

AUGUST 2022

THE GOOD TABLE NEWS



ModBar AV donated by Salesforce

The Good Table Café and Nursery News

We are so grateful for the kind words and contributions that the community has given to us in the **wake of the devastating burglary** of our construction site in mid-June. We are still working with our insurance company on our damage claim that currently stands at over \$180,000. Until the insurance claim is settled, there is little we can do inside the building.

But, if you've driven by the site recently, you will notice that **Planting Justice (PJ)** is working on the outdoor nursery space. We are also busy acquiring kitchen equipment for the cafe AND for the Planting Justice production kitchen that will be managed by **Sam Lustig**, formerly of Swanton Berry Farm. (see bio on pg. 2)

We are also delighted to announce that we will be receiving some additional coffee equipment from **Salesforce** including a [ModBar AV](#) under counter espresso machine that used to be

installed in the coffee bar on the top floor of the iconic Salesforce tower in San Francisco. A good espresso machine is an essential (and expensive) piece of equipment when operating a coffee shop and we are very excited to receive this beautiful (and eventually delicious!) donation. Big kudos to Good Table Cafe Board member **Jason Daniel** and to our new friend **Tom Baker** from Salesforce for making this happen!

The Contra Costa Sheriff is finally investigating this large loss and we are grateful, although finding the thieves will not put our rough electrical back in the walls. Some will find it interesting that the detective assigned to our case is also working to stem the tide of **catalytic converter** thefts. The two crimes are related because both take their ill gotten goods to unscrupulous metal recyclers.

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Thanks to everyone who has **financially contributed to the project** and if you haven't given yet, please help as you are willing and able. We're delighted to receive **your tax-deductible contributions in any amount** and we would really appreciate **introductions to other individual donors and/or foundations** that would be interested in our project. You can give online through the-good-table.org or **save the processing fees by mailing a check to:** The Good Table LLC, 780 Ashbury Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530. All donations are 100% tax-deductible.

Please plan to come to our next **Community Work + Fun Day on Saturday Aug 27 from 12p - 3p**. We always have a variety of gardening and cleaning projects that can be done while construction is happening. Be sure to wear sturdy shoes, bring work gloves, and please wear a mask as we continue to weather this omicron surge. We are likely to begin scheduling some **additional workdays for specific projects**. Do get on our direct e-list if you'd like to come help - we need you and are so grateful for all your support.

Meet the PJ Kitchen Manager Sam Lustig

Sam Lustig has lived in the Bay Area for the last 16 years, working in agriculture for 15 of those years. A longtime Swanton Berry Farm employee (and a proud member of the United Farm Workers!), Sam was responsible for recipe development, interior design, baking and sales at America's very first unionized organic farm and the oldest certified organic strawberry farm in California.

August birthdays

4th: Rev. Susan Meeter
8th: Rev. Thom Longino
8th: Ardith Hayes

August Anniversaries

11th: Rev. Dr. Melinda V. McLain (ordination anniversary)
24th: Patsy & Stan Severson

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



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Meet the PJ Kitchen Manager Sam Lustig (continued)

In addition to making food justice his priority in professional life, he received his degree in Political Science from the University of California Santa Cruz with a focus on poverty and welfare politics. His lifelong passion for food led to a venture in heliculture (snail farming) and the beginnings of his side project, Sam's Snail Farm, with the goal to become the first certified organic producer of escargot in the country.

As brother in law to co-directors and co-founders of Planting Justice Gavin Raders and Haleh Zandi, he has watched PJ grow from the seed of an idea into the food justice institution it is today. His longtime experience in socially just farm to table retail, production and design at Swanton Berry Farm and his commitment to outreach and education on labor inequities and the injustices of America's food system is what has led Sam to join Planting Justice and the Good Table project. Welcome Sam!

Living Edge Book Group



Our next book for our **Mindfulness Circle** or **Living Edge Book Group** will be: **Gifts of the Dark Wood: Seven Blessings for Soulful Skeptics (and Other Wanderers)** by Eric Elnes. Elnes is a UCC minister currently serving First Congregational, Portland, OR.

From the publisher: *Have you left the faith you used to have but don't know what to move toward? When you can't see the road ahead, do you feel lost and alone? Do you wish you had a group of companions willing to wander with you?*

Welcome to the Dark Wood.

