



Community of Christ

**UPCOMING
EVENTS:**

- **LEADS: New Testament Studies** - Tony & Charmaine Chvala-Smith - February 27-28 - Temple City
- **SCMC World Conference Delegates Meeting** - March 7 - Temple City
- **Women's Retreat** - March 12-14 - Buckhorn
- **World Conference** - April 10-17 - Independence, MO
- **Unity in Our Community** - April 24 - Temple City

**INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:**

- Inspired Counsel 2
- Winter's Youth Activities 3
- SCMC Stories of Generosity 4
- SCMC/SwIMC Risky Business 5
- El Segundo Invitation 6
- Upcoming Activities 6
- Plant Info Outreach Int'l 7

Communities of Joy

JANUARY 2010 SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA MISSION CENTER

Share the Wonders

by Terry Read

It was not planned well in advance, but neither was it spontaneous nor serendipitous. It was expected, yet it exceeded all our hopes. It was not uncommon for the circumstances, but for us it was once in a lifetime. It became for us a moment where time barely moved, a super

brings our family together with two other families with whose lives we have intersected in meaningful ways at significant times. The tradition now reaches nearly twelve years and the many memories generated therein are among our most cherished. Each year we choose a

cific Ocean. A day trip to Victoria, the provincial capital, produced the opportunity for a whale watching excursion. Though the price caused some hesitation, the incredibly clear skies and brilliant sunshine coupled with the fervor of our friends quickly prompted a "Let's do it."



Photo by author

slo-mo sensation when something extraordinary is occurring and your mind and soul stretch the divine instant into an enduring memory so vivid and potent, it demands reverence simply to recall it.

Linda, Andrea and I had traveled to Vancouver Island near Victoria, British Columbia for the annual retreat that

different spot in the beautiful Pacific Northwest to commune together – eating, playing, hiking, exploring, and generally savoring creation and community. Last fall's gathering marked our second visit to this verdant island flanked by the straits of Juan de Fuca and Georgia and surrounded by Puget Sound and the Pa-

Outfitted with the obligatory wet gear, we boarded a 30-foot Zodiac inflatable boat that safely cruises at over 50 MPH. The swift ride alone was incredibly exhilarating and only heightened anticipation of what lay in store. Upon arrival in the area where pods of Orca had been spotted previously that day (even though

Continued on page 2

Inspired Counsel Shared with the Church



President Stephen M. Veazey addressed the church from the Temple

“...members are encouraged to be ever prayerful, seeking discernment of God’s desire for us.”

On Sunday, January 17, in a special webcast from the Temple in Independence, President Stephen Veazey delivered a message of inspired counsel to the church. With the 2010 World Conference approaching and now with the words of counsel resting with the church, members are encouraged to be ever prayerful, seeking discernment of God’s desire for us.

The counsel includes specific direction concerning the sacrament of baptism as well as guidance regarding issues of moral behavior and relationships. In addition, the counsel addresses

the ongoing effort for “the greatest collaboration possible” among our missionary quorums.

President Veazey also delivered a letter concerning the leading quorums of the church. Presented for release are Apostles Mary Jacks Dynes and Leonard Young; presented for ordination as apostles are Richard James and Scott Murphy.

To assist us in our individual and corporate discernment the following resources can be accessed on the church’s website -

www.cofchrist.org:

- Inspired Counsel
- Q&A concerning the

Counsel (updated)

- *Yearning for God: Discernment and Spiritual Practice* - a new resource of spiritual formation activities for individuals or small groups
- *Learning to Recognize God* - a companion resource to *Yearning* that features 28 days of video meditations and a downloadable journal

President Veazey closed the document with this prayerful hope:

“As we continue our journey together, may the gracious Spirit that blessed me similarly bless those who seek divine affirmation of this counsel.”

Share the Wonders

continued from page 1

the odds are good for sighting whales, there are no guarantees), we immediately saw a few spouts scattered about as the whales surfaced. These sprays were anywhere from 75 to 300 yards away from us. My camera whirred as I took shots as fast as possible, hoping to capture one of these amazing mammals in a moment of grace.

What became apparent, however – even

before my camera battery died...ugh! – was that moments of grace began to *swarm* even as several of the pods surrounded our vessel. Families of killer whales – some as old as 90 years! – cavorted all around, even swimming right underneath us, just a few feet from the enraptured passengers therein. Eternity at once froze and stretched out before us.

