



CROSS CURRENTS

September, 2025

Alpine Community Church (UCC), Alpine CA

Vol. 36 No. 09

WELCOME
September

May you find peaceful rest in the
arms of our loving Heavenly Father.



THINKABOUTSUCHTHINGS.COM

Women's Guild News

Our thanks to all who contributed to our summer mission project of collecting toiletries for ECTLC. They are very appreciative of our gifts.

We will have our first fall meeting on September 13. (always the second Saturday). Our program will be given by a representative from Ronald MacDonald House which is a place for families to stay while their children are in Rady Children's Hospital.



On September 14 we will have a bake sale. Please bring your baked goods with you to the meeting. The proceeds are used to fund our missions. We choose 5 or 6 missions every year to support. We are always looking for new ideas. If you would like us to consider one of your favorite charities, please let us know.

We are looking forward to a fun and productive fall season. Hope you can plan to join us.



Message from the Interim Designated Term Pastor



As I walked into the building where my office is located, I ran into a student of mine. It was nice to catch up for a moment and greet each other. We shared a bit about how we spent our summer break and expressed our excitement for the coming academic year. Something occurred to me when I finally arrived in my office and settled in to do some work. My exchange with my student was enjoyable because there was a history behind it. We had already built a relationship with one another, and we had a context of good connection and communication. The goodness of

the present moment is built on the intentional relationships we cultivated beforehand. The past is still present with us.

I think often of how the past sets the stage for the present. I reflect on the choices and decisions that led me to my work as an educator and a pastor. It can be easy in the moment to lose sight of how much life and labor has accumulated and brought us to where we are. But we are all the products of some history. When you look back on your history, what do you see? Is there a measure of nostalgia about the good times? Perhaps a bit of wistfulness about the people who have come and gone in your life. Or maybe a sense of relief about the tough times you made it through?

Looking over our lives, there can be a temptation to wish we could repeat some things, or have a second chance, or skip some episodes altogether. This is understandable. After all, who wouldn't want to make their life **exactly** what they hoped for? Of course, I wonder what my life would look like if something from the past changed. How would my personality be different? Would I have chosen a different school, met different friends, entered a different career? It's hard to know. When I'm wondering about my life's path, I return to the comforting words of Romans 8:28 – "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." Whatever has happened in our lives – the good, the bad, the ugly – we are here right now living in the possibility of goodness. God makes beautiful moments out of broken fragments. May we live each day imagining what God can do with us right now, rather than looking back to what might have been. There is purpose and possibility right before us. Trust that God is drawing us ever deeper into both of them.

Moderator Musings



Why church?

I know that fewer and fewer people are currently attending a mainline church—or any church? Membership in church is at an all-time low. At one time, Alpine Community Church was thriving with two full services – and we even had 2 choirs and 2 bell choirs! Hard to imagine anymore, isn't it? So....why church???

I can speak for myself about Alpine Community Church. This is the place where I made some of my closest friends. I was a young mother when I joined the church, and my own parents were living in Northern California. So, I met several people in the congregation who became my surrogate mothers. It was the people in the church who provided me with support and helped me develop spiritual gifts. And when I had struggles with my faith, I found support among members of the congregation. It is a place of support, guidance, comfort and spiritual connection. It remains a place where we work together to make our community a better place.

Why am I bringing this up? I am concerned that as our church has shrunk in size, we sometimes miss a connection to each other. Church should be a place where we worship together –as one body. But when I walk into our beautiful sanctuary, I see us spread out over the large space. Often, there is just one family in a pew. If we don't go to Coffee hour, we may have very little chance to visit. I want to pray with the congregation, share amens with the congregation, nod to my neighbor when I'm touched by something Kyle is preaching.

So.... I am looking forward to having us move closer in proximity to each other when we are in church. Yes, it means changing seats. Sandy needs to sit in the back to help with questions from ushers and to greet anyone who comes in late. She is needed there. But no one else needs to be in the back row! Come forward!! Sit near each other! We can pass the peace with each other!! Be a congregation together!

We will be closing off at least 10 more rows in the back of the church and asking everyone to move in and be closer together. We will be praying and singing – together!!

Let's give it a try and see how it goes. I think you will be delighted to have a chance to sit near someone else --- and to be in church!

God's Just Funny That Way



God is pretty amazing. We know the stories of how He did grand and glorious things. He is still performing miracles in our lives today but they are not always the big miracles the Bible tells us about.

