

KALOS

Congregational Church of Almaden Valley—United Church of Christ

February 2014

Pastor's Reflection



Dear members and friends,

During the month of February, we celebrate the Season of Epiphany. Ash Wednesday comes around on March 5, this year, so we have opportunity for “epiphanies” to abound as we ask what it means to follow the “light” of God’s presence in our daily lives and in our church

life. It means we may continue to pause to look for divine “light” to give us perspective.

Wendell Berry helps me. Listen to the “peace of the wild things,” from *Openings*:

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children’s lives
may be,

I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great
heron feeds.

I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.

And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

We read poetry, we play music, we talk with friends, we listen to the wisdom of our elders, we gaze at the energy of our youth and we enter the life of the church to know the fullness of God’s light. What gifts!

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Also, we find God’s gifts awaiting us when we meet for auspicious occasions in the life of the church. This month we look forward to the Ecclesiastical Council meeting (Feb. 9) and Ordination (Feb. 16) of Melanie Weiner to the gospel ministry. Melanie has been preparing for ordained ministry in the United Church of Christ and now we are ready to celebrate this next step with her, her ordination! We are grateful that Melanie has taught us to pay attention to God’s call for something new to unfold in life and to respond with a plan for making this happen. Many of you have walked with Melanie each step of the way toward ordination know how important it is for us to be with her for these final steps.

What shall we expect? The Santa Clara Association of Churches (United Church of Christ) will examine Melanie as to her fitness for ordained ministry by reviewing her ordination paper and asking her questions about her call (please look for a copy of her ordination paper, available in our church office). The Council will be held on Sunday, February 9, at 3 p.m. at our church (official invitation from John Aney, Vice Moderator, Santa Clara

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Association, Northern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ is at the end of the Kalos). On that day, church delegates will take a vote for approval and, if all goes as expected, Melanie's ordination service will be held on Sunday, February 16 at 3 p.m. It is our honor to be Melanie's sponsor church and to host this service of ordination. It means welcoming guests from our Northern California Nevada Conference as well as neighbor faith communities.

It will be a day of celebration and a day to echo, with Melanie, the desire to treasure our spiritual home, the church, as a place of nurture and belonging, freedom and possibility. As our *UCC Book of Worship* affirms, "The church is called in every generation to celebrate the full message of salvation in the context of the particular time and place given it by God. Jesus Christ, is 'the same yesterday, today and forever,' but the language, customs and historical situation of the people of God are continually changing."

We are grateful for change and for new understandings of how to be "the church," as we strive to minister to the spiritual hunger of all people in this time and place. We live in "anxious" times regarding the church and its future. We are grateful for Melanie and many who are called to serve in church leadership, ordained and lay. We are grateful for our Church Council, our JV Representatives, our Committee Chairs, and others who lead us at CCAV. We are grateful for the "peace of wild things" and the comfort of rest and perspective when the pace is overwhelming. We are grateful for reminders of our humanity and God's sovereignty.

May we be ready to support Melanie for these important events in her life and the life of our Association. Also, I hope you will look forward to Sunday morning worship in February for opportunities to observe Racial Justice Sunday on February 9, Science, Faith and Technology Sunday on February 16, and Seminary/Church Vocations Sunday on February 23.

I'll close my message offering a "blessing" that Melanie quoted in her ordination paper. It is a "commissioning" that urges us to respond to God's invitation to allow "epiphanies" to abound in the humble lives we offer to God. It is from Teresa of Avila (1515–1582), "*Christ Has No Body.*"

*Christ has no body but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.*

Grace and peace,
Pastor Michele

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.

Moderator's Note

February is a busy month in the life of our church. I think the most exciting event coming up is our member Melanie Weiner's ordination. CCAV will be hosting both the February 9, Ecclesiastical Council meeting at 3:00 pm and the February 16, ordination service, also at 3 p.m. Our congregation is invited to attend both 3 p.m. gatherings and welcome our guests during the receptions. The Fellowship Committee will be working on the details and I will be the contact person for both. Look for Sign-up sheets on the CCAV bulletin board and information in the church Announcements and Mid-week. Let's make this a real celebration for Melanie and the church community.



