

The Fellowship Post

Mira Vista
United Church of Christ

May 2014

Pastor's Corner

Last month I wrote about "...that in-between time, the time for our bodies, our psyches to catch up with what is truly the present moment: transition time, the liminal space.

"Transitions are a powerful time for rest, reflection, solitude: so much of the power is in the waiting and the listening and the trusting (or not trusting)."

That may or may not reflect your reality, Beloved Ones. You who are part of the community known as Mira Vista UCC are in transition from a long-time settled pastor to...you don't yet know. As your pastor I am in transition from your long-time settled pastor to...I don't yet know.

When we are in a time of neither-here-nor-there, we are vulnerable to our worst nightmares about times of change. We may also find ourselves open to a new experience of beginnings and endings. May it be so for us now.

This morning I'm reflecting on Jesus, who surely endured the mother of all transitions: life to death to something new during three days in the tomb; resting and waiting in a dark passage from Jesus to Christ. When liturgical churches celebrate Holy Saturday, they occupy that empty, expectant space for a time between two worlds.



The meaning of Jesus' transition was not at all clear. No one recognized the fully transfigured Jesus at first, not even Mary Magdalene; a variety of stories attempting explanation circulated at the time. First Corinthians 15:44, one of the earliest writings, says: "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body."

The mystical Christ potentially rising within each of us defies our rational minds and may not be easily discerned. It takes time, patience, and trust. Paul said in 1 Cor 15:22 that those who follow the way of Christ "shall be made alive."

After a lifetime of spiritual practices, Thomas Merton said upon encountering gigantic Buddha statues in Sri Lanka: "Looking at these figures I was suddenly, almost forcibly, jerked clean out of the habitual, half-tied vision of things, and an inner clearness, clarity, as if exploding from the rocks themselves, became evident and obvious."

While I am not in all ways yet ready for the ending of this pastor-parish relationship, I do feel we have all the time we need for a full and rich parting of the ways. I also believe that we cannot truly be separated, in life or in death, because we are one in the mystical body of Christ and we will always, in subtle ways, discern each other's presence.

With love and gratitude,

Pastor
Susan



Sunday, May 18, over lunch, **Kia Croom**, Community Relations Director of GRIP (Greater Richmond Interfaith Program) will bring us -- founders and supporters -- updates on its programs that engage with the people suffering from hunger and homelessness in our communities.

Saturday, June 14, our faith community will host a farewell party for Barbara Cook and Pastor Susan Meeter at Bonnie and Dan Hariton's house. More information to come!

Sunday, July 20 will be Pastor Susan's last Sunday with us; we will engage in a ritual of release and a process of saying our goodbyes with her and Barbara on that day. Please plan to be part of this tender moment in the life of our church.

May Celebrations

Birthdays

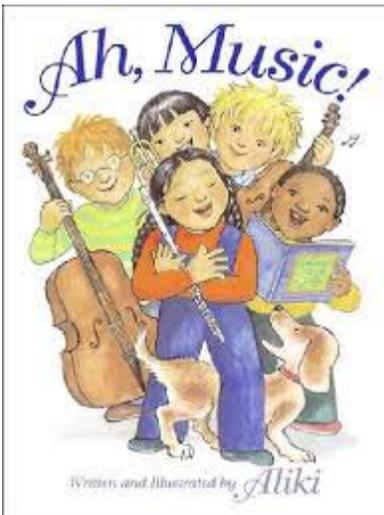
- 1st Eliot Hariton
- 4th Rev. Katie Morrison
- 7th Marilyn Colbert
- 12th Mhel Kavanaugh Lynch
- 22nd Wendy Mahoney
- 23rd Beth Koutz
- 29th Ken Alborn



- 22nd Betty & Howard Coates
- 26th Nancy Lemon & Blain Devine

From Our Hearts to Yours





Music is God's project to begin a process of resurrection in the lives of humans by colonizing earth with soulful heavenly thoughts.

Thank you for allowing me to share in the ministry of music at Mira Vista. I thoroughly enjoy the Amazing Graces, and how they have welcomed me. My background in music is rather theologically diverse, so I welcome your input regarding favorite music pieces or ideas to consider.

The hope for this Eastertide season is to incorporate music which brings us to that centering place after the wonderfulness of resurrection. Scientists indicate that our brain isn't actually wired to live in a period of total non-stop ecstasy (can you believe that?), but we are set to operate in cycles, with the brain desirous of moving back to a place (the valley) of tranquility. Since music fuels the soul, during special holy days of excitement/joy, there would be a spiritually organic need to reflect, for in that reflection, one refuels and gathers hope. It is my hope that some of the quiet music stirs something within you to reach that place of stillness. If you tune into it, you may feel an energy shift within the congregation while singing. I love that!

I am excited to begin work on two pieces which have been suggested by the choir: the 23rd

Psalm and Sing me to Heaven. I think both pieces definitely resonate with Eastertide. It has been wonderful to hear the voices of the choir, *and* to hear soloists!

Susan asked about my favorite music, and that is so difficult to pinpoint, because I really love all types of music, and I have learned to find myself within the body of music somewhere within many theological pieces. Many people assume that I have always known gospel music, but I was actually raised a Catholic and enjoyed guitar mass. My spiritual journey has taken me from there to many different places, and so I enjoy gospel, Taize, traditional and contemporary spiritual music. I also enjoy eliminating words at certain times, to allow everyone to just allow the music to reach deeply within. At home, I love to sing to 80's music, to clean the house to 60's/70's music and to listen to harp/flute combinations and some of Eckhart Tolle's music for stillness. I love the classical holiday music at the SF Symphony, however, one of my favorite holiday concerts is Colors of Christmas with Peabo Bryson. I sing with one of the UC Berkeley choral ensembles, and I am excited that we will sing a couple of old spirituals for the upcoming Commencement ceremony. At my work (which is my school), I just performed Dionne Warwick's, That's What Friends are For, in a concert, but yesterday, I demonstrated loosening one's body, by singing and dancing to the song, Happy. So as you see, I am a lover of all kinds of music – in all of the forms the universe holds.

