



The Fellowship Post

Mira Vista
United Church of Christ

March 2015

Melinda's Musings: *What Does Your Jesus Look Like?* by Pastor Melinda

During the season of Lent, it is a good time to think more concretely about Jesus as a human being, as a teacher, and as a friend.

The small-town Presbyterian church I grew up in didn't have any images of Jesus anywhere in the building and Jesus was rarely the subject of our hymns. All those "Jesus as friend" hymns belonged to the Baptists across town and weren't our standard fare. I was raised with an emphasis on Matthew 25 that the face of Jesus is the face of your neighbor in need. Over the years, as I've buried over 250 people to HIV/AIDS and labored in inner city vineyards, I've seen Jesus in the faces of many, many people and in many places.

On my desk at home, I have a sculpture made by my childhood pastor, the Rev. John Otey, now deceased, that depicts Matthew 25. This is a "real" image of Jesus for me because it depicts my understanding of who Jesus is in relationship to us.

On the web, I found a wonderful website of images of Jesus through history and I'm fascinated by the way that the images mirror any good history of western art. Each image reflects the style of painting prevalent in the period and in some ways, perhaps, the Christology, too.

http://www.religionfacts.com/jesus/image_gallery.htm



Among these images, I find myself more attracted to the "earthier" images that show Jesus as a poor man, a bit unkempt, and less fancy. Unfortunately, when you click on the images, you don't get a lot of information about artists or origins, though a few do have notes. And for certain, Jesus the human being would not have had blond hair and blue eyes - he

would have most certainly been of a darker complexion with brown eyes and dark curly hair. What difference does it make if you think of Jesus as a black man?

I'm also fascinated by all the "sightings" of Jesus and Mary in various places and the veneration they receive. This one comes from my home state of Texas and is entitled, "Jesus on a moth". The cool part is that this is a very abstract Jesus image, in my opinion, but still perhaps accurate because the Divine can be seen throughout the creation.

<http://www.kltv.com/Global/story.asp?s=8911069> And even if you don't "believe" in the divinity of Jesus, who we say that Jesus is matters greatly.

Ultimately, I believe all images of Jesus can only be seen "through a glass dimly" and yet each day, we encounter the Christ everywhere.

Love and many blessings,
Melinda



Now more than ever: We can do more together!

A Reflection on the One Great Hour of Sharing Special Offering
from ucc.org

When the Apostle Paul visited the early churches in Macedonia, they became excited about the ministry opportunities he laid before them. These early followers of Jesus couldn't help but get caught up in Paul's contagious zeal for the ways God was working in their midst. So much so, in fact, that they actually pleaded to be a part of the "service to the saints" Paul spoke of while visiting their community-even though they were themselves living in poverty. This "ministry to the saints," referred to in (2 Corinthians 8:13-15) is another name for the offering Paul and the early churches were organizing for those in distant Jerusalem who had been suffering as a result of a devastating famine. The offering was considered a ministry; in other words, an expression of religious conviction, a spiritual calling, a living out of one's faith.

To organize a church-wide offering, a relief fund, if you will, (One Great Hour of Sharing is not original!) was not only practical in leveraging funds, it was also a visible expression of their Christian unity. This offering was a way for Paul to model the unity of all believers and to provide a way for them to care for one another-even if they did not know each other personally. For the churches in Macedonia and Corinth, many of them would never see or meet the offering was a concrete representation of the Gospel, that in Christ there truly was no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, might 1 add rich or poor-no longer separation or division, but unity in Christ.

Everyone, regardless of economic or social location, has a gift to give. Our God supplies the gifts and resources so that we can give back. After all, none of what the early followers of Jesus gave was really theirs, right? Because all that we have-all that we have-is whose? God's! We're simply giving back to God what is already God's. In giving to God, we give to others. The act of giving is an act of faith,

believing that our gift will be part of transforming a life, a community, and indeed, the whole world.

