

KALOS

Congregational Church of Almaden Valley — United Church of Christ

June 2012

Pastor's Corner



Who Is My Neighbor?

A teacher of the Law came up and tried to trap Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to receive eternal life?" Jesus answered him, "What do the Scriptures say? How do you interpret them?" Then the man answered, "Love the Lord

your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind and Love your neighbor as you love yourself." "You are right," Jesus replied; "do this and you will live." But the teacher of the Law wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:25–29)

Who is my neighbor? That is the question running through the minds of many Americans these days as people all over the United States debate the issue of immigration. From a Christian Century editorial entitled, *Borderline Solutions?*, Jeffrey Kaye, author of *Moving Millions: How Coyote Capitalism Fuels Global Immigration*, has argued that "immigration is not a problem to be solved; it is a fact of life. For millennia, humans have been migrating in search of a better life." Kaye often poses this question to people who oppose immigration: "If you had to support your family on \$3 a day or less, but had opportunity to cross a border illegally to raise your living standard, would you migrate?" He consistently gets affirmative responses, even from the most vocal anti-immigrant advocates. Without addressing the systemic issues of

In This Issue

Pastor's Corner	1
Welcome Visitor	2
Moderator's Message	2
People in the Pews	3
From Phyllis Chai.....	5
Christian Education	5
NCNC Annual Meeting	6
News from JV	7
Pastoral Search Committee ...	7

immigration—like why people come here in the first place—the immigration problem cannot be solved.

We, in the church, have a distinct vantage point from which to view the debate on immigration. We proclaim a God who welcomes us as strangers and impels us to welcome aliens and strangers as well. We discover it is the foreigner, the Good Samaritan, who helps the beaten man in the parable that follows the passage above. We have biblical teaching that commands us to love our neighbors as ourselves.

The question remains whether our concept of neighbor will extend beyond those we know, those we understand, and those we feel comfortable with. Are we open to trust in the good nature of new people we

God Is Still Speaking

KALOS

Congregational Church of Almaden Valley — United Church of Christ

June 2012

meet or do we create more laws that seek to restrict and control who our neighbors will be? Can we live what we claim, “No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here!” That is our question.

Blessings,
Pastor Rod

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.

We hope you’ll return to us soon!

Moderator’s Message

The newly assimilated *Kalos* team is starting to get into its rhythm of collecting and publishing news to our congregation—many thanks to **Sue Scaff** for pulling the news together and to **Risa Feely** for turning it into a fabulous format on our website! And, a big thanks to **all of you** who submit your articles, musings, prayers and good thoughts. Let’s keep the momentum going (last month we had 17 pages!)



Search Committee

Our Search Committee has been very active—see Ted Feely’s report in this edition. I also want to add that they are working great together, it’s a fabulous team, and they are demonstrating teamwork at its best!

Our Two Churches

I had a lunch meeting with **Reverend Kate, Pastor Yee** and **Vestry’s Senior Warden, George Romer**. We had a delightful conversation getting to know one another and sharing updates on our two churches. We even found some areas that we can already improve upon to make sure communications are current and timely between our two churches—not bad for an informal lunch meeting! We all found this quite valuable and will continue to meet on a regular basis.

Along this same theme of keeping our two churches in sync—in April 2011, Council and Vestry got together for a dinner with the goal of getting to know

God Is Still Speaking

KALOS

Congregational Church of Almaden Valley — United Church of Christ

June 2012

one another and share ideas. We had hoped to do this a few times a year. Well the rest of 2011 got away from us and it is way overdue for another get-together. George and I will be pulling this together for Vestry and Council—probably next month or July at the latest. This time we plan to invite the JV Board as well. I'm looking forward to hearing from everyone and sharing ideas and best practices.

