

COMMUNITIES *of* JOY

COMMUNITY OF CHRIST

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA MISSION CENTER

DECEMBER 2005

SCMC Conference Highlights

by Denise Leichter, *Interim SCMC President*

The SCMC Fall Conference was packed with celebrations. Terry and Linda Read were introduced, and Terry was elected as



the new Mission Center President effective January 1, 2006. Mike Hewitt was also sustained as the Mission Center Financial Officer. We honored Evangelists Farren Stevens and Ben Budworth with superannuation and their families were in attendance with us. Saira Juarez was honored as our Outstanding Youth, and the Simi Valley and Ventura Congregations were recognized with their Covenant Certificates as CPI Congregations. The IYF and SPEC youth shared their testimonies of

their experiences this past year, and thanked the members for their support. John Rasmussen, Mike Ehlers and Jim Seeley were elected to the Buckhorn Board. Nancy Eisler from Outreach



International was here to recognize the Congregational Partners, Charlotte Jones for her "Legacy Circle" giving, a \$500 check from the Torrance Congregation for the Gumiguda School, and a \$10,000 check from the El Segundo Congregation as their first installment towards a \$30,000 contribution to Voices of Hope. The El Segundo Congregation also gave \$75,000 to the Tecate Congregation (SWIMC) for renovations to their new church in Baja, and they have established a Graceland University Scholarship for \$10,000.




CALLED CONFERENCE

We will meet again on January 8, 2006, 3PM for a special Called Conference to set apart Terry Read as our new Mission Center President and have him share his vision with us. Apostle Susan Skoor will be speaking at Temple City that morning at IIAM and be part of the afternoon worship. Apostle Dave Brock will also be with us January 22, 2006 teaching and speaking at the LNE congregation. Be part of the "Solution in 2006" to change and improve your world!

The morning worship was planned by the Ventura Congregation with Tony Austin presiding. The children "fed the hungry" and interim Mission Center President Denise Leichter shared the morning message. The Upland Congregation



prepared the lunch feast which was enjoyed by all. The LNE Congregation was well represented, and we had the gift of translation from Linda Espiritu Santo and Sergio Juarez.

The afternoon business session included reports and a vote on the budget. The new Golden West Tower Board of Directors was elected with action by the members for the further work of that investment. Linda Read was hired full time on a one year renewable contractual assignment as Congregational Support Minister (CSM) with her job focus on Children and Youth Ministry, Witness and Outreach, and assisting other CSMs in their assignments throughout the Mission Center. There were so many workers who deserve our thanks for making it a full day of great joy. We were sent forth to *Create ABUNDANCE in our attitudes, resources, testimonies, time and talents and to share GENEROUSLY the Peace and Promises of Jesus Christ.* 



World Ministries Contributions

WORLD MINISTRIES TITHES

Total contributions needed July '05-June '06:	\$10,200,000
Contributions needed through September '05:	\$2,264,400
Contributions received through September '05:	\$2,495,000

Thank you for your generous response. These contributions allow more than 200 ministers to serve the Community of Christ throughout the world.

We encourage congregations to continue to lift up President Veazey's challenge to increase Mission Tithes contributions by one percent of personal income annually. We live in exciting times. Read on to discover how Community of Christ brothers and sisters in the Philippines are furthering their witness of Zion through Mission Tithes.

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Upcoming Events

DECEMBER

- 4 Messiah Sing-Along, Covina
- 11 Christmas Caroling, Orange
- 17 Living Nativity, Long Beach
- 18 Christmas Posada, La Neuva
- 18 Christmas Cantata, Long Beach
- 18 Christmas Dinner & Play, Orange
- 18 Christmas Program, Canoga Park, 11AM
- 24 Christmas Eve Service, Simi Valley, 6:30PM
The Canoga Band will perform
- 24-JAN 2 World Church Congregation Support Offices Closed
- 25 Christmas Services, Canoga Park, Simi Valley, 11AM
- 26 SCMC Office Closed
- 27-30 Calizonia SPEC Retreat, Chula Vista

