

# Wanderings

March 2014



## kintsukuroi

(n.) (v. phr.) "to repair with gold"; the art of repairing pottery with gold or silver lacquer and understanding that the piece is more beautiful for having been broken



*He sat down opposite the treasury and observed how the crowd put money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow also came and put in two small coins worth a few cents. Calling his disciples to himself, he said to them, "Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury. For they have all contributed from their surplus, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood."*

*Mark 12:41-44*

## Stewardship



Stewardship is one of those old churchy words that is making a comeback because the environmental movement is using it. To be a steward means to be entrusted with the care of something. As people of faith we are called to take care of our planet, its resources, critters and one another. As individuals and communities we are also called to be good caretakers of the financial resources.

I used to think that it was wrong for preachers to talk about money because it seemed like they were always after it and instead of proclaiming spirituality they were after *my money to line their own pockets. That was before I realized that the charlatan ministers are mostly on television, not in local churches. It was before I realized that everything I have, including my money isn't really "mine;" it belongs to God and it was before I realized that giving is a spiritual discipline. Now as a pastor who talks about the joys of stewardship from my own experience, I realize that I'm not after your money. I'm*

*after your soul! I want you to grow in spirit, in generosity, in believing that you really can make a difference. I want to help you become someone who uses your time, talent and resources to make this a better world.*

How is giving a spiritual discipline? Giving is an element of showing gratitude. My friend Larry Sonner says Christians give "because" not "in order to." That is we give because we feel blessed, loved, cared for by God and because we trust that God will provide for us. Giving helps to remind me that God (not money or possessions) is worthy of my worship and dedication. Giving nurtures a generous spirit that walks in faith instead of fear. It reminds us to look out for others and opens our hearts so more love can soak in. Giving shouldn't be about the "in order to" stuff that people often mention such as: "Give because the church needs to make the budget; give some and God will make you financially rich because you were faithful. Give because you are receiving services from the church and you shouldn't be a free-loader."



The biblical standard is a tithe or 10% of the first fruits but I think it is a mistake to focus too much on the formula instead of the faith formation. Like any discipline, it takes some time to get better at it. My suggestion is always to start somewhere--even if it is a tiny fraction of your income and build on it from there over time.

Even when I had next to nothing I tithed and found that I never lacked for anything that I really needed. It becomes easier when it's a life-pattern (and to be perfectly candid) when it's automatically withdrawn from my account. When giving is done like that it is easier to make it a priority instead of a left-over.

I've never been a fan of the church harping on money throughout the year. I believe that congregations should be good stewards of the money that is pledged and try to live within those means, trusting that folks in the church are being faithful in their discipleship.

*(continued...)*

## From the Editor's Ipad

"Calling his disciples to himself"....Calling all who walk and learn from him, Jesus is quick to draw our attention to what matters most: a generous and trusting heart. It defies reasoning to give away one's own livelihood, so would this woman be a fool? Maybe in the eyes of the business-like mind... But for Jesus, trusting that faith will carry her through, is indeed worthy of reverence. Faith that an act of true generosity moves the heart of God and invites the divine to infiltrate our everyday lives. Faith that even if we supported a cause of justice and peace beyond our means, our return shall be a hundredfold. Faith that giving beyond our necessities to a broken world will not erase our existence. Faith that beyond what our eyes can see, God has accepted the work of our hands and transformed it to save humanity. Faith that our yearning to keep and safeguard all of God's creations will be answered.

All the gifts that have been bestowed upon us if used wisely, bring love, peace and beauty all around. God calls us to discover the divine presence in our deep core, and to offer that love back to everyone. A smile, a helping hand, a chant, all matters in the fabric of life. What each one of us brings to the table is so unique, that the world would not be the same without it. These words are often repeated till the point of fadedness and blandness. Can it be then that what we are and what we do is easily found in somebody else? Perhaps we have lost the ability to accept the full gift of the other when present as well as the painful loss when gone. Perhaps it is better to keep a safe distance so as not to be touched profoundly. This only reveals the deep impact of every being in their work, their gifts, and their love.



Jesus invites us to be faithfully generous. Will you accept his invitation?

*Katia Hage*

---

(...)Giving of my financial resources helps me to find a tangible way to express my deepest values. I so much want to make a positive difference while I'm in this world and I know that the ministries of RUCC do make the kind of difference I want to make. In the few months that I've been here, I've heard people testify time and again that here they finally feel safe. They tell me what a life-changing difference this church has made for them. RUCC has a special role to play in Redlands because it's loving, welcoming, it's a place where you can express doubt and ask questions. It's a place that isn't just about its own members but is committed to justice. I don't think of it as giving to the church as if it were like dues to a club that benefits me. I think of it as getting the chance to support something that makes a real difference in people's lives everyday.