Our Worship Committee will be meeting on Tuesday February 11, at 6 p.m. If you have any suggestions about our worship service feel free to attend or speak to Carla Gerber, the contact person, or to one of the team members. The "Contact" List, for all committees, may be found posted by the CCAV Photo Board.

We had another very productive council meeting in January. We will be holding our 2014 Council Retreat on Friday March 7. As always, feel free to speak to anyone of

your council members about suggestions and ideas for our church family. We continue to focus on our top priority of growing the church and caring for others.

Shalom,
Connie

Announcements

Events

Sunday Round Table Discussions Continue in 2014. The next one is February 16, after church at the end of our Coffee Hour (10:30–11:15). The theme for that Sunday is "Science, Faith and Technology," so it is a "fitting" Sunday to talk about how those areas intertwine.

Taize Lenten Service, March 16, 7 p.m.

CCAV Outreach / Mission Committee will meet on February 23, after worship. Join us if you can to help us continue to shape meaningful outreach at CCAVUCC.

February book group meets at Joan Okumura's, 7:30 p.m., Feb 19. The book is *The River of Doubt* by Candice Millard. March book is *Desert Queen* by Janet Wallace, hostess is Audrey Wiedrick.

Invitations to Serve

Worship Service: Please call or email the church office or sign up on the CCAV Bulletin Board if you would like to serve on Sundays in 2014 as Greeter/Coffee Host, Liturgist, or Communion Server.

Youth Participation: Remember, we are encouraging youth to sign up to read on the second Sunday of the month. Adults of our youth, think about signing up with your young person and being a "team."

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Flowers: Sign up to provide flowers for both CCAV and ECA services on the Joint Venture Board.

Your Favorite Hymn: Please remember that Pastor Michele will be glad to sing your “favorite” hymn on a “special” day you name; just give her a call or email!

Sunday School: Please consider volunteering, even as a substitute, to help (as a "shepherd") in one of our two Sunday school classes; the classes meet each Sunday from 10 a.m.–11 a.m. in the respective classrooms. There need be no preparation (though information about the scheduled lesson will be provided if time permits), only a willingness to be present in the class and, to assist the teacher as needed, while enjoying being with the children. Serving in this way is a feel-good experience, and will be much appreciated. For more information or to volunteer, please contact our J.V. Director of Christian Education, Susie Ferguson (office: (408) 268-0243 or cell: (408) 499-6381).

Outreach

Christmas Fund Offering—With thankful hearts we received \$640 from our congregation in December to be donated to the annual Christmas Fund Offering. The gifts will go to help lighten the load of those UCC clergy and church lay staff in need during the year. Bless you for sharing out of your abundance in this annual appeal.

Night Ministry Collection for January and February—San Francisco Night Ministry (socks, gloves, hats, blankets, warm clothes). Please place your gift in the “red” box in the Narthex. Rev. Monique Ortiz will receive the gifts and pass them to those in need.

Second Harvest—Donations Are Always Appreciated for Second Harvest Food Bank at our Church. These non-perishables, nutritious items, are high priority: Low-sugar cereals, 100% fruit juices in single serving boxes, canned fruit packed in juice, canned vegetables (low salt), meals

in cans, tuna and canned meat, peanut butter, canned foods with pop-top lids. Thank you!!!

Shelter Feeding—The monthly shelter feeding will be on Tuesday, February 18. If you are able and led to help in any way (cooking, donating cookies, driving, serving) please contact Phyllis Chai at: 408-226-7150.

