

# KALOS

Congregational Church of Almaden Valley — United Church of Christ

November 2012

## Pastor's Corner



*"Like a gardener preparing the soil for planting, I see interim ministry as a time to prepare the soil so that new seeds can be planted. The interim minister is the one who loosens the soil, digs out the old weeds, adds some fertilizer and mulch so that the garden will be ready for planting. The interim minister prepares*

*the hearts and spirits of the congregation so that they will be ready to serve God and their church."* (From my profile)

When I first came to interview for the interim pastor's position at the Congregational Church of Almaden Valley over 18 months ago, I didn't know what to expect. The only thing I remember feeling was that I was open to serving as the interim pastor. I had heard that the congregation had gone through a difficult time and that it needed to heal and move forward.

It was at a first meeting with **Kathryn McAbee, Bessie Hutchins, Michael Moore** and **David Dunlap** (via conference call) that I began to think, "You know, Rodney, these people are good people. I think it would be great if they would want you to serve here." Later I received a call from Kathryn offering me the interim position. Although I was interviewing with other churches, it felt right for me to say "yes" and to come here.

Fast forward 18 months, months filled with weekly worship services, preaching sermons, singing in the

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choir, leading discussions on vitality and part time ministry, pastoral calls, visitations, council and JV board meetings, and getting to know many of you. Can I say that the time was well spent? "Of course it was!" Can I say that I have made many new friends? "You betcha!" You have welcomed me with open arms and I am so thankful for being able to serve alongside of you.

But now the time has come for me to say "goodbye." I will miss all of you, some more than others and I know some of you have expressed the same. My only wish is that you will offer to **Rev. Michele** the same welcome and hospitality you offered to me when I first came. I hope you will be open to her leadership and spiritual guidance. I trust and have faith that God's spirit will be with her as God's spirit was with me.

## God Is Still Speaking

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I would like to take this time to say thanks to Mike and Connie Moore for opening their home and providing me with some delicious meals and conversation while I was here at the church. Thanks to all of you for your kind, thoughtful and challenging words every time we met. Thanks for your presence and service, whether it be participating in worship, helping as a greeter, an usher or a coffee host, serving on the council or JV board, supporting our Shelter Feeding ministry, singing in the choir, playing in the folk choir, attending Quest, or just finding a time to open you home to share with me your thoughts and concerns.

May God be with you and may God's spirit bless and move you to be and do greater things in the future. May you bear good fruit in the days ahead. Thanks, for allowing me to be a part of your lives and your ministry.

With much love and aloha,

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](http://www.CongregationalChurchOfAlmadenValley.org).

We hope you'll return to us soon!

### Moderator's Message

It has been a very busy time for all as we prepare for the last few months of the year. The facelift to the downstairs area is looking great—the nursery is in the works, and many hands have been sprucing up the gardens. The Search Committee has done a fantastic job finding our new pastor. The culmination of their dedication and passion led us to **Rev. Michele**, who spent this last week visiting with our congregation and delivering a wonderful sermon on Sunday. The best part of the morning was when we extended our call to Rev. Michele, and she accepted!



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As we prepare for a new chapter of our church, we are fortunate to have **Pastor Rodney** with us for the rest of November. I for one am going to miss his wise and insightful sermons (infused with a bit of humor to boot!) I'm also going to miss his friendship. The good news—we have the memories to cherish and his inspirations to reflect on. Thank you Pastor Rodney! And of course, we cannot let him leave without a proper sendoff (aka a fun celebration!) Thus on November 18<sup>th</sup> we'll celebrate the time Pastor Rodney has been with us—please join us on this very special Sunday.

In closing, if you have not had a chance to send in your time and talent and pledge form, please do so as soon as possible. Council will be finalizing the 2013 budget to be presented to the congregation soon.

Shalom,  
Kathryn McAbee  
Moderator

### Christian Education

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

This month we will finish our study of Moses and the Israelites. On Thanksgiving weekend Sunday we will be at the Battle of Jericho with Joshua. As we watch those walls come tumbling down, I hope we will be seeing new walls going up all around us as we continue our exciting renovations of the learning and confer-

ence center, youth center and refreshed nursery and preschool areas.

The teachers have been wandering with Moses and the children through Exodus this fall. Teaching can be very enlightening. First, we have to bone up on our scriptures and understandings related to our lessons. Often what happens as we prepare for the basics we hope to get across to our students, we move deeper into our own understandings of that particular scripture and lesson. We discover new revelations of God's Word and how it impacts and strengthens our own lives personally. Yes, as we prepare for our children to grow, we often grow. That has certainly been true for me this fall.

