

# COMMUNITIES *of* JOY

COMMUNITY OF CHRIST

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA MISSION CENTER

FEBRUARY 2006

## Special Called Conference

by Denise Leichter

We had a great day of fellowship on January 8<sup>th</sup> with members from many congregations in attendance. Apostle Susan Skoor was here to speak and teach in Temple City in the morning, and provided the challenge to Terry Read for his new role as Mission Center President during the conference. Susan also made a visit with the leadership team to Long Beach the day before and engaged in meaningful dialogue with the congregation.

Terry, Linda and their daughter Andrea were richly blessed during the setting apart by Susan Skoor and Denise Leichter. The praise band led us in many special songs, and we had opportunities to hear the words in English, Spanish, French and Japanese. We had four vans come from the La Nueva Esperanza Congregation! The joy of fellowship continued through the afternoon with a reception for the Reads hosted by the Gardena Congregation.

An expression of appreciation was provided to Denise Leichter for her service as Interim President for seven months, and the spoken ministry and challenge provided by Terry was welcomed by all. Hiroshi Matsushita provided the Disciples Generous Response invitation and Evangelist Gail Biller provided the prayer of blessing.

We feel richly blessed in this new year to have the Reads here and providing very visible and personable ministry. Bishop Mike Hewitt has started the year with three weeks in seminary training in Independence but is already working in tandem with Terry for "Good News Ministry".



Apostle Susan Skoor and Denise Leichter set apart Terry Read as Southern California Mission Center President. -Photos by Tom Cooper



Michael Ehlers, Sergio Juarez and Linda Espiritu Santo Receiving MEADS Certificates from Hiroshi Matsushita.



Siblings Sarai and Jergio Juarez, Jr. read a poem by Sherry Southland.

## Snow Camps

**JUNIOR HIGH SNOW CAMP** (6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> graders) will be held at Buckhorn Camp, Saturday, February 11, 9AM until Sunday, February 12 at 3PM. *Marble Mania* is the theme. Cost is \$45. Invite your friends and pray for snow!

**SENIOR HIGH SNOW CAMP** (9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> graders) will be held at Buckhorn Camp, Saturday, February 18, 9AM until Monday, February 20 at 11AM. Emphasis will be on Communicating, Worship and Play! Cost is \$80. SCMC President Terry Read, and Youth Support Minister Linda Read will be joining us for this activity.

Congregation and SCMC Camperships are available for these camps. Contact your Pastor or CFO to apply. For further details on the camps, contact Tonia at the SCMC Office, 714-847-5731 or Tonia@cofchristla.org.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW FOR SPEC** (10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> graders), July 22-29, 2006. Start your personal fund raising now! SCMC will also be contributing. More details to follow, but you do not want to miss out on this event.



## Salutations to the SCMC

by Terry Read, SCMC President

Greetings to each of you in the name and spirit of Christ! Linda and I are very happy to be here in southern California (yes, we now have a house!) and look forward to meeting and getting to know all of you in our Mission Center.



A little about us . . . We have been married for almost 25 years and we have one daughter, Andrea, who is 23 and studying architecture at Washington State University. Linda has been working in fulltime ministry for over 6½ years, having been hired initially as a Transformation 2000 minister. Terry became an appointee minister in September of 2001 and most recently was President of Inland West Mission Center. We have just moved from our home in Spokane—where we had been for the last eighteen years—to a house in Chino Hills, where we are eager to get settled.

### Put the U in CommUnity of Christ

One of the most comfortable places for me to be is . . . in my own mind. Now, remember, I said *comfortable*, not necessarily illuminating. I can think about things I enjoy, consider questions I think are important, ponder mysteries that fascinate me, remember my cherished memories and generally just be content to relax in my own thoughts. But of course, my mind is not the only venue of my life. What about my body? What about my heart? Indeed, what about my spirit?

The first great commandment calls us to *love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength*. Disciples then are compelled to a whole or holistic love, where all of the parts are needed to complete the whole. If only I could love God just with my mind. But even this complete love of God doesn't fulfill the totality of discipleship.

The second of the two great commandments not only complements but also resembles the first: *love each one as you love yourself*. Discipleship involves not only loving God—it's also loving PEOPLE—neighbors, strangers, all. And this really does complete the concept of discipleship—on these two primary imperatives hang "all the law and prophets." It's all here. God, persons, self—not so much a hierarchy but a full circle.