JANUARY 2006

- 2 SCMC Office Closed
- 8 SCMC Called Conference, Temple City, 3PM
- 22 Celebration for Christian Unity, Burbank

MARCH

- 11-12 High Priests, Evangelists & Spouse Retreat
Guest Minister: Don Compier, Dean of Graceland Seminary

Aaronic Event

by Bishop Mike Hewitt, SCMC Financial Officer

Our fall Aaronic ministries event was held at Temple City on October 15th. The topic was "The Angry Christian" which explained some ways in which anger can help us make positive changes in our lives if it is channeled in an appropriate manner. The discussion included using anger in a positive way (constructive anger) and not reacting strongly against other persons (destructive anger). The approach was to develop a pastoral theology of anger and was intended to help Aaronic ministers and others see that anger is not always a negative force and can be beneficial in ministry.

I was pleased with the 26 registrations, an increase of 86% from last fall. We will continue to have a half-day session in the fall and a full day session in the spring of each year. These classes are directed towards Aaronic ministers but have general applicability and are open to all who wish to attend.

Plan to attend our next session on April 29, 2006, 9AM to 5PM on with Patti Page of Des Moines, Iowa returning as our presenter. More details will be made available as we approach the date of this event. Thank you for your continuing support. 🌿



Return Requested

As we strive to exercise good stewardship, we ask that you return your SCMC Conference Nametag so that it may be reused. You may return it to Tonia Cooper, SCMC, PO Box 4077, Huntington Beach, CA 92605 or bring it with you to the next conference on January 8, 2006.

Parting Words

by Denise Leichter, Interim SCMC President

From the earliest recordings of Genesis, Chapter 7, our scriptures share with us about angels descending from heaven bearing testimony of the Father and of the Son. In Revelation 14 it is recorded that an angel has the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on earth, and to every nation, kindred, tongue and people. This holiday season also has abundant stories and songs about the blessings and glory of angels, and I am a BELIEVER in their presence and guardianship over our lives.



I have seen many nations and people this year, and have heard the message of *Joy, Hope, Love* and *Peace* in many tongues. It has been a year that I lived the words of the hymn, *Here I am, Lord . . . is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night. I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.*

It has been my pleasure to serve with other members of the Leadership Team in the call to be more deliberate about our actions to create the Peaceable Kingdom, share our resources, and with a sense of urgency to *Tell the Sacred Story*. I have never been a congregational pastor, but have a greater appreciation for those that serve bi-vocationally as I have tried to balance my "Gold & Blue" to shepherd such a diverse flock with a greater awareness for the wandering and lost. Much has been accomplished and there is still much more to do. It is with great joy that I commend to you Terry and Linda Read for the forthcoming blessings of their ministry and leadership in 2006 within our Mission Center.

It is most likely that as you read this month's (my last) Community of Joy, I will be traveling overseas in countries without Christmas trees, neighborhood decorations, snowmen or Santa Claus, and there will not be familiar hymns playing in churches or on radios. But, I will still be looking for the star that guides Christians of many nations towards Peace on Earth and be prepared to hear the Hallelujah Chorus of angels from heaven and on earth proclaim our "Joy for the World" that has waited and worked to receive our King. Wishing you a Merry Christmas and Happy and Healthy New Year! 🌿

Communities of Joy

What's happening in your congregation or personal discipleship? Deadline for the next issue of *Communities of Joy* submissions is January 15. Send items (*please—do not use all UPPER CASE*) to Tonia Cooper:

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- Interim Editor Denise Leichter
- Typography & Layout Jean David
- Technical Advisor & Publishing Tonia Cooper

CONGREGATION ACTIVITIES

ANAHEIM & BASILEIA

Trunk 'n Treat

by Jean Gibo

Anaheim and Basileia Congregations joined forces in sponsoring an outreach activity called "Trunk 'n Treat" held at the Anaheim Church on Halloween. Door-to-door invitations were distributed a week prior to the event. On Halloween, our members wore costumes and formed a semi-circle in the church parking lot with their decorated cars, trunks filled with treats. More than 200 children participated. An invitation to attend church was also passed out. At the conclusion of this activity, the members enjoyed refreshments.