Our generous and gracious God has given us life and a world where there is already enough for all-this has been proven time and again. It is our task, thus, to ensure a fair balance. As the Church in the world, through One Great Hour of Sharing, we have the opportunity to act in one accord as the body of Christ by giving what we have; to collaborate and strategize on how we might share this world of enough in ways that are more equitable; ensure that everyone gets a part of the plenty, and guarantee that all of God's children have what they need. This is the offering, the "ministry to the saints" that Paul was promoting.

This is still our ministry, all these centuries later, through One Great Hour of Sharing-received not only by this church family, but across the country by Christians of many denominations contributing to an ecumenical offering-which has shared abundance for the meeting of needs for almost seven decades. Mira Vista will receive this national offering this year on Sunday, March 15th. In addition to helping folks across the world, we also know that One Great Hour of Sharing is the primary funding mechanism for disaster ministry in the United States with every dollar going to those who have been affected by hurricanes, floods, superstorms, and earthquakes. Give as generously as you are able.

March Celebrations

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

5th Patsy Severson

7th Patsy Stubbs

12th Kathe Kiehn



With love from Mira Vista





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2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 12 noon Worship & Communion  The Found Altar during La Mesa	2	3 Mira Vista prepares lunch, GRIP Souper Center, 10 am Mindfulness Circle @ Patsy Stubbs, 7 pm	4 Pre-Council meeting @ Namaste, 12 noon Mid-week Lenten prayer with Christ Lutheran, 6:30 pm; soup supper @ 6 pm	5 Amazing Graces, 7 pm	6	7 
8 12 Noon Worship & Communion Worship team during La Mesa	9	10 Council meeting @ El Cerrito Royale, 6:45 pm	11 Mid-week Lenten prayer with Christ Lutheran, 6:30 pm; soup supper @ 6 pm	12 Amazing Graces, 7 pm	13	14
15 12 Noon Worship & Communion One Great Hour of Sharing offering Good News team during La Mesa	16	17 Mindfulness Circle @ Patsy Stubbs, 7 pm	18 Mid-week Lenten prayer with Christ Lutheran, Pastor Melinda leading, 6:30 pm; soup supper @ 6 pm	19 Amazing Graces, 7 pm	20	21
22 12 Noon Worship & Communion Theology circle during La Mesa	23	24	25 Mid-week Lenten prayer with Christ Lutheran, 6:30 pm; soup supper @ 6 pm	26 Amazing Graces, 7 pm	27	28
29 12 Noon Worship & Communion Psalm Sunday followed by La Mesa	30	31				

Our worship life together . . .

Join us on Sundays at 12 noon for our celebration with music and preaching and then stay for lunch because our worship continues as we share food and friendship together. During the season of lent we are taking a more contemplative approach to our worship and we are celebrating Holy Communion every Sunday. All are welcome at our table!

March 1, Lent 2, Mark 8: 34-38, "Love, Life, and Loss", **The Found Altar** during La Mesa

March 8, Lent 3, John 2: 13-22, "Signs of Destruction", **Worship team** during La Mesa

March 15, Lent 4, Mark 12: 38-44, "Small Greatness", **Good News team** during La Mesa

March 22, Lent 5, Mark 13: 1-13, "Good News in Bad Times", **Theology circle** during La Mesa

March 29, Palm Sunday, Mark 11: 1-11 "Hosanna", followed by La Mesa



SAVE THESE DATES: National Rebuilding Day, April 18 and 25

We have decided to participate with Rebuilding Together East Bay-North to help renovate a home for a neighbor in need. Mira Vista has done this before and let's do it again! Saturday April 18th will be a training day and time to get our assignments. Then on Saturday, April 25th we will go do the work!

Please let Pastor Melinda or Patsy Stubbs know if you plan to participate. This is also a swell opportunity to invite your friends, neighbors, and able-bodied family members to help us make a difference!

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Address Change Requested

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God's Love in Action



Mira Vista United Church of Christ

The Fellowship Post

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