

# KALOS

Congregational Church of Almaden Valley—United Church of Christ

September 2013

## Minister's Message



Dear Members and Friends,

Recently I read a poem that helped name of some of themes coming up in our lectionary this fall. It is titled “Called Out” by Lorie C. Reed (poem inspired by Luke 18: 9–14). It feels appropriate for a September reflection as we ready ourselves for a

“coming together” with energy to move into a new Christian Education year and a Stewardship drive in October.

*Disturb the peace! Disquiet the calm!  
Dry tears of those who weep!  
Speak truth! You said, Expose the wrong!  
Disrupt complacency!*

*I'm much too weak and way too tired,  
I answered in reply,  
Not ready and so unprepared—  
Today is not the time!*

*Your mercy then attuned my ears,  
To hear my brothers' groans.  
Your grace unmasked my blinded eyes  
To see my sister's wounds.*

*Have mercy, Lord! I cried aloud.  
You heard my anguished call  
And gave me strength to do the task  
And carry out your will!*

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Yes, through the church, we find mercy and grace to go the “extra mile” and look with new eyes upon the world in which we live. Through the church we find “strength” for the journey. We learn and grow through our programs of education and outreach. Through relationships with others we see the world as we imagine God may see the world and this perspective gives strength as well. Where have you had these opportunities lately?

For me, it was when we gathered with friends of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Milpitas, during the month of Ramadan. (About eight people from our congregation were present on July 20, with a host of others from many faiths to share prayers and break the fast.)

In August, the women's organization of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community invited women from the area to share conversation around the relevance of faith today. I was inspired by the wonderful hospitality and intention to say that “we journey together with the same goals and same needs for dialogue in community” that came from both these meetings.

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Yes, these invitations strengthen our resolve to be people of peace, tolerance and mercy.

We know it is God's will that we journey "together" and we remember that the Christian life is designed to be lived in community; yes, it is designed to be lived in "interfaith" community as well. Thank you for your engagement in "life together," striving to use time, talents and financial resources to disturb the peace, disquiet the calm, speak the truth, expose the wrong, disrupt complacency, in Christ's name.

I'm so grateful to be with you and to experience your generous support of our life together. October will be here soon; it has been designated as our Stewardship" Month. I'm hoping we may have "stewardship moments" in worship. Will you volunteer to speak about why you support our church so you may encourage others? Will you begin to think about what you may pledge for the coming year as we commit ourselves to support our worship, outreach, building, staff needs? Just let me know if you'd like to share your personal "stewardship testimony" in one of our worship services; I will look forward to your call!

My thanks to each of you for keeping this sacred "calling" before us by being part of CCAV-UCC. We may be small in number and we may still be struggling with unhappy experiences from our "collective" past, but we move into our future with strength in God's Spirit to sustain us and guide us. We never place a period where God has placed comma! Amen??

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Michele

## Sundays In September

*Joint Venture Worship Service Theme—September 1, 10 a.m.* WHERE IN THE "WORLD" HAVE YOU BEEN? Bring back your "water" and/or a photo from your travels to share. We are grateful to **Rev. Kate Flexer** for leading worship with assistance of our laity in both congregations. (Rev. Michele will be away in Mississippi; grateful to Rev. Kate for planning/leading service and for being on call for pastoral emergencies for both our congregations) And we are looking for "grillers" from our CCAV congregation for a barbecue lunch to share after the service. Please let Margot know in the church office if you can help and the info will be passed on to those doing the planning.

### *Christian Education Sunday—September 8, 9 a.m.*

Look for announcement of guest preacher. We look forward to the leadership of our Folk Choir. Rev. Michele is away in Mississippi, so Rev. Kate will be on call for pastoral emergencies.

*Hymn Sing Sunday—September 15, 9 a.m.* Please choose a favorite hymn that we may sing during the "sermon" time from either the *Chalice* or the *New Century Hymnal*. We are pleased the choir will be back to lead us in this special Music Sunday. And we will have a Roundtable Discussion during Coffee Hour.

### *Worship and Coffee Hour—September 22—9 a.m.*

In the evening, at 7 p.m., we'll share a JV Taize Worship Service. Come and invite a friend for this service of music, reflection, candlelight and silence.

*UCC American Indian Ministry Sunday—September 29, 9 a.m.* Special themes will be shaped around Native American spirituality.

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## Happenings and Thank You's

*Save the Date—Annual Meeting of CCAV-UCC—November 17, after 9 a.m. Worship.*

*Third Sunday Round Table Discussions—September 15—After Worship During Coffee Hour.* On August 18, we began looking at resolutions that were passed at the 29<sup>th</sup> UCC General Synod Meeting in Long Beach, CA, in June. We will probably continue to hone in on specific resolutions that caught our interest. For example, the resolution that sparked much debate was the Resolution on Seminary Aid. What was your response? Let's continue to have meaningful, in depth discussions on relevant subjects that relate to the integration of faith and life and keep us connected to our United Church of Christ family.

