

KALOS

Congregational Church of Almaden Valley—United Church of Christ

October 2013

Pastor's Reflection



Dear Members and Friends,

This month is Stewardship month in the life of our church. I've been reflecting on the "time and talents" aspect of who we are lately and the gifts we bring to life of the church. Where do we begin? There are so many gifts to name and people who come with unique callings and abilities.

All I need to do is look around my office to comb through those "deep" files of minutes or sit down for longer conversations with you as members to learn of the ways our church has been supported through the years. It really is a "loving and giving" story of how you have given to God's world/God's people near and far through gifts past, present and future. You have "planted" yourselves here, responded to the need to form a "church" and we see the fruits of your labors. We are a people with a unique calling here in this Valley!

My first "thanks" is to all you who have given of your support through the years; thanks for financial support and other kinds of support that has come in the form of "volunteering" in multiple ways. We are who we are today because of the commitment of those who have gone before us and those of you who have been here for many years (some since our beginning points) caring for this church through good times and the times of challenge. In addition, newcomers have stepped right up to be actively part of the congregation and become part of that important history of caring and viability.

In This Issue

Minister's Message.....	1
Welcome Visitor	3
Moderator's Note	4
Events & Meetings	4
Christian Education.....	6
Birthdays.....	6

My second "thanks" is to all of you who are, in the present, giving of your presence, leadership and financial contributions to make us viable and strong. As you know, we depend on the gifts of our members/friends to support our staff, programs, building, and general operating expenses as well as our mission programs. The budget we prepare in October will indicate how we may look for commitments to this viability in the coming year. In the present, we constantly ask what that means for us as an individual congregation and as joint congregations.

Part of that calling, in our present, goes hand in hand with those who are our sisters and brothers of the Episcopal Church in Almaden. We are called to show that our "Joint Venture" with the ECA is being carried out in the pioneering spirit of our founders. It is good to go back to the early records to see what the intention was stated to be. Recently, as I was speaking with an ECA member about this and we found these words in a newsletter article: "The joint venture asks that we learn to share rather than possess, that we work to compromise and cooperate rather than build our own thing and remain strictly to ourselves and our own tradition, that we learn to risk and trust rather than demand to know where things are finally going and have our say as to how. This is not easy but

God is Still Speaking

KALOS

Congregational Church of Almaden Valley—United Church of Christ

October 2013

does represent some of the basic Christian lessons of life.” (*Shape*, Summer ’68)

Did you hear that word, “trust?” My third “thanks” is for the dreams, hopes and visions we carry into the future and the ways we “trust” each other to shape the future. “Surprising Gifts” is the “theme” for our Stewardship emphasis this month. It comes from our UCC Stewardship resources which suggest this verse: “May God, who reached out in love and surprised you with gifts of unending help, and confidence, put a fresh heart in you . . .” 2 Thessalonians 2:16–17 (The Message). Sometimes, we are surprised by the “future” but should we be? Sometimes we forget that God is ready to give us that “fresh” heart.

I want that for us? Do you? Thank you for receiving, this Stewardship month, the invitation to pledge your time, talents and gifts once more to the life of our church and for saying “yes” (even surprising us) to the invitation to be intimately involved in this openness to allow God to give us new heart, a new fervor for living intentionally as God’s people here. Even if you cannot be here each Sunday, your desire to be connected to the life of our church is a “treasure” and your prayers are important for our daily work.

We look forward to worship services in October when we will talk more about stewardship. Thank you to the following people who will offer Stewardship Moments in worship: **Phyllis Chai**—October 6, **Ted Feely**—October 13, and **Dot Allfrey**—October 20. Thank you for considering a pledge this year and praying about how you may be involved in supporting our church. Please know that your pledge will be a lifted in worship on Stewardship Sunday October 27 for a special dedication blessing.

Truly, may God surprise us with joy and speak to the yearnings of our hearts for encouragement and strength

for the future. I am glad to be here with you and glad we may journey together to share the past, the present and the future. Please call on me and let me know how I may give you support!

Grace and peace,
Pastor Michele

Sundays In October

World Communion Sunday—October 6, 9 a.m.

Please bring something (object/story/ picture) from a place in the world (yes, and in our USA) you have visited and be ready to share something new you learned about unity in God’s Spirit!

St Francis Day—Blessing of the Animals—October 6, 12:30 p.m.

This service is conducted on the patio by both churches for all in our congregations and the community who want to bring “pets” for the blessing.

Happenings and Thank You's

Save the Date—Annual Meeting of CCAV-UCC—November 17, 10:15 a.m. after worship

THANK YOU to Sue Scaff

Thank you, Sue, for leading worship in my absence on September 8. We are grateful to you and all those who assisted in the worship hour!

