

# The Fellowship Post

## Mira Vista United Church of Christ

November 2018

### Magnetic Faith

by Rev. Dr. Melinda V. McLain

***The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined.*** – Isaiah 9:2

In his marvelous book *Minyan: Ten Principles for Living a Life of Integrity*, Rabbi Rami M. Shapiro brings a Jewish lens to the **theological concept of non-dualism** that many of us have explored through other contemplative writers such as Fr. Richard Rohr, Cynthia Bourgeault, and Thich Naht Hanh.

I've always disliked the term non-dualism because it is such a dry way to describe the most expansive of all theological concepts: **oneness rooted in diversity**. Yet, Rabbi Shapiro helpfully explains this concept by using the example of a bar magnet to describe aspects of God in a non-dualist view.

Shapiro writes, "A magnet has two poles, one positive and one negative. A magnet cannot be otherwise and still be a magnet. The two poles go together, and only when they are together can there be a magnet. Even if you cut the magnet in half and then in half again, it will always manifest these two poles. No matter how small you slice the magnet, **its oneness necessitates the duality of positive and negative poles.**"



In an increasingly polarized body politic and a seemingly "dark" time in our collective lives, seeking to experience this **inclusive oneness** through spiritual practice is indeed good news and balm for our weary souls. In other words, we cannot experience light without darkness, peace without chaos, and we cannot know love without also knowing its opposite, indifference and hate.

The power of practicing this sort of magnetic faith is beautifully made incarnate through through the

**actions of Jewish doctors and staff** who treated the perpetrator of the mass shooting at Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA. in the emergency department of Allegheny General Hospital. While the suspect was still yelling anti-semitic invective, the doctors, nurses, and then the president of the hospital, Dr. Jeffrey K. Cohen treated the injured man with compassion and dignity even though Dr. Cohen personally knew nine of the shooter's eleven victims and lives so close to the synagogue that he heard the gun shots. I am deeply moved by the witness of Jewish doctors and staff who remained compassionate in the face of such hatred. That is magnetic faith at its best: it attracts and inspires us.

During the month of November, we will explore what it means to celebrate life in the midst of death as we honor our ancestors on **Dia de Los Muertos and All Saints Day November 3rd** and through the dedication of **our stewardship pledges and Thanksgiving celebration on November 18th**, what it means to be grateful regardless of our

circumstances and generous, even when we feel poor and weak.

Then as we move into the **season of Advent on Sunday, December 3rd**, we are invited to journey inward to balance our experience of the darkness of winter with the spiritual light of Christ's coming into our hearts again at Christmas.

Love and Many Blessings,  
Melinda

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### **Making the Connections between Domestic Violence and Mass Shootings**

By Nancy Lemon

At the end of October, we heard of yet another **mass shooting in the U.S.**, this time two on the same day, one targeting African-Americans at a grocery store in Kentucky and one targeting Jews who were praying in the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA. While these particular crimes were also [hate-based terrorism](#), the shooter in Kentucky also had a history of domestic violence. In addition to feeling sad, angry, and/or scared, each of us wants to prevent such atrocities in the future, but may feel helpless about what can be done.

One concrete and achievable way to prevent many mass shootings is to enforce the current federal gun laws. These laws ban anyone convicted of domestic violence or subject to a domestic violence restraining order -- i.e., batterers -- from possessing firearms or ammunition. These laws also make it a **federal crime to sell or give firearms or ammunition to batterers**.

Everytown for Gun Safety has [documented](#) the connection between firearms, batterers, and mass shootings (defined as four or more victims). Everytown found that more than half of mass shootings in the U.S. between 2009 and 2016 were committed by intimate partners or family. And other mass shootings have been committed by people subject to restraining

orders or those with a domestic violence conviction.

While these federal gun laws prohibiting batterers from having firearms and ammunition have been on the books since the 1990's, they are not well-enforced, so many batterers continue to possess guns. A few years ago, San Mateo County decided to do something about this, and obtained funding for two sheriff's deputies to go to the homes of people convicted of domestic violence and ask them to surrender their firearms. (I assume that in some cases the batterers refused, and the deputies had to get a search warrant and return.) Through this program, the **county reduced its domestic violence homicide rate to 0.**

No matter where people stand on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment, I hope that **everyone can agree** with Congress and the courts that there are some groups of people who should not have access to guns. These groups include batterers; and California mandates that if they are convicted of domestic violence and given probation, they must complete a year-long batterers' intervention program.

As we complete the month of October, Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we can urge our officials to **enforce the federal gun laws in every county** in the U.S. This should greatly cut down not only on individual women and children being terrorized or murdered, but also on mass shootings in which every one of us is at risk.



Nancy Lemon

## Solving *the GOOD table* Equation

by Rev. Dr. Melinda V. McLain

Our diligent work continues to create our vision of a café church. At this point in the process, we are essentially solving an equation that balances: 1) the **price** of purchasing the property plus 2) the **cost of renovation** against 3) any **projected profit or loss** from operating the business plus 4) the potential funds that can be raised through **joint fundraising**.

In each of the four areas of the equation, teams that include folks from Mira Vista, Planting Justice, professionals with expertise and community leaders in El Sobrante are working to find **bottom line numbers** that will show whether or not the big picture equation can balance.

In some ways, the most straightforward portion of the equation is the cost of renovation and **Colleen Rodger is leading that team** and working with a team of professionals including our chef, plus an architect friend of Planting Justice and a commercial contractor who has built several restaurants. In order to find this bottom line number, we've also been working on the operating side of the equation to know what equipment is necessary to produce our menu offerings.

