

KALOS

Congregational Church of Almaden Valley—United Church of Christ

December 2014

Pastor's Reflection



Dear members and friends,

This is my first message to you in our winter Kalos after returning from the short term volunteer work opportunity in Thailand. I want to express, again, my appreciation for the six weeks away (study leave time) to serve with Global Ministries.

I certainly brought back a new understanding of the ministry of the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT), our covenant partner through Global Ministries, and an appreciation for the work we are part of with Thai Christian churches and institutions.

As many of you know, we now have an “official” missionary relationship with Adam Royston, a Global Ministries Intern, serving with the Church of Christ in Thailand. His newsletters will continue to connect us with the work that he and others do in Thailand and in Southeast Asia. You are meeting Adam through the newsletters he is sending and, one day, we may meet him in person! Having a missionary relationship means we come to know a missionary and their work more intimately. Sometimes visits are made possible so we can hear, first hand, about Adam’s work and his call to ministry.

What is Adam’s call? Adam cares deeply for Southeast Asian concerns and is focused on justice and peace for those who are the marginalized and victims of trafficking. Also, Adam assists the ecumenical officer for CCT in administering the program for “volunteers” (of all ages) who want to work in Thailand. He can help us be connected to these opportunities. Maybe you feel a call to serve with Global Ministries in Thailand or another country?

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The seasons of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany are soon here. They call us in new, distinct ways to be aware of God’s presence in the “darkest” places of the world and know that “God is with us” as the “light” that always gives hope and assurance of God’s care. The seasons call us to a “new” awareness, a new hope. They call us to “stand watch” and expect God’s love to be made known in different ways.

It seems to me that it is important to watch and wait in the right places, at the right times, and with the right intentions. Yes, individuals and churches are challenged to watch and wait and respond in hope. It is in the church we talk about the nurture and care of the spiritual life. We are asked to check our spiritual “health” status and ask if we are ready for these “next” seasons that we enter. The call is to watch, wait, hope, and be ready for action.

As one Advent call to worship suggests: It is a call to stand watch—over a sick child or a rising loaf, at the gate of the corporation, upon the ramparts of a walled city, or

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on the craggy top of a mountain. It is not passive but active. It is a call for alert senses and sensitivities. Standing watch demands an awareness of our surroundings, for even when it seems as though there is nothing out there to watch for, you must be ready for anything. Standing watch builds anticipation and builds community, especially when it is done together.

I thank you for building the “beloved” community in the context of the church, our church. Thank you for your faithful support, encouragement and participation for our life together. Thank you for the desire to “watch and wait” even when it is hard to muster the energy or desire to do one more thing. May we rejoice in our celebration of “life in the Spirit” and continue to pray for God’s peace to be known in the “dark” places awaiting the Christ “Light.”

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.

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

Moderator’s Annual Report for 2014

The Council has been meeting the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00 p.m., at the church. Members and friends of the Church are always welcome. If you care to make a presentation, be sure to contact the Moderator to have your name added to the Agenda.



Please see page 6 for the Annual Report.

We had a very nice turnout for the November 16 CCAV Annual Meeting. There were over 30 folks in attendance. I feel like things went very well and the atmosphere was very positive. What a joy!

There were a few reports handed out. If you missed the meeting I you can find the reports in this *Kalos* issue.

Michele’s *2014 Pastor’s Report* was very positive and well received. The group enjoyed an open conversation with Michele on future ideas.

Tom Gerber, our Treasurer, had a great summary for 2014 and a *Proposed 2015 CCAV Budget*. The proposed budget was voted on and approved.

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Both the 2015 CCAV Council and the 2015 JV Board members were voted on and approved. Kelly Yamanishi joins the CCAV Council!

Carolyn Crowley is retiring from the JV Board and Sue Scaff is taking a break from serving on Council. They both have served our church in various ways for many years. Well done Carolyn and Sue!

The 2014 *Moderator's Annual Report* has a list of 26 items we worked on as a church this year. Not bad!

The 2014 *Committees and Officers List* shows what great support we have from our congregation. I am sure we will have folks step up to fill committee positions for 2015, too.