As you journey through the unknown, you may feel tempted, lost, and uncertain. Though commonly feared and avoided, these feelings of

uncertainty can be your greatest assets on this journey because it is in uncertainty that we probe, question, and discover. According to the ancients, you don't need to be a saint or spiritual master to experience profound awakening and live with God's presence and guidance. You need only to wander.

In clear and lucid prose that combines the heart of a mystic, the soul of a poet, and the mind of a biblical scholar, Dr. Eric Elnes demystifies the seven gifts bestowed in the Dark Wood: the gifts of uncertainty, emptiness, being thunderstruck, getting lost, temptation, disappearing, and the gift of misfits.

This is a book for anyone who feels awkward in their search for God, anyone who seeks to find holiness amid their holy mess, and anyone who prefers practicality to piety when it comes to finding their place in this world.

Get a copy and join us when we begin meeting again on **Wed. Aug. 3, 2-3:30p pacific**. Please read the Introduction and chapter 1, *Where We Find Ourselves* before we meet.

Meeting ID: 868 7644 9214 and zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86876449214>>

You can also add to your calendar by clicking [here](#).

The Partner Advantage

By Rev. Dr. Melinda V. McLain
Pastor for The Good Table UCC



When the church first began dreaming about creating The Good Table as a new way of being a spiritual community, we used a business tool called The Lean Canvas to help us think about things differently and not just fall into the same old, same old ways of being church that we've known in the past.

The Lean Canvas has nine “blocks” that make you think about a new project in a different way. One of them, the “unfair advantage” block has turned out to be one of the best blocks for our project because it reminded us of our commitment to and our ability to work in partnership with other nonprofit organizations.

The partnership between The Good Table United Church of Christ and Planting Justice is essential to this project. Without the legacy capital from the church to buy the property and PJ's ability to fundraise for the renovation, this project would not be possible. Neither organization could do this by ourselves.

While our partnership with PJ is more formal, our church has always sought to work with other partners - both faith-based and secular nonprofits - to serve the wider community.

On Saturday, July 16th, council member Mary Ivas and I went to the 14th Annual Put the Guns Down event sponsored by the Visions of Hope Project led by Pastor Elana Bolds, a longtime community activist in Richmond that Melinda met through City of Refuge, UCC, Oakland.

At the event there was free food, haircuts, games, a bounce house, and a bicycle giveaway aimed at helping families and children stay away from gun violence. The projects does this work year 'round and it is impossible to guess how many lives have been saved. The Good Table UCC is proud to have sponsored this event for the last two years and we look forward to finding new ways to support at-risk children in our area by working with Pastor Elana and her fabulous organization.

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.



Wednesdays, 2-3:30 pm - How do we find our true self? What are the similarities between Buddhism and Christianity? Is there something that is real beyond the limits of our perception? These are just some of the questions that our Live Edge Readers has explored while reading and pondering together. If you are interested, kindly send an email to Pastor Melinda to get added to the list: info@the-good-table.org



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

- **Colleen Rodger** and **Melinda V. McLain** will be in Santa Fe, NM, **July 26-Aug 2**.
- **The Good Table UCC Council** meets via zoom, Wednesday, **Aug 17, 6:30p**
- **The Good Table Café Board of Directors** meets on **Sat. Aug. 20, 2:30p** via zoom.
- **Sat. Aug 27** will be our **Community Work + Fun Day** @5166 Sobrante Ave, 12-3p. Wear sturdy shoes and clothing and bring work gloves and favorite gardening tools. And please bring a good quality mask so we can all stay safe from COVID and construction dust.
- **Sat. Sept. 3rd Sherwood Forest Yard Sale** @Melinda & Colleen's. Donate items that will be sold "pay-what-you-can" to benefit The Good Table.
- **Save the Date**

We will celebrate the life of **Wendy Wisely** sometime this Fall. Stay tuned for a date.

The Good Table UCC Worship Offerings

Join us on **Sundays at 12 noon** for our celebration with music, prayer, and preaching in person AND via Zoom . We celebrate the sacrament of **Holy Communion every First Sunday**. All are welcome at our table in El Cerrito and online everywhere!

Aug 7 “Getting Ready” Luke 12: 32-40

Aug 14 “Tending the Vines” Psalm 80:1-2, 8-19

Aug 21 “Becoming Unbent” Luke 13:10-17

Aug 28 “Setting a Good Table” Luke 14:1, 7-14

Sept. 4 “The Unlikely Messenger” Philemon 1:1-21



Gavin with rare Japanese Raisin Tree

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