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## An Open, Spacious, Free Life



Mary Jo Flory-Steuery & Russ Matteson

*On Saturday, February 28, the District Policy Board meeting concluded with a service of worship in which Russ Matteson was installed as the new District Executive Minister. A congregation of about 100 came together at the Pomona Fellowship church to be a part of the vows and consecration which make up the installation. Following the service a reception was hosted by ladies from Pomona Fellowship and Cristo Sion.*

*The scripture for the service was Romans 8:5-21, from The Message. Following the laying on of hands by all, and prayers of blessing led by Mary Jo Flory-Steuery and Richard Zapata, Russ was invited to make a response and the words he shared are what follows.*

I want to begin by asking for you to continue to hold me in your prayers in the days, weeks, months, years to come. Of February 22, I worshiped with the Circle of Peace congregation in Peoria, AZ. Pastor Jeremy Ashworth introduced me to the congregation by asking me three questions, the last of which was how could their congregation be praying for me in this new calling as District Executive Minister. I would share the same prayer requests with you today.

Pray that I might keep a pastor's heart as I move into this calling. I am coming from a local congregation, I love to see what God does with people and needs through the local church, and

supporting the ministries of our churches is central to who I feel God calling me to be as your District Executive Minister.

Pray for my openness to God's wisdom and leading. I am not naive to the reality that there will be hard decisions and choices that we as a district will need to be about in the days to come. But my prayer is that I and our leadership can stay open to God's wisdom, which can take us to places and possibilities that our limited abilities can't even begin to imagine.

And pray for my family as we move into this new way of being together. I am blessed to have Erin as my wife and partner in the fullness of life for the last 25 years. Our daughters are young adults and beginning to put the form on who they are becoming. But my travel schedule, the new demands of work for both Erin and me, the shifting of patterns in time together and ways to connect – hold us in your prayers in this transition.



Laying on of hands . . .

I asked the search committee near the end of my time with them, what advice they would put in a letter that the new Executive Minister might find waiting on the desk on their first day in the office. There were several good answers, but the one that has been foremost in my heart since it was said was a call to be in prayer, to open myself to deep levels of connecting with God in prayer. In the time since I was called, in the six weeks I have been at this new work, I am learning anew how to live life prayerfully. And

*Continued on page [4](#)*

# THE PARISH PAPER

IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

EDITOR: CYNTHIA WOOLEVER—WWW.THEPARISHPAPER.COM

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## SEEKING A BIVOCATIONAL CALLING FOR PASTORS AND CHURCHES

Jim tells his neighbor about their church's bivocational pastor: "He preaches at our church at 9:00 on Sunday mornings, works in the church office two days a week, and does some visiting with sick members. On Sundays, he also drives eight miles up the road to another church and preaches there at 11:00. He sets up in their church office two days a week too. Then, he is the hospital chaplain one or two days a week." Jim's neighbor is speechless. He wonders when the pastor finds time for anything else.

Many churches need different kinds of leaders and models of ministry to remain workable and effective. The example of the Apostle Paul, who made tents to fund his ministry, inspired multitudes. Now the current demand for bivocational pastors (modern tentmakers) far exceeds the supply.

### What Is a Bivocational Pastor?

The majority of pastors serve one congregation. The church fully funds the pastor's salary and other compensation benefits, such as health insurance, housing, and retirement. A growing percentage of pastors serve multiple parishes, meaning that several churches fully fund the pastor's salary. However, these multipoint ministry assignments are not the usual arrangement for Protestant pastors—only about 12 percent of mainline and 6 percent of conservative Protestant leaders serve more than one church.<sup>1</sup>

Bivocational ministry is different from serving multiple parishes. The pastor holds a dual role—he or she serves in a local church ministry position (or in multiple churches) *and* meets other significant non-church work obligations. Most often, these pastors receive salary and support from other employment—such as chaplaincy, teacher or professor at a religious school, or serving in a community services non-profit organization. More than half of bivocational ministers fit this description. However, many pastors would describe the "other" part of their vocation in unique ways—like farming, a legal professional, IT specialist, or sports coach. Most bivocational pastors

reject the label of "part-time pastor" because they see their pastoral calling as full-time.

