



The Fellowship Post

Mira Vista
United Church of Christ

December 2018

Endless Advent

by Rev. Dr. Melinda V. McLain

Even when we don't desire it, God is ripening.

– Rainier Maria Rilke, *Book of Hours*

Another year is coming to a close and I do wonder what's next. As a community, we are on the brink of beginning a completely different model of ministry. As a country, we are in the midst of so many disasters due to climate change that it sometimes feels as if our "new normal" is chaos. This is especially acute here in California, as we work to recover from another record-setting wildfire season. At the same time, some of the "normal" shifts in health, wealth, and stage of life are also shaking us as families and individuals into new patterns of living.

Traditionally, the liturgical season of Advent invites us to embark upon an extended period of mystical waiting and introspection in order to prepare our souls for the miracles of Christmas. For me, it is hard to imagine intentionally embracing the implied stillness of "waiting" right now when there is so much change taking place and so many new "needs" arise each day from increasing injustice, violence, and natural disasters.

And yet, Advent is indeed upon us - even if controlled stillness seems impossible. We are now in a period of almost life-threatening waiting to hear Good News from somewhere, anywhere. Without taking up a new spiritual practice or reading a new tome on spirituality,



we are longing for comfort and peace instead of news of another mass shooting or state-sponsored violence against children along our border with Mexico.

Are you longing for peace, yearning for comfort, and waiting for hope? Guess what, these are exactly the elements of a deep experience of Advent. So the invitation for us this year is not to adopt a new set of spiritual practices to mimic holy waiting, but instead we are invited to join John the Baptizer and cry out in the wilderness to get ready for the presence of God to be among us again.

This year, we will need to believe even more deeply in the power of love to transform the world and double-down on our commitments to justice and peace - even if it seems impossible to keep moving forward.

This is the season for miracles. May they come swiftly into our lives.

Love and Many Blessings,
Melinda

P.S. UCC Advent Devotionals are here! Pick one up Sunday or ask Pastor Melinda for one.



Creating the GOOD table News

by Rev. Dr. Melinda V. McLain

Our project to create a coffee shop, organic nursery, and community gathering space (that would also house our church) **does seem feasible** – if we can buy at a reasonable price. We now have a relatively good estimate for renovating the building and operating the business, plus we continue to move forward to create a partnership with [Planting Justice](#). We have also received a lot of assistance and support for the project from a variety of folks in El Sobrante. And **Colleen Rodger**, in particular, has worked long hours to determine renovation costs and to estimate costs for fixtures, furniture, permits, equipment, and so much more. These short sentences represent a tremendous amount of work!

With all this information now in hand, the Mira Vista Council has approved the creation of a new **letter of intent** to begin negotiations to buy the El Sobrante property that formerly housed Adachi nursery and is now owned by a developer from Pleasant Hill.

We have also received word that Supervisor John Gioia's office is willing to help **broker a deal with the current owner** and we hope to meet in the next two weeks to negotiate a potential sale. If we can come to a reasonable price, the next step will be to develop a purchase contract with the help of a local attorney who specializes in real estate transactions. The outline for the **purchase agreement** will then be voted upon by the membership of Mira Vista at a special congregational meeting. If that is successful, we could enter escrow by the end of the year.

While there are still many ways in which this deal could fall apart, we are still moving forward. If you would like to **help with this project**, do contact Pastor Melinda, Colleen Rodger or any member of the Mira Vista Council. We would also be happy to discuss the **details of our current drawings, estimates, and business plans** that underlie the Council's decision to move forward. This is an exciting time and we want to keep everyone

in the loop, but not all this information is appropriate for publication in the newsletter. So **make a date with one of us** or stop by community office hours with Pastor Melinda on Thursdays from 2-5 to learn more.

News from the Pews

Former member **Marilyn Colbert** has been displaced due to the Camp Fire. Marilyn moved to Paradise three years ago to be closer to family, but even though Marilyn's house survived, her extended family lost ten homes in the devastating wildfire.

Fortunately, everyone survived and Marilyn and her cat Mimi are now staying with **Bonnie and Dan Hariton** in Pinole. Right now, Marilyn's home is slated for demolition (along with most of the town) and she is considering options for living elsewhere long-term.



Former member Marilyn Colbert, who was displaced by the Camp Fire has now joined the Hariton household with her cat Mimi while she considers her options. Welcome back Marilyn!

Your Donation

to

Mira Vista UCC

Marked Wildfire Relief 2018

Will Directly Benefit Those Affected

The **Mindfulness Circle** has now run its course and will no longer be meeting. **Joan Thompson**, who has faithfully coordinated the group for the past few years, writes, "the group has been going for somewhere between 4 and 5 years and we have read a lot of books. It all started when I approached Rev. Susan Meeter and told her that I had just read a book by Eckhart Tolle (A New Earth) and I wasn't sure what to think of it and how it meshed with Christian "branding." She quickly decided that she would convene a group to practice meditation and to discuss the book." While the current group is no longer planning to meet in their current configuration, another iteration of a "spiritual book group" could form in the future and all are welcome to attend our weekly **Interfaith Meditation** group on Thursdays at 6p @Sycamore United Church of Christ in order to have the benefits of group spiritual practice between Sundays.