I have felt enslaved like the Israelites, wandered at times in a desert, grumbled and complained, been fed from a miraculous God, and moved forward to an unknown but promised future. Yes, when I allow it to happen, God leads me to some very exciting creative solutions and directions. So what could be better than Sunday School in a tent! And how could it have been better timed than to begin with our lesson, "A House for God." (Special thanks go to **Mary** and **John McPherson** who made the tent a reality for us.)

God is sure to make our Sunday School time in a tent a memorable experience for our children and our teachers. I can't wait to hear the stories that will come out of this special time together. This might be a

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great time to invite new children to join us, too. Who wouldn't want to go to Sunday School in a tent!!

In Your Faithful Service,  
Susue Ferguson

## Disaster Preparedness

### *Are We Prepared?*

A disaster can happen at anytime and anywhere. *Are we ready for the next big earthquake, fire, power outage or severe storm?* I am forming a committee for Disaster Preparedness for ECA/AVUCC and would like to invite some volunteers from each congregation to join. One of the goals is to assess our level of readiness here at the church building. Then we can develop plans as to how best to respond. Also, I would like to look at individual preparedness for each of us at home. I am hoping to have some educational events with information that can be shared. Finally, I would like to look at what we can do as a church community to help our own parishioners and our neighbors if a situation arises. If you are interested in joining please contact me. Thank You.

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## Blossoms and Bayonets: A Story of Love, Faith, and Courage Under Japanese Occupation

After six years of effort, **Jana McBurney-Lin**, the award-winning author of *My Half of the Sky*, and **Hi-Dong Chai** have published *Blossoms and Bayonets* on Kindle and Smashwords.com this October. The novel is based on the life of Hi-Dong's family under Japan during WWII. It gives a glimpse of how millions of innocent families suffered under Japan's rule in many Asian countries.

### *Description of Blossoms and Bayonet*

Hi-Dong Chai and Jana McBurney-Lin, the award-winning author of *My Half of the Sky*, turn their hands to a remarkable story of a family and country torn apart by outside forces.

The time is 1942, the place, Japanese-occupied Seoul, Korea. Fifteen-year-old He-Seung is full of fire, ready to take on these Japanese...if only he could convince his father, a Christian minister more concerned about saving his flock in a time when Emperor-worship has become mandatory. Since occupation, the Japanese have eradicated the Korean language, names, even the country's flower. Now they are seeking Korean boys as volunteers for their army. When his father is arrested by the Japanese, however, He-Seung must swallow his hatred of the enemy. Even harder, he must leave his mother and baby brother He-Dong to fend for themselves.

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Based on a true story, *Blossoms and Bayonets* is suffused with the tense atmosphere of the period. The story lends an eyewitness perspective to events as they unfold, revealing an era of nuance and complexity. The result is a work that speaks volumes about how and why one war led to the next.

### Outreach

#### *Beneficio Coffee—More Than Fair Trade*

Beneficio More Than Fair Trade Coffee continues to be available for \$10.50 per 12 oz. bag. Especially with the winter holidays fast approaching, you might want to order extra for entertaining and gift giving. Several types of coffee are available, including “decaf”, and they all have been served at our congregation’s coffee/fellowship hours; we currently are using the French Roast and “Decaf”. The beans are hand picked in Costa Rica by the small farmers who are paid upfront; 20% of the net profits are given back to the farmers for capital improvements and community development, and 10% goes for outreach projects. The owner of Beneficio, “**Jinxi**” Allen, is a UCC member in Sacramento. For more information or to order please contact Phyllis Chai (1-408-226-7150). The next order will most likely be placed in later November.

#### *Alternative Christmas*

Stay tuned for upcoming information on our annual J.V. Alternative Christmas, an opportunity to support several non-profit organizations such as Heifer International, Habitat for Humanity, Sudanese Youth Opportunities, Knit Wits (selling their handmade

crafts to benefit those with health challenges), and Friends Outside.

### Annual Biblical Lecture Series

The local community is blessed to be having Dr. Walter Brueggemann as the featured speaker this fall at the annual Stone Church of Willow Glen lecture series. The dates of the presentations are: Friday, November 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, November 10<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Tickets may be obtained in advance (\$20 for Friday evening, \$20 for the two Saturday lectures, or \$30 for the complete program). For more information please see the flyers on either of two hallway bulletin boards downstairs in our church, call 1-408-269-1593 or Phyllis Chai at 1-408-226-7150.

### 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](mailto:kalos@ccavucc.org). *Kalos* editors are **Sue Scaff**, **Kathryn McAbee** and **Risa Feely**.

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