For Jesus, following these commandments brought the kingdom of God near. And that's where discipleship really gets difficult. It's not only about me and God, even though many Christian preachers speak as though it is. It's about God, and me AND my neighbors. It's about my congregation and my community. It's about how I belong to God's creation—all of humanity, not only the ones who look like or think like or act like me.

Now, as much or more than ever, it's important that we join in our communities of Christ to work and play, rejoice and suffer, grow and struggle. Turns out that discipleship isn't about *comfortable*. "Creating sacred community is arduous and even painful. But it is to loving community such as this that each is called." (Section 161:3c)

Each of us is needed, is invited, is called. Each of us *belongs*. You belong. The COMMUNITY OF CHRIST—it has to have U.

### To Contact the Reads . . .

Linda and Terry Read  
15657 Ladera Vista Drive, Chino Hills CA 91709  
Terry: 909-631-0499 (cell) + Linda: 909-631-0393 (cell)  
Home & Office: 909-606-8636  
E-Mail: TRead@cofchristla.org + LRead@cochristla.org



### Help Wanted

We are looking for help in formatting the *Communities of Joy* every month. Jean David has brought great talent to this task and we need to find additional experts ASAP. If you have experience in desktop publishing (.pdf is final format), and have time to volunteer, please contact Tonia Cooper. Terry Read will assume the managing editor responsibilities with the next issue.

### Communities of Joy

What's happening in your congregation or personal discipleship? Deadline for the next issue of *Communities of Joy* is March 15. Send items to Tonia Cooper:

MAIL: PO Box 4077, Huntington Beach, CA 92605

E-MAIL: Tonia@cofchristla.org

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

## Tri-Area Celebrations

by Rickie Miller

Canoga Park, Simi Valley and Ventura Congregations joined together during the holiday season to celebrate the birth of our Savior with family and friends. Ventura hosted a breakfast which was followed by *Bow The Angel*, a play presented by the Ventura and Simi Valley youth. A trio of lovely ribbon dancers also performed.



The following Sunday, Simi Valley's youth lead the worship service, and the congregation shared in a potluck and gift exchange.



On Christmas Eve, the Canoga Park musicians joined together at Simi Valley for an evening of Christmas caroling. The Bethlehem story was told, and fellowship was enjoyed by all.

It is heartwarming to share with the Saints from our sister congregations, There is such a feeling of family and joy when we get together. May our walk with Christ lead us down many old, old paths that allow us to break bread together during 2006.

## Covina

by Eileen Cockcroft

Enjoy conversation, entertainment and culinary delights with your neighbors and loved ones at Covina's Winter Coffee House, February 25<sup>th</sup>. See insert.

## LNE Consecration

The La Nueva Esperanza Congregation dedication and consecration will be at IIAM on Sunday, February 26<sup>th</sup>, so mark your calendars for a very significant event. Leave your watches at home! Come tuned in for the language of the Holy Spirit during a Hispanic service filled with joyful music, radiant testimonies, and new friends building the Peaceable Kingdom in Los Angeles. After the service, we will celebrate with food and music (live band). Everyone is invited to share in this milestone.

## Upland Congregation

by Jan & Jim Albin

LeRoy Blankenship, songwriter, musician, singer, children's author and gifted communicator, will be at the Upland Church for a special free concert, Saturday, May 13, 2006 at 4:00PM. The Upland church is located at 1111 West 14<sup>th</sup> Street.



LeRoy has been in the ministry since 1958. He has served as a pastor and more recently has been serving in full time evangelism, traveling extensively in the United States, Canada and overseas. He has appeared on The Grand Old Opry, the North American Christian Convention, and Concerts throughout the world. He wrote an American Music Academy Award Winning Song, *He Only Needs it for the Weekend*.

On Mother's Day, May 14<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Blankenship will bring the Mother's Day sermon at the Upland Congregation. We cordially invite everyone to attend these special events.

## Reunion

This year the SCMC Reunion will be directed by Mike Hewitt and Linda Read. Our guest ministers will be World Church President Steve and Cathie Veazey. The ministry that this team will provide should not be missed, and the fellowship with friends is "priceless". REGISTER EARLY for the dates of August 12-18, 2006.

