



# ALAMOSA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEWS

November 27, 2011

Dear Friends in Christ,

The October newsletter never materialized, so this is the first newsletter since September 30 and it's longer than usual. If you've been in church you know a lot has been going on; if you haven't been able to be here, this will give you an idea of what's been happening. First, though, a look at what's coming up.

## COMING UP IN DECEMBER

### Stated Meeting of the Congregation for elections

It may not be the most exciting event in December, but among the most important is the upcoming yearly Stated Meeting of the Congregation for elections. This year we will also be voting on a change in the By-laws. Session will be finalizing the date for the meeting this week.

The Session of Alamosa Presbyterian Church will be calling (this week) the yearly Stated Meeting of the Congregation for elections, to be held **probably on Sunday, December 11, 2011**, immediately after worship. The first formal announcement from the pulpit will be made next Sunday. **Business will include:**

1. The **election of officers** to the Session, Deacons, and Board of Trustees.
2. A recommended **change to the By-laws** of the congregation to **change the composition of the Board of Trustees.**

Current composition (approved as part of the By-laws changes at the January 2010 Annual Meeting):  
*Four elected Trustees in two classes of two plus the Treasurer, elected by the Session, as Chair.*

Proposed composition:

*Two elected Trustees in two classes of two plus the Treasurer, elected by the Session, as Chair.*

3. A recommendation to set aside the By-laws on a one-time basis to **allow the date of the Annual Meeting in January to be changed** (more on that below).

### Low income housing weatherization presentations and sign-ups

December 11 will be an important date for other reasons, as well. We will have our **monthly breakfast**, hosted this time by the UU's. The **Handbell Choir** will provide a taste of their Christmas music during worship. And... both during breakfast and after worship (and after the Stated Meeting, if called for that day), Jeanna Paluzzi will be with us to provide information about the **low income housing weatherization** program. The grant which the Cluster received for the certified energy audits on the Cluster church buildings included a requirement for congregational and community education programs. This is part of that requirement – and, more important, may give some of us in the congregation an opportunity to save on energy bills and have our homes made warmer and more comfortable for free. Don't miss it!

### Handbell Choir public performance

I mentioned the **Handbell Choir** on December 11. Those of you in the area will have another chance to hear them later that week, because we've been invited to play as part of the annual Open House at First Southwest Bank on Friday, **December 16**. The bank will be making a contribution to the church in return. Please come by to hear us that afternoon and celebrate the very hard work the Choir has been doing and the beautiful results.



**ALAMOSA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**HANDBELL CHOIR**  
**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16 2:30 – 3:20 PM**  
**FIRST SOUTHWEST BANK OPEN HOUSE**



## Christmas at APC

On **December 18** we will be receiving the **Christmas Joy Offering** during worship. One half of your gift will help retired pastors, church workers, and their spouses, who often face financial hardships. The other half will support our Presbyterian racial-ethnic schools, including Menaul. Please give generously to these two important mission projects.

Since Christmas comes on a Sunday this year, we will be having **two Christmas services** (not identical, but both with Communion):

**Christmas Eve: Communion 7:00 pm Saturday, December 24**

**Children:** bring a favorite stuffed animal to help keep Baby Jesus warm in the manger. (You can take your animal home with you again after the service.)

**Everyone:** bring a canned good or other non-perishable food item to help feed all homeless travelers. Your gifts will go to the La Puente Shelter on Christmas Day.

**Christmas Day: Communion 10:30 am Sunday, December 25**

## Community events

Will the holidays be a difficult time for you this year? You are invited to attend a special gathering at Hospice del Valle:

**“Handling the Holidays” film and discussion**

*Bring a candle to light and a special item that brings you fond memories of your loved one.*

Offering two dates:

**December 6 10:00 – 11:30 am**

**December 13 1:00 – 2:30 pm**

**Hospice Conference Room**

*For more information, call Dolores at Hospice: 589-9019.*

Then, if your tastes run to music, here are two opportunities:

**Saturday, December 10**

**7:00 pm Leon Hall, ASC**

**Alamosa Symphony Orchestra Winter Concert**

(featuring your own pastor there somewhere in the middle)

Haydn's Surprise Symphony and the Nutcracker Suite

The Valley Community Chorus presents:

*Christmas Memories*

Sacred Heart Catholic Church December 11, 2011 2:00 pm

Come and reminisce with old songs, enjoy new ones, and

sing along with familiar Christmas carols.

