



# The Fellowship Post

## Mira Vista United Church of Christ

January 2018

### Melinda's Musings:

***The object of a new year is not that we should have a new year. It is that we should have a new soul. — G.K. Chesterton***

Calendars, like the concept of time, are purely human inventions. In fact, humans have many different calendars and here in the Bay Area, many of us celebrated the Jewish New Year 5778 or Rosh Hashanah last September and we will soon celebrate the Chinese lunar new year in February. As a child, my parents had a ceramic version of the Aztec calendar that I found fascinating (and inscrutable!) and of course, many folks who are constantly looking for the “end times” were very concerned when an ancient Mayan calendar “ended” in 2012.

Clearly human beings have spent a lot of energy trying to organize time! In most cases, these various calendars are based upon the movement of the moon and/or when various constellations become visible at different points upon the earth. Others track the sun or other heavenly bodies. Many others have religious origins that provide a shape for spiritual practice.

In our Christian tradition, we began a new liturgical year when Advent started five weeks ago. The liturgical year most UCC churches use is based upon the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL). The RCL is a series of readings from the Bible chosen by a large ecumenical council of protestant churches, although the RCL was based upon, and is



often in sync with, the *Ordo Lectionum Missae* used by our Roman Catholic friends. In selecting readings from the Hebrew scriptures, psalms, epistles, and gospels, the council strives to develop a series of readings that cover the breadth of scripture, while also honoring particular seasons such as Christmas and Easter. The selected readings have also been chosen to suggest particular common themes from multiple vantage points.

There are three liturgical years in the RCL and we moved from Year A to Year B on Sunday, December 3rd. Year B readings focus on the Gospel of Mark, but also skip around quite a bit to include parts of the Gospel of John, and occasionally the Gospel of Luke. And as we begin the secular new year on January 1, we will still be celebrating Christmas until January 6th, the 12th day after Christmas, the day when we mark the Feast of the Epiphany. (and if we're lucky, perhaps 12 drummers drumming too!)

Not all Protestant churches use the lectionary, but among those who do, it is fascinating to observe the diversity of celebration and interpretation when so many preach the same text on the same day, let alone the variety of interpretations over time!

I have now been preaching from the lectionary nearly every Sunday for 20 years, so on any given Sunday, I may have preached the same text as many as six times over the years. If I search for one of these specific passages, I

can pull a number of sermons out of my computer on most texts.

Given the “repeats” in the lectionary, some preachers simply “recycle” their sermons, I guess hoping none of their previous takes on a text were very memorable. I prefer to start fresh every time - looking for how the text informs our current historical moment and the ongoing conversations and experiences we are having together as a community. Occasionally, I will look at previous sermon notes to see how my own understanding has changed over the years, and when I do this, I am always amazed to see how things change over time.

As we enter a new secular year and then begin the liturgical season of epiphany, I invite each of us to consider these questions:

***How do you organize your spiritual life? Are there particular texts or special days such as Christmas or Easter that are particularly meaningful? How has your understanding of faith changed over the years?***

Love,  
Melinda

A graphic with the words "happy birthday!" in a playful, bubbly font. The letters are primarily blue and green, with some white and pink accents. There are small, colorful confetti-like dots scattered around the text.

7th Colleen Rodger  
15th Rev. Davena Jones  
16th Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch  
19th Rev. Angela Jernigan  
21st Betty Coates

Best wishes  
with love from Mira Vista



## **Good News Report: Creating *the GOOD table***

by Rev. Dr. Melinda V. McLain

When we meet together for **our day-long retreat on Saturday, January 13th**, we will have the time to reflect on what is next in this process of potentially becoming a café church.

In late December, Colleen Rodger and I were shown a property in midtown El Cerrito that looked very promising. We worked with the Council and a small group comprised of **Brian Campbell-Miller, Bonnie Hariton, Colleen Rodger, and myself** was appointed to explore the possibilities in more detail. We also held an informal discussion on Sunday, December 17th during La Mesa for anyone interested in hearing more.

As of this date, we have determined that **this property is not a good fit** for our needs due to issues related to parking and a too high and non-negotiable asking price. While this news is somewhat disappointing, we have also learned more about what we do and do not want. And we have learned more about the permitting process in both Richmond and El Cerrito.