I look forward to hearing the music that you enjoy!

Blessings,

Cindy





During the month of April, the Mira Vista congregation met twice to consider our "Next Steps" in the light of Rev. Meeter's resignation.

At our meeting on April 6th, we decided to call another minister to start in August 2014. We want to establish a relationship with a new minister, adjust to changes in leadership, and, in 2015, open the discussion to a possible move. We decided to hire a designated term minister (not an interim minister). A designated term minister can stay with us for a chosen number of years, and work on something in particular with us. We do not have to write a church profile or advertise for a "called" minister. (An interim minister can only be with us while we are in between called ministers, and only for a year or so.)

At our meeting on April 27th, we decided to hire a full-time minister for the term of three years. We want the designated term minister to be like a quilter - helping us to fit bits and pieces together into a beautiful, useful pattern. We'd like the new minister to help us in discernment: explore with us where are we in a church's life cycle? what is our future direction? do we want to move? do we want to stand alone or with another church? how do we reach out and create allies in the community? We'd like someone who can continue to help us to be vital as a small church. And we'd like to understand more about being self-sustaining.

Now our Search Committee will work with the Northern California Nevada Conference of the UCC to find candidates who are interested and available to become our next minister. We are positive that, with the breath of God sustaining us, we will find a good match.

--Bonnie Hariton, Moderator

Two years ago this month, I made a decision to retire. Since that time I have come to



realize that retirement was not a good fit. I love the ministry of serving others and I have truly missed the ministry here at Mira Vista. I feel so blessed

to be back serving as your church administrator.

For the last couple of years, Mira Vista has been in a season of change: my resignation followed by Amy's; now Susan's resignation in July followed by Wendy's at the end of the year. That's a lot of changes for a church over such a short period of time. Just know that God has your back and so do I!

... be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love *the questions themselves* like locked rooms and like books that are now written in a very foreign tongue. Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. *Live* the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer. Resolve to be always beginning - to be a beginner!

-Rainer Maria Rilke
Rilke's *Letters on Love*

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 NCNC UCC Annual Gathering Thru May 4 Amazing Graces, 7 pm	2	3 No Saturday Yoga until further notice
4 HOLY COMMUNION Worship 12 noon →	5 Yoga, 5:30-6:45 pm	6 Mira Vista prepares lunch, GRIP Souper Center, 10 am 	7 Susan on meditation retreat thru May 13	8 Amazing Graces, 7 pm	9	10
11 12 Noon Worship <i>Mother's Day</i> Rev. Paul Honigs, presiding	12 Yoga, 5:30-6:45 pm	13 →	14 Leaders' Lunch, 12:30 pm Mindfulness group @ Patsy Stubbs, 7-9 pm	15 Amazing Graces, 7 pm	16	17
18 12 Noon Worship Mental Health Sunday	19 Yoga, 5:30-6:45 pm	20	21 Council meeting @ El Cerrito Royale, 6:45 pm	22 Amazing Graces, 7 pm	23	24
25 12 Noon Worship	26 Yoda. 5:30-6:45 pm 	27	28 Amy singing Jazz @ the Baltic, Point Richmond, 7-9 pm 	29 Amazing Graces, 7 pm	30	31

Worship for May 2014

What does it mean to be “an Easter People”? Every year we ask that anew as we listen through a series of Easter season “Greatest Hits.” In these stories, Easter people are the ones groping in the outer darkness of Jesus’ violent death, the ones shocked by the light of the Risen Christ, the ones with the rug pulled out from under them.

The **Greatest Hits post-resurrection stories** include **Luke’s travelers to Emmaus**; the **Farewell Discourse in John** (I will not leave you comfortless; my Father’s house has many mansions; may they all be one, as Creator and Christ are one); and the much beloved **Psalm 23**. May we draw new water from these ancient wells, water that will quench our thirst amidst new challenges and opportunities.

Sunday, May 4, 2014, 12 noon
Holy Communion
Luke 24:13-35, Travelling to Emmaus
Christ’s Presence in Our Hospitality

Sunday, May 11, 2014, 12 noon
Rev. Paul Honigs presiding
Mother’s Day; John 14:1-14
Don’t Let Your Hearts Be Troubled



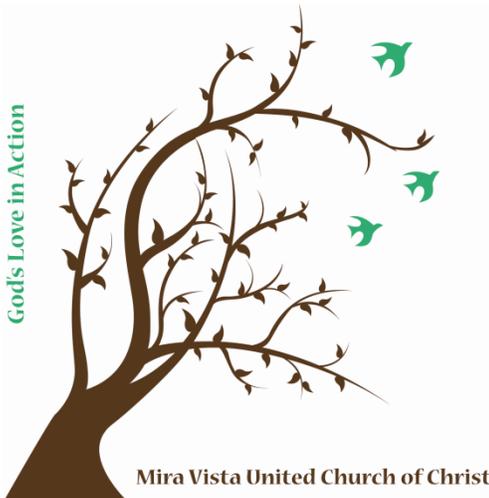
Sunday, May 18, 2014, 12 noon
Mental Health Sunday; Psalm 23
You Are With Me, Showing Me Each Step

Sunday, May 25, 2014, 12 noon
John 14:15-21
I Will Not Leave You Orphaned

Address Change Requested

Dated Material
May 2014

God's Love in Action



Mira Vista United Church of Christ