

KALOS

Congregational Church of Almaden Valley—United Church of Christ

June 2014

Pastor's Reflection



Dear members and friends,

You know these words well from Ecclesiastes 3: 1–3: *For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up.*

I thought of these “wisdom” words during a discussion at a Joint Venture Church Board meeting recently regarding a decision to remove the beloved patio garden tree that has been dying some months. The board decision to remove the tree this summer was a difficult one for those who know its place in our history and appreciate the years of enjoyment it gave. Yet there is a time to say good bye and to let go, even when it comes to trees. The scripture offers wisdom to guide us toward change, even when it comes to dying trees.

Speaking of trees and their removal, last month I got a call from the man who takes care of my yard in Mississippi telling me that a huge tree in my side yard fell. The good news was that it did not hit my house, but the bad news was that it was going to be a big expensive job to remove the tree from the yard. Yes, I had to say good bye (long distance) to this tree I have enjoyed for some years near the back deck porch of my house and pay a fee to remove it! I have always loved trees, so having to see just a stump now in the place where this big beautiful tree stood is difficult. I know I will accept the change and move on, but I need to grieve the loss of this big tree that gave shade and character to my little yard.

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We, too, may need to grieve the loss of our patio tree that has graced our Joint Venture Church life for many years. Some may say it is a little thing and does not matter, but others will feel this loss deeply. We want to be sensitive to our individual responses and reassure each other that we care how we feel, even about the loss of something like a beloved tree. I'm grateful for the wisdom of our faith that reminds us to be sympathetic, caring and agents of God's "time to heal."

As we enter the months of summer, we turn to one another to be grateful for the life of our church and the ways we prepare for change. Farewell and change are coming as we say good bye to a beloved staff member. We are saddened to have the resignation of Dr. Kristal Kim and will be mindful of how we can help each other through this time of farewell to her. Kristal has been a gift to our churches, inspiring, guiding, and leading with her exceptional gift of music. We shall miss Kristal and pray for God's blessing on her and her family as she concludes her music ministry among us at the end of July.

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Thank you, Kristal, for all you have given to us and the blessings we have known through your gift of music and your exceptional direction of our choirs.

I conclude my message with gratitude for the opportunity I'll have this summer to be away for study leave time in Thailand as a short term volunteer with the UCC Board of Global Ministries (July 28–September 8). As some of you know, I was a missionary to Thailand from 1982–86 with Southern Baptists and continue to have deep love and connection to ministry with the Thai people. I am confident you will be in good hands with leadership from various clergy and lay people on the Sundays I'm away. Thank you for the time and financial gift to make this opportunity a possibility for me! Look for leadership from the following people this summer:

August 3: Rev. Dr. Christina Hutchins
August 10: Dr. Hi-Dong Chai
August 17: Rev. Monique Ortiz
August 24: Rev. Monique Ortiz
August 31: Joint Venture Service—10 a.m.—
Rev. Kate Flexer
September 7: Dr. Sue Scaff and Rev. Monique Ortiz

If you are in need of pastoral care, Rev. Kate Flexer will be on call. If Rev. Kate is not available, Margot, in our church office, will guide as to the minister on call.

I would like to include the poem *When Great Trees Fall* by Maya Angelo in this message for you take with you into the summer months (see below). Loss comes in many forms, but we all know that the greatest loss comes when we lose someone we love or when we prepare, ourselves, for the final days of our own lives. This poem speaks to us, just as the ancient wisdom literature from Ecclesiastes spoke to us, telling us the cycles of our lives matter. We touch the world in ways that bring “peace” and “electric vibration.” Through the life of the church, we have a place to sing, pray and speak about what this means.

May the Spirit continue to flow in and through us as we allow ourselves to be thankful for the gift of life, every matter, every time under heaven. May we be thankful for ways we continue to share about the “great trees” in our lives and the turning of every season.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Michele

When Great Trees Fall

By Maya Angelou

When great trees fall,
rocks on distant hills shudder,
lions hunker down
in tall grasses,
and even elephants
lumber after safety.

When great trees fall
in forests,
small things recoil into silence,
their senses
eroded beyond fear.

When great souls die,
the air around us becomes
light, rare, sterile.
We breathe, briefly.
Our eyes, briefly,
see with
a hurtful clarity.
Our memory, suddenly sharpened,
examines,
gnaws on kind words
unsaid,
promised walks
never taken.

