

The Fellowship Post

Mira Vista
United Church of Christ

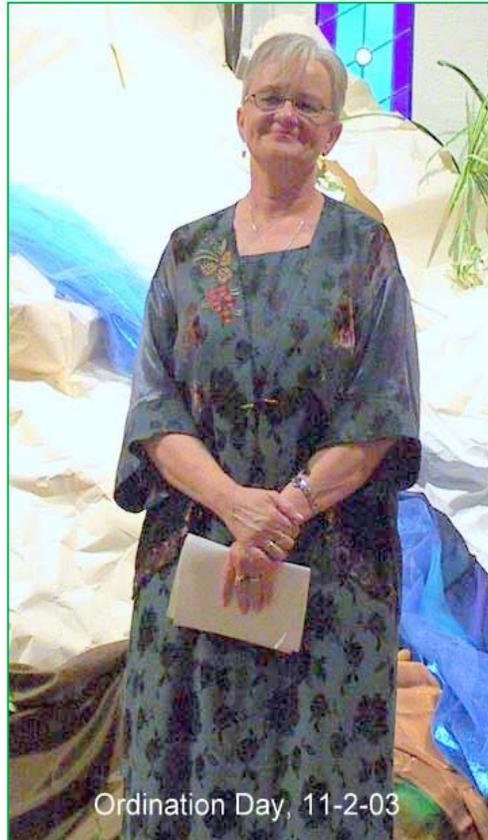
November 2013

Pastor's Corner

Friends, I have worshipped with you and shared your work and play most days for sixteen years – we have all invested a great deal just by walking the journey together – some of us for a long time, some for a short time. My life is composed of moments with you; my experience of the sacred is so much deeper and wider than I imagined, all because of each of you and the 1+1+1+1+1+1+1 we make together. I am confident that our journey going forward will offer just as rich a return on our mutual investments.

At this ten-year mark since my ordination, I've been thinking about the changes in my own life as I walked alongside you all, from the superficial to the sublime. I have now lived in the same home for ten years; in the previous six years I moved eight times! While walking with you, I have experienced: the beginning of my relationship with Barbara; the returns and illnesses of my children; the final illnesses and death of both of my parents; two weddings, one sacred and one civil, with Barbara; a shifting of roles from psychologist to seminarian to chaplain, and finally to your ordained minister.

You have formed me as a minister and welcomed me as your pastor. Truly this web of relationships, the Mira Vista community, is precious to me. Thanks for the memories; thanks for the journey: 10 years of ordination,



Ordination Day, 11-2-03

16 years of mutual ministry.
Thanks be to God!

Managing Your Investments

It's that time of year when your church invites you to think about what you are contributing to Mira Vista right now; you are invited to make a pledge of what you hope to be able to contribute in 2014. What are you offering to God, to your fellow members and friends, and to all the missions of our church? What do you hope might change next year, if anything? In churchy language, this is called stewardship season: the time of year when we look at how we are doing as stewards of our time, money, influence, skills, and God-given abilities.

Your church invites you to make a financial pledge, which your Council needs to plan a budget for 2014. Your church also invites you to consider what surprising gifts beyond money you have to offer. What could be more important than pausing to consider how our actions align with our values? With practice, we can live a more conscious life, a life more aware moment by moment.

In the language we use in a financial frame, now is the time to consider the resources available to you and how you might invest them in 2014. Perhaps for some of you "investment" is not a neutral word, if you feel shame about how much or how little you have invested in financial instruments, for example. Perhaps thinking of your own financial investments highlights the vast differences

among us even in one small faith community: some of us have more than we will spend in this lifetime, and others of us can only live day to day.

Whatever words you prefer to describe your life, wouldn't it be a good thing for us to become more sensitive to each other's available resources? Couldn't we each consider once a week how we have spent all that is ours to spend, and how that aligns with our values? Have no shame for yesterday; take pleasure in your rebalanced investments today.

Next installment: comparing our return on investment to that of biblical characters.
For now, notice each day's surprising gifts!

Pastor Susan

Come Celebrate Pastor Susan with Us on November 3rd!

by Bonnie Hariton, Moderator

Ten years ago, on November 2, 2003, we the congregation at Mira Vista UCC ordained Rev. Susan Meeter and called her to be our pastor. Ordination in the United Church of Christ is the rite by which people are set apart to do ministry and are blessed by prayer and the laying on of hands. Through the ceremony of Ordination, we authorized Susan to serve as our priest, pastor, teacher, prophet, and administrator.

Just think of all the times during these past ten years that Rev. Susan has performed the rites of communion and baptism. Recall the countless times she has cared for us in our joys and sorrows, through listening, prayer, letters, and standing alongside. Think of how she has instructed us during her sermons and showed us by her own living what it means to have faith. Remember how she has led us as a church toward corporate responses to the word of God: bringing more justice into our neighborhoods and our country. Consider how she has trained leaders and managed the organization of our church.

