

# The Fellowship Post

Mira Vista  
United Church of Christ

September 2012

## Pastor's Corner

### Falling Forward

It's September, and all our children are beginning fresh adventures in courage; the courage it takes to fall forward into life. In that spirit, Barbara and I fell into a hiking adventure this week on a Marin Headlands trail we found in a guidebook.

Using a guidebook means we will lose the trail; we will never find the marvels it describes; and we will have to invent our own way back. On the page it's so plain, so simple, but the trail is...different. Guidebooks, in my experience, are unclear, inaccurate, and prone to over- and understatement.

The overall difficulty of the hike is an important feature of trail descriptions and can cause much grumbling when incorrect. How can they call this "a 7-mile stroll"? Really, this is what they call "easy, level"? It said "turn left at Wolf Ridge"!

My fantasy is a guidebook I compile, a trail guide with accurate, detailed, efficient and complete instructions and descriptions. Would anyone want to take a hike after reading about mine, though? Maybe they wouldn't get lost, but would they ever begin?

When I was a 20 year old aide on a Boston maternity ward, a woman fresh from childbirth confided that she had uncovered a conspiracy of silence among mothers. "They don't tell the truth about the pain – that it's unbearable." Shocked and disillusioned over the suffering involved in bringing a new life into this world, she said, "if we told the truth, no one would ever give birth again."



Fortunately that's not true; so many women, probably including her, choose to give birth again despite their memories of pain. A life of love and beauty cannot be organized around avoiding pain. There is no clear, efficient, error-free path to God.

Lots of people use the Bible as a guidebook or even a rulebook. According to the author of John, Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Jesus said we know the Way AND that he will come to get us. The Way is not error-free, however, nor is it free of suffering.

Why then does the Good Book still move me and inspire me, despite the failures of guides and guidebooks? Why after all these years do I keep tracking Jesus, one eye on that ancient Guidebook? My answer is that seeking and searching *are* the journey: avoiding suffering is not the point; clarity and efficiency are not the goal.

The guide and the guidebook focus my attention on pursuing what is elusive and challenging, seeking what I may not find. Searching for one thing changes my perspective on everything else. I do need this journey in and out of sunshine simply to feel the earth under me, to live with integrity, and to fall forward with courage.

As for the headlands trail, Barbara and I discovered just enough to entice us to return, to keep us tracking what is wild and free. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Pastor  
Susan

## Neighbors in Need Offering October 7, 2012



Dear friends. Well, I've been struggling with writing this article for days now. I'm wracking my brain for something new, different, and

clever to say about a concept as old as humanity; we need each other... period. I did not always believe that.

The philosophy and writing of Ayn Rand has been in the news lately having been held up by political candidates to justify budgets that eliminate social safety nets. For those who are not familiar, Ayn Rand, who published her best known work *Atlas Shrugged* in 1957, was a writer/philosopher who held individualism in the highest esteem and saw collectivism as an evil. She believed that government should be structured around these principles and has been revered and quoted by a very loyal and strong following, including prominent economists and politicians, ever since. "Pull yourself up by your bootstraps," "don't depend on government for handouts" and "take care of your own" are all variations on the same theme. I was one of the followers that believed that back in the day, but have long since moved from that viewpoint.

I moved from that viewpoint because in my own lived journey, as much as I wanted it, I could not find a place that was functional outside of community. I came out of my childhood being afraid of dependence and believing that the best course for my life was one of complete independence: "I don't need nobody and I don't want nobody needing me." Well, it just didn't play out that way.

I came to believe that we all come from the same Source. Maybe the word "need" is what scares us. I'll leave that out. If we come from the same Source, we are connected. If we are connected, then we have a vested interest in everyone's wellbeing. *Individualism* and

*collectivism* are polarized and politicized concepts. Taken out of that arena, we can talk about our authentic individual journeys *and* our lives in community. Both/and have tremendous value. No one, no journey gets demonized. Community is not a political side to take, it is the reality of living on this earth together.

In that reality of living together on earth, there is an infinitely complicated dynamism within us and between us of more and less, give and take, strength and weakness, growth and fallowness, fertility and infertility. Religions, philosophies and political platforms that tell us there is/should be no dynamism in our journeys individually or together, I believe, are misguided.