Mid-Year Congregation Meeting

This *Kalos* will be coming out around the time of our mid-year congregation meeting. We'll have a report from me, **Pastor Rodney; Connie Moore** on the status of the search, and **David Hough** on the Church's financial health. Things are rolling along well at our church, but we still have challenges regarding finances. We definitely are no longer racking up huge debits (due mainly because we have a part-time pastor), this is good news. But, we need to address the drain that still exists. Certainly budget is connected to membership, and I'm hopeful that as a result of the discussion at the meeting we'll be able to test out creative ways to help resolve this issue and reverse the trend. Ultimately I'm confident we'll find a way to reach out and serve our community and as a result we'll bring more folks into our ministry. Of course, there's always the "invite a friend to church" approach!

Youth Mission Needs You!!!!

Have you noticed the big box in the Narthex, just to the left as you enter church? Let's help fill up the box and support our Youth who will give these items to the needy on their upcoming mission trip. Warm socks and toiletries are very much appreciated (travel

size shampoo, conditioner, hand cream, tooth paste, tooth brushes, small bars of soap, hand sanitizer, small combs, deodorant, etc.) I'm sure I speak for everyone when I express pride and a heartfelt thank you for our youth.

Shalom,
Kathryn McAbee
Moderator

People in the Pews

Not very often that I find myself without words. I do enjoy writing this column, but for some reason today I am having a hard time with it. I do want to thank all of you who have been so supportive of my efforts and that helps to keep me going forward. So as I start to prepare my column for the next issue of our *Kalos*, I would appreciate any items of news that you want to share with all of us.

While reading some of our previous *Kalos* issues I found an interesting item written by **Susie Ferguson** of ECA back in 2008. I thought it speaks to what we as a congregation are experiencing right now. As our Search Committee works to find a new pastor, let us hold them in our thoughts and prayers.

Susie wrote: *Everyone has a different tolerance for change. Some find it easy to deal with and just "roll with the circumstances." Some avoid facing change by moving away or retreating. Others meet change with resistance and sometimes even with anger. Some find change exhilarating with the hope of something new and exciting before them. Change in our lives as individuals and corporately*

God Is Still Speaking

KALOS

Congregational Church of Almaden Valley – United Church of Christ

June 2012

as a church is inevitable and is happening right now before our very eyes. How will we choose to face and grow with it positively for the glory of God's kingdom?

I do know that God's grace and love has seen each of us through changes in the past. I know His grace and love can and will transform each of us into better witnesses of His love and grace if we just allow Him to do so as we move into our future.

Congratulations to **Samantha Yang**, she graduates in June from Leland H.S. and will attend Loyola Marymount College in the fall.

Also, **Kristie Bemis** has been accepted at Gallaudet Univ. in Washington D.C. This is a wonderful opportunity for Kristie and we wish her well.

Such hidden talent! **Pastor Rodney** and **Dennis Elliott** gave us the gift of song on Mother's Day. Dressed in Hawaiian attire Rodney and Dennis sang "Somewhere Over the Rainbow/What a Wonderful World." Rodney accompanied on his uke. That was very special and a gift to us all.

Stan Yumen was back in town for a few weeks and always so grateful for his visits. **Stan and his wife Ethel** were founding members of our church. We were lucky to have had their many gifts and talents shared with all of us.

Laura Hall will be one of the several parent chaperones on the upcoming June Youth Mission Trip, Laura wouldn't miss this trip for anything because her daughter, Annie Laurie going as a youth participant.

We wish them well on this great adventure.

Phyllis Green has been on our prayer list for some time and we hope to have her and Bob back again with all of us in worship. She is home and continuing to have treatments and further tests.

Others on our list of folks needing our prayers and concerns are **Mary Kingsley** and **Jean Shipe**. Good to see **Ariss Thomas** on Mother's Day. Thanks for our elevator, now those finding stairs too difficult will have the easy way up to the sanctuary.

David Dunlap is scheduled to have an aortic valve replacement in June. Pray for a successful surgery.

Perla Runge has been treated for a pain in her left arm, physical therapy is helping. Their home in Germany was burglarized recently, especially unsettling from afar. Just recently Perla's young brother-in-law in the Philippines died. He was a small business owner and father of four children and a very vital person to the extended family. We offer our thoughts and prayers for Perla and Norbert and family.

