

KALOS

Congregational Church of Almaden Valley—United Church of Christ

FALL 2017

Interim Reflections

Rev. Marty Williams



The pace of life and ministry continues to move forward at CCAV during this interim and transitional season of life. Since our last *Kalos* you have been busy! You have been working hard and bringing some of your ministry ideas and dreams to fruition.

• In July CCAV, ECA, and AKMC shared in a Joint Venture worship and 4th of July potluck picnic! It was a wonderful day for the three congregations worshipping

and sharing a rich experience of fellowship together.

- In early August, ECA and CCAV worked together to participate in the National Night Out. You came out in force and worked hard with your ECA sisters and brothers. While there were not many neighborhood people stopping in for the event, the two congregations worked well together and you deepened your appreciation and affection for one another.
- In late August, CCAV sent a contingent to march in the Silicon Valley Pride Parade! Eight of us marched in the parade carrying a beautiful banner and handing out goodies to parade spectators. Meanwhile, back at “home” Rev. Debra Newcomb and the rest of the congregation worshipped and supported this expression of to CCAV’s Open and Affirming witness.
- In September—just a couple of weeks ago—we celebrated a Homecoming Sunday to launch the Fall and Winter season of ministry at CCAV.
- And the Joint Venture Congregations worked together to successfully complete a fundraising project for a new roof. CCAV contributed over \$15,000 toward this important work. Congratulations!

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Next on our interim agenda is the Day of Discovery on October 7, 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. with Rev. Daniel Ross Jones. There is a more detailed piece in the Winter *Kalos* about this important event.

If you are a member or an active participant or friend of the congregation – this event is for you. You will be a part of shaping the future of the congregation and giving your valuable thoughts, hopes, and vision to help guide the search for your next minister and next era of ministry.

Whew! That’s a lot of good work. And I didn’t mention the ongoing ministries and mission work of the church. You continue to show up and polish headlights, provide meals at the shelter, support special projects like Village House, support special offerings and more.

In October, we are planning a special event on October 28, 7:00 p.m. CCAV will host Kazu Haga, of the East Point Peace Academy and a keynote speaker at the 2017 NCNC-UCC Annual Gathering! Mr. Haga will share his personal story having studied and pursued the practice of nonviolence in the context of his personal life, social justice work, and as a trainer in nonviolent conflict resolution in the prison system. We are extending a wide invitation to our JV Churches, the Association, the Conference and the wider San Jose Community. The event is also being promoted with Together We Will, a local activist

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network of over 3000 members in San Jose with an interest in nonviolence.

As we look further ahead into this fall and holiday season CCAV will continue to be about the interim work and the work of ministry as you strengthen the each other and the congregation in fellowship and spirit and as you continue to reach out and serve in the community and beyond.

I appreciate your faithfulness and steadfast!

Blessings and Peace,
Rev. Marty

Message to our *Kalos* Readers

I sincerely apology for getting the Fall *Kalos* out so late! Some of the information you will read below is out of date, but still relevant. I promise to be on schedule for the next *Kalos*!

Peace,
Kathryn McAbee

Welcome Visitor!

Whether you're visiting with us because you're looking for a church, or accompanying a friend or family member, we bid you a hearty welcome!

We welcome all who would join us on our journey—for a day, a week or a lifetime—to discover who we are now and who we can become on this road of faith and inquiry.

We embrace our diversity of thought and scriptural understanding. We respect and honor all who seek to be in covenant with us as we share in the joys and responsibilities of our church family.

We are a warm and friendly bunch, but we're not perfect! So, if in our excitement to greet our church family members, we forget our manners, please talk to us, introduce yourself and ask us lots of questions!

And if you want to dig deeper and learn more about our church, please visit us at:
www.CongregationalChurchOfAlmadenValley.org.

Moderator's Note

Lazy summer days are gone (although I don't think mine were actually very lazy, at least not as lazy as I had wanted them to be!) and school is now in full swing again. Things at church are as well, with the end of the special music for the summer and the start of the choir season. As I write this, I am looking forward to and planning for the Homecoming Sunday, a time for us to "kick off" the season and re-connect with each other as a church family.



As we get back into the swing of things this fall, I am reminded that we need to continue to move forward on our interim journey. Rev. Marty is such a blessing to us all, and I so appreciate the gentle way she continues to encourage us to talk about our future and to help keep us moving. It is pretty clear to me that we will not be able to continue "status quo" in our little church. We need to make some changes in order to keep ourselves strong and dedicated, rather than tired and burned out. It is time for us to take a look at alternate ways of being. Change is always scary, but we are a dedicated congregation with a strong bond to each other and to our little church. I look forward to more work together as we continue on our interim journey. I am excited about the Day of Discovery that is coming up in October, and I hope you will each be able to join us for this very important discussion about some options for our future.

