

KALOS

Congregational Church of Almaden Valley—United Church of Christ

November 2013

Pastor's Reflection



Dear Members and Friends,

Recently, I entered the sacred space of fountains, gardens, chapels, meeting rooms, and mountainside walking trails of the San Damiano Retreat Center in Danville, CA with my Northern California/Nevada UCC colleagues in ministry. This annual retreat gathering of clergy in our Conference to pray and

share and hope was a gift to me, and I thank you for providing the funding, encouragement and time to attend. There was good attendance and a good spirit among all present. I met many of my clergy colleagues I only knew from Facebook!

Rev. Rodney Yee, former interim pastor, was there as well as one of your former pastors, Rev. Julianne Stockstad. It was good to see them and receive their “greetings” to bring back to you. I was very glad we could talk about “you,” my congregation, and feel their love and care.

I thought about the “gatherings” of people who have intention to be God’s people and live out God’s calling to care in covenant as a local church community, as the Santa Clara Association, the Northern California Nevada Conference, or as the wider United Church of Christ. We have our own personal definitions of “spirituality,” but when it comes to the church, we have much in common and that is why we can share a common covenant.

We are blessed by a “covenant” that binds us to say “we choose to belong together.” We choose to share sacred

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spaces, individual faith journeys, and common Christian spiritual values. On Sunday, October 13, this point was brought home as I witnessed the approval of Pam Nates for ordination to the gospel ministry at the meeting of the Santa Clara Association. We asked her questions and determined that she may represent our churches as an authorized ordained minister. This was not done by a single church but by all of us working together to offer our collective wisdom and decision making for who may represent us as clergy in the UCC.

Yes, it a season of giving thanks and remembering to be grateful for what we share in our gathered faith communities. Ups and downs? Of course. What would life be like without those? As the writer of I Thessalonians suggests, we give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for us. How thankful we are to express our renewed commitment to support our “sacred” spaces (particularly with our sister congregation, the ECA), our covenant to belong to one another in this local

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body and to the wider, universal church, in all circumstances. How thankful we are that we are not limited to our own denominational ties, we are grateful for those among us who come from other church backgrounds, denominations or faith traditions to share the journey.

We'll have a chance to talk more about what this means in the upcoming Annual Meeting on Sunday, November 17, after worship. As I begin to mark my first year as your settled pastor, I thank you for your support to me and encouragement to build and grow with you. For me, "growth" is not always about numbers, although that is important. Growth is about how we mature in Christ and live into our callings to be people of peace, justice and compassion.

How are we doing in that regard? I hope that our beginning point is to give thanks for our leaders, our givers, our doers, our pray-ers, and our "church" family near and far. Let us never forget to be expectant and grateful for the "surprising gifts" that are ours when we are faithful stewards and when we come together to share that faith.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Michele

Let's Try Something New

Before our worship each Sunday (or during the week), you are invited to write your prayer concern on the clipboard provided at the entrance to the sanctuary. ALSO, remember that we may make announcements about the life of our church or our community in the Coffee Hour. Thanks for your written announcements for our bulletin each week (deadline is Wednesday, noon).

Prayer for November as we give Thanksgiving for the gift of our church community and know God's call to be disciples in this time and place of Christ's peace:

Make us keep the sputtering lantern burning
and not to break a wounded reed.

Make us understand
the secret of eternal life
from the pulse of blood in our veins
and realize the worth of a life
from the movement of a warm heart.

Make us not discriminate
the rich and the poor,
the high and the low,
the learned and the ignorant
those we know well and those we do not know.

Oh!

A human life can't be exchanged for the whole world
this supreme task of keeping the lives
of the sons and daughters of God.
Let us realize how lovely it is
To feel the burdens of responsibility.

(By a worker of Peace Market, Korea, Gifts of Many Cultures)

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Sundays In November and More

All Saints Sunday—November 3

please bring a picture or memento to share that will allow us to lift with thanksgiving your loved ones, our “saints,” who have entered the eternal realm!

Santa Clara Association (NCNC, UCC) Fall Meeting—November 3, 2:00 p.m.

Everyone is invited to Foothills Congregational UCC for this meeting.

Folk Choir and Special Prayer and Remembrance of our Veterans—November 10

Annual Meeting After Worship—November 17

Thanksgiving Sunday—November 24

Dr. Hi Dong Chai will deliver the sermon. We will sing traditional Thanksgiving hymns.

Taize Style Worship Service—December 15

There will be prayer, candles, and silence.

JV Worship Services—December 22 and January 19

Thank you for your support of our Joint Venture worship opportunities.

