



ALAMOSA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEWS

May 29, 2011

Dear Friends in Christ,

It's been almost two months since the last newsletter, so let me catch you up a bit before I get to the upcoming events.

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

AT THE CHURCH there have been a number of special events. David Schneider let our **Handbell Clinic and Festival** on April 16. Congratulations to the Handbell Choir for their hard work that day and all of their beautiful playing this year. The day after the Clinic was **Palm Sunday** and we rejoiced in joining once again with Sacred Heart for the Blessing of the Palms outdoors on Fourth Street. Afterwards the Sunday School children labored tenaciously to make palm crosses for us all; if you didn't get one that day, rumor has it that you may have another chance. Then on **Easter**, following the Ecumenical Sunrise Service in Cole Park, the Handbell Choir played a beautiful fanfare to begin our worship, their most ambitious piece yet, and the Sunday School children greeted us all with decorated eggs as we left the sanctuary. The **PW-SLV Spring Cluster Gathering** at our church on April 30 was a rousing success, with presentations about the SLV Foster Care Alliance, PW's Birthday Offering, the Tattered Rose project in Ethiopia, and our own Nuts'n'Needles. Dorothy Croft deserves a warm vote of thanks for her hard work on the day. Many of the women stayed after lunch to work on the **Nuts'n'Needles** quilts for La Puente, and some of them may be joining us as N'n'N resumes its weekly meetings now that the warm weather is here (sort of). May 8 was **Mother's Day** and we had a great breakfast and then carnations for everyone handed out by the children during worship. Have you been noticing that word "**children**"? Isn't it wonderful that we have been having a handful or more each Sunday! Kathy Schultz is now teaching Sunday School and Sharon Furukawa, with some other helpers, is doing the Children's Time during worship. More on upcoming events for our children below. Besides the special events, Dorothy Croft has continued to line up **pulpit supplies** for the first, third and fifth Sundays of each month and to play the piano on those Sundays also. Now that's dedication! Kathy Schultz is now signing up liturgists and someone else on Session (you know who you are) is gathering servers for Communion each month. Thank you to all of you Session members for taking on these tasks.

Also at the church we have continued to host outside groups. The Drug Court Parents yoga class, now called "**Movement, Mindfulness and Meditation**," has been meeting here weekly on Mondays for two months or so. How blessed we are to have our building to share in this way; Maura, the instructor, stops by most weeks to tell me how much the students are enjoying the class. These are folks who have never had any experience with yoga or meditation before. Now they are learning how to relax their spirits, stretch their bodies, and receive some much-needed strengthening for their lives. The "**Cooking Matters**" weekly classes (over a six-week period) have been ongoing in our kitchen on Tuesday evenings for parents of Early Headstart children. There have been some individual events and, of course, lots of **work groups** staying here while they work at La Puente. The **Blister Fellowship** also met in our building on April 26, but I want to talk more about that separately below.

OUTSIDE THE CHURCH I've been busy on your behalf for the last two months. The **Interfaith Forum** on April 9 connected with ASC's production of Romeo and Juliet and the theme "*Can love rescue what hate threatens?*" went well. We looked at faith stories, faith rituals, and faith practices around facing conflict, with over thirteen presenters from a wide variety of Christian and other faith traditions and lots of theater, dance, music, poetry, and children's art. Judy Burrell's and my radio show on KRZA (88.7 FM),

“Religious Roundtable,” has aired four programs now: an April Fools’ edition around religious humor and holy fools; a show about the Interfaith Forum; a Mother’s Day edition around feminine images of the divine; and a show about the annual SLV Women’s Conference. At the **Women’s Conference** itself, which happened on May 19, I presented a workshop (two times) on “Honoring End-of-Life Choices.” Of course I’ve continued my work as a **Hospice** chaplain, and earlier this month I traveled to the beautiful Shenandoah Valley of Virginia for another course at **Eastern Mennonite University** toward a masters in conflict transformation. It was a wonderful and stimulating time with fellow students from around the globe. I’m on my way back to Virginia now for one more course and I’m excited about it.

IN THE CLUSTER

Our SLV-Salida churches have been spending time together in a number of ways over the last year and a half. Let’s see if I can help you sort them out. The **official, Presbytery-initiated annual meeting** of the Cluster happened on April 2 in Antonito to make recommendations and requests to the Presbytery Budget Committee about designating Presbytery mission money to churches and organizations in the Cluster’s geographical bounds for the 2012 Presbytery budget. (I later attended the Presbytery Budget Committee as the Cluster representative, and am happy to report that we were voted all the money we requested!) At that meeting the attendees set the **Blister Fellowship** meeting here on April 26. Blister Fellowship is the name for the mission work projects we did in 2010 for one another and for our ongoing cooperative mission projects as a Cluster. BF’s project for this spring was cutting and stacking firewood to make available to needy families in our churches and communities come next winter. The first planned date got snowed out, but I’m told that a work group from Salida did come down to La Jara last weekend and cut wood.