Bivocational ministry is more common among conservative Protestant pastors—about one in four work as tentmakers. Only about 6 percent of mainline Protestant pastors are bivocational and rarely are Catholic priests bivocational (1 percent). On average, bivocational ministers spend 20 hours per week in their non-church role. Pastors of small congregations devote closer to 30 hours per week to other employment, compared to about 9 hours a week for large-church bivocational pastors.

**The benefits for the pastor.** Many bivocational pastors find opportunities for ministry that they would not be able to pursue otherwise. These pastors find places to serve where they feel a special calling (new church development, a small or urban church, a diverse multicultural community) but where fully funded ministry is not available. Their non-church employment puts these pastors squarely out in the community—outside of any holy huddle<sup>2</sup>—where cross-pollination is more likely



"WE'RE HOPING TO HIRE A BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR WHO IS ALSO A PLUMBER, ELECTRICIAN, OR PASTRY CHEF."

to happen. Tentmakers are often geographically bound because of their non-church employment, boosting the likelihood of commitment to the local community.

**The downside for the pastor.** The myth that bivocational ministry is a second-rate ministry persists. This myth may prevent some of the most creative and entrepreneurial leaders from seeking out what seems like a riskier path. Research confirms high levels of ministry satisfaction among tentmakers, but they are too often undercompensated and provided few or no job benefits, which keeps them and their families on the financial edge. Other issues include long commutes, exhaustion, few or no days off, and limited chances for continuing education.

### How Do Congregations Respond?

Only when the congregation embraces their bivocational pastor's dual roles and sees that dual calling as fundamental to their own ministry vision are they bivocational too. One definition, from "The Bivocational Congregation," states that when local churches welcome bivocational ministry they operate on two callings: "the calling of function and the calling of mission." The authors go on to describe how churches live out this calling in five distinct ways.<sup>3</sup>

**We've always been a bivocational church.** This type often occurs in small towns or rural areas where the congregation has never had a full-time pastor. Because members carry out most roles and part-time pastors come and go, they have limited pastoral expectations.

**We seek to be a missional, bivocational church.** This second type exhibits a greater degree of intentionality to serve their local community. They want a pastor to be an equal companion in their understanding of what it means to be the church. Their church health and viability depend on their ministry outreach.

**We are a transitional bivocational church.** In this model, typically one church invites another congregation to share its building (sometimes called a nested congregation). The long-term outcome of the arrangement is unplanned and uncertain. In the meantime, both congregations benefit from the dual mission of support for one another.

**We are an experimental bivocational church.** Two or more worshiping communities form a cluster to carry out their respective ministries. Together they call a fulltime pastor, but each church experiences the leadership arrangement as a part-time clergy role for their site. Over time, they may develop collaborative Christian Education, music, or social activities.

**"We want out" bivocational church.** In this situation,

church leaders unhappily accept a part-time pastor, but their real yearning is for a full-time pastoral leader as soon as possible. Organizationally, the congregation functions as a church with a part-time pastor, but never as a bivocational congregation with a unique mission. In the end, they draw from endowments or other funds to call a fulltime pastor. Rarely does exhausting all resources in the full-time clergy pursuit lead to long-term viability.

### What Does This Mean for the Congregation?

Whether a congregation has always been bivocational or is just beginning to experiment with it, there are pros and cons for all involved.

**The benefits for the congregation.** The most obvious one is a decreased financial burden for staff expenses. Healthy congregations direct these budget savings toward other priorities and find joy in supporting ministry outside the congregation's walls. For financially struggling churches, they see a part-time pastor as their only alternative to no pastor at all.

**The downside for the congregation.** Most members experience transitioning away from full-time clergy leadership to a part-time pastor as a loss, triggering a loss of identity and self-esteem. Instead of highlighting the congregation's gifts and strengths, members may only describe to potential candidates what they have lost and what is not working. Their lack of church self-esteem may keep them from attracting creative and talented pastors. Instead, they may settle for whoever is willing and available immediately.

### The Bottom Line

What makes a congregation thrive today and into the future? Bivocational churches and pastors face the same temptations as other congregations—the strong pull back to old systems and habits. Yet bivocational churches and pastors possess positive qualities that give them the flexibility to experiment, adapt, and respond quickly to new opportunities. They have all that they need to respond to what God is calling them to do.

1. Cynthia Woolever and Deborah Bruce, *Leadership That Fits Your Church* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice: 2012), 16.

