

## Ministry Commission Report

**Ministry Commission:**

Norma Sexton, chair  
Jeremiah Irizarry, vice-chair  
Erik Brummett, secretary  
David Flores

*ex-officio* members: District Executive Minister;  
Moderator; Board Chair

It is a privilege to serve again this year as chair of the Ministry Commission. A great big ‘THANK YOU’ is due to my commission members listed above. “The Ministry Commission gives counsel and guidance to all ministerial matters in the District” (from the District Bylaws, 2018 ed.) This encompasses the ordained, commissioned and licensed ministers in our District.

God is at work as demonstrated by the recognition of four new ministries/fellowships at an event prior to Annual Conference. Three of those ministry sites are here within the Pacific Southwest District! Los Banos, Pasadena and Waterford. The ministers serving in these locations are following God’s call to gather the lost sheep and shepherd them into faithfulness.

As the pandemic continued our commission created a *Bilingual Virtual Love Feast* celebrated on Maundy Thursday, April 1, 2021. This event drew 45 persons on the Zoom platform and was also available online which drew many attendees and subsequent viewings of the recorded version. Many thanks to the contributors and editors of video submissions and the breakout room hosts.

Following last year’s cancellation of the Pastor-Spouse Retreat due to the pandemic we were able to provide this opportunity to our ministers this year! 28 persons met at the Serra Retreat Center in Malibu for a 5 day experience of rest and retreat guided by Melissa Hofstetter with several creative writing and art sessions led by Steven Homestead.

Praise God for the blessing of the abundance of ministers in training in our District! We currently have 16 persons licensed and engaged in training programs. The Ministry Commission is pleased to support these ministers in training by approving grants requested for tuition. I appreciate the service of the persons on the Nurturing and Credentialing Committee (NACC) that perform the licensing and ordination interviews of applicants and annual reviews of licensed ministers. I want to recognize the service of Peggy Redman as chair of NACC, and of Gilbert Romero as our Ministry Training Coordinator.

Norma Sexton, Chair  
PSWD Ministry Commission

The Ministry Commission extends our gratitude to those appointed by our commission:

**TRIM Supervisor Report.** . . . . . Russ Matteson  
See District Executive Minister report on page [13](#).

**SeBAH, EFSM, EPMC Report.** . . . Gilbert Romero  
See Ministry Training Coordinator report on page [14](#).

**NACC: Nurturing & Credentialing Committee:**  
2023 Peggy Redman, Chair  
#2021 Don Shankster  
x2022 Becky Zapata  
#2024 John Katonah  
#2025 Susan Boyer  
**Ex-Officio:** Ministry Commission Chair,  
District Moderator, District Board Chair,  
District Executive Minister

### NACC: Nurturing & Credentialing Committee

The NACC Committee is a sub committee of the Ministry Commission. We provide guidance and legwork in the licensing and ordination process for the Pacific Southwest District. We oversee the process in licensing and guide licensees toward the goal of ordination. In the past we meet twice a year, in the fall and in the spring. Covid moved us to Zoom meetings last year, which still continues. Now we can do interviews in a more flexible manner. Our meetings include interviews for those entering the licensed ministry, an annual progress review of all licensed ministers in their movement towards ordination, especially their education requirements, and interviews of those who have completed their training and are ready to receive a call to ministry as a commissioned or ordained minister. At our Fall Meeting we make recommendations based on our annual progress review. Ministry Commission then reviews our process and recommendations and make the final decision on each case before them. It is an honor and privilege to be a part of this process as we bring new people into our district to serve as licensed and ordained ministers among us.

Peggy Redman, NACC Chair

**TRIM Supervisor Report.** . . . . . Russ Matteson  
See also Ministry Commission report on page [21](#).

The District has one TRIM (Training in Ministry) student at this time. Jody Romero, pastor of Restoration LA, has completed his course work in Ministry, History, and Theology through the program. This spring into summer he completed his Supervised Ministry experience, having weekly meetings with me via Zoom to reflect on his ministry work with special focus on some areas where he wanted to further develop his ministry skills. This is now complete and Jody will begin his ordination paperwork.

The District also uses the courses available in TRIM to provide training to other licensed and commissioned ministers who are needing to complete courses to learn more about the Church of the Brethren history, theology, polity, and practices. And some of our ministers take TRIM courses for professional growth as areas of interest are offered.

*Russ Matteson, TRIM Coordinator*  
[DE@pswdcob.org](mailto:DE@pswdcob.org)

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**Youth Advisor Report.** . . . . . Rafael Aranda

Hi PSWD, My name is Rafael Aranda and I am the District Youth Advisor for Pacific Southwest District. I have been married for 7 years to Estefany Aranda and have 3 beautiful children Nathaniel 7, Naason 5, and Noelle 3. My wife has been in ministry since she was born and when I met her I integrated into Principe de Paz church in Santa Ana. I am a Youth Leader at our church, play the Bass, and help in the Pastoral Ministry as Executive Director to the pastors Richard and Becky Zapata. I came on board as district youth advisor in 2020, the year of the pandemic. It was a rough year to say the least. Since then we had District Youth Zoom Calls until mid summer, because the youth were tired of sitting in front of a computer everyday all Day. It was a blessing to have youth from our district join and have devotion time as well as spend time together as that was our new normal. We have now had a District youth bonfire at Huntington Beach since the re-opining and are planning other events before the end of this year. I look forward to seeing what God is going to do with our youth, and it has been a blessing being part of such a great community. I encourage those of you reading this to reach out to me if you have a youth group or have a youth in your church to join us in what is coming next. Look forward to what God has in store!

*Rafael Aranda, District Youth Advisor*  
[Youth@pswdcob.org](mailto:Youth@pswdcob.org)

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**MTC: Ministry Training Coordinator: SeBAH, EFSM, EPMC Report.** . . . . . Gilbert Romero  
See also Ministry Commission report on page [21](#).

In my role as MTC (Ministry Training Coordinator) for the district I find that through the many challenges, our current team makes everything work! I have a wonderful job centered on putting people that have been called to ministry in the Church of the Brethren, into the training programs EFSM: Education for Shared Ministry, EPMC: Educación para Ministerio Compartido, and SeBAH: Seminario Biblico Anabautista Hispano. Then I follow-up with calls and emails encouraging the licensed ministers as they move through the training, and keep them connected to resources.

I praise God for the three licensees from “Cristo Genesis” who are on their second unit of the EPMC program. Pastor Luz of the Las Vegas “Iglesia

Cristiana Elohim” church plant is doing well in EPMC, about to start unit four this fall. Pastors Rigo & Margie Berumen of the Los Banos “Centro Agape en Acción” fellowship are doing well in EPMC, about to start unit four this fall. Pastor Florecita Merlos of the Waterford “Nueva Visión La Hermosa” church plant has finished SeBAH, and has finished 8 of her 20 experience write-ups. “Príncipe de Paz” Pastor Becky Zapata has finished SeBAH and been ordained. Pastor Richard Zapata is working on his last SeBAH class and his 20 experience write-ups. “Iglesia de Cristo Sion” pastor David Flores has completed EPMC and been ordained. Pastor Rita Flores is on her last EPMC Unit.

Thank you for letting me work with these students during these trying times. Be blessed.

*Gilbert Romero, MTC*  
[MTC@pswdcob.org](mailto:MTC@pswdcob.org)