

NOVEMBER 2022

THE GOOD TABLE NEWS



The Good Table Café and Nursery News

As in previous years, we have rescheduled our last Saturday **Community + Fun Workdays** for November and December due to the holidays, but do hope you'll join us on **Saturday, December 3rd** and **Saturday, January 7th**, from 12-3p. We always have a variety of gardening and cleaning projects that can be done while construction is happening. Be sure to wear sturdy shoes and bring work gloves or just stop by for a tour. 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.

If you haven't been to a workday recently, you'll be delighted to see all the work

being done in the Planting Justice nursery space outside and inside their lovely farm store space. Do come check it out!

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.

Taking Time to Heal

By Rev. Dr. Melinda V. McLain



"Perhaps wisdom is simply a matter of waiting, and healing a question of time. And anything good you've ever been given is yours forever. "

— Rachel Naomi Remen, M.D. founder of Commonweal in Bolinas

In all of the gospel narratives, **Jesus regularly retreats** to the wilderness or some other “away” place to pray, and in my own view, rejuvenate and heal, from the stress and challenge of being the leader of a movement for spiritual wholeness.

For churches that follow the liturgical calendar, the upcoming **season of advent** is not only celebrated as a time of preparation for Christmas and the coming of the Christ child again in our hearts, it is also a perfect time to resist the “busyness” of the holiday season, by making a conscious decision to slow down and make space for contemplation and deeper reflection.

I've been an ordained minister for 26 years and a human being for 60 and I've been fortunate to gain a little bit of **wisdom about the relationship between time, space, and healing**. The old adage is that “time heals all wounds”. But in my own personal experience and in my ministry of accompanying others, how you spend time also affects the healing process.

For those of you who know me well, you already know that **I have personally become quite exhausted** serving as a solo pastor while also developing this big project that includes leading three nonprofit organizations. And because the project is unique, it also has meant that I've had to learn a gazillion new skills while at the same time – like everyone else – I also had to change pretty much the way I do everything because of the pandemic. It has been a very bumpy ride for most of us!

A couple of weeks ago, after a poignant session of spiritual direction with my longtime colleague and friend, the **Rev. Dr. Curran Reichert** and a healing herd of six horses in Petaluma, I recognized that in order to be able to actually do the final push of getting our Good Table Café open next year and moving

our church from El Cerrito to El Sobrante, I need a significant amount of time completely away to prevent my current level of exhaustion from escalating into a major health crisis.

Fortunately, the Good Table United Church of Christ has been able to generously grant my request for **medical and study leave that will begin on Monday, November 21st and continue through Monday, February 6, 2023**. During that time, a group of wonderful leaders will temporarily take up my roles.

While I will be spending most of my leave time in Santa Fe, NM, my beloved wife **Colleen Rodger will remain here in El Sobrante** to continue her work on the project as the interior designer and project manager for various vendors and contractors doing work outside our main contractor's scope-of-work.

It is very difficult to let go of all that I have been holding since we began creating this fabulous project in the Fall of 2018. But learning to trust the leadership of others and remembering that we're all "replaceable" will make me a better and stronger leader in the long run. I am also hopeful that when I return next February, I will rejoin a larger and more invested team ready to do the hard work of getting this project all the way to opening.

Thank you in advance for your best wishes and prayers, if you're into that sort of thing. I will miss you all and will light some New Mexican luminarias for our world, this project, and for all of you that we might all be strengthened and healed.

Namasté, blessed be, and may the peace of Christ surround you all.

November Birthdays

10th Heinz Lankford

13th Amy Ukena

19th Matilde Hollander

24th Ty Kavanaugh-Lynch

25th Elise Hariton

November Anniversaries

28th Brian Miller and

Howard Campbell

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

Choice Tidbits

Our next Good Table News will be a big double issue for December and January that will arrive in your inbox right after Thanksgiving.

Do you subscribe to The Good Table at Home, our weekly blog? You can find it on our website, social media sites, or subscribe here.



November is Native American History month and a perfect time to make a donation to benefit indigenous organizations. A fantastic local organization called **Sogorea Te' Land Trust** invites non-indigenous people to support their work this month. The Shuumi Land Tax is a **voluntary annual contribution** that non-Indigenous people living on traditional Lisjan Ohlone territory make to support the critical work of the Sogorea Te' Land Trust.

Meet the Temporary Leadership Team

The [Rev. Joanne Whitt](#) has agreed to become our **Temporary Managing Pastor** who will work with The Good Table LLC and The Good Table Cafe Board of Directors on behalf of The Good Table United Church of Christ. She will work with Gavin Raders of Planting Justice and the rest of the construction management team to ensure that our construction and development work continues apace.