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Great souls die and
our reality, bound to
them, takes leave of us.
Our souls,
dependent upon their
nurture,
now shrink, wizened.
Our minds, formed
and informed by their
radiance,
fall away.

We are not so much maddened
as reduced to the unutterable ignorance
of dark, cold
caves.

And when great souls die,
after a period peace blooms,
slowly and always
irregularly. Spaces fill
with a kind of
soothing electric vibration.
Our senses, restored, never
to be the same, whisper to us.
They existed. They existed.
We can be. Be and be
better. For they existed.

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.

Moderator's Note

We will be having our Mid-year Congregational meeting Sunday June 22, during fellowship hour. Please, plan to attend. Your input is important. Dates for our 50th birthday celebration will be announced. Diane Hawes, Audrey Wiedrick, and Joan Okumura have been collecting records and information to get the word out.



As you may have read in Mike Moore's "InnVision" article, we were very impressed when we attended InnVision's "thank you" to volunteers reception in April. Our congregation has had such a long relationship with this organization, and InnVision has really expanded its services beyond feeding and housing folks in need. I hope we will be able to explore how we as a church family can further help with these programs. Stay tuned for more information from our Outreach team.

As you may also have heard, Risa Feely and Pastor Michele spent an evening with Pastor Monique and Tom, helping with their San Francisco Night Ministry. I hope we will hear more about that experience and ways to continue to help with this program.

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By the time this issue comes out we will have had another headlight restoration/polishing event. We have increased our advertising with posters and business cards. The posters we are placing in business windows, and the cards are being placed on windshields of cars that could use our service. This is truly a public service to the community by helping make nighttime visibility better.

I believe this congregation is very fortunate to still be together after 50 years. I have heard many stories and observed some of these long time relationships among members. Many relationships do not endure and continue to have meaning. Our congregation deserves to stop and recognize what a unique gift we have been sharing all these years.

Shalom,
Connie

Announcements

Meetings at CCAV

Sundays after Worship/Coffee Hour. You are welcome to join in!

- June 1: Outreach
- June 8: Worship Committee
- June 15: Round Table Discussion
- June 22 Mid-year Congregational Meeting

Church Council

Church Council meetings continue to be on the 2nd Tuesday at 7 p.m. and the Joint Venture Board meetings are on the 3rd Tuesday at 7 p.m.

Birthday/Anniversary/Other Blessings

These are recognized and celebrated every 1st Sunday in Worship. Offerings go to our church outreach missions like monthly InnVision Shelter Feedings.

Prayer from Pastor Michele

A Prayer for entering a quiet, sacred space with God each day!

The little Gate to God

By Walter Rauschenbusch
(October 4, 1861—July 25, 1918)

In the castle of my soul is a postern gate. Whereat, when I enter, I am in the presence of God.

In a moment, in the turning of a thought, I am where God is, This is a fact.

When I enter into God, All life has a meaning, Without asking I know; My desires are even now fulfilled, My fever is gone.

In the great quiet of God. My troubles are but pebbles on the road, My joys are like the everlasting hills.

So it is when My soul steps through the postern gate Into the presence of God.

Big things become small and small things become great. The near becomes far, and the future is near.

The lowly and despised is hot through with glory—God is the substance of all revolutions; When I am in Him, I am in the Kingdom of God and in the Home (Fatherland) of my Soul.

Outreach

InnVision

In 1982, Rev Jack Takayanagi suggested to the Quest group that perhaps they could cook, deliver, and serve food to the InnVision Shelter. Rae Harris originally headed up the effort through 1989 when the baton was passed to Laura Hall, and on to Phyllis Chai. Our church continues to provide meals to the InnVision Shelters in San Jose, and Laura Hall continues to work with the crew preparing the food. The original menu was varied, but

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according to Rae, that became a problem and finally we settled on a menu we currently serve which I can tell you is very much enjoyed. Our food is cooked in our kitchen and delivered to both Julian St InnVision and Commercial St. InnVision Shelter. Julian has a capacity of 73 mixed gender clients who have been diagnosed with mental problems. It is the only such facility in Santa Clara County. Commercial Street Inn Shelter has 55 beds for women and children who need shelter for any number of reasons. The goal of InnVision is to get the homeless stabilized, working, and in a permanent home. It is a tough thing to do in this economic climate. I have met several of the Julian clients, and I think it would be a real challenge for them to get a job paying enough to survive.