Even though we will not be presenting a potential property on January 13th, we are at a **critical moment in the development of this dream for new ministry**. Do plan to come to Colleen and Melinda’s home at 5838 Robin Hood Drive in El Sobrante. Your participation is needed and important! We will gather at 9:30a and end no later than 3p. Lunch will be provided.

All Church Retreat  
@Melinda & Colleen’s  
Saturday, January 13, 2018  
9:30a – 3p  
Lunch provided

## **Cleaning House**

by Tom Emanuel

New Year's Eve is a day  
for cleaning house,

for sweeping out the guttering embers  
of a year gone by and committing them  
to the ash bin so they don't burn  
the house down overnight,

for reorganizing your shelf space  
so that the books you wanted to read  
last year but didn't get to are right in front,  
titles enticingly displayed,

for clearing out the corners and seeing  
what got misplaced and buried when you  
spent too much time at work or on the road  
and not enough time in your own home,

for packing up the inevitable clutter  
of 365 days of thoughtless purchases  
and recognizing that you don't need  
nearly as much as you think you do,

for hanging up the thoughtful gifts  
of friends and family in their place and  
recognizing that receiving and letting go  
are mirror-images and equally blessed,

for strategically leaving empty space  
so there's still room for your spirit  
to expand and contract without  
knocking something over,

for washing the dishes and  
scrubbing the stove and  
mopping the floor and  
raking the shag carpet and  
scouring the bathtub and  
all the small intentional things  
that you so often forget  
or put off 'til tomorrow,

so that on New Year's Morning, after  
all the toasts have been drunk and the  
Auld Lang Synes have been sung and the  
paper hats and holiday crackers have been  
strewn across the dining room floor and  
you have awoken to a house

filled once more with chaos,  
you might know that tidying up is not  
the impossible task  
you once believed it to be.



*Tom Emanuel serves as our Associate Minister  
for Worship Arts*

**Mira Vista UCC**  
**Semi-Annual meeting & Potluck,**  
**Sunday, January 21, 2018**  
**during La Mesa**  
**2018 budget is the agenda for this**  
**meeting**

## Mira Vista in 2017



*Colleen Rodger with Revs. Melinda V. McLain, Thom Longino, Deborah Streeter, and Michael Patrick Ellard at the March for Science*



*Celebrating LGBTQ Pride! Tom, Melinda, Colleen and MVUCC Moderator Brian Campbell-Miller*



*Amy Ukena and Hans Raag playing at the El Cerrito Natural Grocery*



*Timothy K. Murphy becomes MVUCC Minister of Music in June*



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**United Church of Christ**  
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**January  
2018**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 Mira Vista prepares lunch, GRIP Souper Center, 10a	3 Mindfulness Circle, El Cerrito Royale, 7p	4 Community Office Hours with Pastor Melinda each Thursday @Catahoula Coffee, 2-5p  Interfaith Meditation @Sycamore UCC, 6p	5	6
7 12 Noon Worship & Holy Communion followed by La Mesa with Social Action Team  Live jazz w/Amy & Hans @El Cerrito Natural Grocery, 6-8:30p <i>FREE – invite friends!</i>	8	9	10	11 Community office hours, 2-5p  Interfaith Meditation @Sycamore UCC, 6p  Mira Vista Council, 7p	12	13 All Church Retreat @ Melinda & Colleen's, 9:30a – 3p - Lunch provided
14 12 Noon Worship followed by La Mesa	15 <b>Martin Luther King Day</b> 	16	17 Mindfulness Circle, El Cerrito Royale, 7p	18 Interfaith Meditation @Sycamore UCC, 6p	19	20
21 12 Noon Worship followed by Semi Annual meeting & potluck	22	23	24	25 Interfaith Meditation @Sycamore UCC, 6p	26	27
28 12 Noon Worship followed by La Mesa	29	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 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!

Jan. 7	“Tearing Up Heaven” <i>Social Action Team meets during La Mesa</i>	Mark 4: 1-11
Jan. 14	“Finding Each Other” <i>Tom Emanuel preaching</i>	John 1: 43-51
Jan. 21	“Big Fish”	Mark 1: 14-20
Jan. 28	“Going Home”	Mark 1: 21-28
Feb. 4	“Song of Simeon”	Luke 2: 25-35



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780 Ashbury Avenue  
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Address Change Requested

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January 2018

God's Love in Action



Mira Vista United Church of Christ

*The Fellowship Post*

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*An Open and Affirming Congregation*  
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