Epiphany Sunday—January 5

There will be a singing communion

Happenings and Thank You's

THANK YOU to Dr. Lee Krahenbuhl

Thanks to our guest musician On Sunday, Oct. 13, Dr. Lee Krahenbuhl. Lee is the son of Janice and Charles Krahenbuhl in our congregation. Here are a few “notes” about Lee’s training and work: Lee graduated with honors from Linfield College in McMinnville, Oregon, in 1982 where he was active in The Performing Arts. Having graduated

near the top of his class from Gilroy High School in 1978, he had taken four years of German at Gilroy High School and also took four years of German in college. He spent his junior year of college abroad, leaving in June to attend the Goethe Institute before traveling “on his own” through German-speaking countries and arriving in Vienna. He studied in German at The University of Vienna for his junior year of college. He then returned to Linfield to complete his senior year. He attended The Pacific School of Religion where he received a Master's of Divinity degree with an emphasis on religion and the performing arts. His Ph.D. is from The University of Oregon at Eugene. He has taught Communication and Performing arts at several colleges. He is now teaching at Mercy College in Toledo, Ohio.

October is Stewardship Month at CCAV-UCC

Our theme on the front of our Oct. 13, worship bulletin was “Surprising Gifts.” We are grateful to **Phyllis Chai, Ted Feely, Dot Allfrey, and Debbie Bemis** for preparing Stewardship Moments for us this month. Look for opportunity to dedicate your pledge on Sunday, October 27, in worship. If you are not able to be here, we will include your card in the dedication. And, October is also the opportunity to support our UCC Neighbors in Need (NIN) offering. The inserts each week help us learn about the ministries this offering supports.

Christmas Party!— December 7

Watch for details and sign-up sheets on the UCC bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall!

Serve as a Liturgist, Coffee Hour Host, Communion Server or Contribute Flowers

Email the church office at office@jointventurechurches.org, or call, or sign up on the matrix located on the CCAV Board. To provide flowers for UCC/ECA Sunday worship services sign up on the JV Bulletin Board.

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Outreach Committee Meeting—November 3, After Coffee Hour

You're invited to attend our next Outreach Committee. This is an opportunity to talk about all that we do and make decisions about what we want to "keep," "add," or "end" for the future. We need your input and your thoughts for this part of our life together.

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 Note

The first Sunday in November will be All Saints Sunday and will also mark the first time Pastor Michele gave a sermon to our congregation! The first week in November of 2012, we spent some time getting to know Pastor Michele and on All Saints Sunday the congregation voted to ask Pastor Michele to come be our part time minister. Nice memories as we look back over the past year and make plans for the days ahead.



As we start planning for 2014, we look forward to receiving your CCAVUCC Time and Talent Forms. This helps us know what each of you would be interested in helping with this coming year. It is okay to change from what you have been doing and help in other areas. New ideas come with new folks helping! I will be switching to the Mission and Outreach Committee in 2014, as well as attending Worship Committee meetings. (Yes, I have checked Moderator for 2014, also). Please, see where you can help and let us know by filling out and turning in your Time and Talent form in the offering plate or in the Moderator church mailbox.

I will need to step aside from heading up your Caring Ministry in 2014. I truly feel I am not able to give it the time it deserves. I realize that we have folks recovering at home and I sometimes feel I should be doing more to keep in touch with them and their needs. I think about

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them often yet that is as far as I get. I realize a simple card, phone call, or visit would mean a lot. I hope there is someone in our church family who feels called to step in and help in this area. There are many folks who want to help and if we had someone to give them direction on what needs to be done it will happen!

Shalom,
Connie

Stewardship

Last Wednesday, Martin Copenhaver, one of the stalwarts of the UCC and one of its regular Daily Devotional writers, closed with this short prayer: “Thank you, God, that your invitation to me is not based on my righteousness, but instead flows from your graciousness.” — I’ll return to this later.

I want to talk to you about stewardship. Not stewardship with a small “s”, but with a big capital “S”. Please don’t worry. I’m not going to try to talk you into giving more than you can afford.

Stewardship with a little “s” is about survival. Scraping by. And, even more, it’s about taking a small view of our stewardship.

Stewardship with a capital “S” is something quite different.

It’s about not keeping the Good News of this church penned up within the walls of this building and shared with just us.

Stewardship with a capital “S” is about throwing open the doors of the church and welcoming the people of the Almaden Community to the Good News that is the UCC church and more particularly is the Good News of this congregation.

Big S Stewardship is recognizing that you are not just a steward of your church. You are steward of the community’s church. A church the community needs, whether they recognize that now or not.

So, what does this mean for us? More to the point, what’s it mean for you?

I’ll tell you what it means for me and then you can see if there’s anything there that rings true and good for you.

Here goes:

You know, when you say the Lord’s prayer, the part that goes “Thy Kingdom Come?” To me, that’s about Big S stewardship. To me being a Christian means being a player in “Thy Kingdom Come.” And, that means stewardship with the biggest capital S.

It’s about God is Still Speaking. And about helping to share that with the Almaden community. “Thy Kingdom Come.”

It’s about having a pastor who can help to take us and be with us and others on such an important journey. “Thy Kingdom Come.”

