

FALL 2024

THE GOOD TABLE NEWS



Insulation and sheetrock in the Gathering Space and Cafe.

The Good Table Café & Nursery News by Melinda V. McLain

There is a tv ad that claims: “a website makes it real”. But I believe that when renovating an old building that: “sheetrock makes it real”. I’m delighted to announce that we have now enclosed the walls and most of the sheetrock, taping, and mudding is complete inside the building. We also have our electrical panel onsite and the large hoods for our two kitchens are now in place. Our back employee parking lot has been graded and paved and we hope to have windows and doors soon. If we continue to make progress, it is still possible that we will open by the end of the year.

In the meantime, our weekly **Planting Justice Farmer’s Market** continues with new hours: **10a-2p**.

Do come down and enjoy live music, friends, food, and of course, support local farms and businesses. Every week is a little different, so come find out what’s new and revisit your faves. The Shed is also open every Sunday and it’s a perfect way to connect with the Triangle Works group too. Check out their class offerings at: theshedelsobranterg.org

Finally, please put our **Last Saturday Community Work + Fun Days** at 5166 Sobranter Avenue on your calendar for the rest of the year, although we meet on **First Saturdays in December and January** to avoid the holidays. Wear sturdy shoes and clothing suitable for gardening or cleaning projects or just stop by for a tour! Our workdays are organized and led by **Sam Lustig** of Planting Justice. If you have questions, or would like to help out at other times, please [contact us here](#).

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.

Choice Tidbits

What are the Live Edge Readers reading now?

We're currently reading *What Makes You Come Alive: A Spiritual Walk with Howard Thurman* by Lerita Coleman Brown. **Live Edge Readers** currently **meets via zoom on Wednesdays, 2:30-4p.**

Our **Interfaith Meditation** group meets [via zoom](#) Meeting ID: 416 454 2723 each **Thursday from 6-6:40p** for a restorative session of shared silence. No previous experience with meditation is necessary and all are truly welcome.

Fall Birthdays & Anniversaries

September Birthdays

8th Carol Kiehn
21st Iris Ridgway
23rd Rev. Roger Ridgway
23rd Elisabeth Severson

September Anniversaries

8th Joan Thompson & Ken Alborn
21st Ruth Ann Clark & Ardith Hayes
24th Colleen Rodger & Melinda V. McLain
25th Kathe Kiehn & Heinz Lankford

October Birthdays

11th Joann Pavlinec
13th Bonnie Hariton
17th Diane Young
25th Ali Edney

November Birthdays

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

November Anniversaries

28th Brian Miller & Howard Campbell

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



EL SOBRANTE MAKES HISTORY WITH IT'S FIRST-EVER PRIDE CELEBRATION!

El Sobrante, CA – Get ready to make history and celebrate love, unity, and diversity at the very first LGBTQ+ Pride celebration in El Sobrante, California! As a small but vibrant community just 20.5 miles from San Francisco, El Sobrante is stepping into the spotlight on Sunday, **September 22, 2024, from 12:00 PM to 5:00 PM** at **La Moine Park** affectionately known as “**Cheese Park.**”

For over five decades, San Francisco has been a beacon of Pride, and now, El Sobrante is proudly joining the ranks of communities across the Bay Area to create a space where everyone can celebrate who they are and who they love. This historic event will be a day to remember, filled with music, laughter, and the joy of community.

What to Expect:

- **A Celebration for All Ages:** With food trucks, local vendors, and community booths, there's something for everyone. Kids will love the two playgrounds and a charming petting zoo, while adults can enjoy a lively lineup of entertainment.
- **World-Class Entertainment:** Dance the day away to the beats of the world-famous DJ Page Hodel, who will be spinning hits from yesterday and today. Plus, enjoy drag queen bingo, inspiring speeches from local leaders, and surprise musical guests!
- **A Community United:** This event is brought to life by a diverse coalition of local business owners, religious leaders, nonprofit organizers, and elected officials, all united in their support for the LGBTQ+ community. Special thanks to Nicole Donn, President of the El Sobrante Chamber of Commerce, and event chairs Clayton and Michael Price-Brown, pioneers in local LGBTQ+ history.

“For years, we’ve chanted ‘We are everywhere’ at big city Pride celebrations, and now, we’re bringing that spirit to El Sobrante,” says Rev. Dr. Melinda V. McLain, an openly lesbian pastor at The Good Table United Church of Christ, another proud sponsor of the event. “This is our time to shine, to come together, and to show that love has no boundaries—even in semi-rural places like El Sobrante.”

Don't miss out on being part of this groundbreaking moment in our community's history! Sponsorship opportunities and booth sign-ups are available until **September 1, 2024**. For more information, please contact us at elsobrantepride@gmail.com.

JOIN US ON SEPTEMBER 22ND TO CELEBRATE LOVE, PRIDE, AND THE POWER OF COMMUNITY!

WriterCoach Connection



WriterCoach Connection is a nonprofit that brings trained volunteer coaches into public middle and high schools in the East Bay to help students develop strong writing and critical thinking skills. Over the past 24 years, WCC has coached over 37,000 students. Our coaches provide individualized attention to students to help them become free-thinking, confident writers. With coaching last year, 80% of low-performing students improved or significantly improved their skills. 100% of high school seniors whom WriterCoach Connection coached on essay questions for college applications were accepted into college. We recruit coaches of all backgrounds, and no formal training in teaching or writing is required. We coach directly in schools, working with teachers to provide support within the curriculum students are already engaged in. We coach all students in a class, and our program is not a pull-out.