Pastor Joanne is a semi-retired Presbyterian minister who recently relocated to Richmond. She is uniquely-suited to do this work having been a lawyer and business owner before attending seminary with Melinda back in the '90's. Joanne is also a trained spiritual director and writer who produces a blog entitled "[Solvitur Ambulando](#)" or "it is solved by walking". We are so fortunate that Joanne is willing to walk with us over the next two months.

The [Rev. Dr. Celestine Fields](#) will be our **Temporary Pulpit Supply Pastor** who will lead our weekly Sunday Gathering with music, prayer, and preaching plus our beautiful Candlelight Christmas Eve service on Dec. 24th at 8p.



Pastor Celeste serves as the pastor for our sibling UCC church, **Arlington Community Church, Kensington** and was a member of The Good Table UCC when she first came to the Bay Area to serve as Interim Pastor for Sycamore UCC, El Cerrito in 2019. She is a dynamic and spirit-filled worship leader and preacher. We are so fortunate that she is willing to help tend our spiritual community during this time.

These two talented pastors will be ably assisted by our **Construction Project Manager, Xina Ash; Construction Consultant, Brianne Steinhauser** of Gunkel Architecture; **Interior Designer Colleen Rodger**, and of course, **Gavin Raders, manager of The Good Table LLC** on behalf of Planting Justice.

The Good Table UCC/LLC **Communication Manager, Jacob Day** and **GTUCC Music Director, Tim K. Murphy** will also help to keep things running and humming along. Billy Wayne Roy, seminary student and admin for Christ Lutheran will produce our weekly bulletins.

Live Edge Readers and Interfaith Meditation



While Pastor Melinda is on leave, **Joy Barnitz** has agreed to be the zoom master and facilitator for our spiritual book group, the Live Edge Readers. Thanks Joy!

Right now, the group continues to read and discuss: *When Things Fall Apart: Heart Advice for Difficult Times* by Pema Chödrön on **Wednesdays, 2-3:30p pacific via zoom**. We should finish this book by the end of November.

In early December we will begin reading and discussing *The Thirst of God: Contemplating God's Love with Three Women Mystics* by SFTS professor Wendy Farley. In this enlightening volume, Farley eloquently brings the work of three female mystics--Marguerite Porete, Mechthild of Magdeburg, and Julian of Norwich--into creative conversation with contemporary Christian life and thought. Get a copy now and join us! If you're not already on the **e-list for Live Edge Readers**, do send an email to **Joy Barnitz** by [clicking here](#).

Our **Interfaith Meditation** group meets via zoom each **Thursday from 6-6:40p** for a restorative session of shared silence. While Melinda is on leave, group member **Joyce Hedges** will be the zoom master and facilitator for this group. If you'd like to receive zoom credentials to join this group, send an email to Joyce by [clicking here](#).

Giving Thanks for The Good Table

On Sunday, Nov. 20th, the Good Table UCC will receive our annual giving pledges during our Sunday Gathering at 12n. When this congregation sold its campus on Cutting Blvd in 2006, the community decided that 15% of the monies pledged by members and friends would go to nonprofit organizations we admire each year.

We have given to local, national, and international organizations over the years as needs shift and our interests intensify. Check out some of the groups we've given to over the years by [clicking here](#). This year, we've already made significant contributions to: Oakland Literacy Coalition, Tandem Partners in Early Education, World Central Kitchen (for disaster relief), the Rainforest Trust and Put the Guns Down/Visions of Hope project in Richmond.

At the time of the sale, the church also raised its giving percentage to the ministries of our denomination, the United Church of Christ. This means that a full 30% of every dollar given to the church goes beyond this community to benefit others.

A letter will be sent by email to our church e-list soon asking you to make a giving pledge for 2023. If you haven't become a regular giver and want to know more, please speak to Financial Secretary Kathe Kiehn.

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

- **The Good Table UCC Council** meets via zoom, **Monday, Nov. 14, 4p**
- The Good Table Café Board of Directors will have a joint meeting with The Good Table UCC Council on **Saturday, Nov. 19th at 2:30p** via zoom.
- **Pastor Melinda's Medical and Study** leave begins **Monday, Nov. 21** through **Monday, Feb. 6th**.
- **Sat. Dec. 3** 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.

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! All are welcome at our table in El Cerrito and online everywhere!

Mark your calendar!

Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

Dec 24 at 8p in-person and via zoom.

The Good Table UCC will not meet on...

Christmas Day, Dec. 25th

New Year's Day, Jan. 1.

The Good Table
780 Ashbury Avenue
El Cerrito, CA 94530

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The Good Table
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