*Taize Worship—Sunday, September 22, 7 p.m.* A service of music, reflection, candlelight and silence will be offered for our Joint Venture Churches and our community on these two Sunday evenings: September 22, 7 p.m. and Sunday evening, December 15, 7 p.m. The service is inspired by the Taize community in France. Meditative singing in a quiet setting promotes a sense of spiritual openness. Readings for reflection are taken from scripture spiritual classics, poetry and contemporary literature. All are welcome! Rev. Kate, Rev Michele and musicians **Debbie Bemis, John Hawes and another person from ECA (not named yet)** will lead us. We continue to be grateful to **Tom Gerber** for hanging our banners and preparing the box for our candles and to **Carla Gerber and our Worship Committee** for their assistance with set up.

*Outreach Committee.* Would You Be Interested in Serving on our at? We need help! Our CCAV-UCC Bylaws state, "The Outreach Committee undertakes to involve the congregation in Christian outreach in the community and in wider, global missions. Active members and friends of the church may participate on the Outreach Committee."

Please say yes to serving for a least, one year or more on the Outreach Committee. **Phyllis Chai** has graciously led the efforts for many years. She would welcome others to serve with her for presentation of special UCC/other offering opportunities, evaluating our current outreach programs, and possibly exploring new ones.

You may contact **Phyllis Chai, Connie Moore, or Pastor Michele**. We hope to have periodic meetings arranged at the convenience of those who are willing to serve. Thank you to all of you who are currently involved in "outreach" through our church; we want you to continue to feel appreciated for whatever part you are doing!

*CCCAV-UCC Church Directory.* The new directory will be available in September. It has taken a little longer than we thought it would to have our new directory ready but we hope you may pick one up by mid-September. Thanks for your patience and your updates. Please send Margot in the church office any new updates for our church record keeping system.

Would you like to volunteer to be a liturgist, greeter, coffee hour host, or communion server? Please call or email Margot in the church office or sign up on Sunday on the matrix list ; Margot keeps our master calendar and can let you know the dates that are available.

*Progressive Christian Forum Speech—February 21–22, 2014, in Santa Cruz.* Progressive Christian Forum of Santa Cruz invites us to hear Diana Butler-Bass speak about the future of the church. She's the author of *Christianity after Religion: The end of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening*. Many from our Association and Conference will be attending. Let's think about going together.

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**Love Your Church Library?** Yes! Thank you to JV Library team—especially **Kathleen Eagan** (ECA) for spearheading with committee to organize and overhaul our library. It is in the corner of the Choir Room. Would you like to help? Contact **Ann Mayers** at 408-826-7238 or [amayersdmd@yahoo.com](mailto:amayersdmd@yahoo.com).

Thank you to all who have helped organize/refurbish our new look!

**Request a Hymn.** Have a special occasion (birthday, anniversary, etc) and want to sing a favorite hymn? You can pass on your request to Rev. Michele so she may include your request in her worship planning. She will also pass this on to Kristal and others involved with music. This is an invitation for any time during the year!

**Flowers for Worship.** From our Sunday Round Table discussion we have opportunity to respond to those who are asking about bringing flowers to share during worship. Here is a simple guideline: If you are only able to bring your favorite flower bouquet or plant to add to our CCAV-UCC service, please do so. Just bring what you have to offer and take it home with you after our service. If the flowers are given for a special reason, please announce to us in our sharing time.

If you want to give flowers for ECA and CCAV services on a particular Sunday, you'll want to sign up on the JV Bulletin Board. If you want to call the Church Office, Margot can do this for you too. You can give her your dedication so it may be printed in both church bulletins. We are grateful, at all times, for the beauty of your "flower" gifts and hope this guide will encourage your gifts!

**Names for Our Prayer Calendar.** Thank you for helping us keep our prayer calendar up to date. If you want to be listed, let Rev. Michele or Margot know in the Church

Office. It is important that we have a person's permission before listing a name; we highly respect confidentiality.

**Backpack Drive.** Thank you for your gifts to the Sacred Heart Community Service Backpack Drive. We received a letter of thanks for our contribution! See letter on bulletin board at church.

**New Church Banner.** Thank you to **Tom Gerber, Ted and Risa Feely** and other Church Council members for the preparation/design/hanging of our new Church banner; part of our efforts to give welcome and visibility to our neighborhood. We appreciate the gifts given to support these new initiatives.

**Office Remodeling.** Thank you to **Dot Allfrey and Joan Wagner** for their donations toward carpeting, and to all those who worked with them on the renovations in the church offices. And thank you to **Ron Howie** for his donation of time and materials for the flooring in the Christian Ed-Music office. All of these wonderful people make our church home more beautiful and inviting for all of us. Thank you!

