



# CROSS CURRENTS

February, 2026

Alpine Community Church (UCC), Alpine CA

Vol. 37 No. 02

During the  
*Season*  
*of Lent*  
contemplate  
your heart and  
look at our  
world with  
*Hope.*

Artwork: Mary Judine Bruch, BVM

# Women's Guild News

Our speaker in January was from the Braille Institute. It was a very informative lecture.



**Full Range of Services**

We help families with babies that are born with conditions affecting their sight to working with seniors who develop visual loss due to eye conditions like macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma and more.

If you or a loved one are experiencing any degree of vision loss, we can help.

**Classes & Services**  
**Adult • Youth • Child**  
*A preview of Classes and Services:*

- Learn how to use accessibility features on Android phones, tablets, iPhones, iPads and computers to make everyday life easier.
- Stay up to date and get the latest news with The Telephone Reader program that has national and local news, from the New Yorker to La Opinion, grocery specials, advertisements, and much more.
- The Summer Reading Program offers children and teens a wonderful way to read during the summer to increase confidence and have fun.
- There are over 100 online classes you can attend from the comfort of your home by using your phone or computer. For Spanish classes, go to [brailleinstitute.org/seminarios](http://brailleinstitute.org/seminarios).

**1-800-BRAILLE (272-4553)**  
**BrailleInstitute.org**

**b Braille Institute®**

**OVERVIEW**

*Our mission is to positively transform the lives of those with vision loss.*

As a non-profit organization, Braille Institute offers free classes and services to help people with vision loss of all ages.

We understand losing your vision can make everyday life harder. We can help you adjust with free services offered in English and Spanish.

**It's all free!**

Our programs and services are free to everyone. We do not ask for insurance or other documentation.

To start, just call us at  
**1-800-BRAILLE (272-4553),**  
**Monday – Friday**  
**8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**



## Message from the Interim Designated Term Pastor



Greetings to you all! It is a joy to be back with Alpine Community Church after several weeks abroad in Buenos Aires, Argentina. I am grateful for opportunities to engage in teaching and learning around the world. I believe these kinds of experiences expand our view beyond our usual limitations. Sometimes, we need to be in places where our understanding of the world is not the center of things.

Among the many enjoyable experiences I had in Argentina, two of the most meaningful involved meeting people who were doing the kind of work I was teaching about this month. My course, Liberation Theologies, was all about the history and practice of theology in direct response to the conditions of the poor and the oppressed. In Latin America, the theologian Gustavo Gutierrez began to shape his ideas of liberation theology as a response to the devastation in his home country of Peru. As this tradition has expanded, so many people – from everyday folks to pastors and academic theologians – have worked to apply their Christian faith to the most urgent needs in the world around them.

I met two people who have been doing this work in a profound way in Argentina. One is Father Guillermo, who serves at the San Cayetano parish in Buenos Aires. The area of town where he serves has a significant population of poor and working-class folks, in part because it is located near a major hub of public transportation. Father Guillermo walked our group through the church and through the places where they served meals to thousands of people on a regular basis. He spoke of his conviction as a young man, when he felt called to the priesthood and turned his attention to study. For him, a theology of liberation had to be a theology of *action*, an expression of everyday Christian life that tangibly changes the world.

The second person I met was a priest by the name of Father Francisco Olivera, affectionally known as Padre Paco. Padre Paco has worked for 38 years in some of the poorest slums of Buenos Aires. He spoke of the history of Argentina's political context, the years of dictatorship, and their impact on the most vulnerable people. One of the most powerful things he shared with us was this question: "Have you ever seen a walking soul?" His point was that he doesn't serve souls, which we cannot see, but he must engage and serve people, who are physically present with us. He also reminded us that to side with the poor and the oppressed is inherently political; there is no neutral ground.

There is far too much to say about the lessons I learned on this journey to Argentina. Suffice to say, I was reminded of something we should all remember – the Christian life is not a theoretical pursuit, but a practical action. I am grateful for the witness of these two priests who take that idea to heart and strive to feed God's sheep – literally and figuratively.

# Message from the Moderator....



## The Things We Keep

When Pat and I moved from our 2200 square foot and one acre of land on Alpine Heights to our much smaller home on a minimal lot in Crown Hills, we had a lot of “stuff” to get rid of. It was quite a job to decide what to keep, and what to let go of. Often, the items we kept aren’t the usual expensive ones. They were often items that jogged a memory, or told a story.

Sometimes we hold on to things because they anchor us to a version of ourselves that we don’t want to lose. Other times, it’s about someone else – a moment, a season, or a chapter we closed gently but not entirely.

The new year 2026 has begun, and again, the church is looking at what we can keep, and what we must let go of. We can keep the memories, but let go of some of our traditional activities. We haven’t had a Halloween party in a few years – because of the few children left to attend. This year the Deacons have asked that we celebrate the Lenten season, but not keep the weekly Lenten Soup Suppers, because so many of us don’t want to drive at night for the meetings. We plan to hold on to Ash Wednesday, and maybe have one Soup supper, but no others. We hope to continue with a Maundy Thursday service, because it holds such meaning and makes Easter Sunday all the more joyful.

And, finally, the Cabinet is also recommending that we no longer keep Rummage Sale on our calendar. So much work falls on the Trustees, and we don’t have the manpower (specifically, “man” power!) to make it happen. This was a hard one for me...I love the camaraderie that we all shared during Rummage sale week, and the reception from community for the event. But we will let it go. I am so glad I have kept some of the “treasures” I brought home from Rummage sale... the photos of members being silly, the Christmas quilt I bought, my Halloween lamppost, and some clothes that I still wear that remind me of who I “inherited” them from. But I have those memories, and maybe that is enough.