Jesus was humble. Sometimes He is still so subtle and humble that it might cause us to chuckle a little and say, "God's just funny that way." Here are a couple of examples.

Carol was driving home from work when she saw an old man mowing his lawn. Suddenly she heard what she claimed was the voice of God telling her to help. She said that she was no stranger to the voice of God and she usually obeyed. Today, however, she was eager to get home. Besides, why would she pull over and ask a total stranger if she could help mow his lawn? Yet, God's voice was insistent so, she decided to give in.

The two of them struck up a conversation and it turned out that the man welcomed the interruption because he needed a break. God was asking His servant to be a Good Samaritan. He's just funny that way.

Another example is of a woman who heard about a mother whose son had tragically been in an accident which left him paralyzed from the waist down. For twenty years the woman never forgot the child and prayed for him every day. By the grace of God, not only did she finally meet the young man, but eventually welcomed him into her family as her son-in-law. It was quite a coincidence. Or, is God just funny that way?

God is infinitely powerful and He can make anything happen. Yet, the best miracles of all are the small ones and we should always be on the lookout for these "little coincidences". One day we might be compelled to help a stranger or have certain feelings we don't understand at the time. If we accept God's plan and obey His command, we will be justly rewarded for it. God's just funny that way!

Cabinet Doings

The Cabinet met this past week. We spent a few minutes talking to Pastor Kyle about his recent trip to Palestine. I am sure he will share more with all of us in the weeks to come. It's good to have him back!

We spent some time talking about ways to improve our Sunday services. More to come in the weeks ahead.

The Deacons met this past week and are looking at having a potluck in the coming months. The Cabinet has asked the Deacons to bring back the Soup Suppers during the Lenten season. They will be working on those plans in the coming months.

The Guild will have a bake sale on September 14. This is always a hit and the way the Guild funds their mission projects for the church. Their first meeting of the season is on September 13 with a speaker from Ronald McDonald House.

Several people have mentioned the need to do a deep cleaning of the church, and the **Trustees** are working on that. They will be hiring different people for different areas, i.e. cleaning the windows, a deeper cleaning of Fuller Hall and the sanctuary. The carpets will be cleaned, but we will wait until after Rummage sale. Thanks to Vern Sonksen for replacing the worn out ramps on the Medical Equipment shed. And if you're concerned about the bare spots in the mulch at the front of the church, the Trustees are working on that, too. It will be replaced this fall. The Trustees are also welcoming **Jan Welch** to serve on the Trustees since Dan Hames has moved. She has already stepped up to help in a number of capacities. Thanks, Jan!

Rummage Sale is now just around the corner, October 24-25. We are concerned about having enough able bodies to set up and take down in the parking lot and move items for sale. Pam Ennis has two men who will be coming to help for the week, and Lorena has offered some able bodied people to help. IF YOU HAVE SOMEONE WHO CAN HELP, please contact Ray Sopfe now!

Also, it is time to start collecting items you can donate to Rummage sale, but PLEASE wait until the week of the sale to bring them to church. We just do not have the space to store things at the church until then. **Another need?** We need someone with an RV who can camp in our parking lot on the Thursday night of Rummage Sale. We will have items out for the sale, and they need to be monitored closely. Contact Ray if you can help.

Now we just need a **clerk!** Contact Pam Price if you can help!

Religious history around equinoxes and solstices

Europeans have celebrated solstices and equinoxes for centuries. Read on to discover the history of these events and neopagan attempts at revival.

Pagan roots

Around every solstice (days when the sun's arc is shortest or longest) and equinox (day when the sun's time in the sky is equal to night), the generally quiet hills of the British county of Wiltshire experience a barrage of visitors, as people flock to Stonehenge. The structure, one of the oldest in the United Kingdom, likely bore some connection to the changing of the seasons, as sunrises and sunsets on the equinoxes and solstices align with various stones.

^[1] ^[2] ^[3] Furthermore, archaeological evidence shows that settlers in the area used to throw large feasts around the monument, especially around the winter solstice. ^[4] As the centuries have passed, large celebrations of these seasonal changes have evolved, morphed, shifted, and dwindled, yet connections still remain. And, as this article will discuss, there is a vibrant neopagan movement today, aiming to reassert the spiritual importance of these seasonal shifts.

Modern connections?