We have also had a good response to the 2015 Time and Talent forms. So far, 19 forms have been turned in. There is one small item we need help with: A few of the sheets that were turned in don't have any names at the top! Check in Fellowship Hall on Sunday to see if one of the "no name" sheets could be yours. Thanks.

Sign-up and information sheets for our **Saturday December 13 Christmas Dinner** are on the CCAV bulletin board. Audrey is planning another lovely meal for us and this is our opportunity to support all her efforts. If you have not signed up, be sure to do so soon. The donation is \$15 each to be paid in advance.

As I sit here writing down all this neat information, I can't help but reflect on what talented caring folks we have in this little congregation. It is a joy for me to bring whatever skill/effort I can to help continue to bind us together in service. I feel really good about the future, too. I know with Debbie's love and support we will continue to nurture one another and reach out to share the love we have to offer.

Here's to the finish of a good year and the start of a new year with opportunities and challenges. We are truly blessed to have Pastor Michele to guide us and share her experience, strength and hopes with us. May we walk together down this path with hope and joy.

Amen,
Connie

Calendar

What's happening on Sundays and other days in coming months?

Advent Season Worship

November 30, December 7, December 14, December 21

Sunday, December 7, 7 p.m.—Blue Christmas Service
CCAV and ECA will conduct a service of healing and remembrance. Please invite your friends/neighbors to join us for this special service for all who mourn. Special music will be provided by Maria Brodsky and Debbie Bemis, and candle lighting with Pastors Michele and Linda leading us.

Sunday, December 21, 10 a.m.—Joint Worship
Family Affair Christmas Pageant (see message on page 3 about how everyone may be involved!)

Christmas Season Worship

Wednesday, December 24, 7 p.m.—Christmas Eve
Lessons, Carols and Candle Lighting

Sunday, December 28—First Sunday after Christmas
John Aney, Moderator of Santa Clara Association, UCC, will lead worship

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Epiphany Season Worship

Sunday, January 4, Epiphany Sunday and Singing Communion

Sunday, January 11, Remembering our Baptism and Installation of Church Leaders

January 18–25—Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Lenten Season

Lenten season begins on Ash Wednesday, February 18, 7 p.m. Joint Worship (CCAV/ECA) Service

Ongoing Activities

First Sunday of the month—after Coffee Hour, Book Study with Pastor Ann Michele

Birthday/Anniversary/Other Blessings every last Sunday, each month, in Worship—(special offerings may support our Outreach programs of CCAV.)

Roundtable Discussions—3rd Sundays (when possible!) This is a time to speak about social justice issues, share denominational information, or address a “current event” topic

Quest—The Quest ladies group meets each Wednesday morning from 9:30 a.m.–11:00 a.m. in the Choir Room. The U.C.C. four-part Bible study, *Ecclesiastes*, authored by *Stillspeaking* writer Molly Baskette is the current focus of the group. Baskette writes, “Some know this short book as the most curmudgeonly and cynical of all the books of the Bible. Some praise *Ecclesiastes* for telling it like it is. Many have found comfort and friendship in the practical wisdom and reflections of *Ecclesiastes*. Please join us in interesting and informative discussions while realizing to quote Anthony Robinson in the introduction, the primary purpose is not simply learning information about the Bible. It is hearing God speak. There is a difference.”

AA Meeting—Tuesdays 8:15–9:15 p.m. at our church

Would you like to sing a favorite hymn? Pastor Michele invites you to let her know if you have a favorite hymn you would like to sing on a special occasion in your life. Just email or call her

Hold the date—Saturday, December 13, CCAV Christmas Party

Christmas Pageant

Help Needed

Pageant Prep is on Saturday, December 20, 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Help is needed in the following areas:

- Bakers to make Christmas cookies that the kids will decorate
- Cooking crew to prepare a “kid friendly dinner”
- Costume assistants to help match kids and adults to appropriate costumes
- Craft help for kids’ art activities
- Pianist to help with Christmas carols and pageant music practice
- Coaches to help with different pageant roles

If you are willing to help with any of these needs, please contact Susie Ferguson so she can move forward with necessary plans for this year’s pageant. Once again this is a Family Affair Christmas Pageant. All ages are welcome and encouraged to participate.