# He Really Loves Us



Whitney Houston was blessed by the Lord with one of the most beautiful voices of all time. Sadly, her life came to a tragic end much too early. However, she left behind a lot of wonderful music. One of her songs that I have been hearing of late is “How will I know?” The song is about romantic love, not spiritual. Yet, it is possible to take the premise of the song and connect it to a love which is much more meaningful to us. That is the love of Jesus.

People are constantly searching for spiritual meaning. Some don’t want to admit it, but we are always searching for some kind of meaning in our lives. Without a relationship with Jesus, our lives don’t have much meaning. Therefore, like the song we are always asking, “How will I know if He really loves me?”

It is especially hard for some to believe that God loves them. It may be especially hard now as we go through such times of struggle. However, we are lucky to have that love of God. While human love is imperfect, God’s love never fails us. This is not to say that our relationship is always perfect. Sometimes we might not always be very happy with God. Sometimes He may be disappointed with us. Yet, unlike the character in Whitney’s song, we simply have to open our hearts to God. We have to listen to His word, read His word, and feel his word. Sometimes we can even feel His love just by looking at the beautiful world He created. We don’t have to wonder whether He loves us or does not. He just loves us naturally. He is love.

Just listening to upbeat music can make a person feel better. Don’t we get the same feeling from knowing that we are loved by Jesus? It is a comforting feeling and a joyful feeling to know that we are loved and everything will be all right. Human love can’t always do that. Spiritual and eternal love always will. How do we know if He really loves us? How could we possibly not? He does not love us because we deserve it or even want it. He gives it because that’s who He is. That certainly is enough to make one get up and dance!

We had to say goodbye to a very special lady in January. Ina Denny left us to live with her son . She will be greatly missed.



# The Season of Lent

## History of Lent

Lent is a season of 40 days (46 including Sundays) leading up to Easter, beginning with Ash Wednesday and concluding on Holy Saturday. (Sundays are considered "feast days" when fasts can be broken to celebrate the Sabbath.) During these 40 days, Christians around the world dedicate themselves to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, imitating Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness, where he fasted and was tempted by Satan. It is a season for repentance, self-denial, and remembering our mortality. Though the origins of Lent are not entirely certain, the forty-day fast prior to Easter was already a well-established custom by 325 AD, as is evident from the fact that the canons of the Council of Nicaea reference it as common practice.

## Three Pillars of Lent

Traditionally, the church has turned her attention to three spiritual practices during Lent: Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving (serving others). These practices are based on Jesus' teachings in Matthew 6:1-18, where he instructs his followers to pray, fast and give to the poor, but to do it all in secret, unlike the hypocrites who do it publicly, for show.

This guide follows these three traditional Lenten spiritual practices, assigning one practice each day. Each activity has one of the labels below to indicate the practice.



Pray



Fast



Give

# 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,*

Diane Beblo

Carl Berry

Family of Normand Croteau

Tatty Fenton

Delores Gomez

Helen Harvey

Julia Kupin

Sandy Lusink

Eva Martinez

Bonnie Moffett

Jim Moffett

Hans Reuter

Anne Reuter

Brittany Santos

Sheryl Wade

Sue & Tom Truscott

Our Nation & Our Leaders

Military  
Police Officers  
Firefighters

May Peace Prevail on Earth

# Birthdays and Anniversaries

## FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY WISHES:

O'NEAL, Misty	02/12
TODD Jr., Damien	02/12
SMAZEL, Judy	02/13
POINDEXTER, Rob	02/15
BOYER, Donna	02/17
FENTON, Tatty	02/17
KEYES, Debbie	02/24

## FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES:

None

# Church Office Hours

We can be reached by telephone at (619) 445-2110, or by e-mail at [acc1894@acc.coxmail.com](mailto:acc1894@acc.coxmail.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:***

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# February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> ACC – 9am <b>Annual Mtg to follow</b> Pastor Ben & PPC	2 OFFICE CLOSED on Mondays B.S. TROOP 105	3 CHOIR 7-8:30p	<b>4</b> ACC Bible Study 9:30 ACSL Book Study	5 PPC Bible Study 6-8pm	6	<b>7</b> 7:00 PM AA
<b>8</b> 9:00a ACC Worship PPC 10:45am <b>DEACON'S Mtg</b>	9 OFFICE Closed <b>TRUSTEE's Mtg</b>	10 CHOIR 7-8:30p	11 ACC BS 9:30 ACSL – Rm #1 10:30-noon 5:30p – AA, FH	12 PPC Bible Study 6-8pm	<b>13</b>	14 GUILD MTG 9:30am
<b>15</b> 9:00a ACC Worship PPC 10:45am <b>CABINET Mtg</b> PPC 5:00pm	<b>16</b> OFFICE Closed B.S. TROOP 105	17 CHOIR 7-8:30p	18 <b>ASH WEDNESDAY</b> ACC Bible Study ACSL Book study 5:30p – AA Fuller Hall	19 PPC Bible Study 6-8pm	20	21 7:00 PM AA
<b>22</b> 9:00a ACC PPC 10:45am <b>1st Sunday in LENT</b> PPC 5PM	23 OFFICE Closed B.S. TROOP 105	24 CHOIR 7-8:30p	25 ACC BS ACSL –Rm#1 Wed. 5:30p – AA Fuller Hall	26 PPC Bible Study 6-8pm	27	28 7:00 PM AA

## **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  
United Church of Christ  
2225 W. Victoria Drive  
P.O. Box 212  
Alpine, CA 91903-0212  
Return Service Requested



## **CROSS CURRENTS**

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