In the Christian calendar, the two most significant religious holidays happen to correspond well with two seasonal shifts: Christmas with the winter solstice and Easter with the vernal equinox. The exact motivations for setting these dates are debated. ^[5] Many question whether the Christian Church, in attempts to rid itself of pagan qualities, would choose to adopt similar holidays. That said, there are many parallels drawn between the Roman holiday of Saturnalia and modern Christmas traditions. ^[6] Similarly, there is debate over where the word 'Easter' comes from. Some argue it comes from the Old High German for 'dawn', *eostarum*. ^[7] Yet, there are others who link the term to an Anglo-Saxon deity, Eostre, a goddess of fertility and the spring. ^[8]

All of the holidays and figures around Easter, however, symbolise an idea of rebirth and new life. For Christians, this is the death and rebirth of Christ – and the corresponding salvation of humanity. For pagans, the date marks the coming of spring and the renewal of plants and other vegetation.

Parallels do not stop there, though. Individual countries and regions have their own idiosyncratic celebrations. Take, for instance, the Slavic tradition of Dożynki. Celebrated on and around the autumnal equinox, the celebration, with many pre-Christian traditions, includes a ceremonial cutting of the last sheaf of wheat. Before that, though, a boy and a girl will crawl around the sheaf – a ceremony designed to maintain the land's fertility for crops in the next year. ^[9] Over time, the ceremony has incorporated numerous Christian components, varying from area to area. ^[10]

For thousands of university students across the UK and Ireland, the beginning of the school year contains a direct homage to an equinox-adjacent holiday. From Oxford to London School of Economics to Swansea, students start in Michaelmas term – so named for Michaelmas, a holiday celebrating the Archangel Saint Michael that regularly occurs on September 29.

Neopaganism

While the seasonal importance of many modern traditions may have dwindled or never existed, modern-day pagans, followers of ‘neopaganism’, overtly celebrate these times of year. Before further exploring, though, it is important to note that neopaganism is a loose term, with a variety of interpretations and diverse followers.^[11] Regardless, many pagans recognise themselves as followers of a “polytheistic or pantheistic nature-worshipping religion.”^[12]

In alignment with the nature worshipping, many neopagan holidays are directly related to the solstices and equinoxes. A key part of some neopagan beliefs is following the ‘Wheel of the Year’, which splits the year up by the two solstices and two equinoxes and the midpoints between each. Celebrations of varying importance are held on each of these days. One such celebration is that of the autumnal-equinox-centric Mabon.

Mabon celebrations

The celebration of Mabon has risen in recent years, with many tracing its start to the 1970s.^[13] The term Mabon refers to a Welsh mythical figure whose story often includes being a kidnapped youth.^[14]^[15] The founders of the tradition, however, will seemingly readily admit that Mabon has no significance with the autumn equinox, leading some to question why the name has stuck.^[16]

Regardless, celebrations continue – though, given the nature of neopaganism, the experiences vary dramatically from person to person. However, websites like [Mabon House](#) encourage celebrating Mabon in simple ways, like decorating one’s house for the fall or having a symbolic family dinner in recognition of the day.^[17] Other methods proposed include spending time in nature, preparing the house for winter, and feasting.^[18]

Others seem to focus on the cornucopia, as an item of plenty – or on apples as symbols of Mabon. According to the Boston Public Library, one of the games played on Mabon will be to see how much of an apple skin one can peel off in a single peel.^[19]

Regardless of the approach, Mabon likely has a robust future ahead as fewer Britons and other Europeans identify not as any religion, but as spiritual nones – those with a desire to be spiritual but with no specific faith.^[20]

Sources

- ^[1] [Solstice and Stonehenge](#)
- ^[2] [Summer Solstice 2022 Sunrise LIVE from Stonehenge](#)
- ^[3] [Summer Solstice 2022 Sunset LIVE from Stonehenge](#)
- ^[4] [Solstice and Stonehenge](#)
- ^[5] [Easter – Encyclopedia Britannica](#)
- ^[6] [How Saturnalia became Christmas: The transition from ancient to present and pagan to Christian](#)
- ^[7] [Easter – Encyclopedia Britannica](#)
- ^[8] [Easter – Encyclopedia Britannica](#)
- ^[9] [Dożynki, the ancient harvest festival](#)
- ^[10] [Dożynki](#)
- ^[11] [Paganism and Interfaith in the UK and Europe](#)
- ^[12] [Paganism and Interfaith in the UK and Europe](#)
- ^[13] [Mabon: The Pagan Festival that Marks the Autumn Equinox](#)
- ^[14] [As pagans celebrate autumn equinox, some question why Mabon is its symbolic deity](#)
- ^[15] [When is Mabon 2021? Meaning behind autumn equinox pagan festival and what the celebrations involve](#)
- ^[16] [As pagans celebrate autumn equinox, some question why Mabon is its symbolic deity](#)
- ^[17] [Mabon House](#)
- ^[18] [Merry Mabon! What is the meaning of Mabon and when does it start and finish in 2022?](#)
- ^[19] [The Origins and Practices of Mabon](#)
- ^[20] [Non-religious are hardline, easygoing or spiritual, says UK thinktank](#)