In his essay on wonder, David James Duncan describes wonder as being nearly indistinguishable from love. “...maybe love is just wonder aimed at a beloved. Wonder is like grace, in that it’s not a condition we grasp; wonder grasps us.” Even though Duncan implies that we cannot control wonder, he doesn’t mean either that we cannot prepare ourselves for



A whale “spies”
photo by author

Winter, Anyone?

by Kyle Logan, SCMC Children and Youth Minister

The New Year is upon us and we are starting the year with two of our most anticipated events...

SNOW CAMP! Jr. High

Snow Camp's theme this year is **Mission:**

Possible. Youth in grades 6-8 will have an opportunity to learn what their gifts and talents are and what mission God has called them to carry out. We

will be meeting at Buckhorn at 8pm on February 5th and departing at 11am on February 7th.

The theme for this

year's **Sr. High Snow Camp** is **Coexist.** Our very own Terry Read is coming up to teach the youth in grades 9-12

meet at Buckhorn at 8pm on February 19th and depart at 11am on February 21st. Over 30 youth attended both Snow Camps last year



about what it means to coexist with people who have different backgrounds, with the opposite sex, with nature and with ourselves. We will

and I hope to see more this year. The challenge last year was the same that Grant McMurray gave all of us with "Each One, Reach One". If the youth at both

[Continued on page 5](#)

Share the Wonders

it. Certainly a pod of orca, a sunset that breaks forth through layers of nimbus after a rain, a brilliant panorama of alpine peaks and meadows can rather easily inspire wonder. Yet wonder need not require extensive or expensive travel. It can be as near as the next breath, the next seemingly ordinary moment, writes Duncan: "Wonder is anything taken for granted - the old neighborhood, the old job, old buddy, old spouse - suddenly filling with mys-

tery." Wrapped as it is in gratitude, wonder transcends the moment and can carry us to new places of being as followers of Jesus Christ, as worshipers of God.

And not only ourselves but those nearest us can be carried as well when we share these moments of wonder and grace. As the song goes, "Praise him, praise him! Tell of his excellent

greatness..."

May you soon behold something or someone so indescribably beautiful as to overwhelm your heart and soul...and then may you tell of it...in word and in deed.



The joyful passengers

[continued from page 2](#)

"Wrapped as it is in gratitude, wonder transcends the moment and can carry us to new places of being as followers of Christ, as worshipers of God."

Gardena Connects to Ministry in the Philippines



Gardena Congregation

Thanks to a personal connection between the Gardena Congregation and the church in the Philippines, an opportunity arose to bring material support to an ongoing ministry in the southeast Asia nation. Mary Normanly, a Gardena member helped found a school several years ago and her friend, Dr. Roger Cabida provides medical care to the stu-

dents. Dr. Cabida also organizes health missions to communities around the school where there is no regular medical care.

To assist in this endeavor, the Gardena Congregation raised \$2320 in the month of December! In a letter of thanks, Jennifer De Guzman, Associate President of Southeast Asia Mission Center, writes, "This is a day to celebrate for all of us! The Medical Mission we held today in Gabriela, Diffun,

Quirino was a success. We deeply acknowledge the efforts you have exerted to raise the funds for the medical mission. Such a wonderful gift to us."

In all, 176 patients of all ages, both members and friends of the church, received treatment.

The funds contributed by Gardena will be used further to provide medical supplies to other depressed areas.



Even More Generosity



Christ's Kids share their special Christmas gifts

Canoga Park

Christ's Kids, their parents, and friends once again showed that, where there is a need, there is

a generous response. This last Advent season, the children and their families "bought" the following from Outreach International's Gift Catalog:

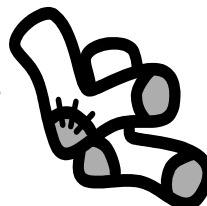
- 20 chickens
- 3 goats
- Meals for 1 month for 3 orphan children
- Education for 3 Haitian girls

These are Christ's Kids' special gifts to and for

Jesus. We are blessed to give to those who in need.