I think you would all want to join me in saying to Susan, "This is our beloved minister, in whom we are well pleased!" We are beyond joyful that God has given us this time together. Let us come together at Noon on November 3rd to worship and to celebrate this 10th anniversary. Let us bless Susan and bless her ongoing walk in ministry with us at Mira Vista UCC.

Susan chose to be ordained on All Saints' Day as a way of connecting her ordination with her ancestors in faith: important teachers in her first faith family, mentors along the journey, her personal ancestors, and all the saints who have lifted up the Way of Jesus from his time on earth to ours.

On this All Saints' Day, Rev. Dr. Curran Reichert, pastor of Congregational Community Church of Tiburon (UCC) will bring her own Spirit-inspired message to bless and inspire us on our journey together. (Curran is the wife of Rev. Katie Morrison, who many of you know, and the mom of Ellis Jane, Susan and Barbara's goddaughter.)



The Amazing Graces will sing “Come to Me,” by Michael Joncas, a piece they sang also for Susan’s ordination ten years ago. The words are based on Matthew 11:28-30. “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”



We will incorporate festivities from Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) into our worship theme and lunch. For worship, we will create a special "offerenda" (offering table) to thank our ancestors. If you would like, bring a small picture of someone dear to you who has passed on, or bring a paper with their name, either of which we can place on the offerenda alongside the flowers, candles, sugar skulls, and other decorations and food. For lunch, we have a wonderful, special

lunch planned, with chips and salsa, chicken in mole sauce, tortillas with cheese, rice and green and jello salads, flan and chocolates and virgin sangria.

We look forward to celebrating together!



Marigolds in November

How an old tradition began to heal a young heart

Carlo Busby of *Sagrada Sacred Arts* store wrote “Marigolds in November” for their newsletter. I share excerpts of it with you so that you might understand why a church of mostly northern European ancestors will taste a little of Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) this year. **On Sunday, November 3, you are invited to bring photos or names or mementos of your biological or spiritual ancestors** – people whose lives fed yours – and we will celebrate the sweetness of those ancestors with our sugar skulls, marigolds, and special foods.

Matilde Hollander tells me that in her native Chile this annual celebration is somewhat different, as it is in the rest of Latin America. Here in California the decorations and customs reflect Mexican tradition. Wherever and however it is celebrated, this holiday reunites and honors beloved ancestors, family, and friends. It is an ancient and enduring ritual when the living commune with the dead – a mystical night when the veil is lifted between their two realms and they may share a day together.



Carlo writes: “*Dia De Los Muertos* observances can be traced to Aztec times when fall agricultural rituals were infused with the honoring of the deceased members for the tribe, village or family,” honoring also natural cycles of life, death and rebirth.”

Christian themes expressing the continuation of our relationship with those who have died entered the tradition in later Spanish and Mexican influences. “Traditional celebrations typically lasted three days, culminating in all the families of a town forming a procession to the cemetery. There they would gather around the graves of their ancestors and decorate them with mementos and huge bundles of marigolds. There were remembrances, devotions and festivities including singing, dancing and feasting on special foods. The resting place of the dead would be transformed into a kind of village square full of color, laughter and joyful remembering.”

One customer who came into the store to buy supplies for her family told Carlo this story:

“...several years ago her younger child was one of only two Latino children in the first grade. As part of her volunteer time she offered to assemble a *Dia De Los Muertos* altar for the students.” First she had to persuade a teacher and principal wary of any suggestion of religious ritual that this would be a positive

experience of another culture. "For the children the emphasis would be on remembering those who were no longer with them. In fact, she assured them, at this age children mostly tend to think of their pets, often the only deaths they have experienced personally.



"In a corner of the classroom she created a simple altar: a table with a colorful covering, oranges and apples, lots of *pan de muerte* and skull candies, *papel picado* draped overhead and bunches of marigolds strewn about. The children were invited to bring in photos or reminders of those they loved who were no longer alive.

"The next day, she told me, the students gathered around, placed their mementos on the altar and...were invited to share a remembrance. The children seemed especially attentive to each other...as some told stories they had heard from their parents about grandparents in other countries or long ago. And sure enough, most remembered fun times

with former pets -- cats, dogs, goldfish and a favorite parakeet. At one point, a young girl spoke quietly about how much she missed her mother: 'She died during the summer just before school started; I miss her very much.'" The teacher and the volunteer exchanged glances; neither had known of this loss.

"...The next morning, the teacher was met by the principal, who told her that the father of one of her first graders was waiting for her. The teacher braced herself for criticism.

"When she entered the classroom, the father stood waiting; in his hand, a golden marigold, bright as a candle. 'This marigold,' he said, 'my daughter brought it home from school yesterday. When I asked her about it she told me what happened...about the altar...and the other children... and what she said about her mother. I want you to know that this is the first time she has been able to speak about her mother since the funeral. Whenever I would try to mention her mother she would always go silent and look away. Last night at supper we spoke together for a long time. I want to thank you and the children; somehow you made that possible. You, and this marigold.'"