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It's about turning to the blessings in my life and acknowledging those blessings and letting those blessings overflow. "Thy Kingdom Come."

And in that overflow is the ultimate blessing of all: That we can be a part of *and* a recipient of *and* a steward of "Thy Kingdom Come."

Maybe one of the best things of all about Big S Stewardship, is that it has nothing to do with how good we are or how much money we have or anything that we claim for ourselves. To use Biblical terms, our "righteousness."

As Martin Copenhaver wrote last Wednesday, "Thank you, God, that your invitation to me is not based on my righteousness, but instead flows from your graciousness."

Ultimately, it seems to me that Big S Stewardship is acknowledging that flow from God's Graciousness, being a part of that flow and passing it on. "Thy Kingdom Come."

Ted Feely

Christian Education

Fall in full swing in our Sunday School program. We are offering two classes every Sunday now is with exciting things happening in both. During October the children worked on an added component to their regular curriculum. The youngest children learned the song "Zacchaeus," and the older class worked on a short skit, written by Sandie Mueller, to tell the story of Zacchaeus. This story is scheduled to be the gospel lesson for Sunday, November 3, when the children will present their song and skit.

Our youth leaders, Bonnie and Inge, our nursery worker, Patricia, and most of our teachers and shepherds have now attended the program "Safeguarding God's Children."

This is an important component for our Christian Education and Youth Programs to meet our church wide policies of providing a safe environment for our children and youth. This program helps us all know what we can do in our physical environment as well as with staff and volunteers to assure the safety of all the children and youth that are entrusted to our care as they participate in our programs.

During the months of October and November the Sunday School children will participate in a "stewardship focus" called Operation Starfish through Food for the Poor, Inc. Each family received an activity booklet with fun ways to learn about this program and an offering box to collect their donations.

"When we see or hear about the tremendous suffering of the poor, we may feel helpless. The problem seems immense. But if you think about helping just one person or one family at a time, suddenly you'll realize that you can make a difference." Through this program we want to help our children and families realize each one of us can make a difference. It only takes \$3.65 to feed one child for an entire month through this program. We plan to see how many children we can feed the month of December by what we collect during October and November. There is a thermometer on the ECA bulletin board to track our progress.

If you want to learn more about this program or anything else that is going on in our Sunday School, please don't hesitate to give me a call.

In your faithful service,
Susie Ferguson

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Social Policy Breakfast Reform

Early Friday morning, September 27, a group from our congregation was very warmly welcomed by Steve Hicken of Catholic Charities as we gathered with about fifty-five other folks at the Eastside Neighborhood Center for a presentation on “Immigration Reform” organized by Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County. It was an informative and inspiring time, and a call to action. There was a feeling of enthusiasm and energy “in the air.” We heard from Teresa Castellanos, of the Office of Human Relations of Santa Clara County, that “When the people lead, the leaders follow.” The last immigration reform law was passed in 1986; the 50th anniversary of the “War on Poverty” will be in 2014. We heard that the War on Poverty has worked and can be documented. Jack Holmgren of the Catholic Legal Immigration Network came from Oakland to speak, and it was apparent that he is passionate about his work. We listened to a conference call from Representative Zoe Lofgren in Washington, D.C., who for many years has been actively engaged with the issue, and we heard during the morning that this issue will involve and affect everyone. There are reportedly thirty-four groups “Fighting Poverty With Faith” in our nation’s capitol which work together to make a difference. Bishop P.J. McGrath reminded us that welcoming strangers is biblical. We heard that we need to speak the words “hunger” and “poverty” in our country and that to decrease poverty we need comprehensive immigration reform (C.I.R.). Huge numbers of volunteers will be needed to help in expected changes to our immigration system. We need to tell the stories of immigrants to those not informed about the need for immigration reform. To change the system people need to get involved.

Phyllis Chai

JV Board Update

Last month we reported activity around kitchen equipment upgrades, refreshed office and common area spaces, the huge effort to repair our roof, fixing lights/electrical and continued effort on our curb appeal. We continue in these efforts, adding to our list of important topics to cover such as

- Updating important JV documents – Facility use agreements, JV Bylaws, and JV Handbook
- Consideration of a marketing project from CCAV, UCC team
- Improvements to security and preparation to our year-end work

And, speaking of year-end work, we have a few folks retiring at the end of this year, so we’ll be looking for some volunteers to join JV next year from both congregations. Please consider what talents you could bring to the team!

As a reminder, if you have an idea or see a need to fix/spruce up the facility, 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)**

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November Birthdays

Harriet Yamada 11/3
Dave Harris 11/6
Joan Curtice 11/6
Sue Scaff 11/11
Linda Farr 11/15
Bob Green 11/17
Bonnie Graham 11/18
Melanie Weiner 11/19
Toh-Bee Syn 11/21
Lorenzo Ramirez 11/28

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

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