Also at the BF meeting we discussed a variety of other cooperative areas, including the work of **EEEC** (the Energy Efficiency Evaluation Committee, or something like that). EEEEC is the group that worked with Jeanna Paluzzi, Community Energy Coordinator, Colorado State University Extension - San Luis Valley Area, in writing a grant request to do certified energy audits of the Cluster churches’ buildings. The grant, for about \$11,000.00 was awarded and after lots of paperwork (thank you, Jack), e-mails, and a meeting here on May 11, I hear that Monte Vista and Antonito have now had their audits done and others are on the way. You’ll be hearing more about this in the months ahead.

The BF meeting also considered a number of other topics, which led to a separate meeting, also on May 11, of the **Pathfinders** Steering Committee. “Pathfinders” is the group that came out of the “Filling with Love” meetings hosted last fall by our Alamosa PNC for representatives from all of the Cluster churches to identify our common interests, resources, and ways we might support one another. That group has another meeting in the next week or two because they are working on several projects. So far, Pathfinders has led to...

On May 23, the Alamosa PNC met with the Pioneer United (Del Norte) Session at Del Norte’s request to begin discussions about a possible joint search for a new pastor. The two groups will meet again in July.

Beginning June 5, the Cluster churches will be **praying for one another** in worship each week. Each congregation will pray for one other congregation in the Cluster for a month, and then for a different congregation the next month. In June, Alamosa will be praying for Salida and Monte Vista will be praying for Alamosa.

On September 18, the Cluster will host a **gathering with Rusty and Sara**, who will be back from Peru for a bit. Rusty and Sara will preach at our church that morning, then the Cluster gathering will take place that afternoon or evening. Pathfinders is in charge of the details.

Discussions are underway about another Cluster-wide gathering soon, but I won't spoil the surprise quite yet by telling you the details. (I'll know in a week or so what's been decided.) And the hope is to do more of this "intermingling" in the future. Several other projects are also on the table but needing more time to develop.

COMING UP

So, with all of that, what could be left to do? Don't go away, because we're in for a great summer and fall.

Pentecost is coming on June 12, complete with wind and flame. Then the annual **PW potluck** hosted by Mabel Cotton will be at the church on June 16. Mabel hasn't promised her hats, but I'm counting on them.

Presbytery meets in Del Norte on June 18, and on June 19 the new Interim Synod Executive, David Ezekiel, will be filling our pulpit. Our annual worship service and picnic at the **Sand Dunes will be July 10**. At that service we'll be receiving the **Pentecost Offering** (obviously usually received on Pentecost) for at-risk children and youth. Look for more on the Offering soon. One-quarter of that offering will stay with the Session for local distribution.

Then in late July or early August, plans are developing for a special **Vacation Bible School** for our own children and others from the Cluster churches or from the community if they are interested. Session has approved ordering two sets of special **children's handbells**, color-coded and suitable for anyone age 3 and up. The thought is to spend time each day with the handbells, a **children's choir**, a Bible story, and...**scrollsaw work** in our "Cross Room" (the former second-floor storage room) with Kathy Schultz as instructor. This will all be low-key (no pun on the music intended) – no decorations or purchased curriculum – but something special for our children. We'll try to set the dates soon and I'll let you know. Might you be interested in providing a snack or helping with crowd control that week? How about telling a Bible story or two?

I've already let the cat out of the bag that Rusty and Sara will be here September 18 for our own worship and for a Cluster event. That weekend will be special in another way as well. On Friday, September 16, Alamosa Presbyterian Church will be hosting the **Covenant Players** for a special evening. You can see you don't want to be out of town that weekend.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Increasingly this year people who were in worship faithfully two years ago are less and less able to get out because of health reasons. Please keep each of them in your **prayers**. Remember our ongoing prayers for Lynette Cotton and for Lynne Cotton, recovering from her injuries. Dave Furukawa's uncle Paul is living with cancer metastasized to the brain. Kathi Smith's family continues in need of our prayers. Curt Furukawa is nearing the end of his deployment in Afghanistan; please continue to hold him and all our service men and women in your prayers. Jack has already been off to incident command headquarters for several wildfires, and there is no sign of their stopping. Keith Schultz and Tanya rejoice in his new position with the Rio Grande Sheriff's Department, and the approaching due date for the baby. Eric and I are rejoicing that his last PET-scan was clear. Within the Presbytery, David Bribach has had a recurrence of an extremely serious disease that has left him paralyzed for now, and greatly covets your prayers. Elder Larry Farmer from Trinidad is still recovering from the severe injuries he received in a car accident in March. Around the world, please continue to remember the people of Libya, Yemen, Bahrain and Syria; the people of Japan; the people of Alabama and of Joplin, Missouri and other Midwest towns after the tornados; people facing flooding along the Mississippi; and all those whose suffering does not make the evening news.

After my current class in Virginia, I have two more short trips later in June. Then I get to settle down and enjoy being with you and with my Hospice patients. With all of our special events coming up – and with all of you to share fellowship with – it's going to be a great summer. Meanwhile, my flower beds are looking at me

reproachfully, the new floor loom still isn't warped (for looms, that's a good thing, not a bad one), and my violin hasn't been out of its case since the spring concert. What HAVE I been doing?

In Christ, Katherine



Pentecost Offering

for Children at Risk, Youth, and Young Adults

Through the Pentecost Offering, the church expresses a common commitment to provide hope for children at risk, opportunities for youth and young adults to grow in their faith, and short-term mission service options for young adults.

Please give generously.

