

JULY 2020

THE GOOD TABLE NEWS



Slowly, but surely, we are working our way through the building, fire, and environmental health departments for Contra Costa County by providing big sets of drawings delineating all the nitty gritty details of renovating a commercial building. Plumbing and light fixtures, kitchen appliances, and every door and window have to be specified in advance and comply with the various codes and regulations. In addition, we have to contend with West County Wastewater and PG&E with regard to our utility service. Our project manager, Colleen Rodger and architect Darrel DeBoer are really busy!

We are also exploring whether we can afford to install solar plus a new roof. The current roof is perhaps ok for another two or three years, but it makes sense to do both at the same time if we can identify funding. Bottom line is that we are still hopeful that construction could begin in the Fall, but there is much to do and we still have lots of money to raise. If you'd like to contribute, do check out our [GoFundMe](#) or contact Gavin Raders if you have a lead on an appropriate source of funding or major gift to offer. This community café, gathering space, and nursery will be a real boon to El Sobrante and we would be grateful for your support!

Choice Tidbits

Our small monthly workdays continue with physical distancing, masks, and a stable cohort of volunteers. At our June workday, we did more demo in the building and continued with the unending task of weeding the long beds on Sobrante Avenue plus picking up trash and recycling. We also continue to water our new trees and plantings to add to the existing beauty of our street front. Take a look and feel free to pick up trash, if you see it too.



Melinda's Musings - *Beautiful Justice*

by Rev. Dr. Melinda V. McLain

Pastor for The Good Table UCC



Here at the half-way point for 2020, I suspect most of us would say this year has been hard. Really hard. For some, the global coronavirus pandemic has meant the loss of a job (or even a career or business) and for many others this has been a time of crippling fear and/or extreme social isolation. At the very least, we have all found our lives disrupted and remade in new ways and we've had to do it all while masked!

Also, this global health emergency has laid bare and exacerbated the grave injustices based upon race and class that continue to plague our society. This is exceptionally hard to live with for our black and brown siblings and hard to watch for those of us who are committed to acts of solidarity and support. And yet, this is a historic moment when the possibility of leaping forward toward the goal of a more just and equitable society is palpable. We must keep our hands on the plough – now!

At the same time, we also need to remember to tend the holy in ourselves so that we have the stamina necessary for this time. There is evidence-based research that shows that meditation, mindfulness, and other spiritual practices do make us more resilient. Plus, many centuries of wisdom bear witness to the power of rooting our action in contemplation.

On Sunday, July 12th we will begin a six-week worship series entitled “Beguiled by Beauty” using materials created by Rev. Dr. Marcia McFee and Dr. Wendy Farley, both professors at my alma mater, San Francisco Theological Seminary. By contemplating the beauty of the creator, creation and all beings in it, we will seek to begin to see with God’s eyes how to better love our neighbors and ourselves. This will help us to then do justice because as Dr. Cornel West has written, “justice is what love looks like in public”.

Dr. Farley writes, “Contemplative disciplines, such as centering prayer and meditation, have been part of Christian life for centuries. They seem hard to practice now, not simply because our distracted and hyper-stimulated age makes them difficult, but also because they can appear irrelevant to the needs of a fractured and ugly historical moment.”



Please join me for this special series that will propel us “to dwell with the God of Divine Goodness, deeply in love with us, and practice ways to return that love as we fall more deeply in love with creation and with one another.”

What role does beauty play in your life and in your spiritual practice? How do you make the connections between beauty and justice?



News from our Digital Pews

- At our Sunday Gathering on July 5th we will welcome the Rev. Roger Ridgway as a new member of The Good Table UCC. Roger has also just moved to Bay Park in Pinole, not far from our new site in El Sobrante. Welcome Roger!
- Olivia Wisely will be attending SFSU in the Fall taking 15 units online with a major in creative writing and potentially a double major yet to be determined. Yay Liv!

birthdays

13th - Brady Morales-Woolery
24th - Barbara Bly

Let us know your birthday or anniversary and we'll celebrate you here!



Regular Ways to Connect



Sundays at 12 noon - Music, prayer, and preaching via Zoom. Our style is relaxed and interactive. Our music includes many genres from chant to gospel, and pop/rock to classical. We celebrate Holy Communion on the first Sundays of every month.



Thursdays, 2-5 pm - Virtual Coffee with Pastor Melinda. Need a chance to vent or simply connect? Send an email to Pastor Melinda and she'll schedule a time to meet you in zoom, via Facetime, or we can text or talk via phone: 510-526-0110. Don't let this time of physical distancing turn into toxic isolation. Reach out for support!



Thursdays, 6 pm - Interfaith Meditation via Zoom. There is an old Zen saying, "Everyone should meditate for 20 minutes each day unless you're really busy, and then you should meditate for an hour." We sit in chairs in silence for about 45 minutes and no previous experience with meditation is required.

Worth Noting

- **Wednesday, July 14th The Good Table UCC Council** meets via Zoom, 4:00p
- An online **Celebration of the life of Betty Coates** will be held on **Saturday, July 18th at 11a**. Mark your calendars now and plan to attend.
- **Saturday, July 25th, 12-3p**, a modified **Community Work + Fun Day** to continue cleaning up and preparing the site for construction while observing public health restrictions.



Our Worship Life Together

Join us on Sundays at 12 noon for our celebration with music, prayer, and preaching via Zoom. We celebrate the sacrament of **Holy Communion every First Sunday**. Please prepare your own elements of bread and a cup to use during our virtual celebration. All are welcome at our table!

July 5 - The Vindication of Wisdom *Matthew 11:16-19*

July 12 - Beauty and Radical Compassion *Ezekiel 31: 3-7*

July 19 - We Are Made for the Beloved *Psalms 16: 7-11*

July 26 - Falling in Love with the World *Psalms 147: 1-11*

August 2 - Abyss, Mystery and Wonder *Psalms 135: 1-3; 13-21*

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