There are times in my life when I have much to give. There are times when I am depleted. And there are times when I need a helping hand. There is no shame in any of those experiences. And, unlike much of the rhetoric we hear in politically active times, we can, and most do, *move through* all of those experiences without getting stuck. We can live our experiences as they come to us without *becoming* the perpetual giver who can never receive, the apathetic isolationist, or the stereotypical welfare recipient. It's life in motion. It's a dance. Come dance with me.

On October 7, 2012, Mira Vista United Church of Christ will receive the Neighbors in Need (NIN) offering. For those of us in a time and place to give, here is a great opportunity. It is a special mission offering of the UCC that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry(CAIM). Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries(JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.

Peace,  
Barbara

## Social Action Team (SAT) Corner



Get your work clothes & gloves out, dust off your walking shoes. There are opportunities coming in October to help in your community. First, the organization that we worked with in April, Rebuilding Together (RT) is planning 2 work dates in October. They will be working on Berkeley houses October 13 & October 27.



Secondly, on October 20 GRIP will be hosting their annual Harmony Walk in Richmond to raise awareness and money in support of the Richmond Souper Center. Please let Sylvia Sugg know if you are interested in volunteering for the RT project and/or the Harmony Walk.

## Keeping in Touch



**Kathryn Schreiber** writes that she will be serving as interim minister for the United Japanese Christian Church of Clovis beginning September 15. She is thrilled to be serving this dynamic church in the Central Valley (Fresno) and will be moving to Clovis for the duration.

Rev. Kathryn will be installed to this new position at her home church, Faith Community Church in Oakland on September 2, 11:30 am.

Mira Vista's church Council is compiling a list of all the PSR students who have served our church over the years as either a Minister In Training or were In Care with us toward ordination. We would like to be in touch with all of our former students. Will you share any names, current addresses and emails you have? We'll put a partial list in a future POST to get this moving!

## PRAY FOR WORLD PEACE – International Peace Day

The East West Sikh Women's Association for World Peace (member of the United Nations Religion for World Peace Commission) invites us to pray for world peace on International Peace Day, **Friday, September 21st**. Sikhs believe that *Sukhmani* (peace of mind) is the Way to World Peace. They say that conflict in the human



mind disrupts peace; therefore peace must be created in human minds. Last year 8 million people prayed for peace along with our Sukhmani Sahib (Peace Prayer from our holy scriptures). *Won't you join in?*

\*\*\*\*\*

## Mira Vista at Solano Stroll 2012

Please visit/support our Mira Vista UCC



booth at the Solano Stroll on **Sunday, September 9, 10-6**. Like last year, we will be on the Berkeley end of Solano Ave, on the south side of the street between Curtis and Santa Fe, in front of 1498 Solano. We will be beside BERKLEY ECKANKAR and SOGNO DESIGN GROUP, same block as the Berkeley Buddhist Priory, Shepherd of the Hills, Epworth United Methodist Church, and Unitarian Universalists.

With adults and children, we will be planting "**Peas for Peace**" to take home, and creating "**Blessing/Prayer Flags**" to hang from our canopy (folks who wish can take them home). Fun for all ages!

Huge thanks to **Wendy Wisely**, who has shepherded the project this year, and to all of us who are busy preparing for this road trip.

# DON'T MISS IT! BIG EVENTS TO COME

September 9  
10am -6pm

Solano Parade & Solano Stroll (Mira Vista UCC @ both)

September 30  
12 Noon

Global Mission Sunday, Dr. Katy Valentine speaking, MVUCC

October 7, 14  
12 Noon

Rev. Dr. Melinda McLain presiding/preaching @ MVUCC

October 20  
8:00am-11:30am

GRIP's 26<sup>th</sup> Harmony Walk fundraiser to end hunger & 5k run to end homelessness, Richmond Civic Center plaza.

October 21  
11am

Mira Vista and Arlington UCC churches jointly present Sunday **Leaps & Bounds**, a one woman show about **faith, ecology and the Global Economy**, presented by Tevyn East of the Affording Hope Project. Weaving between biblical and personal narrative, music, movement, song and ritual, Leaps and Bounds uncovers the driving factors of our environmental crisis while awakening the imagination to a new way of relating to Earth.