(Your pastor will be in this one also. David Schneider is directing.)

## **COMING UP IN JANUARY**

### Annual Meeting – on an unusual date

Assuming the congregation approves it at the Stated Meeting in December, the **Annual Meeting** of the congregation will be very early this time, on **Sunday January 8, 2012**. Once again we will have a potluck after worship followed by the Annual Meeting around the tables in Fellowship Hall. That Sunday is also the day we will be celebrating **Epiphany** and **installing officers**, and there are other special items happening, so please do your best to be here. It will be a festive and important occasion.

## Your Interim Pastor's Plans

As you know, January 31 will mark the end of my third twelve-month covenant as your Interim Pastor. I've been with you a year longer than I had expected, and it has been a blessed time for me serving you, but it is time for me to move on and for you to concentrate on looking toward the next called pastor.

**January 8 will be my last Sunday** in the pulpit and I will be leaving toward the end of that week, without quite completing the month. I will be heading for Virginia, where **on January 16 I'll start classes** for the spring semester in the Center for Justice and Peacemaking at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg. This is the school where I've been working on a masters in conflict transformation since 2008, and I am going to be on campus full-time for the spring. After that I hope to be serving another congregation or church body as an interim again, because I love this work.

During worship on January 8 I'll be packing up that suitcase that's still by the pulpit, and into it will go not only what I took out three years ago but so many wonderful memories that I may have to sit on it to get it closed. At the close of the Annual Meeting we'll have a special liturgy to say good-bye. So you can see why I'm hoping you'll be in church that day.

## What will happen with the church?

At the November Session meeting, Session authorized the PNC to **finish the CIF and submit it for approval without reference to any other congregation**. It's been eight months since the PNC began conversations with Pioneer United church in Del Norte and we're still hoping to work on a shared pastor agreement with them but they have a long way to go before they are ready to complete their own CIF. This has been the hold-up in getting our own pastoral search past the stage of local discussions, and it's time to get this congregation's invitation out there to all the wonderful pastors who are looking for a call.

The Session and PNC anticipate that there will be **several months in the new year before the PNC can bring a candidate** to you as your new called pastor. While my job all along has been to help you get ready for that person, I have been here so long that it is probably a good idea for you to have a break before you meet a candidate. The Session and I will be working on transition plans at the December and January Session meetings (before I leave), and they and I will keep you posted.

## ... and what about that Pole out front?

The committee that was responsible for planting our new Peace Pole is still hard at work on plans for the **Peace Garden** to go into the north lawn around the Pole. Jan Oen and Audrey Liu met recently with Ruthie Brown to firm up sources for the "hard-scaping" – the path, boulders, bench or benches, and so on that will be part of the Garden. The actual plantings have to wait for warm weather, of course, but the hope is to get at least some of the architectural elements in before then. Last meeting I attended, the decision was to plant only some areas of the lawn and to leave some of the grass. That will let the project develop in stages; another year, the plantings could be expanded. Our congregation, the UU's and the Anabaptists have all pledged money toward the Garden and I think that other groups will be contributing also. Once I have better drawings of the plans I'll post them at the church for you to see.

Well – as you can see, the next couple of months will be filled with special events. Now for a look at the last couple of months.

## **WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING – EVENTS IN OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER**

### October

Thank you to all of you who contributed to this year's **Peacemaking Offering** on World Communion Sunday. One-quarter of your gifts went into the fund for the Peace Garden.