Third Sunday Round Table Discussions—October 20—After Worship During Coffee Hour

We will dedicate this time to a budget review—looking at our church budget to understand it and have conversation about it. In addition, we will appreciate knowing more about our JV work and how that budget operates.

God is Still Speaking

KALOS

Congregational Church of Almaden Valley—United Church of Christ

October 2013

The Round Table Discussions held in August and September were centered around the review and study of UCC Resolutions that were approved by the Synod Meeting in June. The top resolutions we found people most interested in knowing more about were:

- Resolution for the UCC to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery which authorized the genocide of native people and the theft of native lands
- Resolution against bullying and discrimination
- Resolution calling for an all church offering for supporting the educational expenses of members in discernment preparing for authorized ministry of the UCC
- Resolution resisting actions seeking to undermine the status of women
- Resolution supporting compassionate comprehensive immigration reform and protection of human rights of immigrants
- Resolution of advocating for funding to construct quality affordable housing
- Resolution urging divestment along with other strategies from fossil fuel companies to address climate change

Note: Interest was expressed in knowing more about a statement of affirmation of relationship with the Fellowship of Affirming Ministries and a support statement for voter's rights through public statements, advocacy and actions.

You can find more info on the UCC web site on these or Pastor Michele has hand outs for you to read related to some of the resolutions.

Neighbors in Need (NIN)—“Imagining Another World is Possible”

This NIN theme is a special mission offering of the UCC that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States.

One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants.

CCAV-UCC encourages you to give to the UCC Neighbors in Need Special Mission offering during the month of October. October 6 is the offering date but you are encouraged to give any time during the month. If you would like to give an offering to NIN, please put a note on your check/gift indicating that you'd like your offering to be sent for NIN.

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!

God is Still Speaking

KALOS

Congregational Church of Almaden Valley—United Church of Christ

October 2013



Moderator's Note

It was nice to see Pastor Michele Tuesday night at our Council meeting after her time away. We had a busy evening and got a lot accomplished.

While Pastor Michele was away we had the opportunity to be part of a JV Service, and have one of our own give a sermon the following Sunday. I admire Sue Scaff for her willingness to prepare and deliver such a well thought out sermon on education. Thank you, Sue!

Our September PhunStuff outing was in Capitola, at the home of Diane and John Hawes. Once again we had a marvelous time. (Diane has already invited us back next year). I know we all really have appreciated Audrey, Carolyn and David, and Diane and John opening their homes to us this summer. A big "Thank You" to each of them!

October is Stewardship month for CCAV. We will have envelopes prepared to hand out on Sundays and/or mail to members. On Sunday, Oct. 27, we will bless all the pledge cards that are turned in. Please be sure to make your card among those that Pastor Michele will bless. Our contributions make CCAV able to continue to move forward, reach out, serve, and invite folks to join us in our journey!

Another item we need to be aware of is the status of our 2014 CCAV officers. I have volunteered to stay on as Moderator for 2014. I am excited about the positive attitude of our council, the enthusiasm of our congregation, and I want to remain a part of that! We are in need of a Vice Moderator and I would ask that you carefully consider helping in that position. We are also in need of two council members-at-large to replace Dennis Widman and David Hough. Yes, we are still "searching" for a member

to relieve David of his Treasurer's position. If you feel called to any of these openings let me know. Come be a part of this new chapter at CCAV. Pastor Michele is coming up on her first year with us and I believe we can truly look back and say, "It has been a good year!"

Shalom,
Connie

Events and Meetings

Women's Fall Retreat

A spirited group of women including Bessie Hutchins and Phyllis Chai from our congregation—and a woman from Nevada who was there for her 50th time—attended the Fall retreat. The retreat, which was presented by the NCNC Christian Church (Disciples of Christ or DOC), was held at the Women's Fellowship at the Mission Springs Conference Center in Scott's Valley from September 13–15. Since our NCNC (UCC) Women's Network no longer exists, UCC ladies have been grateful for the warm welcome we receive at the DOC retreats. At the recent event Rev. Dr. Mary Donovan Turner, a Pacific School of Religion professor, was the keynote speaker, sharing several inspiring sermons including moving and humorous stories on the theme of Living in the Light.

As one sits in the high-ceilinged worship center, the breathtaking view from the windows is of the tall redwood trees, and not infrequently with the sun streaming in.

A highlight of every retreat is the group singing with Dr. Barbara Hamm—composer, soloist, minister-of-music extraordinaire—at the piano. Barbara—who has also played at Max's Opera Cafe in San Francisco a number of times—had the appreciative talent night audience in "stitches" with her original western style delivery of *The E-Mail Jail*.

