from this world on February 20. She was 92.

Mary McConnachie Andrews was born September 1, 1920 in Houston, Scotland. She married Robert Wright on March 10, 1940 and they lived in Elderslie until Robert left for America to work until he could earn enough for the family to join him. Mary came to America in 1952 with their three children, a daughter Sheena and two sons Robert and Kenneth. Mary was a homemaker who enjoyed gardening, travel and baking. She also loved to

sew and knit beautiful clothes and spend time with her loving family.

After Mary's husband Robert died of a heart attack in 1966, she married Henry Taylor, also originally from Scotland. Henry was a Mason and they travelled to many Masonic and Hands of Friendship functions. After Henry died in 1995, Mary continued to live in their El Cerrito home until a stroke required a move to El Cerrito Royale, an assisted living facility.

**We're going Green!** – well, sort of. Do you receive our newsletter via email, snail mail or both? For those of you who receive our newsletter both by email and mail, would you consider receiving it by email only?

We will have paper copies at church for you; we'll be in touch

## *Sisters in Solidarity • Hermanas en Solidaridad*



**Saturday March 9, 2013 10am-3pm**

**Lovonya DeJean Middle School  
3400 Macdonald Avenue Richmond CA**

Come out and enjoy a day of: Networking with neighbors and local community organizations; Taiko drumming; Zumba; panel discussions; art projects; free and delicious food; poetry and spoken word  
A march from Lovonya de Jean to the Civic Center Plaza



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Mira Vista United Church of Christ

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Yoga, 9-10:15 am
3 Holy Communion 12 Noon Worship 	4 Yoga, 5:30–6:45pm	5 Mira Vista prepares lunch, Souper Center, 10am 	6	7 Choir, 7pm	8	9 Yoga, 9-10:15 am  <i>Sisters in Solidarity, Lovonya DeJean</i>
10 12 Noon Worship SAT Meeting	11 Yoga, 5:30–6:45pm	12 Bible Study, 1pm  Mindfulness group 6:45pm @ Joann's	13  Susan attending Jesus Seminar	14 Choir, 7pm	15	16
17 12 Noon Worship	18 Yoga, 5:30–6:45pm	19 Bible Study, 1pm	20 Council Meeting, 7pm	21 Choir, 7pm	22	23 Yoga, 9-10:15 am
24 12 Noon Worship Palm Sunday	25 Yoga, 5:30–6:45pm	26 Bible Study, 1pm  Choir, 7pm	27	28  Maundy Thursday	29	30 Yoga, 9-10:15 am
31 12 Noon Worship Easter!						

## Worship for March 2013

March 3, 2013, 12 noon

### **Holy Communion**

Lent 3: Luke 15:1-3; 11b-32

**Habit 1: Accept Your Worthiness**

March 10, 2013, 12 noon

Lent 4: Luke 16:19-31

**Habit 2: Unravel Adversity**

March 17, 2013, 12 noon

Lent 5: Luke 18:31-19:10

**Habit 3: Focus On "Yes!"**

March 24, 2013, 12 noon

**Palm Sunday Celebration:** Luke 19:29-44

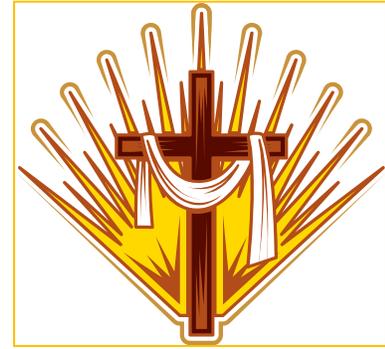
### **Middle Eastern Lunch**

**Habit 4: Welcome Everything**

March 31, 2013, 12 noon

**Easter Sunday Celebration:** Luke 24:1-16

**Habit 5: Yes! to Miracles**



March is a l-o-n-g month – and this year we keep on trucking all the way from the two lost sons who don't know what the Risen Life means...to the disciples who don't know what the Risen Life means. So if you too don't know what's true, where's love, who's worthy – come and join the caravan from **Lost to Found**, from **Dead to Alive**, from **Buried to Risen**. We'll talk about a couple of habits that can help keep you on the track of Aliveness – no matter what. *Welcome, supper's ready, you are loved!*

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Address Change Requested

**Dated Material**

March 2013