Joint Venture New Vision for Patio Area

Come help rejuvenate the patio area! Bring your ideas for adding shade and beauty to our patio. Contact Connie Moore if you would like to help or have suggestions at Conlou4430@aol.com or 408-782-1272.

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Outreach

Christmas Offering

The dedication of our Christmas Offering will take place during our Christmas Eve, service, December 24, 2014. This year our Outreach/Mission Team agreed that half of the offering will be earmarked for our U.C.C. Christmas Fund (Veterans of the Cross and Emergency Fund), which aids retired UCC clergy/lay employees in various ways. The remainder of our offering will go to InnVision, the local non-profit which supports the two homeless shelters to which our congregation serves dinner monthly. Our offering may be presented anytime, especially during Advent; envelopes will be made available, and checks may be made out to “AVUCC” with “Christmas Fund” in the memo section. Let us prayerfully consider what we may be called to share for this much needed yearly offering.

Shelter Feeding

Our church continues to help serve the evening meal on the third Tuesday of each month at the InnVision downtown homeless shelters, Julian Street Inn and Commercial Street Inn. Please contact Phyllis Chai (408-226-7150) if you are able/feel led to help with this very worthwhile “feel good” ministry.

Second Harvest Food Bank Bin

Thank you for your contributions to the Second Harvest Food Bank; the collection bin is located in our downstairs hallway near the Choir Room. We are invited to bring donations especially on our Communion Sundays, the first Sunday of each month. Phyllis Chai has envelopes for those wishing to use them. Checks also are appreciated, and may be made out to “Second Harvest Food Bank” with a notation that the donor is a member of CCAV,UCC.

“Red Box” in Narthex

The marked red box in our J.V. Narthex is especially for donations of requested clothing items for The San Francisco Night Ministry (Associate Night Minister Rev. Monique Ortiz has said that warm socks “are like gold”) and the S.C.C. (Santa Clara County) Main Jail “Release” Program (“sweat” tops and pants, preferably without pockets, and not solid red or blue in color). T-shirts are also welcomed. For questions please contact Phyllis Chai (408-226-7150).

Christian Education

Much has happened in the last quarter in the Christian Education department. First, we completed our first Fall Festival, which was a tremendous success. We introduced 14 new families to our church and made friends with 19 new children from our neighborhood. Our evaluations from these participating families were very exciting. Everyone was impressed with our unique art projects and the exciting enrichment opportunities we provided for the children. Our guest artists each day were a big hit with all the children and many want to pursue more fully some of what they learned, according to their parents. It was an exciting week with much involvement from our congregations which added greatly to its success. Special thanks to Dot Allfrey, Linda Farr, Kristen Nieders, and Sofia Hawes for volunteering to help during the week.

December is always a very exciting month for kids with Christmas as its major highlight. In Sunday School we begin our Advent Season with the story of our Savior’s coming as found in Micah 5:2–5. This year we follow that lesson up with the stories from Luke 1:26–49 of Gabriel visiting Mary and then Mary visiting Elizabeth. By the time of our Christmas pageant our Sunday School children are ready for the continuation of the story and Christmas.

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This year we are continuing a tradition we started last year with “It’s a Family Affair Christmas Pageant.” We provide a fun afternoon for families and children of all ages to come and build the Christmas pageant with us. This event will be on Saturday, December 20, from 3 p.m. until 7 p.m.. During the afternoon the children, teens and their parents will do special Christmas crafts, choose their parts in the pageant, get fitted for costumes, practice a bit, decorate Christmas cookies, sing Christmas carols, and more. Some of the adults will even do a little slicing and dicing to prepare our dinner which concludes our time together. Last year some of the parents joined in as parts of our pageant making it truly an intergenerational celebration.