## Costa Mesa Congregation

by Tonia Cooper

The congregation's New Year's Eve party was held at the home of Tom and Tonia Cooper. Food, games, puzzles, visiting and videos were the main attractions for the evening's fun.



Congratulations are in order for Jennifer Orrison, who officially graduated from Cal Poly Pomona with a degree in Zoology, and to Ashley Simpson and Chad Howard who recently announced their marriage engagement.



Costa Mesa member Jennifer Orrison repaired water damaged nursery walls by adding more animals to the mural.

## La Nueva Esperanza Celebrates!

by Linda Espiritu Santo

Christmas and traditional Mexican celebrations brought out the neighborhood and many others last month. For a number of years, La Nueva Esperanza en Cristo has presented a Posada to its neighborhood—many different neighborhoods—with many different results. The Posada represents Mary and Joseph seeking lodging on Christmas Eve. This season the congregation has a new permanent home and the celebration



was exciting! After months of preparation and practice, December 18<sup>th</sup> finally arrived. A grand procession down 21<sup>st</sup> Street with candles and singing began the festivities. This has always been considered a time to walk the neighborhood and pray for peace. Along the way, more people joined in.

Returning to the church, the congregation presented a Christmas pageant to over 200 people. The hours of practice, the decorating and making of costumes were evident in the festivities. The evening ended with tamales, pozole, ponche, champurrado—all traditional foods—and good fellowship. Many came from the “new” neighborhood; others from the “old” neighborhoods; and others joined from the Mission Center. All added to the joy of the evening.

On the evening of January 5<sup>th</sup>, traditionally, the Three Kings visit homes and leave gifts for the children who leave their shoes out with hay for the royals’ camels. On January 6<sup>th</sup> (Epiphany), people gather to share in the Rosca (a wreath-like fruit bread which has plastic dolls baked in it). The children who came to the Posada signed up for gifts on January 6<sup>th</sup> along with another celebration and the sharing of the Rosca in the church parking lot. Again, over 200 people participated. They shared the bread (those who get a doll in their piece are expected to make tamales to celebrate February 2—día de la Candelaria—celebrating the flight into Egypt) and enjoyed having their picture taken with the Kings. Of course, the children couldn’t wait for the toys. It was a wonderful introduction of the Community of Christ to the neighborhood as residents were invited to “come and see”.



On January 8<sup>th</sup>, Melinda Munguia and Luz María Cervantes were baptized at the Temple City church. This was a true celebration of the love and grace of God in the lives of these two women and the congregation. A confirmation service was held January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Apostle David Brock brought the spoken word. During a special visit to the SCMC, Brother Brock provided focus ministry and leadership to the congregation, did home visiting, provided leadership support, taught a class on theology and identity of the Community of Christ.

For the La Nueva Esperanza Congregation, every day is a celebration of the joy found in serving God and the blessing of having a place to call home, the addition of which allows us to better pursue our mission in the Los Angeles Latino community.

## Missionary Workshop

The SCMC Missionary Witnessing Workshop will be April 8, 2006, at the CCM in Temple City, 9AM to 4PM.

## Come to the Fair

Bridge Builders is sponsoring a *Family Affair*, Saturday, March 18, 2006 at Temple City CCM. Everyone—young, old and in-between—is invited to share your talents and hobbies. Check with your pastor for further details soon to be released.

## Upcoming Events



### FEBRUARY

- 11-12 Junior High Snow Camp, Buckhorn Camp
- 12 Youth Ministry Day
- 18-21 Senior High Snow Camp, Buckhorn Camp
- 20 Presidents’ Day, SCMC Office Closed
- 25 Covina’s Winter Coffee House
- 26 LNE Congregation Consecration Celebration

### MARCH

- 1 Ash Wednesday
- 11-12 High Priests, Evangelists & Spouse Retreat  
Guest Minister: Don Compier, Dean of Graceland Seminary
- 18 Bridge Builders’ *Family Affair*, Temple City, CCM

### APRIL

- 8 Missionary Workshop, Temple City, CCM
- 9 Palm Sunday  
Basilea Passover Seder
- 14 Good Friday
- 16 Easter
- 23 Mission Center Conference
- 24 SCMC Office Closed
- 29 Aaronic Priesthood Workshop