COVINA

Messiah Sing-Along

by Eileen Cockcroft

Start the season out right with this exciting Christmas event for people of all ages, singers or not! Join the Covina Congregation, 2003 Cienega Avenue, Covina, on Sunday evening, December 4th at 5:00PM. We're gonna rock the house with Rex Boos as Director and Elbert McAllister as Accompanist! Join us for refreshments and fellowship.

GARDENA

Heritage Festival

by Wilfred T. Miyashiro

The Gardena Congregation participated in the Gardena Heritage Festival on October 1, 2005. The festival was sponsored by the City of Gardena and the Chamber of



Photo courtesy of Ken Huthmaker, City of Gardena

Commerce. This is a huge annual event with part of 162nd Street closed for booths. Ethnic foods popular to this city were sold. Throughout the day, we enjoyed entertainment representing various countries. We sold andagi (Okinawan donut) and mochi (Japanese rice cakes). As the andagi were being cooked, the aroma drew many to the booth to purchase them. We did well in sales of these two food items. This was the third year the Gardena Congregation participated in this festival.

LA NUEVA ESPERANZA EN CRISTO

Christmas Posada

by Linda Espiritu Santo

La Nueva Esperanza en Cristo invites all to attend the annual Christmas Posada on December 18, 2005 at 6PM, 1327 21st Street, Los Angeles. Festivities include:

- ★ A March for Peace in the neighborhood
- ★ The traditional asking for "Posada" (lodging for Mary & Joseph)
- ★ A "big production" Christmas Play
- ★ Pinatas
- ★ Tamales and other goodies

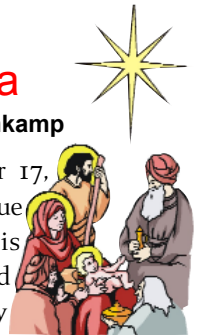
Call 213-746-6264 or 805-404-1380 for further information and directions.

LONG BEACH

Living Nativity & Cantata

by Melissa Allshouse & Sheila Muhlenkamp

A Living Nativity, Saturday, December 17, 6:30PM. You're invited to experience the true meaning of Christmas, as we present this special gift to the community. Bundle up and bring the family to see the Christmas story portrayed with actors, animals and song.



Christmas Cantata, Sunday, December 18, 6PM. You are invited to share in the celebration of *Bethlehem's Brightest Morn*, presented by the Long Beach Choir. Please join us as we sing praises to our Heavenly Father and share this glorious story with you through song.

The Long Beach Church is located at 3525 Elm Avenue, Long Beach. Refreshments will be served after each event.

ORANGE

Caroling, Dinner & Entertainment

by Jeanie Kensler

Christmas Caroling, Sunday, December 11, 5PM. All are invited to meet at the Orange Congregation's parking lot for an evening of caroling. We will grab dinner at a restaurant afterwards.

Annual Christmas Dinner & Play, Sunday, December 18, 5PM. Our youth will present *The Christmas Chronicles*. Cost is \$15⁰⁰ each for those 8 years old and up. A delicious catered meal is planned and we invite our sister congregations to join us for this fun filled evening of fellowship and entertainment.

For both events, please RSVP to Jeanie Kensler by phone, 714-544-4554 or e-mail, aunt-toast@pacbell.net. The Orange Church is located at 395 South Tustin Street in Orange.

Many Respond To "Our Witnessing Community"

by Glenn Johnson

Fifty persons from across the Southern California Mission Center participated in "Our Witnessing Community" workshop held in Temple City on October 29. We suggested that this workshop could be "the most important event" in the Southern California Mission Center this



year. That can only be true if we respond to the enthusiasm brought to us by Charlie Carter and the wisdom shared by Tammy Lindle as we "take the next steps" in the disciple's path.