Care and Prayer List

Alpine Community Church Care & Prayer List

Please call or send a greeting card to someone on the list, your thoughtfulness will be appreciated. Names will be removed when it is unknown if the need for prayer still exists. If you have family or friends in need of prayer,

George & Judy Doble

Patty Brown

David Brooks

Ray Cobble

Traci Denny & David Denny

Anthony Fenton

Tatty Fenton

Helen Harvey

Family of & Roy Harvey, Jr.

Jessica (Chris Noble niece)

Amber Galves-Jimenez

Celia Leon

Anne Reuter

Hans Reuter

Sue & Tom Truscott

Family of Fred Wiley

Bette Youngman

Our Nation & Leaders

Military

Police Officers

Firefighters

May Peace Prevail on Earth

Birthdays and Anniversaries

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAY WISHES:

POINDEXTER, Artemis	09/02
HABERLE, Alanna	09/09
SILVIA, Brenda	09/17

SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES:

BURRIE, Caryn & Tim	09/01
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Church Office Hours

We can be reached by telephone at (619) 445-2110, or by e-mail at acc1894@acc.sdcoxmail.com. Office hours are Monday – Friday from 9am until noon. Even if we are not here in the office after noon, you can slip envelopes, messages & requests through the mail slot in the office's front door. *Thank You, Denise*

Please send articles and pictures for the Cross Currents to:

Cross Currents Editor:
Email: pamelaennis@cox.net

Pamela Ennis
Cell Phone: (619) 249-3739

September 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
ACC – 9am Pastor Ben & PPC 11am & 5pm ser- vices	1 OFFICE CLOSED on Mondays B.S. TROOP 105	2 CHOIR 7-8:30p	3 ACSL – Rm #1 10:30-11:30 5:30p – AA, FH	4 PPC Bible Study 6-8pm	5	6 7:00 PM AA
7 9:00a ACC Worship PPC 10:45am PPC 5:00pm	8 OFFICE Closed B.S. TROOP 105	9 CHOIR 7-8:30p	10 5:30p – AA, FH	11 PPC Bible Study 6-8pm	12	13 GUILD MTG 9:30am
14 9:00aACC Worship Guild Bake Sale PPC 10:45am DEACON'S Mtg	15 OFFICE Closed Lunch Bunch ? TRUSTEE's Mtg B.S. TROOP 105	16 CHOIR 7-8:30p	17 ACSL –Rm#1 Alternating Wed. 5:30p – AA Fuller Hall	18 PPC Bible Study 6-8pm	19	20 Fred Wiley Me- morial service 10am 7:00 PM AA
21 9:00a ACC PPC 10:45am CABINET Mtg PPC 5PM	22 OFFICE Closed B.S. TROOP 105	23 CHOIR 7-8:30p	24 5:30p – AA Fuller Hall	25 PPC Bible Study 6-8pm	26	27 7:00 PM AA
28 9:00 AM ACC Worship PPC 10:45am PPC 6:00pm	29 OFFICE Closed B.S. TROOP 105	30 CHOIR 7-8:30p				

Mission Statement

Our Mission as the Alpine Community Church is to serve God by creating an environment of fellowship following the teachings of Jesus Christ. We minister to the needs of our congregation and community, motivating ourselves with love, faith and hope.

Join us for Worship

In person in our sanctuary at 9:00 AM Sunday Mornings

Also on **Facebook** and **Youtube** (links found on alpineucc.org)

ALPINE COMMUNITY CHURCH

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Alpine, CA 91903-0212
Return Service Requested



CROSS CURRENTS

Published Monthly
Editor Pamela Ennis
Production Manager Denise Horan

**The editor welcomes contributions
But they must be received
by the 15th of each month.**