Everyone comes back on Sunday morning to share the pageant with our congregation and enjoy those Christmas cookies the children decorated at our fellowship time following the service. We have invited 28 new families from our neighborhood to join us in this celebration time. It will be very exciting if some of them take us up on our invitation and join our festivities.

We do not hold Sunday School on December 21 (which is pageant Sunday) and December 28. We will resume our classes on January 4 with our first lesson the story of the three Kings and the start of Epiphany (technically January 6.) And then we are off and running with some exciting new things on our horizon. Stay tuned.

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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Moderator's Annual Report for 2014

Council Members

Connie L. Moore, Moderator
Debbie Bemis, Vice Moderator
Tom Gerber, Treasurer
Sue Scaff, Secretary
Ted Feely, Webmaster
Diane Hawes, Historian
Dave Harris, Member-at-Large
Rev. Dr. Michele Rogers-Brigham, Pastor

2014 in Review

- Council, Vestry and JV finance committees joined to develop 2014 JV Budget
- Two new members joined CCAV,UCC in February
- Ordination service held in the sanctuary for Melanie Wiener in February
- CCAV Council Retreat held in March
- *Kalos* changed to quarterly publication
- Ad placed in Church section of the Times Media local papers
- Endowment Fund (Long Term Funding Program) added to the Council's Action Items
- Volunteers to head-up CCAV's 50th anniversary celebration were established
- CCAV Music Director Search Committee formed in May
- Mid-Year Congregational meeting held in June
- Approval from Santa Clara County to use CCAV-UCC as a fictitious name, July 14 (expires 2019)
- Pastor Michele left on six week sabbatical mission trip to Thailand end of July

- Kristal Kim left as JV Music Director the end of July
- God is Still Speaking banner purchased and displayed on banner structure
- Roundtable discussions continued the third Sunday of the month
- AVUCC Policies and Procedures Manuals handed out to committees for revision
- Maria Brodsky became CCAV Music Director September 15
- Adjustment made to CCAV monthly share owed to JV (with no co-music director)
- Monthly Sunday book discussion started in October
- Pledge and "Long Term Funding Programs" forms were distributed/mailed to members
- CCAV Welcome Bags created for visitors
- Global Ministries Relationship established with Adam Michael Royston, CCT Thailand
- Annual Personnel meeting held with our Pastor to review the past 22 months
- CCAV will finish the year with a balanced 2014 budget
- Debbie Bemis will be Moderator for 2015
- Kathryn McAbee will be JV President elect beginning April 201

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CCAV – UCC
Treasurers Report to Congregation
November 16, 2014

OPERATIONS

(Funds Used to Support Day to Day Operations of the Church per Annual Budget, e.g., Joint Venture, Minister Package, etc.. Primary Source of Funds is Pledges and Plate)

Income to Date	\$93,159	(84% of Budget)
Expenses to Date	\$90,702	(82% of Budget)
Balance 11/1)	\$2,455	

OUTREACH (Short Term)

(Funds Donated to the Church to Support Specific Outreach Programs and Services in our Community, e.g., Shelter Feeding, OGHS, NIN etc.)

Balance (11/1)	\$2,631
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DEDICATED (Long Term)

(Funds Donated to the Church to Support Designated Long Term Church Programs or Services, e.g., Pastoral Support, Growth, Music etc.)

Balance (11/1)	\$40,263
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ENDOWMENT

(Funds Donated to, and Invested by, the Church for Unspecified Church Needs and Opportunities)

Balance (11/1)	\$74,332
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CCAV – UCC
2015 Operating Budget

2015 DRAFT BUDGET

Proposed Balanced Budget

Projected Income and Expenses Same as 2014 (\$111K)

Changes in Expenses

Increases Ministers Package 3%

Includes Music Director Costs

Decrease in JV Contribution (Equal ½ of JV Music Program Costs)

Will be Asking for Draft Budget Approval at This Meeting

2015 FINAL BUDGET

Approved by Council After First of Year

Pledge Drive Complete

End of Year 2014 Performance Known

JV Financial Support Finalized

Final Budget Will Not be Larger (Maybe Smaller) than Draft

TLG 11/16/14