



ALAMOSA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEWS

October 28, 2010

Dear Friends in Christ,

This is the first newsletter since September 29, so we'll just call it a monthly newsletter for October and I'll allow myself more space than usual. First, some "new news", then some upcoming events, and then news on what's been happening.

"New news" and People

Latest breaking news – **Nancy** is back. I saw her at the blood drive Tuesday afternoon, after she had gotten back in town the night before. Sounds like Nancy, doesn't it? You'll get to see her on Sunday, but then not much longer because she and Darrell are only here briefly. They will soon be heading back to Springfield, Illinois, where they've been all these months. The bad news for us is that they will be moving there to stay, in order to be near family. Well, that's being selfish. It's good news that they can be where they have lots of support and resources, much as we'll miss them here. (And we will!)

In other new news, those of you locally have probably heard or read that one of the La Puente Mennonite volunteers, **Chloe Weaver**, was hit by a truck and killed while riding her bike on North River Road last Sunday afternoon. As you can imagine, the La Puente community is in shock compounded by other recent local deaths. Chloe had worked with the PALS program, which means those children are hurting, and with the Community Gardens, which means many other people in our community are hurting as well. I'll be in Boulder Friday for her memorial service there; local services here are this coming Sunday afternoon, October 31, 2:00 at First Methodist.

Other people news: In concerns, Sally Gonzales is doing better after a brief hospitalization but still recovering from an injured hand suffered afterwards. June Lorimer has not been well, and the word is that Joe Medina is not well either. A. J. is getting out less and less, and although Gerry's arm is much better she is also restricted in getting around. Please continue to hold Ellen's brother-in-law in your prayers along with Jack and Mabel and Lynette. Hold Janet and Michael Yohn in prayer also, as they face the stresses of Michael's run for County Commissioner and the various other demands and family pressures in their lives. We rejoice that Glen Bean is back at The Bridge. Congratulations to Kathy Schultz on her retirement (recognizing also that retirement brings grief along with it), and to Courtney Furukawa on her graduation and new job. And congratulations to Marv and Mary on the best Stephanie L. Miner Walk and Run yet, as well as on the wonderful presentation they made at the TSJC Lunch'n'Learn afterwards.

Upcoming Events

Besides the local and out-of-town services for Chloe Weaver, there's a lot going on here at Alamosa Pres **this Sunday**. It's Reformation Sunday and also our celebration of **All Saints**. We'll be using the beautiful baptismal font cloth that so many of you helped to make last year as we honor and give thanks for church members, friends and family who have died during the past year. It's a Communion Sunday also, and I'll try to keep the service to a reasonable length so that you have time afterwards to visit the Book and History Sorters' **exhibit** in Fellowship Hall on the history of our congregation. That exhibit celebrates some of the discoveries the Sorters have made over the last seventeen months, but as its introduction states, it's also open-ended. Your stories, your loan of photos and memorabilia, your corrections and additions will help us all in knowing our history better. Sunday evening, of course, is **Halloween** and the annual appearance of pirates, fairy princesses, and assorted wild creatures on our doorsteps.

Just in case you hadn't noticed, let me point out that Tuesday is **Election Day**. As Christians and citizens, this is always an important time, whether you vote early or wait to walk into the polling booth that day. Our politics differ within this congregation, and that's a healthy thing; any time that any of us begins to equate one particular political position with the Christian position, we are in danger of idolatry. (Which means, if you're like me, that we're all at risk at times!) I hope you will vote on Tuesday, and I hope that your votes will come out of prayer and discernment as to whether the candidates you choose will work toward God's concerns for healing, wholeness, and transformation (spiritual, physical, and of every other sort); justice, righteousness, and mercy; and compassion and care for one another in our society. If you do, then even though we will not all choose the same candidates and the same policies to work toward those ends, we will be united in desiring those ends. As a historical note, here are some of the "Historic Principles of Church Order" dating back to 1788 and still in our Form of Government in the Presbyterian Church (USA). While they focus on matters of faith, that includes the way we approach our duties as citizens also.

“God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to his Word, or beside it, in matters of faith and worship.”

“Therefore we consider the rights of private judgment, in all matters that respect religion, as universal and unalienable....”

“That truth is in order to [exists for the purpose of] goodness; and the great touchstone of truth, its tendency to promote holiness, according to our Savior’s rule, ‘By their fruits ye shall know them.’ And that no opinion can be either more pernicious or more absurd than that which...represents it as of no consequence what a man’s opinions are....”

“... We also believe that there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good characters and principles may differ. And in all these we think it the duty both of private Christians and societies to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other.”

(You can read the entirety of these Historic Principles in our Book of Order, G-1.0300.)

The Sunday after this one, **November 7**, we will hold our annual **Stated Meeting** to elect elders, trustees and deacons. The **PW Bazaar will be on November 18**, and your contributions of crafts and baked goods will be very welcome. You’ll have a chance to place your order for nuts soon as well. Other events are coming up in November, but I’ll hope to tell you about them next week. You can also look over the **November calendar** with this newsletter.

What’s been happening



October began with Presbytery in Pueblo West and with **World Communion Sunday** here on October 3. **Rusty and Sara** were with us in worship this morning and for a festive lunch at Calvillo’s afterwards. Not only was it great to see them, but we got to hear about their work in Peru and Pauline’s great-grandchildren, who were here that day, got to model some very special Peruvian dancing costumes (as you can see in the photos).