Inland Empire

During Advent, members of the Inland Empire Congregation shared in a Sock Drive to benefit the local Salvation Army. This ministry opened a new homeless shelter recently and because of the response from our congregation there, 237 pairs of new clean socks can be shared with the folk served by the shelter. A pair of clean socks is



a precious commodity for a person without a home.

Upland

With a packed house in full throat, the annual Messiah Sing-A-Long at the Upland Congregation showed once again why it's an Advent favorite. The 2009 event marked the 50th year of music ministry in the Los Angeles area for Messiah leader Rex Boos (photo at left). Another first saw the gathered singers contribute \$500 to Outreach International, "purchasing" a water buffalo and two goats from OI's Gift Catalog.



Annual Messiah Sing-A-Long led by Rex Boos

Youth Ministries continued from page 3

camps accomplish this goal we'll have over 60 youth at each Snow Camp!!

Spectacular is quickly approaching! Any youth currently in grades 10-12 are eligible to attend SPEC this summer. Dates are July 23rd-31st. The total cost is \$450 with our Mission Center paying for plane tickets. This year money deadlines will be enforced even more. \$150 needs to be received by March 1st. The second \$150 needs to be received by April 1st. The last \$150 needs to be received by May 1st. Please encourage youth in your congregations to begin fundraising and saving for SPEC. If money is not received by May 15th, tickets cannot be purchased. In past years there have been youth that have made commitments to attend SPEC but have dropped out at the last min-

ute, leaving the Mission Center with extra plane ticket costs to absorb. I will only book plane tickets for youth who have their money and registration forms in by May 15th. Youth deciding to attend SPEC after that date will be

responsible for any additional charges for airfare and SPEC's late fees. Please contact Kyle Logan if you have any questions or concerns about Spectacular. You can find more information and registration forms at www.cofchrist.org/spec.

In the future expect to see opportunities for you to help our youth raise funds for the Journey Takers Caravan and SPEC this summer. Help give our youth an opportunity to grow spiritually as well as develop their leadership skills. If you would like to donate to either of these funds please make checks out to Community of Christ with either Journey Takers or SPEC in the item line. If you have questions don't hesitate to contact Kyle Logan at 909.562.9308 or klogan@cofchristla.org.

Upcoming Events

- February 5-7 - Junior High Snow Camp @ Buckhorn - Cost: \$75
- February 19-21 - Senior High Snow Camp @ Buckhorn - Cost: \$75

CONTACT KYLE LOGAN FOR DETAILS
klogan@cofchristla.org
 909-562-9308

SCMC, SwIMC Share in Risky Business



Apostle Susan Skoor shares in the closing service

45 mission-minded disciples gathered at Buckhorn in mid-January to explore and deepen their witness of Jesus. The weekend's theme invited us to consider and accept the risk (perhaps never as great as we think) to step out and share ourselves in proclaiming Jesus Christ and inviting others into community-building.

Our guest ministers provided strategies and tools for expanding witness in our congregations in the areas of Small Group Ministry, Young Adult Ministry, and Missionary Opportunities. Participants assessed the weekend as both inspiring and practical. Resources from the weekend will be available on our website: www.cofchristla.org.



John Wight with Terry Read

Seeds of Growth: Planting A New Church Home by Linda Read

Mary and Milla shared breakfast with me just before Christmas. All three of us were strangers when I sat down* but by the end of our conversation, I felt that we were neighbors and friends. They shared their thoughts and dreams about the kind of community they would like to live in, here in Covina (where the newest Community of Christ presence in the Los Angeles area is located). These two lovely women

are very different in some ways, but their dreams are similar for their neighborhood. One works the night shift at Wal-Mart and the other is a single mom who previously had a great job but is now unemployed due to her health problems. Yet both are concerned about the violence, poverty, and lack of resources available. These negative forces put their neighbors, now **our neighbors**, at risk, especially the youngest and oldest.

Just a couple of days ago at Coffee Church (our weekly Bible study night at the coffee shop), I met Carlos and Antonio, two more new friends who live

and/or work in Covina. Everyday, doors open and conversations begin...small steps toward God's community here.

Please keep the new plant in your prayers as we continue to build community here, moving toward our first service on Palm Sunday, March 28.

And, of course, don't forget to keep up the conversations in your own lives and communities, conversations that will bless your lives and congregations, helping lead us one small step at a time toward God's community.