*Rev. Dr. Dave Clark*

For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them: if prophecy, in proportion to the faith, if ministry, in ministering; if one is a teacher, in teaching; if one exhorts, in exhortation; if one contributes, in generosity; if one is over others, with diligence; if one does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

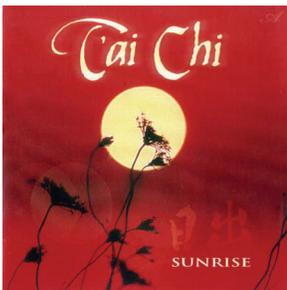
Romans 12:4-8



## The Inward Journey—Tai Chi

Every Tuesday evening, a group gathers in Covenant Hall to learn and practice *tai chi*, an ancient Chinese martial art that is known these days more for its many health benefits than for self defense. Studies show that it is highly effective in improving balance and joint functioning, lowering blood pressure, and contributing to overall well-being. But perhaps most important in this stressful world is that it helps us relax. So how does this work?

From our beginning warm-up exercises through the hour long practice, we direct our attention into the body. This



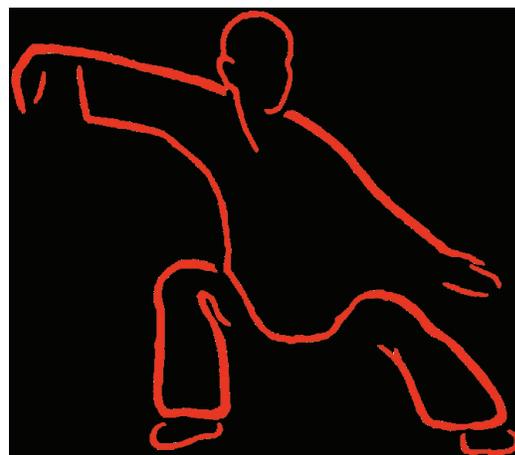
focuses the mind and keeps our thoughts from wandering into the past or future. These thoughts are what cause uncomfortable

sensations in the body that we call stress. In the slowness of the tai chi movements, we have an opportunity to enjoy moments without those thoughts, or at least without investing in them if they do arise. By not getting caught up in our thoughts, both the mind and the body relax. That is the essence of tai chi--the unity of mind and body. In that sense, it is often referred to as a moving form of meditation.

If we can learn to relax and understand how this body/mind process works, we can learn not to take it all so seriously and enjoy this wonderful life we have been given.

We invite you to join us on Tuesday nights from 6:00 to 7:00 pm. Classes are also offered at the Joslyn Senior Center, Tuesdays, 9:30-10:30 am and, beginning March 14<sup>th</sup>, a beginners class at the Joslyn Center from 9:00 to 10:00 am.

If you have questions, please feel free to call Linda Hamilton (909) 793-4482.



## The Outward Journey

As the birds welcome the beginning of a new dawn, and the sun's rays color the empty pews, Richard Hodson makes his way inside the sanctuary every Sunday morning. Calmly, quietly, he prepares the sacred place to welcome everyone. At the early meditation service and then the worship service, the little details are taken care of: from the bread and juice, the prayer books for meditation, the heater or air conditioner, and most importantly the sound system. Through all these long years of service, Richard has been here available and ready. As the good servant, he cares for the gift of the community that has been entrusted in his hands.

It all begins from within: the everyday yes to the call of God to be part of the beauty and the power of love.



“The Simple Path  
 Silence is Prayer  
 Prayer is Faith  
 Faith is Love  
 Love is Service  
 The Fruit of Service  
 is  
 Peace”

— Mother Teresa

## RUCC in transition



### Lent

In this Lenten season, we pray and reflect on where we are as a church and where we want to go in the future.

Wednesday, March 12 – **Appreciating the Present, Turning Toward the Future.**

We'll open with a general conversation, focusing on these questions: What brought you to RUCC? What keeps you coming? As we look toward the future, what do you think God is calling our church to do/become over the next few years?

Wednesday, March 19 – **Thinking about Our Time Together in Worship.**

What do you love about our worship services? In what ways might we bring new energy and spirit to them? (Can we use more of the arts and various learning styles in worship? What could make our music ministry more meaningful? How can we involve children and youth in a more meaningful way?)

Wednesday, March 26 – **Building Our Community.**

What has helped you to feel connected to others in the congregation? What might we do to be even more effective in our communication with each other and in building our sense of community? The Shepherd groups have traditionally taken on this role, but have struggled a bit of late. Can we revitalize this ministry? Are there other ways that we can support the ministry of Shepherds or develop other activities/structures that can help with pastoral care, communication and building community?

Wednesday, April 2 – **On Leadership and Living Within Our Means.**

What is the proper sized staff for a church our size? Can we transition from ministry providers to leaders/coordinators? Should we hire a youth minister or associate pastor? What must we do to make sure that we have the financial resources and processes to support the work of staff?

Wednesday, April 9 – **Cultivating Our Passion for Social Justice.**

We are known for our social justice work. Recently, we've helped form Step-By-Step, we've been involved in the "Get On the Bus" project, we've fought to keep a Super Walmart out of Redlands, and we worked on Proposition 8. Now what? What are the needs of Redlands? What are people passionate about?