Inspiration

You may say, "I don't have anything to give." Sure you do! You can give a smile. You can give a hug. Somebody needs what you have to share. Somebody needs your friendship. Somebody needs your encouragement. God didn't make us to function as "Lone Rangers." He created us to be free, but He did not intend for us to be independent of each other we really do need one another. Joel Osteen

Dot Allfrey

God Is Still Speaking

KALOS

Congregational Church of Almaden Valley – United Church of Christ

June 2012

Messages from Phyllis Chai

Bike and Build

Two years ago our Joint Venture Churches hosted a group of young people overnight, biking from Charleston, S. Carolina to Santa Cruz, CA, and helping to build houses along the way. Those of us who participated in that hosting experience no doubt remember it well. Because of the group's positive feedback of the time with us, we were invited to do it again this year.

Great thanks goes to **Rev. Kate Flexer** who became excited about the idea, and to **Jon Mills** of ECA who answered the call to head up the arrangements to make another stay with us possible.

The group will set out on their journey on Thursday May 24, and expect to arrive at our church (most likely coming down Camden Ave. from the west as most of them did last time, except the ones who thought it would be a short cut to travel over Mt. Hamilton) by 4 p.m. on Saturday, August 11, the last night of their trip.

It would be fun to have a welcoming group, even on W. Camden, as the bikers wind up their day's ride. Jon expects that there will be a barbecue supper and a pancake breakfast for the group before they head out to Santa Cruz on the last leg of their journey.

If you feel able, and called to help in any way with the hosting (including someone who would stay in the church overnight with the group), please contact Jon at: jmills@relypsa.com or (408) 316-0182.

Bold Sighting

On the Monday after Cinco de Mayo, as I was taking my early morning walk, I came upon a sweet sight which brought a smile to my face. On the fence at the base of the Santa Teresa foothills, printed with large letters and colored chalk were these words:

“JESUS IS THE LORD”

At each end of the words were pink hearts, and in the middle was drawn a fun sun. A week later the words remain (as well as cheerful flowers and words drawn on the driveway across the street). Realizing that the words on the fence would not necessarily be welcomed by every passerby, it has heartened me to see them.

Christian Education

Know it in your head, stow it in your heart, show it in your life and sow it in the world.

Sunday School Year-end Report

May was another busy month in our Christian Education program. We had to bring another Sunday School year to a close. Besides completing our unit on Easter People we had the great pleasure of recognizing and thanking our teachers on Pentecost Sunday. We have been so blessed this year to have so many willing to give some of their precious time and energy to working with our children. After a special breakfast in their honor, we offered special recognition to **Wendy, Nick, & Ashley Martin, Phyllis Chai, Janice Krahenbuhl, Mike Hertzner, Ann Mayers, Alex Alvarado, Gwen Hacker, Kelly Yamanishi, Leslie Rousseau, & Sandie Mueller** for their service to our community this year.

God Is Still Speaking

KALOS

Congregational Church of Almaden Valley – United Church of Christ

June 2012

Go for the Gold

May also was a busy time in preparation for our VBS program, “Go For the Gold,” which will be held June 11–June 15. We chose to write our own program this year to be timelier with the Summer Olympics happening in July. To plan this program with **Kate** and me, we had wonderful help from **Wendy Martin, Sharon Hall, and Kelly Yamanishi**. What a great creative team to develop the scope and ideas for our program. We have an exciting and creative week planned for those children who give us a try this year. We still need a little help and a few odds and ends to follow through with our plans. Check the JV bulletin board in fellowship hall to see if there is some way you can help us make this the best VBS possible.

School Facelift

After VBS what can we look forward to and where will we expend our energies this summer? First, let’s get our “facelift” of our Sunday School and Youth Center under way. It’s overdue to spruce up those areas and make them more inviting, safe, and welcoming so new families will want to join us more regularly. Let’s energize our facility to match the energy we hope for with new members to our congregations. If you would like to help me with this “facelift” please let me hear from you. Let’s make some plans now and be ready to get started mid-June.

I must thank you all for your wonderful support and encouragement this past year as we have begun a transformation of our Sunday School program. You certainly have made my job a labor of love and joy.