* Mary and Milla live in the apartment complex where I lead a Young Peacemakers Club



“Everyday, doors open and conversations begin...small steps toward God's community here.”



Linda Read leading Young Peacemakers

A Big Thank You, an Urgent Appeal by Denise Leichter

A huge **Thank You** from Outreach International! We had the best October-November-December quarter in our history! The Gift Catalog earned over \$125,000, shattering our goal of \$55,000, and I know that the SCMC special giving at events and personal shopping made a big difference. Remember that you can shop year round!!

The Haiti disaster is so devastating that we had to

respond with immediate aid, even though that has not been OI's traditional role. The generous response to our appeal is already well over \$150K. The need to rebuild, of course, will be costly and long term, so we urge your continued support. If applicable, please check with your company's ability to contribute or match what you give during this international humanitarian crisis. It will take long-

term generosity - in money, time, and talent - from you, and from the members of the devastated communities whose resources of energy will be used in the recovery.

It is a blessing to serve on the board of directors, and a joy to thank you for all you give!



Special Invitation: El Segundo

All are invited to a service of celebration commemorating the El Segundo Congregation on Sunday, February 28, at 3:30 PM. This will mark the last service for this longtime group. Former pastor Steve Shields will be among those leading in ministry. A reception will follow. Join us at 361 Richmond in El Segundo for a celebration of

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Sharing the Peace of Jesus Christ

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE OF *COMMUNITIES OF JOY*:
APRIL 18
PLEASE SEND ARTICLES/PICTURES TO:
tread@cofchristla.org or 15657 Ladera Vista Drive, Chino
Hills, CA 91709

From the Youth Minister...

CRANIUM CONUNDRUM



1. Do they have a 4th of July in England?
2. If there are 7 months that have 31 days in them and 11 months that have 30 days in them, how many months have 28 days in them?
3. How many birthdays does the average man have?
4. What is boiled then cooled, sweetened then soured?
5. A woman gives a beggar 50 cents; the woman is the beggar's sister, but the beggar is not the woman's brother. How come?

Answers: 1. Yes, they just don't celebrate it. 2. All of them. 3. Just one, the day of his birth - then each year he celebrates the anniversary. 4. Sweet ice tea with lemon. 5. The beggar is the woman's sister.

Visit us on the Web!
www.cofchristla.org

Apostle Skoor to Visit SCMC

In early March, Apostle Susan Skoor will visit in our mission center, including several activities. She will share ministry among us, particularly in the areas of evangelistic witness and preparation for the upcoming World Conference. One such gathering will be for all SCMC World Conference Delegates - Sunday, March 7 - 3PM at the Temple City Center for Christian Ministries. In addition, she will meet with clusters of High Priests and Evangelists in various locations. More details will follow - watch the E-Bulletin.

Reunion Guest Ministry Announced

The 2010 SCMC/SWIM Reunion will feature guest ministry from Scott Murphy, current Director of Human Resources for Community of Christ and soon to be apostle, Zac and Katie Harmon-McLaughlin of Graceland's Campus Ministries Team, and Ken McLaughlin from Outreach International. Watch for more information coming soon regarding registration and other details. Mark the dates:

July 9-16 - Buckhorn Camp.

Upcoming Events

- ♦ Junior High Snow Camp **Feb. 5-7, 2010**
- ♦ Senior High Snow Camp **Feb. 19-21, 2010**
- ♦ LEADS - New Testament **Feb. 27-28, 2010**
Instructors: Tony and Charmaine Chvala-Smith
- ♦ Women's Retreat **March 12-14, 2010**
- ♦ Youth Hunger Challenge **March 26-28, 2010**
- ♦ 2010 World Conference **April 10-17, 2010**
- ♦ Unity in Our Community **April 24, 2010**
- ♦ Buckhorn Work Week **May 3-9, 2010**
- ♦ LEADS - Mission/Evangelism **May 22-23, 2010**
Instructor: Kris Judd
- ♦ Junior Camp **June 4-6, 2010**
- ♦ Buckhorn Golf Tournament **June 5, 2010**
- ♦ Primary Camp **June 26-27, 2010**
- ♦ SCMC/SWIM Reunion **July 9-16, 2010**
- ♦ SPECTACULAR-Calizonia **July 23-31, 2010**
- ♦ Junior High Camp **August 13-15, 2010**