Many people in our church prepare, or deliver and serve food to the shelters. Besides the attendees, Phyllis Chai, Hi-Dong, Linda Fair, Laura Hall, Ted and Risa Feely, Bart and Karen Smith, John Hawes, Debi Bemis and others are instrumental in making it all work. The monthly event usually begins on the Sunday before the third Tuesday of each month with the making of the Jell-O in our church kitchen. By Tuesday afternoon, the Jell-O is jelled and beans, (turkey) franks, and coleslaw is prepared. Deliveries depart our church around 530.

Recently, InnVision had a Volunteer Appreciation Event which several of us attended. All our volunteers were invited, but only five of us attended. It was a terrific evening as we had a chance to understand some of what the InnVision Shelters are doing, why, and to meet the key people. I was very much impressed with the staff and very proud of our church being so well represented by Joan Okumura, Betty Benson, and Toh-Bee-Syn. Connie and I attended as well.

Last Tuesday, thank you cards began to appear in the lobby of Julian Street.

Please note the heart note below: A common complaint by the clients is that they are “transparent”. No one sees

them, no one cares about them, no one acknowledges them, and no one talks to them. They are very busy just trying to survive. I have had an in-depth explanation of how much walking and work it is to be homeless and stay alive. There are though, some terrific success stories.

Whenever possible, and after everyone is served, I like to fix a plate and sit with clients (after asking permission to join the table). I have always received an enthusiastic welcome at the table. I usually ask where folks are from, how long they’ve been at InnVision, and how their day has been. I have been rewarded with some incredible stories. There was the young man who had moved out of his parents’ home, a runaway, who was trying to find his way on his own and ended up at InnVision Julian. There are veterans. One man had been a Navy plane captain on Yankee Station during the bombing of North Vietnam.

A most remarkable story was related to me by a clean shaven, well spoken, well dressed man in his 40’s. He had been a Quality Control Head for an area company which made robotic arms. He was well trained in ISO-9000 (I am familiar with it enough to know he knew his stuff). His company was having products rejected because they were out of specification because they were too long by a tiny amount. Engineering was struggling with a solution while they blamed manufacturing. My friend took it upon himself to do a thorough dimensional analysis and discovered the parts had drawing tolerance problems and the drawings needed changes. Engineering balked and told him he didn’t know what he was talking about. The company was soon on the verge of bankruptcy due to an inability to ship product. He went to the president (and owner of the company) and reviewed his findings. The president called in the Engineering managers, drawings were changed, products were shipped, and he received a big bonus and a nice plaque. Then the owner sold the company. As soon as the new owner came in, the Engineering Department extracted revenge and he was suddenly fired. Meanwhile, he was living in a house his mother had left him with the proviso that he take care of

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his mentally handicapped brother. As soon as he lost his job, his older brother moved in with him, but they did not get along. His older brother went to court and gained custody of the handicapped brother as well as the house. In total despair, he then moved to the Guadalupe River, where he remained homeless for a couple of years. He somehow end up eventually at InnVision. Julian. He said he was getting some great counseling, and was interviewing for a job in a field he knows well. I now know that InnVision has volunteers who will help him along. Telling his story to a future employer will be tough. How will he handle that? I think he will be fine, I have no doubt InnVision has saved his life. I am very proud of our church for this work. I hope we do more.

CIC Ministries, from Reverend Evelyn Vigil, Main Jail Chaplain, Correctional Institutions Chaplaincy of Santa Clara County, Inc. (mainjailrev@aol.com)

Here are some ways you and your church can help the courts:

- Candy for Judge Manley's department
- Yarn for Judge Manley's department
- VTA tokens at the reduced rate of \$25
- Joint funding for a case manager to assist in ensuring continuity of care
- Scholarships for drug treatment programs
- Low income VTA monthly passes at a cost of \$25 each
- Toys and stuffed animals for dependency cases
- Provide meeting locations
- Provide sponsors and most importantly, provide jobs

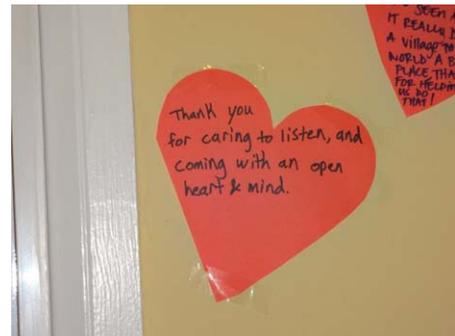
In addition, if you would like to join CIC Ministries in serving those who are incarcerated, please consider attending our next training session for volunteers, which will be held on Sunday, June 1, from 1:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at Foothills Congregational Church-UCC at Foothill Congregational Church, 461 Orange Ave., Los Altos.