We have much to look forward to in the coming months. The Homecoming Sunday is in September, the Day of Discovery in October, Thanksgiving in November, and the peaceful season of Advent and Christmas in December. Our annual Christmas dinner is coming up as well: always a time we enjoy each other's company. And, the council is working on a "calendar of events" to help keep

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us engaged and involved, and just to have some fun things to look forward to! If you would like to be involved in ANY part of planning of ANY events, I welcome your help and support. Please don't hesitate to let me know. I would also love for you to prayerfully consider whether you would like to be a part of Council next year. We really do have some good discussions together on Tuesday evenings, and we get a lot of things accomplished. I would love to have some new faces and fresh ideas. Please think about it and consider come talking to me about it, so that I don't have to ask around in another couple of months when I need to have a new roster of council members for 2018. It is an exciting time for our church. Wouldn't you like to be a part of the leadership and help shape our future?

We really are an amazing group of people with a strong bond: a love for each other, a strong dedication to our church, and a deep love of God. We have lots of work ahead of us, and very few hands to help with the work load...but I have no doubt that we'll get it done. The outcome is unknown and unpredictable, but I have a feeling that we will all be pleasantly surprised in the end—no matter what the outcome brings—because of our love and dedication to each other and to our church.

Thank you for being a part of my church family. Blessings and joy to each of you!

Debbie Bemis

Day of Discovery—What's That?

To help launch your search for your next pastor, the Northern California Nevada Conference offers to provide leadership for a process by which your entire congregation can have energizing, positive input to guide your Ministerial Search Committee.

Day of Discovery **implements** the process of *The Appreciative Way*, a congregation-based version of *Appreciative Inquiry*, a widely used system based on the assumption

that in every organization something works and change can be managed through identification of what works and the analysis of how to do more of what works.

Day of Discovery **invites** all members and friends of your congregation to come together and discuss their love of the church, the values and practices that have sustained your congregation, and hopes and dreams for the future that all can share. By beginning to identify a future direction based on past successes and common values, your leadership and search committee has needed information to find the best pastoral leadership to take you where you want to go.

Day of Discovery **includes** a congregational meeting of approximately three hours in length. Ideas will be suggested to get input from church members who are unable to attend and maximize participation of those who cannot be present for the entire event. It is recommended that the event be held on a Saturday morning or after Sunday worship with snacks and drinks provided.

Consultant costs for your Day of Discovery and follow up with your consultant are covered by the Conference as part of the services provided to assist you in successfully completing your pastoral search process. The funds to support this ministry come from the Strengthen the Church special offering.

Local Churches who have participated in a Day of Discovery to launch their pastoral search, or as a visioning tool at any point in the life of the church, have experienced a heightened sense of positive energy for their future work. Their direction is clearer because the Appreciative process is based on past successes, the best experiences of members, positive qualities that are already present, and shared dreams for the future.

Our consultant, Rev. Daniel Ross-Jones, Associate Conference Minister will be the leader for our Day of Discovery event and will assist in a study of the collected infor-

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mation with your governing board, your Ministerial Search Committee. This information will inform the content of your Local Church Profile, which is viewed by potential candidates, and will give your search committee specifics to look for when reviewing ministerial profiles of potential candidates.

Outreach

Neighbors in Need Special Offering

Our annual Neighbors in Need (NIN) Special Offering will be received on World Communion Sunday, October 1, 2017.

One-third of this offering supports the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM) and two-thirds is administered by Justice and Witness Ministries to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts and direct service projects through grants. Checks may be made out to CCAV,UCC with NIN in the memo section. Offering envelopes will be available in our bulletins on Sunday, October 1 and also in the Narthex wall rack.

Please consider prayerfully what you may share in this vital annual offering.

Report from the Day Room

Exciting things have been happening this quarter! With our great colleagues and fellow volunteers, we are now starting into our third year with teaching our classes on Life Skills.

We had a Staff Support Committee meeting two months ago in the new Autumn House, the Victorian house at the intersection of Julian St and Autumn Court. Offices for the senior counselors were moved to Autumn House, plus we acquired a meeting room.

Since a couple of offices at the JSI facility were vacated, one room now has an additional 8 clients bringing the JSI bed count to 180 (it used to be 172 (not 171 as advertised). The county was very happy about that and will buy

the Autumn House from Life Moves eventually making it county property.

The JSI Support Committee tries to help the recurring problem of low morale among the junior staff there. Low Staff Morale results from are low pay (some staff must have additional jobs), cost of housing, stress and constant crises with clients. Because the crucial junior staff has no offices, no place to have privacy, store their purses, store their lunch etc. JSI management decided the extra office would become a staff “lounge” with personal storage lockers, a sofa, and a refrigerator.