This prophetic art experience, a launching pad for further reflection and engagement, will be held in Arlington's Kensington sanctuary. Invite your friends and family to this event, followed by a shared potluck lunch -- *don't miss this!*

October 28  
1:30pm

New Orleans fund raising lunch on behalf of our sister UCC churches' repair and rebuilding



# YOGA FOR ACTIVE SENIORS

at Christ Lutheran/Mira Vista Church  
780 Ashbury, El Cerrito, 94530

## Monthly Schedule for September 2012

**Patsy Stubbs, RYT**  
Registered Yoga Teacher  
(510)-367-6523



Mondays, Sept. 10, 17, 24

**Time:**  
7 p.m. until 8:15 p.m.

Thursdays, Sept. 6, 13, 20, 27

6 p.m. until 7:15 p.m.

Saturdays, Sept 1, 8, 22, 29

9 a.m. until 10:15 a.m.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

Classes are appropriate for beginning/intermediate levels.  
Poses (asanas) can be modified to fit individual needs

**Suggested Donation:**

\$7-10.00 a class  
\$55.00 for 6 classes

**Please let instructor know of injuries, special needs or for any questions.**

# September 2012

*Mira Vista  
United Church of Christ*

780 Ashbury Ave.,  
El Cerrito, CA 94530

phone: (510) 526-0110 fax: (510) 526-0110

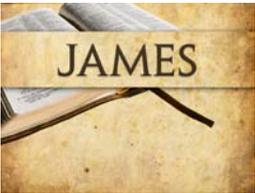
email: [office@miravistaucc.org](mailto:office@miravistaucc.org) • website: [www.miravistaucc.org](http://www.miravistaucc.org)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Yoga, 9-10:15 am
2 Holy Communion 12 Noon Worship 	3	4  Mira Vista prepares lunch, GRIP Souper Center, 10 am	5 Council Meeting, 7pm	6 Yoga, 6-7:15pm	7	8 Yoga, 9-10:15 am
9 12 Noon Worship Solano Stroll 10am – 6pm	10 Yoga, 7-8:15 pm	11 Bible Study, 1:30 pm	12	13 Yoga, 6-7:15pm	14	15
16 12 Noon Worship	17 Yoga, 7-8:15 pm	18 Bible Study, 1:30 pm	19	20 Yoga, 6-7:15pm	21	22 Yoga, 9-10:15 am
23 12 Noon Worship SAT Meeting	24 Yoga, 7-8:15 pm	25 Bible Study, 1:30 pm	26	27 Yoga, 6-7:15pm	28	29 Yoga, 9-10:15 am
30 12 Noon Worship Global Mission Sunday						

# Worship for September 2012

**FALL WORSHIP PLATFORM:** We've all decided already for whom and what we are voting in November, yet millions and millions of dollars will be spent on partisan campaigning to change our minds – is that your definition of waste and futility?

At Mira Vista we're building a **nonpartisan platform**, something we can all stand for despite our differing opinions about tactics and strategies. Your pastor invites you to hold all candidates and all propositions accountable to our Mira Vista UCC platform of faith!



In September the practical book of James will offer us practical guidance as we begin choosing our first faith-based platform planks:

September 2, 2012, 12 noon  
Holy Communion  
James 1:17-27  
*Liberty, Platform Plank #1*

September 9, 2012, 12 noon  
James 2:1-10, 14-17  
*Mercy in Action, Platform Plank #2*

September 16, 2012, 12 noon  
James 3:1-12  
*Dealing with Mistakes, Platform Plank #3*

September 23, 2012, 12 noon  
James 3-4, Mark 9  
*Welcome Children, Plank #4*

September 30, 2012, 12 noon  
James 5:13-20  
*Outsiders, Platform Plank #5*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Mira Vista*  
*United Church of Christ*  
*780 Ashbury Avenue*  
*El Cerrito, CA 94530*

Address Change Requested

**Dated Material**  
September 2012



Mira Vista United Church of Christ