All are welcome.

Mike Moore

"We may be surprised at the people we find in heaven. God has a soft spot for sinners. His standards are quite low."

Desmond Tutu



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Huge Thank You Card Made by Staff!

Thank you to those who have served as readers, greeters, coffee hosts, communion servers, and given flowers for our worship services.

Thank you to all those serving our Church Council!
Thank you to our leaders on the Worship Committee, Outreach Committee and Pastoral Relations Committee.
Thank you to our JV Representatives.

Thank you to Dennis and Lynn Widman for the wonderful program on Myanmar/Burma.

Thank you to Dr. Kristal Kim for her ministry of music among us. Thank you to our choir members, Folk Choir members and bell ringers who continue to lead us and offer music each Sunday.

Thank you for your generous gifts, congregation, to support our daily operations and budget needs. Thank you for the support you give to our mission offerings!

We have thousands of opportunities every day to be grateful: for having good weather, to have slept well last night, to be able to get up, to be healthy, to have enough to eat. There's opportunity upon opportunity to be grateful. That's what life is!

Pastoral Relations

The Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) has met a couple of times with Pastor Michele. Our first meeting together was to discuss the committee's purpose, the needs Michele may have, and how we can best support her in her ministry with us here at CCAV-UCC. The sole purpose of this committee is to provide support and maintain an open relationship between the pastor and members of the congregation. It may act as a "sounding board" for Michele if she needs to verbalize thoughts or feelings related to her work with us. It may act as a liaison for members of the congregation who might need support in their relationship or communication with Michele. It may let

San Francisco Night Ministry and Open Cathedral

Recently Pastor Michele and Risa Feely accompanied Rev Monique to the Night Ministry in San Francisco. Enjoy the photographic tour at the end of this newsletter!

Gratitude List!

Thank you to Anne Mayers for offering her services to us, printing our membership and baptism certificates with beautiful calligraphy!

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the pastor know what people in the church are thinking, and it gives a framework for dealing with any conflicts or issues that may arise in an effort to maintain open and honest communication between us all. The contents of our meetings will always be confidential so that Michele will have a safe venue in which to express herself freely as things come up for her.

Members of the PRC this year are Debbie Bemis, Sue Scaff, Hi-Dong Chai, and Linda Farr. In addition, Bessie Hutchins, who has lots of previous experience on the PRC, may be joining us. We will be meeting quarterly, and will be available to meet on call if there is ever a need.

We invite you to communicate with any of us if you have anything to share about the life of our church, especially as it relates to Michele and her ministry with us. We are here to serve, and we encourage you to keep the lines of communication open. It will only make us stronger.

Debbie Bemis,
PRC Chair

Christian Education

Our Sunday School program draws to a close with a thank you and recognition of our teachers and shepherds on June 1. We are thankful to all the wonderful help we have received this past year. Just look at the list of our teachers and shepherds: Alex Alvarado, Ann Mayers, Anne Van der Staay, Dana Renfand, Debbie Estill, Elizabeth Cihon, Emily De La Rosa, Fritz Gramkowski, Jan Henderson, Jim Hinch, Kelli Casale, Kelly Yamanishi, Leslie Rousseau, Phyllis Chai, P. J. Casale, Sandie Mueller, and Wendy Martin. Sunday School will resume in the fall with our Kickoff Labor Day Weekend, Sunday, August 31.

Sparks Fly, our summer VBS program, begins this month Monday June 16 and runs all week. We are very excited to have many returning families as well as the blessing of

welcoming some new families from our neighborhood. With our theme revolving around fire stories in the Bible, we are also including a visit from our local firemen and a big end of week BBQ lunch for campers and their families. Surely after it all we will have many wonderful pictures and stories to share with everyone.

Summer may be “vacation” for many, but in Christian Education I use the time to research and investigate new and exciting programs to try out in the fall that may speak to families in our neighborhood. I welcome your ideas. Please feel free to stop by my office and chat with me about what you might like to see happening in our Christian Education and Youth Programs.

In your faithful service,
Susie Ferguson

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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Rev. Monique Ortiz conducts the Open Cathedral service



A bright, colorful welcome to everyone so they know they can drop by any time



Pastor Michele and Risa Feely are happy to be there, and glad they bundled up for the brisk San Francisco Spring weather!



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