We volunteered to provide a new apartment sized refrigerator. Our Church Outreach Committee was given an opportunity to pay for it, or Connie and I would. Our colleague Alie Saad contributed “One Benjamin” (\$100 bill) to the refrigerator (total cost of \$545 with my veteran discount at HD.) Halie Greenroad selected the refrigerator and it was delivered the following Monday. The JSI Staff are most grateful and wished us to thank the church. David Canha is providing lockers. Alie found a sofa, a picture of which was sent to Halie with dimensions. It was perfect. Alie convinced the lady selling it that she really should just donate it to the shelter, which she did. Alie rented a truck and we soon had a truck load of great teenagers from Alie’s Mosque to help. I really enjoyed the chatter of the 3 friends and cousins as we stopped for lunch. It was interesting to hear the discussions of Muslim teenage boys, their aspirations for college. They were typical American kids. We delivered the sofa which is very comfortable.

The classes continue to be most rewarding. There are always new students and new problems. One of the things we suggest is they do volunteer work while looking for a job. One young woman who did that, said at the next class she had volunteered to work at the Salvation Army and they had accepted her. A couple of weeks later she told the class that the Salvation Army offered her a permanent job. She said they liked her personality and work ethic.

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We have another student who is now working at Burger King as a manager and enjoying it.

We sometimes get involved with complicated problems as a part of life skills. We have to be very careful how we deal with them and we have caused ourselves problems. One young man started a tech course by correspondence many years ago, then dropped out. He has been hounded for years by the “school” and collection agencies while the interest on the loan continues to grow. Whenever he puts money in a bank, it is seized by the school, or his paycheck gets garnisheed and he loses the job. He needs a lawyer to get him some relief or he needs money. Another client, a young man, was “high” at a dance and pinched a woman on the butt. She called the police, he was arrested and it made the papers along with an exaggerated version of what happened. His Public Defender suggested he plead “no contest” saying it would keep him out of jail. He pleaded no contest. He lost his job immediately and made the sex offender list which is now a nightmare for him. Alie is trying to get him legal help as we believe his version of the story and think he should have had better representation. Alie is looking for a pro bono attorney for him.

These are the seemingly hopeless places our clients sometimes find themselves in.

I am proud of the effect our class discussions have on shaping thinking. We have had clients in the class who tell us they will never be able to work because they are always hearing voices. We had a long conversation with a student recently who hears voices, His family owned a fish business in Santa Cruz for many years, founded by his grandfather. The grandfather began hearing voices so intensely that he quit working and turned the business over to his son, the father of our student. When that man also began hearing voices so badly he couldn't work, he gave the business to our student, his son.

Our student began hearing voices and had to sell the business. He wants to contact the competitor/company he sold the business to, whom he knows quite well, and see if they will hire him to work in the mornings cleaning fish. They are well aware of and sympathetic to the family illness. He told me he hears voices mostly when he gets tired or stressed, and thinks with his medication he can work mornings and be ok. I commended him for managing his illness that way. He said his case manager supports his plan. We encourage everyone doing something useful with our lives, something more than sitting on a curb smoking cigarettes, even if we do have SSDI!

We frequently hear that Judge Manley likes it and likes to see the certificates in his drug court. We have issued around 70 since we started, 16 since January. The program is the result of work done by Ted Feely, Saleem Qadir, Alie Saad, Lesley Emma, Connie, Kevin Williams, and me. A special tip of the hat to Ted who wrote a number of lessons we are still using unchanged despite many others being revised. Connie was especially instrumental in guiding a major shift in the direction we took as soon as she came on board. Saleem Qadir brought a lot of current thinking to job hunting.

We are always looking for information from resources; simple things such as asking an Albertson's store cashier how stressful her job was. She said it was highly stressful, but only because of the occasional jerks she had to deal with each day. On a brighter side. Connie and I met the HR Manager for a major cleaning service company which will be hiring in San Jose. She said the handicapped and former offenders are excellent employees and they welcome them. They work hard, pay attention and are thankful to have a job which they want to keep. She will be a resource for us.

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Activities

Headlight Polishing Highlights

A few pieces of data and interesting things to share. We had an outstanding event on our July event. We took in around \$500, allowing us to buy a new refrigerator for the shelter for the new staff “depressurization” room. They thank us all. Part of the refrigerator (\$100) was contributed by Dr. Alie Saad, a Life Skills colleague instructor who also convinced a neighbor to part with her very nice sofa for the lounge. Aliee also rented the truck and dug up the helpers for us to deliver the sofa, which we did!