The wordless language of the heart  
Arises at dawn, just when the vigilant  
Footsteps of the stars start to wane.  
Nothingness lies beyond.

-Ivonne Gordon Carrera

© Photograph by Andreas Vailakis  
*The Himalayas, Nepal*

Professor of Spanish and Latin American literature at the U of R, **Ivonne Gordon Vailakis** has recently released a second edition of her poetry book, "Meditar de Sirenas."

Originally from Ecuador, Gordon Vailakis is a widely recognized Latin American poet, literary translator and author of five books. Gordon Vailakis is one of the few academic professionals in the United States who specialize in the poetry of Gabriela Mistral, the only Latin American woman to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. The lyrical text of "Meditar de Sirenas" invites you to dive into the deep, melancholic, sweet and bitter waters of poetry as you let yourself go in her verses that are an embodiment of eternal youth.

Gordon Vailakis will have a book signing for her book "Meditar de Sirenas" from 6 to 8:30 p.m. on March 22, 2014 at the children's bookstore the Frugal Frigate, located at 9 N. 6th Street in Redlands.

## Birthdays

- 2 Seth Wacks, Jessica Woods
- 6 Dante Welsh
- 9 Mary Melcher
- 10 Margaret Barnett
- 12 Bill Whitmer
- 13 Fred Arth, Jane Macrorie
- 14 Janie Hurley
- 15 Marybeth Maury-Holmes, Sandy Peavler, Karen Walsh
- 20 Sally Burton
- 21 John Walsh, Carol Stanley
- 24 Kathleen Fox
- 25 Ruth Durrant
- 28 Gavin Thrasher, Ken Hurley, Soroosh Ehteshami, Avery Osajima
- 30 Emma Malonelord



## In Memoriam

"More than the  
cherry blossoms,  
Inviting a wind  
to blow them away,  
I am wondering  
what to do,  
With the remaining  
springtime."  
-Asano Nagunori

Praying for those who crossed the threshold and the ones who are still among us.

“Be still and know that I am God.

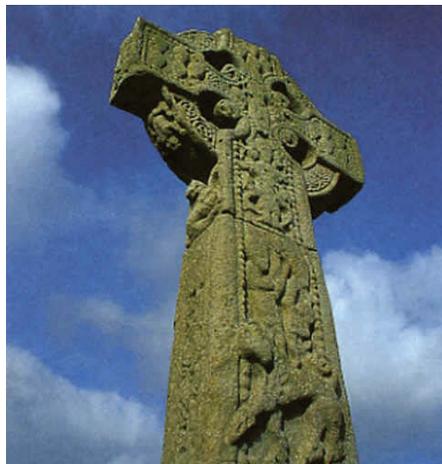
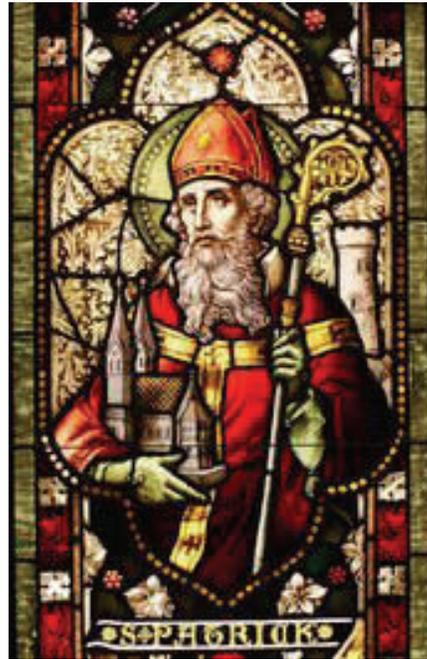
Be still and know that I am.

Be still and know.

Be still.

Be.”

— St. Patrick



Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireas na  
daoine.

People live in one another's  
shelter.

Irish Saying

Redlands United Church of  
Christ

168 Bellevue Avenue  
Redlands, CA 92373-4978

Phone: 909-793-3520  
Fax: 909-793-5418

E-mail: [pastor@uccredlands.org](mailto:pastor@uccredlands.org)  
[office@uccredlands.org](mailto:office@uccredlands.org)  
[hollybea@uccredlands.org](mailto:hollybea@uccredlands.org)

For thoughts or comments: [katioun@gmail.com](mailto:katioun@gmail.com)



As the Redlands United Church of Christ,  
we are called by God  
to follow the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.  
We are an Open and Affirming community of faith,  
who value all people as the family of God.  
We love, nurture, support, and give hope  
to one another on the journey of faith,  
seeking God's will for our lives.  
Led by the Holy Spirit, we reach out to serve,  
and to help heal the hurts of humanity and the world  
with caring justice to the glory of God.  
We welcome all  
into the full life and ministry of this church.

[www.uccredlands.org](http://www.uccredlands.org)

