

The Fellowship Post

Mira Vista
United Church of Christ

March 2016

Melinda's Musings:
by Rev. Dr. Melinda V. McLain

After nourishment, shelter, and companionship, stories are the thing we need most in the world. – Philip Pullman

The story of Jesus is often referred to as “the greatest story ever told”. And like most complicated stories, the meaning of the story shifts depending on what elements of the story are given more emphasis. This is the reason that there have **always** been so many different denominations, traditions, and understandings about Jesus.

In our current era, these different interpretations of the story of Jesus are so divergent that it is often hard to imagine they ever shared a common source. For our sisters and brothers who focus on the crucifixion of Jesus, the suffering of this world comes to the foreground of the story. With an emphasis on the cross comes an emphasis on sin and redemption. Other interpreters prefer to focus on the resurrection and yet others focus on the humanity of Jesus as a teacher and moral leader. All are telling the same story, but with these shifts in interpretation, the meaning can vary widely

When the Roman Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity in the Third Century, he was dismayed by the diversity of views amongst the followers of Jesus and insisted that they come to one view that could become



the standard for faith and practice. The believers at the time met in various councils

and began to labeling various interpretations of the story acceptable and others not.

Because the Emperor insisted on an orthodox standard, those who understood the story in other ways were labeled heretics and a very long and grievous path of terror began that continues in the current age as to exactly who is - and who is not - a christian.

In the United Church of Christ, our spiritual ancestors decided that a uniform telling of the story was not necessary and that indeed our “unity is found in our diversity, not our conformity”. This is a tremendous gift to us in the current age when other cousins in the Christian family are basically at war with one another. It is also an opportunity to act as peacemakers amongst our sisters and brothers of faith.

As we conclude the season of Lent and celebrate Easter, I invite you to consider what the story of Jesus means to you. What parts of the story animate your own faith? Which parts of the Jesus story enable you to identify as a follower of Jesus? Are there parts of the story that separate you from that identity? Do you feel comfortable sharing the story of Jesus, as you understand it, with others?



The Power of Partnership

By Pastor Melinda

Our legal team from the **New Business Law Practicum at UC Berkeley Boalt Hall** brings worldwide experience to our project to create a Café/Cabaret Church. Two of the three students working on our case are practicing attorneys from beyond the United States who are in a one year program to prepare for taking American bar exams. **Joao Nascimento** is from Brazil and **Nathaniel Mouyal** is from France. They are coordinated by **Justine A. Black**, a 2nd year student.

In our first meeting, we were asked to further develop the business model so that the team, who is supervised by **Professor William Kell**, could begin to lay out the various legal entities that could support the business activities we envision. They will also help us with various legal documents to support the business such as a template for partnership with other organizations and legal advice about the employment issues involved.

We asked for further support in developing a business plan and they will connect us with a **volunteer MBA** who consults with the program to do that work.

Do save the date now for an **all-day retreat on Saturday, April 23rd** when **Bob Pearson of the One World Everybody Eats** foundation will come to talk to us about the pay-what-you-can café movement. By that time, we hope to be able to present more of the potential business model and plan.

If you want to hear more about this process in detail, do speak **Bonnie Hariton, Tom Emanuel, Colleen Rodger, or Pastor Melinda**. Also, many thanks again to **Nancy Lemon** for connecting us to this program!

News from the Pews

Amy Ukena's wonderful concert on Valentine's day was a vision of things to come

in a cafe/cabaret church. Beautiful and fun way to give to mission and support local musicians!

Pastor Melinda's mother had a stroke on February 25, but is on the road to recovery. Many thanks to all for prayers and support during this challenging time.

Under Pressure

By Tom Emanuel

Love's such an old-fashioned word, but that doesn't stop us wanting the neurochemical combustion and codependence for which we have learned to mistake it. We find ourselves driven to the hunt because we are hunted ourselves by a Happily-Ever-After that we know, deep down, is a lie or at most a sunny gloss on a life of unquiet desperation and fierce compromise. But we are creatures of habit, and we desire that which we have been taught to desire. So we career through the forest, hound-tracked and harried, somewhere between blackout and white-knuckle, legs atremble for fear that if we stop chasing Love, it might overtake *us*—not the needy kind we have grown up pursuing, but Real Love, the kind that will not permit us to keep running, the kind that roots us to the spot and dares us to change our way of caring about ourselves, the kind that does not fill our empty places but forces us to love the emptiness itself.

HAPPY
BIRTHDAY

5th Patsy Severson
7th Patsy Stubbs
12th Kathe Kiehn

Happy Birthday to each of you

♥ with love from Mira Vista! ♥



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2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Mira Vista prepares lunch, GRIP Souper Center, 10a  Mindfulness Circle @ El Cerrito Royale, 7p	2	3 Open Door Interfaith Zen, 6p Amazing Graces, 7p	4 World Day of Prayer 	5 NCNC Church Day, @Danville UCC, 8:30a-4p
6 12n Worship with Holy Communion followed by Social Action Team @ La Mesa One Great Hour of Sharing offering	7	8 Mira Vista Council @ Mira Vista UCC, 7p	9	10 Open Door Interfaith Zen, 6p Amazing Graces, 7p	11	12 Spring Forward  Daylight Savings Time begins 2AM Sunday!
13 12n Worship followed by La Mesa with Holy Communion	14	15 Mindfulness Circle @ El Cerrito Royale, 7p	16	17 Open Door Interfaith Zen, 6p Amazing Graces, 7p St. Patrick's Day	18	19
20 12n Worship followed by La Mesa with Holy Communion Palm Sunday  Spring begins	21	22	23	24 Maundy Thursday Service @ El Cerrito Royale, 7p 	25 	26 
27 12n Worship followed by La Mesa with Holy Communion 	28	29	30	31 Open Door Interfaith Zen, 6p Amazing Graces, 7p		

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. We celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion every First Sunday in the sanctuary and during La Mesa on subsequent Sundays. All are welcome at our table!

During the **liturgical season of Lent** we have been tracing the **Legacy of Love** by focusing on the Hebrew texts from the lectionary paired with poetry, drama, and music to inspire our own sense of legacy as a community of faith and practice.

March 6	"Food for the Journey"	Joshua 5: 9-12
March 13	"The Way Through"	Isaiah 43: 16-21
March 20	"The Drama of Holy Week" Palm/Passion Sunday <i>Tom Emanuel preaching</i>	Luke 19: 28-40
March 24	Maundy Thursday Service at El Cerrito Royale	
March 27	"An Idle Tale" Easter Sunday	Luke 24:1-12



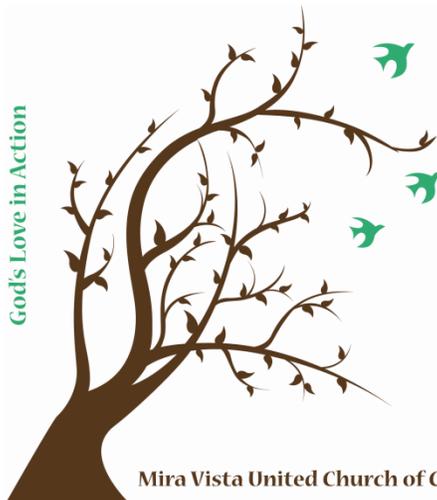
Christ is Risen!

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Address Change Requested

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God's Love in Action



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The Fellowship Post

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