## 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.

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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 Note



We had another productive Council meeting this past Tuesday. We are looking ahead and have chosen dates for officer nominations, Stewardship drive, and our Annual Congregational meeting. That meeting is scheduled for Sunday November 17, so please mark your calendar so you can attend. It will not be as lengthy as our mid-year meeting!

We are also working on new banners and a fund-raiser. As you may have noticed, our first new banner is up, thanks to Tom Gerber. We are working on improving our name visibility. Keep watching for changes! We also have a team of folks working on a fund-raiser that you will be hearing about in the next couple of weeks.

Photos have been taken for our Photo Board and copies made, thanks to **Bart Smith, Tom Gerber and Diane Hawes** will be working on the new display, so watch for that "new look"!

Council has picked dates for CCAV's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration. They are August 29 and 30, 2015. If you would like to help with this big event contact me! A few folks have already started looking through past documents to help plan this 50<sup>th</sup> celebration. Come Help!!

We have a lot going on and more coming. Be sure to check the Mid-Week on-line information that come out on Wednesdays and take home your "Announcement" Sheets out of your Sunday bulletin to keep informed! Thanks, to **Ted Feely**, for the Mid-Week, **Margot and Pastor Michele** for the Announcement Sheet. Friendly reminder: if you know someone who may not check e-mail often let them know what is going on at CCAV. Thanks.

Shalom,  
Connie

## Events and Meetings

### *Women's Fall Retreat*

"Living in the Light," September 13–15, 2013, at Mission Springs Conference Center, Scotts Valley, CA

- Presented by the NCNC Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Women's Fellowship
- Speaker is Dr. Mary Donovan Turner, Pacific School of Religion Professor
- A choice of various workshops such as "Human Trafficking Awareness"
- Registration deadline is August 30, 2013

For more information contact Phyllis Chai at 408-226-7150

### *Book Group*

Will meet at **Amy Griffith's** on Wednesday, September 18, 7:30 p.m. The book is *Defending Jacob* by William Landry. Everyone is welcome. RSVP to Amy at 408-268-0920, or [amy-g@pacbell.net](mailto:amy-g@pacbell.net).

### *Joint Venture Work Day*

A few people have done a lot of work at the church the past couple of months. Now there is an opportunity (and a need) for a lot of people to pitch in and spruce things up. There will be a Work Day on Saturday, September 14, starting about 9 a.m. The scouts will be working in the tree lot, and a tree trimming company will be trimming

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trees, but there is a long list of jobs that need to be done—from weeding to window cleaning to painting, going through closets, repairing sprinklers, etc. We can probably match any ability and time availability to a job that needs to be done. So please come and help!! Look for the Sign Up sheet coming soon to Fellowship Hall.

Ellen Lukanc  
JV Property and Maintenance

## *Quest*

The Quest women's group will resume meeting on Wednesday, September 4, at 9:30 a.m. in the choir room. We will continue reading/discussing *Sabbath* by Wayne Muller. Know that you are welcome and invited to be there.

For questions Contact Phyllis Chai at 408-226-7150

## *Reflections*

I have come to believe that we do not walk alone in this life. There are others, fellow sojourners, whose journeys are interwoven with ours in seemingly random patterns, yet, in the end, have been carefully placed to reveal a remarkable tapestry. I believe God is the weaver at that loom.

There would be less suffering in this world if humanity would learn this one truth: It is not what we receive but what we give that heals us.

Dot Allfrey

## **Outreach**

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

Our Joint Venture Churches continues to serve Beneficio More Than Fair Trade Coffee which is available for purchase at \$10.50 per 12 oz. bag. Each sale supports the small business farmers and their families in Costa Rica (where Sue Scaff's granddaughter Claire is attending college during her sophomore year).

For questions or to place an order contact Phyllis Chai at 408-226-7150

## *Recycling*

It feels like it's time to me to remind us all that throughout our Joint Venture Church there are two kinds of small bins/baskets, one for trash, and the other for recyclable items. Also, there are written instructions regarding what types of items go in which container. It might seem to be a "no brainer," but what can be found in the bins indicates that it is not. I feel sad when I see cups with liquid in them, or unrinsed, tossed into the blue bin which has a logo on it signifying that it is for recyclables; too, one can find pieces of discarded food there. Plastic liners ought not be necessary for those bins, but unless we follow the directions, there is a need for them. If only one cup containing coffee or tea is tossed in one of those bins, the contents of the entire bin will be tossed out by the recycling company, and that could well include our entire outside collection bin... Why does this sadden me? I doubt that a long discourse is needed to jog our memories which know that our actions each day very much can contribute to the quality of life of those who come after and most likely remain longer than we on this earth.