One Great Hour of Sharing—During the month of March we will receive the annual One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering. This is the very popular refugee, relief, and development offering of the UCC which transforms lives through health, education, agriculture, and emergency relief initiatives in 138 countries of the world. Envelopes will be made available, and may be placed in an offering plate on any Sunday (or mailed/taken to the church office); checks are requested to be made out to: CCAV,UCC with OGHS in the memo section. Please prayerfully consider what you might share in this very vital yearly offering.

Christian Education

Several big events for the Sunday School are now pleasant memories. Both our Christmas Pageant and our Epiphany Celebration were exciting as we made them truly intergenerational with our youngest participant six weeks old and our most mature participant somewhere in their 70s. I commend all our children, youth, parents, visitors, and other adult members of our congregations for being so cooperative to participate so fully, costumes and all. Both celebrations, December 22, and January 5, were great examples of the church as a family, all ages coming together to share worship, food, and fun with Christ at their center.

A new energy started bubbling up with our “It’s a Family Affair Christmas Pageant” event. Families that attended had many good things to say about the experiences they shared. It was a wonderful community builder for all ages. I am most excited about running with this new energy and

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seeing where it might lead our churches, just who we might reach, and just how it will lead us to serve our neighborhoods. So watch for more “It’s a Family Affair” happenings and get ready to join in.

VBS planning is also underway. I am hoping to expand our program this year in two ways. First, I hope to expand the numbers we can accommodate by finding more “staff” to support our endeavor. Second, I am exploring ways to offer our program to children connected to Santa Maria Urban Ministry. God placed this idea of outreach to the SMUM on my heart last year and I am now ready to see what I can do about that call.

For VBS we need first, enthusiastic adults who love to work actively with children.

Our children groups are usually four and five year olds; six, seven, eight year olds; nine, 10 and 11 year olds. We need adults and young people who don’t mind a little “grunt work” preparing snacks, cleaning up, setting out game activity supplies and putting things away, and doing a variety of odds and end jobs just to make things go smoothly throughout the week. We can also use adults and young people who might like to assist a teacher with a particular age group of children or in a particular curriculum aspect. All curriculum, activities, supplies, and ideas are all supplied with the program that we will be writing and creating for this year.

Please let me know if you would be interested to work with me this year on our VBS program. I will do my best to find a place in our program that fits with your talents and your desires to participate.

In your faithful service,
Susie Ferguson

February Birthdays

2/3 – Patty Johnson
2/7 – Lynn Widman
2/13 – Laura Click
2/19 – Phyllis Green
2/23 – Riley Marshall
2/24 – Matthew Click
2/24 – Shirley Lind

Official Invitation

*Melanie Weiner's Ecclesiastical Council
February 9, 2014, at 3 p.m.*

Blessings upon you all in this Season of Epiphany.

As Vice-moderator of the Santa Clara Association of the Northern California Nevada United Church of Christ, it is my pleasure to invite you to the Ecclesiastical Council for ordination candidate Melanie Weiner.

The Ecclesiastical Council will take place on Sunday, February 9, at 3 p.m. at the Congregational Church of Almaden Valley, UCC, 6581 Camden Ave., San Jose 95120.

For those of you who may not know, an Ecclesiastical Council is an official gathering of all members of an Association for the purpose of authorizing a candidate for ordination. It is a very important event in the life of the Association, and the Executive Committee of the Santa Clara Association invite you all to attend.

Melanie's ordination paper is attached. We request that attendees read her ordination paper prior to the Ecclesiastical Council, but it is not required to participate in the event.

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Assuming that Melanie is cleared for ordination by the gathered body on the 9th, her Ordination is scheduled for Sunday, February 16, also at the Congregational Church of Almaden Valley. More details to follow.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me.

Peace and Grace,
John Aney
Vice Moderator
Santa Clara Association, Northern California Nevada
Conference of the United Church of Christ

Kalos Publication

Please remember you may take a copy of our *Kalos* Newsletter home each month if you are not reading on line. It is located along with other UCC info on the wall to the left of the sanctuary entrance.

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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