God is Still Speaking

KALOS

Congregational Church of Almaden Valley—United Church of Christ

October 2013

At every retreat there is a mission outreach project, and for this one the Walnut Avenue Women's Center in Santa Cruz was the recipient of gifts of various needed items.

Participants had the option of attending two of a number of offered workshops.

Phyllis was interested in hearing the presentation about plans for a Recovery Café (modeled after the one in Seattle) in downtown San Jose at the First Christian Church. Also, the workshop on human trafficking was very informative and inspiring. The attendees were encouraged to add the National Trafficking Hotline number (888-373-7888) to their phone contacts. They also heard that the Super Bowl is the largest sex trafficking event annually, and that ten thousand young people (a.k.a. slaves, costing only \$90 each) are brought in for that event. The award-winning movie, "Call + Response," about modern-day slavery in the world around us, is available for those churches wishing to host a showing.

One of the co-presenters gave an impassioned message, sharing the story of her older sister who was abducted at the age of 11, and held as a sex slave for the next five years.

There will be a free Human Trafficking Awareness event with a showing of the movie at Concord First Christian Church (DOC) from 1–5 p.m. on October 13.

For more information about the retreat or workshops, please contact Phyllis Chai (hidong@pacbell.net or 408-226-7150).

Planning is already underway for the 2014 fall retreat... Think about going—You'll be glad you did!

Book Group

The Book Group meets on Wednesday, October 16, at Betty Benson's. The book is *State of Wonder* by Ann Patchett. Everyone is welcome!

JV Board Update

Many thanks to our two congregations for supporting our facility! Here's a brief update on what's getting done around our facility with the help of many volunteers

- Upgrades to kitchen equipment including fire suppression hood, refreshed offices and common areas
- Upgrades for electrical and fire safety upgrades
- The roof!!! (With special thanks to our roof czar Bob Green)
- Repairing lights, lights, and more lights
- Sprinkler and lawn mower repairs
- Continued work on our "curb appeal"

Want to volunteer? Have an idea? Contact one of your JV members. This is especially helpful for any future fund drives to support our call for contributions to capital fund needs, etc. and for volunteers to take on interest in projects that need some work. We have a prioritized list of "must do" and "would love to do" and need to balance those wishes within our budget. Keeping our congregations up to date on our progress and priorities will help greatly!

JV Board: **Jim McPherson, Carolyn Crowley, Joe Machado, Ann Mayers, Kathryn McAbee, Jim McAbee, Brenda McHenry, Jon Mills, Dennis Widman, Debbie Bemis, Bryan Bond, Ellen Lukanc, Rev. Kate Flexer (ECA) and Rev. Michele Rogers Brigham (CCAV, UCC)**

God is Still Speaking

KALOS

Congregational Church of Almaden Valley—United Church of Christ

October 2013

Christian Education

Everything and everyone is up and running to start off our fall in Sunday School. We have 16 children on our roster which is very exciting. How we wish they would all show up every Sunday. But needless to say things are buzzing in both our Preschool/Kindergarten room and our Learning Center on Sundays. You are always welcome to visit between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. to see what's happening. Just find a spot at the back of either room to quietly watch our teachers and students in action.

On Saturday, October 5 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon we are holding a "Safeguarding God's Children" program. This is an educational program on protecting our children from sexual abuse. All teachers, shepherds, nursery workers, youth leaders and helpers are required to take this course every three years to meet our church-wide policy of providing a safe environment for our children. If you plan to be involved with our children and youth in the coming year and have not taken such a course within the last three years please sign up and join us. You can register through our Christian Education office. Materials will be provided so pre-registration is encouraged.

As our Sunday School program continues to grow we will be in need of some new furniture to meet the needs of our classes. If you would like to help with some of our "growing pain" needs, let me know. I will gladly offer suggestions of how you might be able to help and what might fit into your budget.

A special thank you goes to all our teachers and shepherds this year. Just look at this list: **Elizabeth Cihon, Dana Renfand, Debbie Estill, Leslie Rousseau, Wendy Martin, Sandie Mueller, Anne Van der Staay, Emily De La Rosa, Alex Alvarado, Kelli Casale, Ann Mayers, Phyllis Chai, Kelly Yamanishi, and Jan Henderson.**

These wonderful women are making it possible to hold two classes this year.

Teaching and shepherding is not really "just for women." Children love the male influence, too. So you men—dads, uncles, and even teens—might want to give shepherding a try. Just let me know and I will help you get started.

In your faithful service,
Susie Ferguson

October Birthdays

Phyllis Chai	10/3
Steve Coutinho	10/25
Georgia Ramirez	10/25
Shirley Lucas	10/26
Jennifer Quint	10/27

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