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Kermit the frog reminds us that “Everyone makes mistakes, o yes they do”; Yes, we all do things that we ought not...and we forget.

My prayer is that each of us will do our best in striving to be good stewards of this earth on loan to us by God.

Phyllis Chai

## Christian Education

September has come with its flurry of activity for our church. First, we will start with our Labor Day Weekend joint service to welcome all our families back from their travels. Just check out our “water drop” display and see some of the exciting places our families have been traveling and having fun during the summer months. It is always fun to get away, but isn’t it great to be home again!

Sunday School, of course, will begin this month on September 8 from 10–11 a.m.. We are excited to be holding two classes to better meet the needs of children ages four through fifth grade. Remember to invite new families with children from your neighborhood to come to church with you and to try out our Sunday School. We have some new and exciting things planned for this year.

We will be holding a Safe Church Workshop sometime this fall. The program is designed for adults who will be involved with children and youth at our church. Sunday School teachers and shepherds, youth leaders and helpers, are all encouraged to attend. The program is most informative as to the best practices to maintain healthy adult/child relationships and safe environments in our church. If you would like more information on this program and its contents please contact me directly. Watch for the specifics of date a time for this workshop.

Every year God calls new people into our ministry. Is He calling you? Perhaps you have a special gift or talent you would like to share with us just one Sunday sometime

during the year. That’s great. Let me know what it is and when you might like to do it. I can always work you in. I will look forward to hearing from you.

In your faithful service,  
Susie Ferguson

## Ramadhan Celebration Dinner

Connie and I were fortunate to attend, with others from our church, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community’s Ramadhan celebration dinner on the evening of 20 July at the Baitul Baseer Mosque in Milpitas. Imam Mubasher Ahmad had invited our congregation to help them celebrate. He had earlier helped install our Pastor Michele. It was a joyous and spiritually moving event.

It was an especially gratifying experience to be with a large group of Americans of such diverse faith groups. There were clergy and members of the Sikh, Buddhist, Catholic, Jewish, Episcopalian (and some others I know I have missed) and of course our own church, well represented by Rev. Dr. Michele Rogers-Brigham who was recognized by Imam Mubasher from the podium. I am very proud that our group and our leader were there officially representing our church.

There were several speakers, all of whom spoke of celebrating each other’s joy and respecting one other’s faith. One speaker simply said, “We are as one tonight.”

Also in attendance were high ranking military (U.S. Army), including one US General, and a mosque leader. (I recalled that one of several Muslim graves at Arlington belongs to Army Capt. Humayun Khan, who diverted a suicide car bomb away from his men and into himself.) My friend Saleem Qadir, a former US Air Force officer was also there. Many high tech business leaders were in attendance, several being very active in the mosque, I understand.

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Especially moving to me was the short talk given by Milpitas Mayor Jose Esteves. I know Mayor Esteves is a very senior leader in the Knights of Columbus, a strongly pro-Catholic organization committed to “defending the faith.” Yet Mayor Esteves spoke thoughtfully and convincingly about maintaining our respective faiths, even while respecting and helping celebrate with other’s their own faith beliefs.

When Connie and I joined this church, we studied “The Phoenix Affirmations” written by Dr. Eric Elnes. It was being studied by Quest at the time. This document is an affirmation of what mainstream Christians and theologians believe.

Affirmation One came to mind that night: *“Walking fully in the path of Jesus without denying the legitimacy of other paths that God may provide for humanity.”*

This celebration was a lesson on all twelve Phoenix Affirmations, as they each applied.

Saleem once said as a devout Muslim, he could uphold the Phoenix Affirmations if just one reference in Affirmation Nine was changed from “Jesus” to “God.” That’s how similar we are.

We look forward to attending this same event next Ramadhan, and hope we have a larger representation as a church. It is good for the soul.

Mike Moore

## Missing Items

There are 2 missing items:

- One bowl and blade for the new Cuisinart recently purchased by an ECA member to be used by MM. It has been missing about two months. If it was borrowed, please return.

- One of the large yellow plastic buckets used by MM to transport food when serving the homeless. It was loaned to someone, but has not been returned.

Amy Griffith

## September Birthdays

Charles Krahenbuhl	9/4
Jim McAbee	9/6
Al Nieders	9/6
Hi Dong Chai	9/10
Dick Shipe	9/12
Jacob Graham	9/13
Jean Shipe	9/14
Pat McGarvin	9/19
Liana Ramirez	9/19
Laura Hall	9/21
Robyn Dorsey	9/22
Frank Yamada	9/26
Alex Bemis	9/28
Joe Machado	9/28

## 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 15<sup>th</sup> of the month to kalos@ccavucc.org. Kalos editors are **Sue Scaff, Kathryn McAbee and Risa Feely.**

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