On October 14-15 came the annual meeting of **Presbytery**. We honored Gary Weaver on his impending retirement as of December 31, 2011, with a special worship service, a "roast" and a reception. The major business was voting on procedures for "**gracious dismissal**." The ongoing disputes within the larger church over gay ordination and theological differences finally reached a head over the last year or so, and we are now facing the loss of many of the PC(USA) member congregations within the next year. Presbytery's Committee on Ministry, of which I am a member, was charged with coming up with a policy for "gracious dismissal, which we brought to the Presbytery for amendment and approval. I have agreed to serve on two Presbytery teams, one of which will meet with churches wishing to leave in order to walk with them through the process. The other team is developing plans for churches which want to stay but only with some ways of expressing their disagreements. (I will be serving on both teams up through January 16, and then after that long-

distance as I am able.) Meanwhile, a search committee of Presbytery is looking for a **new Transitional Executive Presbyter**, at half-time, to take over after Gary retires and to lead the Presbytery and its remaining churches. Pricilla Hill, the Presbytery's Stated Clerk, was elected at the October meeting to fill in as Acting Transitional EP until the search committee presents its candidate at the February 15 Presbytery meeting.

All of these activities relate to making peace, and we took another step in that direction on October 16 when members of Session and representatives from the Deacons and Trustees attended a four-hour training workshop on **child abuse prevention** in churches. Now not only our child care providers but also our church leadership, responsible for setting policies, has the knowledge to guard against any harm coming to children in our building. (And thank you to those of you who dropped off outlet covers to protect our children in another way; some of us will be crawling around the building on our hands and knees soon to get them all in place.)

On October 24 and 25 I attended two workshops, one on **grant-writing** and one on "making the ask," how to ask people for money. I have been hoping that what I learned at the grant-writing workshop could be of use to this congregation, specifically in terms of looking for money to renovate the second-floor bathrooms. That probably will not happen before I leave, but I hope at least to pass on some of what I learned to the Trustees and the Stewardship Committee.

Also during October, the **Scroll Saw** weekly gatherings, sparked by the workshop in September, continued – and are still continuing. Latest plans are to keep going into the new year. Way to go, Kathy and all you scrollers! There were lots of other ongoing activities as well, which were listed on the October calendar and in the weekly bulletin inserts.

## **November**

November began with a splash on **November 6**. That morning in worship we celebrated **All Saints** and remembered those in our congregation who had died in the previous year ( ) as well as other people special to us. We had four names to add to our congregational scroll this year: Don Montgomery, Marv Motz, Susan Valdez, and Helen Cordova.

That afternoon we **planted the Peace Pole** in a community celebration with about sixty people in attendance. After the outdoor ceremony there was a program indoors, with a talk by Jenna Nielsen about her one-woman show, "My Name Is Rachel Corrie," playing later in November at the ASC Theatre, and a string quartet including your own pastor. (Other players were Katie Yoder, Joy Plesner and Alice Price.) About fifty people stayed for the program and the soup, salad and bread meal with yummy desserts, including the Oreo version of the federal budget. (Ask Alice about it.)



Late that week came our **Work Day** on **November 10**. **Ellen and Sarah** scrubbed the kitchen top to bottom so that it gleams. **Noel Harlan** brought his pickup, and will come back another day to help haul old items. Upstairs, a crew of APC, UU and Anabaptist members soaked and scraped the old animal frieze off the top of the walls in the north wing worship space and repainted the room. It's a unique color: we mixed all the old cans of off-white paint in our church cupboards to come up with two batches of paint, one semi-gloss the other glossy. The room looks fresh and clean. When you look at the neat painting job around the windows, think of **Lara Demlo** who came by to tape them ahead of the paint brushes.

On **November 17** PW hosted its first annual **Pecan Sale without a Bazaar**. The Library was full of talk and laughter all day as people came by to pick up their pecans, chocolate-covered pecans, and walnuts.

That brings us to the week just past. On Monday fifteen people gathered for a **Cluster EEEEC** meeting with Jeanna Paluzzi and Dave Beaulieu, the certified energy auditor who had "done" our buildings. Tuesday was **Helen Cordova's memorial service**. **Gina**, Helen's daughter, had done a beautiful job in planning the service. **Nadyne Guzman**, Gus and Cecilia's daughter, was on hand, and **Tita**, Benito and Bonifacio provided music with Tyleen Stults on the violin.

