

# The Fellowship Post

Mira Vista  
United Church of Christ

October 2015

## Melinda's Musings:

***Your hand opens and close, opens and closes. If it were always a fist or always stretched open, you would be paralyzed. Your deepest presence is in every small contracting and expanding, the two as beautifully balanced and coordinated as birds' wings. – Rumi***

Many of us, including me and Colleen, have gone through some significant changes this year. Some of us have new jobs, new gardens, and new homes. Several of us have had significant deaths among our family and friends. And, of course, we are contemplating major change in the way we do ministry together including the possibility of moving to a different location. By the end of the year, for most of us, life will be different in many ways. No moss growing under our feet!

While all this change seems a bit overwhelming at times, the truth is it simply happens bit by bit, with an occasional leap forward. The key to not becoming undone by change, in my view, is what my friend Phil Porter calls the "gift of incrementality".

Porter speaks of the "I can do that" mantra. For example, when learning a new dance step, you might watch another dancer do some piece of it until you can say: "Oh, I can do that" and then keep repeating that process until you've learned the whole dance. If you look at the other person dancing and think, "Oh no, I can't



do that", then it's time to break it into smaller parts until you can again say, "I can do that".

It's the same process musicians use for learning music. If you're a pianist, you learn to take the different parts of the music apart and practice them individually. Once you've mastered the smaller parts, you begin to put it back together - usually one hand at a time and then both hands together. For a difficult piece of music, it can take quite a lot of time practicing the bits and pieces before you can actually play it all together.

I find this approach works spiritually too. When we are overwhelmed by grief or change, just breaking things into smaller parts really helps. The important thing is to keep finding our way to: "I can do that" and pretty soon we find ourselves able to say, "it's going to be okay".

Meanwhile, as a community, we can also help each other when things are hard. We can be kind. We can provide safe harbor for one another. We can also teach and encourage one another by our example and experience.

Love and many blessings,

Melinda

## All Saints

Celebrating

## All Souls

On **Sunday, November 1st**, we will mark the **Feast of All Souls and All Saints** by creating an *ofrenda* during our service to honor our ancestors and beloved friends who have died. In Mexico, this practice is attached to the **Dia de los Muertos** or the "Day of the Dead" < <http://www.inside-mexico.com/ofrenda.htm> >. This is a great service for all ages!

The *ofrenda* is an art installation that includes photos, objects, special foods, and/or other means for remembering and honoring those who have died. So look around this week and then bring items this Sunday that remind you of your beloveds who have passed away. During the service, we will bring forth our items and create our *ofrenda* in the midst of worship. I also invite you to simply make a list of those whom you would like to honor and bring that with you, too. There will also be opportunities for prayer and contemplation that are more like what happens in our monthly prayer services.

The purpose of the *ofrenda* is two-fold: it helps us to grieve when we honor our dead AND it reminds us of the ways that they live on in us. I also believe this is a great multicultural way to mark **Reformation Day** in our congregation because we owe much to those particular ancestors for creating and shaping the so much of our faith.

If you have had significant losses this year, consider making your own *ofrenda* as part of your grieving process.

## News from the Pews



We honor the life of **Alice Parks** who passed away on Saturday, September 26th at the age of 94. Alice was a charter member of Mira Vista Church who sang alto in the Amazing

Graces. She was proud of her service as a nurse during the World War II occupation of Japan and she later taught nursing here in the Bay Area for many years. Her neighbors in El Sobrante remember her outgoing personality and the apples from her trees. Here at Mira Vista, we will cherish her many stories and her steadfast attendance. Alice was deeply grateful for the people of Mira Vista, especially **Kathe Kiehn**, who serves as trustee for her estate and who has taken care of her these last years. Godspeed Alice Parks! We give thanks to God for your life among us.

**Patsy Severson** (and her handsome guy!) will be traveling to Europe for a couple of weeks during October.

Condolences to **Heinz Lankford and Kathe Kiehn** upon the death of his mother in Sacramento this past month.

Our music director **David Joon Song** is thriving in his new position at Bowditch Middle School in Foster City. While he was hired to primarily work with the orchestra, he has already formed an enormous glee club. Bravo David!

**Colleen Rodger and Melinda V. McLain's** house renovation continues and we're now in the final stretch. We plan to have a garage sale in San Francisco on **Saturday, October 3rd**. The final move to El Sobrante is now slated for **Wednesday October 7**.

## October Celebrations

### Birthdays

11<sup>th</sup> Joann Pavlinec  
11<sup>th</sup> Michael Wisely  
13<sup>th</sup> Bonnie Hariton  
17<sup>th</sup> Latifah Abdullah  
17<sup>th</sup> Diane Young

### Anniversaries

22<sup>nd</sup> Barbara & Susan Meeter

**Best wishes with love from Mira Vista**

## Interfaith Zen Workshop on Meditation



“You are the light of the world.” Imagine yourself sitting quietly and meditating on this saying. What thoughts, feelings, insights come up?