A note from Nancy Lemon: I would like to publicly appreciate **Ken Alborn** for volunteering to bring my mother and Phyllis to church week after week, dealing with walkers and wheelchairs and elderly people who need a lot of help just to get in and out of his car. I also appreciate his working in the kitchen to clean up after La Mesa every week. He is a gem and so modest - and deserves lots of public accolades!



Ken Alborn doing dishes for La Mesa

A letter from Rev. Angela Jernigan:

Dear Mira Vista Community,

You have all been on my mind and in my heart for weeks now, and this note is long overdue. You may not even remember us, our time with you was so brief. But... I want to say a good-bye of sorts, one that reflects what you meant and mean to us.

In September, my husband Niels Teunis and I sat down with Melinda and we told her that we had come to the difficult decision that we needed to transfer our church membership to a UCC church closer to home, and one that worships in a building that doesn't trigger so much illness for us. I think it was obvious to Melinda that this was happening before we could really fully claim it ourselves. Last week we gratefully, tearfully and joyfully were welcomed by [Grace North](#) in Berkeley as new members.

We had only visited visited Mira Vista a couple of times before we became members a year and a half ago. Just long enough to feel your collective spirit of warm welcome, your through-and-through marination in progressive, justice-seeking Christianity (the hallmarks of our dear UCC tradition), and still... with the depth of true contemplatives who pray in all you say, sing, do... and those who also cultivate the homegrown community closeness that brought back my own warm memories of growing up a kid in house church... long ago.

In short, you touched us. Deeply. It had been a long time for us, Niels and I both, to glimpse such feelings of "spiritual home" in church. After having had some painful church experiences, that is, and some time wrestling with our own senses of exile, of wilderness.

So, I want you to know: though we never got to know you, not really--in fact, you may not even remember having met us (it was so brief)--but Mira Vista, please know, you made a difference in our life in a way we will never forget. And we are excited to learn through Melinda of the developments of your cafe

ministry in San Pablo.... We will look forward to more news, and our first visits some day.

And now as we gratefully and sweetly settle in to our new church home, and begin to formalize the launch of our own [community-based ministry](#) here in Berkeley.... We pray that our future will bring us together with you again. That we might next time welcome you, move you, offer a ray of healing hope to you, when you are in need.

Or perhaps we'll just eat great food together and sing our hearts out.

Until then, dear people.

In faith, love & kinship in Christ,
Angela & Niels



Love: impervious to hazardous air. Angela Jernigan and Niels Teunis sporting N95 masks.

Save the Date!

Mira Vista
Semi-Annual Meeting
Sunday, January 13
After La Mesa



4th Sylvia Sugg
9th Nancy Lemon
21st Matt Kavanaugh-Lynch
24th Kevin Manz
30th Andrew Noble
30th Benjamin Noble



Candlelight Service



Christmas Eve

Monday, December 24

8p

Come join us!

Mira Vista United Church of Christ

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2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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2 First Sunday of Advent 12 Noon Worship & Holy Communion, Social Action Team during La Mesa Live jazz w/ Amy Ukena and Hans Raag @El Cerrito Natural Grocery, 6-8:30p <i>FREE - invite your friends!</i>	3	4 Mira Vista prepares lunch, GRIP Souper Center, 10a	5	6 Community Office Hours with Pastor Melinda each Thursday @Catahoula Coffee, 2-5p Interfaith Meditation @Sycamore UCC, 6p	7	8
9 Second Sunday of Advent 12 Noon Worship followed by La Mesa	10	11	12	13 Community office Hours, 2-5p Interfaith Meditation @Sycamore UCC, 6p	14	15
16 Third Sunday of Advent 12 Noon Worship followed by La Mesa Live jazz w/ Amy Ukena and Hans Raag @El Cerrito Natural Grocery, 6-8:30p	17 Budget meeting, Noon – 2p	18	19 Council meeting, 7p	20 Community office Hours, 2-5p Interfaith Meditation @Sycamore UCC, 6p	21	22
23 Fourth Sunday of Advent 12 Noon Worship followed by La Mesa	24 Candlelight Service 	25 	26 	27 Interfaith Meditation @Sycamore UCC, 6p	28	29
30 12 Noon Worship followed by La Mesa	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 our common table, **La Mesa**. Feel free to bring food to share as you are able. We celebrate the sacrament of **Holy Communion every First Sunday**. All are welcome at our table!

Dec 2	Kindling Hope <i>First Sunday of Advent</i>	Isaiah 64:1-4
Dec 9	Comfort My People	Isaiah 40:1-11
Dec 16	Behold the Light	John 1:6-8, 8-1
Dec 23	Receiving the Love	Luke 1:26-38
Dec 24	Candlelight Christmas Eve	8p
	<i>All are welcome to join us for this service of lessons and carols followed by hot cider and cookies. Bring friends, family, and cookies to share as you are willing and able!</i>	
Dec 30	The Loss of a Child <i>Tom Emanuel preaching (!)</i>	Luke 2:41-52

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Address Change Requested

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The Fellowship Post

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