We ask our volunteers to commit to a consistent shift for the entirety of our 10 to 12-week program. Volunteers can sign up for as little as an hour a week, with the option to sign up for more shifts as they please. We provide all the training needed to coach, including a mandatory orientation and a core training session. Our coaches are encouraged to focus on encouraging students to develop confidence in themselves as writers. Our job is not to correct grammar or enforce writing rules. Rather, we want to help students get their ideas down on paper and experience the joy of writing.

This fall we are running programs at 3 middle schools: King Middle School (Berkeley), Betty Reid Soskin Middle School (El Sobrante), and Elmhurst United Middle School (Oakland). We have coaching shifts available Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday during the school day (8:30-4). The first step for folks interested in volunteering with us is to [fill out our volunteer interest form](#). From there, our Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Manager Noah will reach out about signing up for an orientation session. Questions? Reach out to Noah at noah@writercoachconnection.org.

Celebrating the Unity of Flesh & Spirit

By Rev. Dr. Melinda V. McLain

Pastor for The Good Table UCC



“Long years must pass before the truths we have made for ourselves become our very flesh.” – Paul Valery, poet

The Apostle Paul, author of the “epistles” in the Bible had received a classical Greek education that taught that flesh (σάρκα-sarka) and spirit (πνεύμα- pneuma) were always in strict opposition. This “war” between flesh and spirit is waged throughout his letters and has continued in parts of our Christian tradition with some fairly dramatic consequences.

By accepting these rigid dualisms, spirituality for Paul was pretty black and white. You were either driven by flesh or by spirit - and flesh was bad and spirit was holy! It was either darkness or light - certainly no value in fog! Later Christians then designated everyone as either “saved” and headed for heaven or “depraved” and headed for hell.

This unyielding dualistic strand of the Christian tradition is deeply problematic and has gotten the faith into the most trouble over the centuries. By creating dualistic categories for humans, we have slaughtered beloved children of God by labeling them heretics, unbelievers, pagans, foreigners, or simply strangers. This thinking, when allied with corrupt political power, has supported ethnic cleansing and religious genocide. In simpler forms, it breeds persecution and oppression and is thereby antithetical, in my view, to a Gospel that is meant to be Good News for the poor, the oppressed, the stranger, and the outcast.

Dualistic thinking is also pervasive throughout secular culture too. It is on rabid display in our political discourse for sure and makes compromise of any kind impossible. And, if we tell the truth, most of us - even if we have been actively trying to avoid dualistic thinking - have a hard time remembering the beauty and holiness of our “flesh” and we'd like to be more “spiritually” evolved.

I believe that the teachings of Jesus were aligned with Jewish teaching and philosophy which is far more wholistic than dualistic. So much so, in fact, that there isn't even a word in masoretic Hebrew for “but”. The primary conjunction in Biblical Hebrew is “and” or וְ.

And even if you aren't a Jesus person or religious person of any sort, we live in a culture that constantly puts bodies into categories of good and bad; ugly and beautiful; so learning to love your body and soul together is a great way to heal wounds left by our judgmental culture.

Finally, I believe that flesh cannot be separated from spirit in this life. You cannot pray (or think or feel) without a body - nor should you even try - because the gift of the Christ is dependent upon incarnation: the Word (Jesus) became flesh and dwelled among us. And it was good.

***Do you love your flesh/body? Is it easy or hard?
What spiritual practices do you do to honor your body?***

Small Kindnesses

by Danusha Laméris

I've been thinking about the way, when you walk
down a crowded aisle, people pull in their legs
to let you by. Or how strangers still say "bless you"

when someone sneezes, a leftover
from the Bubonic plague. "Don't die," we are saying.

And sometimes, when you spill lemons
from your grocery bag, someone else will help you
pick them up. Mostly, we don't want to harm each other.

We want to be handed our cup of coffee hot,
and to say thank you to the person handing it. To smile
at them and for them to smile back. For the waitress
to call us honey when she sets down the bowl of clam chowder,
and for the driver in the red pick-up truck to let us pass.

We have so little of each other, now. So far
from tribe and fire. Only these brief moments of exchange.

What if they are the true dwelling of the holy, these
fleeting temples we make together when we say, "Here,
have my seat," "Go ahead—you first," "I like your hat."

From *Healing the Divide: Poems of Kindness and Connection* (Green Writers Press, 2019)

Republished from grateful.org Poem submitted by Nancy Lemon and Lesley Turner.

THE GREATER RICHMOND
INTERFAITH PROGRAM
PRESENTS THE 38TH
ANNUAL



OCTOBER 5TH, 2024
10 AM - 1 PM
@ NICHOLL PARK IN
RICHMOND

www.gripcares.org



Scan me to register!

Thank you to this year's sponsors!



San Francisco Chronicle



Worth Noting

- **Planting Justice El Sobrante Farmer's Market on Sundays, 10a-2p!**
- **Community Work + Fun Days @5166 Sobrante Ave** are held each **last Saturdays, 12-3p (Sept. 28, Oct. 26, and Dec. 7)** *Please note that we meet on the first Saturdays for December and January due to the holidays.* Wear sturdy shoes and clothing and bring work gloves and gardening tools. Or just stop by for a tour!
- **The Good Table UCC Council** meets **each 2nd Monday, 4:30p** [via zoom](#).
- Join us on **Sundays at 12 noon** for **The Good Table UCC Sunday Gathering** 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 @780 Ashbury Avenue, El Cerrito (near Stockton) and online everywhere!



Regular Ways to Connect



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 @780 Ashbury Avenue, El Cerrito (near Stockton) and online everywhere!



Wednesdays, 2:30-4pm - 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 have 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.