This style of meditation, reflecting on the sayings of Jesus, or of others, is a way of drawing our attention to life and opens us to the Spirit and transformation. They help us to draw attention to the vast mystery of life. On September 19, Melinda, Bonnie Hariton and Joan Thompson attended an interfaith Zen workshop, led by David Parks-Ramage, UCC minister in Santa Rosa. The workshop introduced us to the Zen style of open awareness meditation, using “koans,” or sayings, as tools for transformation. Melinda will be sharing more information on this style of meditation as a practice, later in the fall.

By Joan Thompson

## This Is a Stick Up!

By Tom Emanuel

Jesus came into Galilee  
proclaiming the Good News of God:  
“Up against the wall!  
This is a stick-up!

Up against the wall of your lip-service  
limitations,  
your deferrals and hesitations,  
your critiques and calculations,  
your freeze-ups and market liquidations!

Up against the wall you heap up  
between humanity and divinity,  
between potential and kinetic,  
between inconceivable and incarnate!

Up against the wall of the Financial District  
storehouses

where you hoard burnt-offerings for tomorrow,  
forgetting that tomorrow never knows!

Up against the wall—  
and within three days I will tear it down,  
turn the change-grasping tables of the  
financier-priests, and  
forever rend the veil separating This from That!

For Time is now fulfilled,  
and the Kingdom is at hand!

Not after the next election!  
Not when you get your diploma!  
Not when you find the One!  
Not to be repaid at six percent interest over ten  
years!  
Now!  
*Right Now!*

The Kingdom is at *hand!*  
Think again, and believe the Good News!”

So—  
Will you believe?  
Will you permit Ultimate Reality to cock the gun  
against your temple  
and yield up both coat and cloak?  
Will you rise from the wreckage  
and behold the naked unity you only intuited  
before?

For there is no place now that does not see  
you,  
no wall between Greek and Jew,  
between imagined and true,  
between who you are and who you might  
become.

So up against the wall!  
The Kingdom is at hand!  
Will you change your life?



In Memory of Alice Parks  
You will be Missed!



THE SUNDAY TIMES  
**WEST COUNTY**  
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1999 / And the Bay Area



**Walking off hunger**  
WALKERS RETURN, above, to the Richmond Civic Center on Saturday during the Greater Richmond Interfaith Program's fund-raising Harmony Walk to End Hunger. At right, participant Alice Parks of El Sobrante proclaims her church affiliation.

Times photos by Larry Strong





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2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Amazing Graces, 7 pm	2	3
4 12 Noon Worship & Holy Communion followed by La Mesa Social Action Table Rev. Dorothy Streutker preaching	5	6 Mira Vista prepares lunch, GRIP Souper Center, 10 am Mindfulness Circle, 7 pm	7 Melinda & Collen's moving day	8 Amazing Graces, 7 pm	9	10
11 12 Noon Worship & Holy Communion followed by La Mesa Good News Table Tom Emanuel preaching	12	13 Council meeting @ El Cerrito Royale, 6:45 pm	14	15 Amazing Graces, 7 pm	16	17
18 12 Noon Worship & Holy Communion followed by La Mesa	19	20 Mindfulness Circle, 7 pm	21	22 Amazing Graces, 7 pm	23	24
25 12 Noon Worship & Holy Communion followed by La Mesa	26	27	28	29 Amazing Graces, 7 pm	30	31

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

*The **Amazing Graces** plan to sing on **October 11th and 25th.***

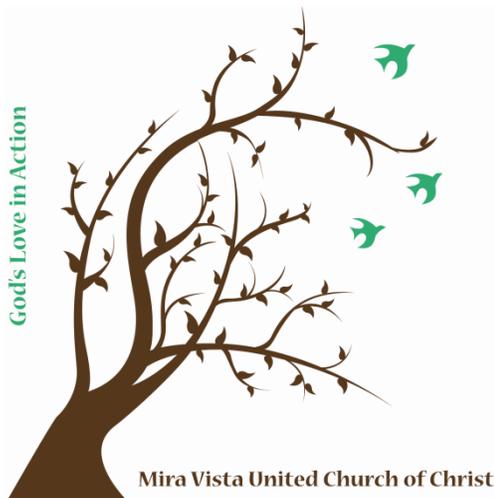
October 4	World Communion Sunday The Rev. Dorothy Streutker preaching	
October 11	“Through the Needle’s Eye” Tom Emanuel preaching	Mark 10:17-27
October 18	“Be Careful What You Ask For” - Pt. 1	Mark 10: 35-40
October 25	“Be Careful What You Ask For” - Pt. 2	Mark 10: 46-52
November 1	“From Generation to Generation” Celebration of All Souls and All Saints	Psalms 146

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Address Change Requested

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