Remember to set your clocks back!



**Stewardship Sunday,
November 17**



Last chance to contribute to the GRIP Harmony Walk! Send your checks to **Mira Vista UCC, 780 Ashbury Ave, El Cerrito, CA 94530**. Put *GRIP Harmony Walk* on the memo line

Pictures from our
October 20 Outdoor Worship at
Barbara & Jay Vincent Park on the
Richmond Marina Bay Trail
Photos by Nora Norback



*Happy
Birthday!*

10th Heinz Lankford

10th Jeanette Smith

13th Amy Ukena

19th Matilde Hollander

24th Maddie Kavanaugh-
Lynch

25th Elise Hariton

Grace Notes

Since we are celebrating anniversaries this month, I thought it would be of interest to you all to know that this is the 7th year that the Amazing Graces have been singing for MVUCC. In that time, we've sung at ordinations, baptisms, memorial services, the GRIP concerts, and at other community events. We continue to grow in abilities and new members (we're looking at you, De!), as we bring our brand of ministry to Mira Vista UCC.

Here's a chance to join in on the fun. Since Advent starts on Dec. 1st this year, there's plenty of time for people to join us while we get ready for the Christmas season. We are an all-female choir, sight-reading is not required, and we'd love to have you join us. Rehearsals are at 7:00 pm on Thursday nights in the sanctuary. Y'all come!

As in seasons past, I would like to invite singers, instrumentalists, percussionists, etc., to step forward and offer your gifts to the church during Advent. One of the many joys of Mira Vista is the wealth of talent that exists in the pews and in the larger community. We will have many opportunities in the weeks and months ahead to enrich our worship service with music of all kinds and configurations. If you'd like to be a part of that or know someone who would, please let me know. Friends of MVUCC are also more than welcome!

I love this time of year, unabashedly and unashamedly. I look forward to moving through this month with you in peace, love, and humility.

In harmony,
Amy

"It's easy to sing the song, but to pray the lyrics from deep within... that's worship!" — [Gangai Victor](#)



Thanks to Amy Ukena & Wendy Mahoney on November 17th!

Believe it or not, our dear music director, Amy Ukena, and our dear organist and pianist, Wendy Mahoney, have been with us for ten years! We are planning a special thank you for them during worship on November 17th, followed by our traditional thanksgiving-style pot-luck lunch in the social hall. Please come and lend the blessing of your presence to our gathering in honor of these two wonderful women!

Bonnie Hariton, Moderator

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Yoga 9am-10:15am 
3 Noon Worship Holy Communion <i>Celebration of Susan's 10-Yr Ordination Anniv.</i>	4 Yoga, 5:30–6:45pm 	5 Mira Vista Prepares lunch, Souper Center, 10am 	6 Home Team, 7pm @ Susan's	7 Amazing Graces Choir Rehearsal, 7pm	8 Worship Team Potluck, 6:30pm @ Susan's	9 Yoga 9am-10:15am  <i>Rosie the Riveter @ 12:30 or 2pm</i>
10 Noon Worship <i>Davena Hambrick's Ordination, 3pm</i>	11 Yoga, 5:30–6:45pm 	12	13 Council Meeting, 6:45 @ El Cerrito Royale	14 Amazing Graces Choir Rehearsal, 7pm	15	16
17 Noon Worship <i>Honor Amy and Wendy's 10 Years with MVUCC; Stewardship Sunday; Thanksgiving Dinner</i>	18 Yoga, 5:30–6:45pm 	19 Mindfulness, 7pm @ Patsy Stubbs'	20	21 Amazing Graces Choir Rehearsal, 7pm	22	23 Yoga 9am-10:15am 
24 Noon Worship	25 Yoga, 5:30–6:45pm 	26	27	28 Thanksgiving Day	29	30 Yoga 9am-10:15am 

Worship for November 2013

November 3, 2013, 12 Noon

- Holy Communion
- All Saints' Day, Dia de los Muertos
- Pastor Susan's 10th Ordination Anniversary Celebration
- Rev. Dr. Curran Reichert, preacher
- Matthew 7:7-8: *Risk Love!*

November 10, 2013, 12 Noon

- Luke 18:1-8
- *What Does the Lord Require of You?*
- *Persistence in Justice*



November 17, 2013, 12 Noon

- STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY, receive pledges for 2014
- Celebrating 10 years of gifts from Amy Ukena and Wendy Mahoney!
- Potluck Thanksgiving Dinner
- Luke 18:9-14
- *What Does the Lord Require of You?*
- *Humility on the Journey*

November 24, 2013, 12 Noon

- Reign of Christ, end of lectionary year
- Luke 6:20-31
- *What Does the Lord Require of You?*
- *Mercy, Mercy, Mercy*

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Address Change Requested

Dated Material
November 2013