## **PEOPLE NEWS**

I've already mentioned **Helen Cordova's** death and the celebration on All Saints. Late October also saw the first anniversary of **Chloe Weaver's** death. We remembered in worship her family and also the family of Kyle Stotsky, who was driving the truck that hit Chloe's bicycle.

Session went through its annual **Rolls review** at its November meeting. We reviewed every one of our members for needs as well as the official review. Please pray for all associated with our congregation, especially our shut-ins and those people we moved from Active to Inactive or dropped from the Inactive list.

The [prayer list](#) has been pushed out of the bulletin the last couple of weeks. Here it is: the family of Helen Cordova, on her death; Mary Van Pelt, on her father's death; Joe Martinez, Dorothy Romero's brother-in-law; Susie Paulson's stepdaughter Wendy; Audrey Liu's mother; Lynnette Cotton; Eric Griffis; Candi Atencio (Shirley's daughter-in-law); June Lorimer; Kathi Smith's great-grandchild and other family members; CLP Derek Hutchison, pastor in Las Animas; Elder Larry Farmer, Trinidad; all of our shut-ins; our veterans and all those currently serving in our armed services.

And, [Happy Birthday](#) to some special people:

#### NOVEMBER

3-Bill Chase  
6-Pauline Moore  
16- Chloe White  
20- Phoebe Russell  
23- John Halvorson

#### DECEMBER

1-Joanne Clayton  
2-Geraldine Martinez  
6-Courtney Furukawa  
15-Lynn Crowder  
21-Marcella Chacon

### [ITEMS FOR DISPOSAL](#)

After all the hard work done by the Book and History Sorters in 2009, we are finally ready to get rid of some of our stored items.

#### [Bibles](#)

Sitting in the narthex are boxes of old Bibles: King James Version, Revised Standard Version (the version in our pew), Good News, Living Bible, and Contemporary English Version. **If you would like one or more of them, please help yourself. AND...DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTION ON WHERE WE MIGHT DONATE THE REST? LET ME KNOW BY DECEMBER 11.**

#### [Hymnbooks](#)

On a table in the choir room are boxes of old hymnals: Spanish El Himmarios and paperback Spanish hymn collections; old green Hymnals, old red Hymnbooks, and many, many children's, youth, and miscellaneous hymnals. **If you would like one or more of them, please help yourself. AND...DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTION ON WHERE WE MIGHT DONATE THE REST? LET ME KNOW BY DECEMBER 11.**

#### [Curriculum and Choir robes](#)

For now, we are holding on to the old Faith and Life curriculum materials, which were designed to be used over and over. All of the more recent curriculum, designed for one-time use, is currently in the meeting room of the Pastor's Study. **DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTION ON WHERE WE MIGHT DONATE IT? LET ME KNOW BY DECEMBER 11.**

All of the old choir robes (but not the newest blue robes) are on a rack in the office hall. Current thinking is to offer them to the ASC Theatre Department. **DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTION ON WHERE WE MIGHT DONATE THEM? LET ME KNOW BY DECEMBER 11.**

#### [Historical materials](#)

We sent some of our nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century denominational publications to Menaul Library this year. We have just promised some others to the museum here in town. We will be offering others to the public library. Whatever we do not give away will go into our church library for safekeeping. **DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTION ON SOME OTHER PLACE THAT MIGHT VALUE THESE?**

#### [And finally,](#)

Someone left a beautiful [china bisque doll](#) sitting in the dirt outside our back door. **DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT?** You can see him right now in my office.

With all of these five pages, there is still more that I could have told you about life here at Alamosa Presbyterian Church. May this season of Advent be a blessed time for you as together we wait – for the coming of Christmas, for the coming of Christ in many ways including at the end of time, and for the ways in which Christ will be leading this congregation into the future.

In Christ, Katherine