SCMC Missionary Coordinator Linda Espiritu Santo said, "We ordered 50 workbooks and ten congregational kits thinking that it would be more than enough. Everything sold! Herald House told us that it was the first time they ever had a consignment order where nothing was returned." What a wonderful testimony of our desire as a Mission Center to move forward and share our stories.

It is important that missionary activity reach the congregational level. Every congregation is unique. Our greatest participation will take place within congregations themselves.

So what is the next step? What can you do today to make the effect of this workshop real? It is our request that each congregation immediately schedule a Vibrant Witness Workshop



Workshop Ministers
Charlie Carter and Tammy Lindle

in the first quarter of 2006 using the excellent World Church resource "Vibrant Witness: Who, Me?" Members of the SCMC Missionary Team are available to come and assist you with the workshop. These congregational events will lead up to our missionary "Big Event" with

Seventy Bob Kyser at Temple City on April 8th. God is blessing us even now and calling us forward to even greater service with the promise that "many will respond." ❁

Celebration for Christian Unity

by Carol Kostura

You are invited to attend the traditional celebration of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity which will be on Sunday, January 22, 2006 at 4:00PM at the Armenian Orthodox Cathedral, 3325 North Glenoaks Boulevard in Burbank. Episcopal Bishop J. Jon Bruno of the Los Angeles Diocese will be preaching. Reception to follow after the service. This event is sponsored by the Southern California Ecumenical Council. If you need any further information regarding this event, please contact Carol Kostura at kostura@socal.rr.com. ❁

Calizonia SPEC Retreat Bananas Unite!



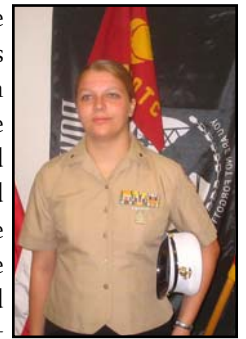
ReUnite with friends, learn about our appealing faith, and become an unsquashable team!

Talk it up, invite your friends and be ready to GO GO GO Bananas on December 27-30, 2005 at the Swim Retreat Center in Chula Vista. All 9th-12th graders are invited to share friendships, sports, team building, bonfires and worship. Special guest is Apostle Susan Skoor. Cost is \$70⁰⁰. Contact Debi Norton youthmin@myway.com 951-659-2995 for further information. ❁

Student Honored

by Cindy Pace

Lindsee Pace, an Orange High School Junior, and the youngest daughter of Perry and Cindy Pace of the Costa Mesa Congregation was offered a unique educational experience at the Freedoms Foundation "Spirit of America Youth Conference" in Valley Forge, PA. Lindsee was one of 115 students in the United States to receive an all expense paid scholarship from the AMVETS. This five day (November 3-6, 2005) experience consisted of lectures, workshops and interactive programs and tours. The last night was spent on board the USS New Jersey, the world's most decorated battleship. This Youth Leadership Seminar was developed to give young people a better appreciation of the freedoms they enjoy. Lindsee also participated by singing the national anthem with several Color Guards. Lindsee was selected as a deserving student and was sponsored due to her exemplary conduct both in and out of high school. Lindsee currently plans to join the Marine Corps and become an officer after her high school graduation. ❁



WM Contributions

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SOUTHEAST ASIA MISSION: ANSWERING THE CALL

Jennifer De Guzman, Southeast Asia Mission Center president, recently described the incredible response of Community of Christ disciples in the Philippines. In answer to the call of A Disciple's Generous Response, the Southeast Asia Mission Center inaugurated its first system of Mission Tithes offerings. In February of last year, the envelope system in which people are taught how and why to give was initiated. The result was astounding. Total response from all eleven congregations at the end of year was PHP (Philippine pesos) 200,064.75 which included PHP 27,675.50 for World Mission Tithes.

Jennifer elaborated, "The money is from all of the people. They give because now they understand the journey of the church and their part in the church's larger mission." ❁