Around town, a number of special events were going on. October was (still is) Domestic Violence Awareness Month. La Puente celebrated their annual HOPE Week. The Immigrant Resources Center and United Campus Ministries at Adams State celebrated Immigration Awareness Week. And, of course, we focused on breast cancer with Stephanie’s Walk and other events.



We’ve been blessed this month by our **connections with other congregations**, both Presbyterian and otherwise. The bathroom renovation project has run into some snags and is on hold, but in the meantime we have had good conversations with the **Lord of the Mountains** congregation that helped build the bunk beds and with **St. John’s UCC** in Vincennes, IN, which is sending a very generous check to us from their Benevolence Committee in support of our work and in thanks for their work group’s stay here last summer. While Eric and I were in Northfield, Minnesota at Denis’s college’s Family Weekend, we were able to worship at **First UCC Northfield**, which has been sending work groups here for ten years. By God’s Providence and sense of humor, that was the Sunday that their youth group reported to their congregation on this past summer’s trip! They sent three bags of books for the PALS Program at La Puente back with us.

I’ve already mentioned the fall **Presbytery** meeting. **PW** also held its **Fall Retreat** in October, and it got rave reviews. While in Pueblo for a COM meeting, I was also able to bring back to the Valley a carload of items for the Women’s Resource Center and La Puente, courtesy of **Westminster Presbyterian** Church in Pueblo. Among our Presbyterian congregations here in the **SLV / Salida Cluster**, we are all waiting to hear whether the **energy audit grant** will come through; Jeanna Paluzzi stopped by yesterday and confirmed that the word still isn’t in. We no longer need to wait, though, for the eagerly-awaited **Filling with Love** meeting of the Cluster churches held here on Wednesday, October 13. The evening was filled with great food (spaghetti, garlic bread, salad, cake and ice cream), great people (about twenty-three representatives from the Cluster churches), and great discussion, as we pondered in small groups how to address the common challenges we all face to “fill the pulpit, fill the pews, fill the plate, fill the heart and mind, and fill the needs.” The group agreed to meet **again on Wednesday, November 9**, to focus on “filling the pulpit”. Oh, and by the way, if you’d be interested in joining me at a **local workshop on using social media** (it does cost money), let me know. The date is **November 16** and there are still a few places yet.

Here **at the church** there were at least two other important meetings this month. The **Ad Hoc Stewardship Committee** met to address a long agenda. You'll be hearing more from that group as we continue our work. For now, we have verified that our finances will make it to the end of this calendar year, with a deficit but less of a deficit than anticipated, and we have begun work on a budget for 2011 that saves money in one major way and allows us to spend more money on area that the Session and congregation identified as important to us in our Congregational Mission Statement of last May.

And **Session** met on October 18 for a long and significant meeting. Perhaps most importantly, Session, Charlie Goff and I agreed that we will plan on my staying for at least awhile into a **third year of my Interim** with you, but that as of February 1, 2011, I will be with you **half-time** only. What that will look like we don't yet know. Moving to half-time comes out of the Congregational Mission Statement process and will allow us as a congregation to set aside a significant portion of money toward both programmatic and mission work and toward financial stability. My hope is that, as the Session and I evolve a pattern for half-time pastoral service, that will ease the PNC's work in searching for a called half-time pastor and ease the transition into that longer-term half-time pattern. While I have consistently said that three years is too long for an Interim in my own opinion, this will in some ways be like a whole new time for us, as well as providing ongoing pastoral care during the longer time needed by the PNC to develop this new model and while conversations continue among the Cluster churches about possibilities for shared pastoral ministry. Speaking selfishly, it also allows me a chance to be with you and here in the Valley awhile longer. I will be looking for other employment to supplement my income, so not only by design but also by necessity I will not be as available to you all as I would like. Please help the Session and me in identifying the most important aspects of my work with you so that we can protect them as far as possible under this new arrangement.

Eric and I enjoyed our trip to see Denis in Minnesota, thanks to permission from the Session to be away for a few days. Thanks go to Bob and Sharon for providing worship leadership that Sunday. Eric has been busy with his teaching for TSJC and with workshops on Seven Habits for Successful Living offered at TSJC's Valley Campus and upcoming at the Trinidad campus. I took a Saturday to sing Sacred Harp music in La Junta at their Fall Harvest Sing, and am looking forward to getting a monthly "sing" going here in town after giving myself a break on that for October. The interfaith women's group and the monthly Taizé services begun last summer are both continuing, along with my chaplaincy work at the hospital and the jail. I'm now back in the ASC/Community Orchestra, learning Beethoven's Fifth Symphony for our winter concert, and in the Valley Community Chorus, where we're working on Schubert Mass and a Daniel Pinkham Wedding Cantata. Anne Divine and I are preparing the first movement of the Bach Double Violin Concerto for a String Festival at Adams State on Saturday, November 6. I've just restarted Intermediate Spanish Conversation at the Immigrant Resources Center and am knitting again with our local charity knitting group, working on items for children in Afghanistan.

Well! Do you feel caught up? As you may have discovered, I can't always keep the office hours listed in the calendar and in each week's bulletin insert, but I do my best. It's always a joy when I am here to see one of you coming up the walk toward the church door, so please keep it up. And if you've been wanting me to come by and I haven't made it, give me a nudge via the phone or in person.

In Christ, Katherine