I look forward to continuing this very special ministry with you.

In Your Faithful Service,
Susie Ferguson

NCNC Annual Meeting

The annual meeting offered inspiring speakers and creative worship services I was able to renew old friendships and talk with new acquaintances. That conference name tag was an introduction to strangers and dinner companions. Our conversations covered both shared congregational challenges like fading finances, aging congregations and learning what it is like to live out our “All Are Welcome” invitations.

Some were intrigued by our Joint Venture and saw it as a possible answer to some of their problems. They asked, “Do you think it will last?” My answer was “Well we are at 40 years and counting.” They were amazed. I was amused.

I was especially pleased with the choice and quality of the workshops. One which I attended was on healthy communication. A remarkable role model of this communication in practice was in passing the conference budget which would make our conference a leaner and more fiscally responsible entity.

There was an amendment to preserve jobs of beloved personnel and to continue research into other financial options. The discussion remained passionate, civil, polite and non-judgmental, not adversarial but seeking

God Is Still Speaking

KALOS

Congregational Church of Almaden Valley – United Church of Christ

June 2012

census. When the amendment failed to pass but the original motion did, there were some tears of grief and sadness, but a graceful lack of celebrating a win or a loss. I came away with some notes for our congregation to remember: UCC believes in acceptance by ALL for majority decisions and second that we as a church need to revive and use our own communication guidelines which were so carefully crafted.

The conference meetings are a good reminder that CCAVUCC is not alone out there. And besides, they are great fun!

Bessie Hutchins

News from JV

Parking Lot Repaved and Garbage Bins Moved!

You may have noticed that half of the parking lot was repaved, and all spaces have been restriped. Your Joint Venture Board elected to make this improvement because the driveway on the tree-lot side of the church was in dire need of resurfacing. The back portion of the driveway, by the patio, was falling apart partially due to the garbage trucks driving in to dump the bins. The parking area on the creek side was not resurfaced because it is still in good shape.

The garbage bins have been moved closer to Camden Avenue so there is less damage from the garbage trucks when they enter the lot. This has caused another problem, however.

It appears that people are placing plastic garbage bags in the area where the garbage bins used to be, after their service or function. During the night time, vermin and other animals are tearing these plastic garbage bags open to forage for whatever they can. Ultimately, someone has to clean this up.

So, we would ask those of you to whom this may pertain, to please place garbage from events in the respective bins (green for garbage and yard trimmings, blue for recyclables) in their new location, so a larger problem does not occur.

While I'm at it, the question creeps up as to why we have padlocks on the garbage/recycle bins. This is so others don't find a need to deposit everything from their own garbage to the remnants of remodeling projects, in our bins. The combination to the padlocks (they are the same) can be found in the cabinet door in the kitchen, nearest the back door.

Thanks and God Bless,

David Byers
JV Board Member

Pastoral Search Committee

Step 1: Creating the Church Profile

In the previous *Kalos*, we expected to complete the church profile by the end of June. We think we're ahead of schedule.

God Is Still Speaking

KALOS

Congregational Church of Almaden Valley – United Church of Christ

June 2012

At this point, we've forwarded the current draft of the profile to our NCNC (Northern California Nevada Conference) contact, Carol Monahan, and are making final changes.

To see the current version of the profile you can go to this link: <http://ccavucc.org/profile>

By the time you receive this, hopefully our open position for a Half-time Pastor will be officially listed on UCC.org. You can check the listing by following this link: <http://www.ucc.org/classifieds/pdfs/ucem.pdf>

Step 2: Send Out the Profile

With the assistance of our local conference and by using the UCC.org website job posting page, step 2 should be well underway shortly.

Step 3: Receive and Review Applications and Interview Applicants

With Dave Harris' leadership, we're working on a form for capturing information about prospects and getting ready to receive and review applications.

Hopefully, this step will be under way by the next *Kalos*.

Kalos Publication

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 Sue Scaff (sscaff@sbcglobal.net or 960-4452).

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 **Sue Scaff, Kathryn McAbee and Risa Feely**.

God Is Still Speaking