One of the things we had hope to do was to make ice cream on the premises utilizing fruit from the Planting Justice orchard. Yum, right? But we have learned from a commercial kitchen designer that health department regulations require a separate room with equipment that brings the construction cost to

produce that **single menu item to \$80,000**. While it is still a fond desire, it appears to be cost prohibitive, though we continue to look for creative solutions.

Also on the renovation side are some **potentially expensive unknowns** such as whether our use will require a building-wide sprinkler system for fire suppression and whether the current sewer line is adequate for the expanded use of the kitchen and additional bathrooms.

On the operating side, we have been fortunate to obtain **outstanding, yet free, legal representation** from both Hastings School of Law and Boalt Hall. In addition, our friend and regular participant in Mira Vista worship, Andy Weill is mentoring our student lawyers in the finer points of non-profit tax law. So we have five students, two professors and Andy now working to help us to create a **solid business model and partnership with Planting Justice**. While the number of folks involved in this part of the process can be a bit unwieldy, the work is moving forward well.

This is **just a taste of all the work** going on to determine whether or not this project is viable and how much money we could potentially offer the current owner of the property in purchase price while accounting for the costs for renovation and operations.

If you want to **plug in to one of these work teams**, do let Pastor Melinda, Colleen Rodger or any member of the Mira Vista Council know where you might be able to help.



## News from the Pews

Mira Vista is pleased to welcome a new member, **Mary Ivas**, to our congregation! **Mary** grew up Roman Catholic in Massachusetts and decided to join this church in part because of her reading of Judith Valente's marvelous book on Benedictine practice entitled, "How to Live" that our Mindfulness Circle is also reading. Mary lives with her spouse Nicole Morin in El Sobrante, not far from Pastor Melinda and Colleen Rodger.

**Adelle Lemon**, one of our beloved elders, has "graduated" from hospice care, although she still has a solid team of caregivers supporting her. Continue to hold her in your thoughts and prayers.

We were treated to a marvelous presentation by our own **Olivia Wisely** about her recent trip as a student ambassador to China after La Mesa on Sunday, October 14th. Well-done Olivia!

Our own **Nancy Lemon** has received another award for her work in the area of domestic violence law from A Safe Place, the oldest shelter for survivors of domestic violence in the East Bay. This honor followed on the heels of a legislative victory here in California. Nancy writes on October 3, 2018, "AB 2044 (Stone) was signed by the California governor and will take effect 1/1/19. I worked on this bill with others from the Family Violence Appellate Project, to strengthen our family law statutes dealing with domestic violence and children. The new law amends 3044, among other sections, so the presumption against custody will apply if one of the parents is abusive to their current partner, so it's no longer limited to abuse against the co-parent." Congratulations to Nancy and many thanks for continuing to work on behalf of survivors of domestic violence.



Olivia and Wendy Wisely celebrating Bonnie Hariton's 70th birthday



10<sup>th</sup> Heinz Lankford  
13<sup>th</sup> Amy Ukena  
19<sup>th</sup> Matilde Hollander  
24<sup>th</sup> Ty Kavanaugh-Lynch  
25<sup>th</sup> Elise Hariton

Happy Birthday to each of you ♥  
with love from Mira Vista! ♥

# Mira Vista

## United Church of Christ

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# November

# 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				<b>1</b> Community Office Hours with Pastor Melinda each Thursday @Catahoula Coffee, 2-5p Interfaith Meditation @Sycamore UCC, 6p	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 
<b>4</b> 12 Noon Worship & Holy Communion followed by La Mesa Live jazz w/Amy & Hans @El Cerrito Natural Grocery, 6-8:30p Daylight Savings Time begins	<b>5</b> Mindfulness Circle, El Cerrito Royale, 7p	<b>6</b> Mira Vista prepares lunch, GRIP Souper Center, 10 am 	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> Community office hours, 2-5p Interfaith Meditation @Sycamore UCC, 6p	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> 12 Noon Worship followed by La Mesa	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Mira Vista Council meeting, Melinda's office, 7p	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Community office hours, 2-5p Interfaith Meditation @Sycamore UCC, 6p	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b> 12 Noon Worship followed by Thanksgiving La Mesa Live jazz w/Amy & Hans @El Cerrito Natural Grocery, 6-8:30p	<b>19</b> Mindfulness Circle, El Cerrito Royale, 7p	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>  Church Office closed	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b> 12 Noon Worship followed by La Mesa	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	

## ***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!

Nov 4      The Great Cloud of Witnesses                      Hebrews 12: 1

*All Saints Sunday and Die de Los Muertos*

Nov 11     Following the Divine Gaze                                      Mark 12: 38-44

Nov 18     Enough?    Matthew 6: 25-29  
*Stewardship Sunday and Thanksgiving Dinne*

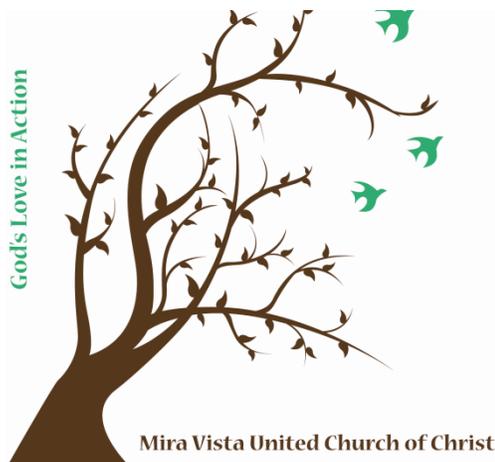
Nov 25     Holy Branding    John 18: 33-37

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Address Change Requested

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*The Fellowship Post*

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