Second little thing which happened was that I received some extra sanding pads for our Turtle Wax Headlight Restoration Kits. We run out of sanding pads before anything else and have incomplete kits left over. I made some good contacts at the Turtle Wax headquarters and discovered that the new ICE wax sold my Turtle Wax is great as a UV shields. (We are using a different product, “Blue Magic”.) I made contact with their chemist and he finally told me that it is basically polyurethane clearcoat and that is what makes it so good (and why we need to let it dry). So, on that count, I have too much info and am conflicted a bit, although I think I have a plan. If the car is going directly home, we can use Blue Magic and have them let it dry. If they are going to a car wash, shopping etc, we’ll use the new product “ICE”.

Yesterday I received notice from Turtle Wax that I had won a product review contest and they would send me a \$100 gift certificate to use at Walmart, Advance Auto, O’Reillys, or Auto Zone. I had to choose. I told her we were a church and we did headlight polishing initially as a fundraiser although now as a public service also etc and our revenue all went to benefit our homeless shelter. I said I wanted to shop around and see who had best prices on Turtle Wax Lens Restoration kits and asked if I could get back to her next week. In her response she said,

Hi Mike,

Absolutely! Thank you for your time and your review! It’s always great to hear how Turtle Wax is being used within communities. In addition to your gift card we’d like to send you a case of our Turtle Wax Headlight Lens Restorer Kit to help with your event. I’ll send you the case once I hear back from you with which retailer gift card would work best for you and which address I should mail the gift card and case to. Take your time this week and I can send everything to you whenever. Feel free to reach out if you have any additional questions!

*Best,
Emma*

So, we get the \$100 plus a case of Headlight Lens Restorer! Hooray for us!

JV Workday

Our JV Board has scheduled an all church members and friends workday for Saturday, October 21, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.. Mark your calendars and plan to participate, even if only part time. Both inside and outside activities are planned including gardening, cleaning and maintenance tasks. Have something specific that you would like to see accomplished where extra hands would be of help? Please contact a JV Board member or Tom Gerber with your suggestions.

Quest

The Quest ladies group will resume meeting on Wednesday, September 6, from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. in the choir room. The book, *Choose Life*, has been the focus of discussion. Group members will discuss whether to continue with this book.

Know that you are welcome to join the group. For questions please contact Phyllis Chai at (408) 442-5098.

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Hurricane and Earthquake Relief Update

This hurricane season continues to bring new storms and more devastation. The United Church of Christ is responding not only to the immediate disaster at hand, but is also committed to the long-term process of rebuilding that will take years. You can continue to make gifts through CCAV by marking your check for "Hurricane Relief" or "Mexico Earthquake Relief". Donations made through CCAV will be sent to the conference office and then to One Great Hour of Sharing. (100% of funds to the United Church of Christ designated for U.S. disaster relief are used for disaster relief and rehabilitation programming within the United States.)

One example of how your giving is at work:

UCC Disaster Ministries has just contributed \$10,000 toward a proactive program to prevent cholera and malnutrition in Haiti in the wake of Hurricane Irma, and to treat any instances that occur. The implementing partner is IMA World Health, which has had a significant presence in Haiti since 1998, including relationships with government and communities.

ECA Special Events: An Invitation *Celebrate ECA 50th Anniversary!*

Dear AVUCC/CCAV and UCC friends,

ECA would like to cordially invite you to our 50th Anniversary celebration events on November 10–12. We have a Taco Fiesta on Friday, a sit-down dinner and program on Saturday, and an After-service Lunch on Sunday. However, we do need RSVPs for planning and funding purposes. Our deadline to RSVP is October 10. We have given the invitations to Ruthanne to distribute to those who are interested. Hope to see you there!

Blessing of the Animals and Children's Play

Join your friends and neighbors October 7, from 4:30–6:30, p.m. here at Let's ROC for the Blessing of the Animals. We'll enjoy a show prepared by our campers, a special Eucharist and have lots of time for fellowship over dinner. Bring a pet or a picture of a pet. This is a great event to invite a neighbor to. RSVP by Holly at holly@eca-sj.org by October 4, or sign up in the fellowship hall.

Kalos Publication

Please remember you may take a copy of our *Kalos* Newsletter home each month if you are not reading on line. It is located along with other UCC info on the wall to the left of the sanctuary entrance.

Kalos appears on the CCAVUCC website and in a few printed copies for those who request a mailing. If you would like *Kalos* to be sent to your home, please contact Kathryn McAbee (kathryn.mcabee@hpe.com or 203-4794).

We encourage you to share stories and inspirations in our newsletter! Tell us about your experiences, your reflections, your hopes for the church, anything of interest to the community that you would like to share. Send us images, poems, links for our Inspiration section. We want to hear from you!

To submit an article, send it by the 15th of the month to kalos@ccavucc.org. *Kalos* editors are Kathryn McAbee and Risa Feely.

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