2. Thom Rainer, "Eight Reasons Why Some Full-time Pastors and Staff Should Go Bivocational," <http://thomrainer.com/2015/01/19/eight-reasons-fulltime-pastors-staff-go-bivocational/>.

3. A. Pappas, N. Faramelli, and E. Pease, "The Bivocational Congregation: Tomorrow's Church?" *Congregations* (Alban Institute: 2009), Winter, Vol. 35, no. 1.

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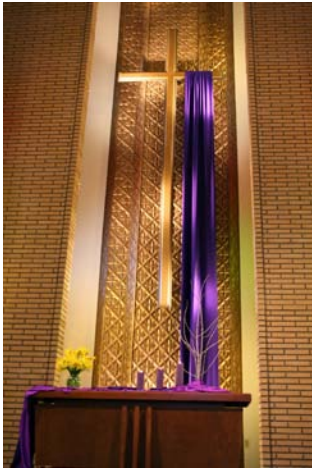


... Continued from page 1

## An Open, Spacious, Free Life

... I pray that I will continue to learn, to trust, to live more fully and completely in this relationship with God.

The passage from Romans that we heard earlier speaks to the blessing of being connected - of learning to "trust God's action in them." Paul zeros in on the reality that if we pay attention to God then "God leads us into the open, into a spacious, free life." That is the space that I hope we will find ourselves in as the Pacific Southwest District of the Church of the Brethren in the years ahead. That as we - individuals and churches - humble ourselves and open our hearts and minds we will find God leading us into this open, spacious, freeing place. This is the place



that I think we speak of being with God and one another in our Unity Statement. A place from which we can hear God and one another in new ways. A place where we come to know deep in our being that God is leading us somewhere together. A place where we are aware that the coming good times are ahead of us.

I look forward to being in this space with all of you, and the Christ who we follow. Join me in expectation of what God is doing among us. In the words of the apostle Paul, may our joyful anticipation deepen.

**Please join me in a spirit of prayer...**

Move in our midst in mighty ways O God. Transform us, teach us, lead us, free us - that we might be your church in this time and place. Amen.

*Russ Matteson*

District Executive Minister



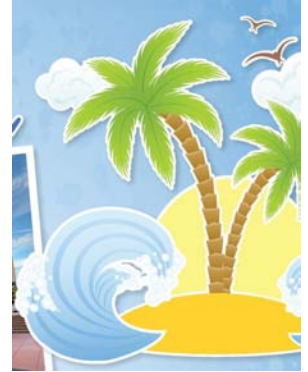
Reception by Women of Pomona Fellowship and Iglesia de Cristo Sion  
Photo by Nathan Aguirre

## Annual Conference – July 11-15 Tampa, Florida

[www.brethren.org/ac](http://www.brethren.org/ac)

**Are You a Dr, Nurse Practitioner, RN, LPN, or EMT?**

The First Aid Office at Annual Conference in Tampa is looking for DR.'s, RN's, LPN's and EMT's who are willing to volunteer a few hours during Annual Conference this summer. Kathi Horrell is coordinating the First Aid Office this summer in Tampa and would be glad to hear from willing volunteers! Please contact her at: [neonpalmtree@gmail.com](mailto:neonpalmtree@gmail.com)



## PSWD Youth ...

Dawna Welch, PSWD Youth Advisor  
[Youth@pswdcob.org](mailto:Youth@pswdcob.org)



**2015 / 2016 Youth Cabinet SOON Forming!**

**What is this and why do I want to be on the cabinet????**

Well, who better to plan and provide leadership for youth events and activities than the youth themselves? Who wants to miss out on a great opportunity to have fun and make new friends and develop leadership skills?

The Youth Cabinet is comprised of Middle School and Senior High aged Youth, in grades 8-12 during the 2015 / 2016 school year, from around the District. They work with the Youth Advisor to plan, publicize, and carry out the District's Youth Program for the year including WRYC 2016 at University of La Verne!



Youth Cabinet at Glendale CoB

Photo by John Jackson

Youth Cabinet members will be expected to travel and attend cabinet meetings, follow through on assignments, and participate in youth events.

Applications and instructions for how to apply will be mailed to all PSWD congregations, and be available via the PSWD website in May!

[www.pswdcob.org/youth](http://www.pswdcob.org/youth)

If you are interested or have questions, do not hesitate to call Dawna Welch at 909-267-5477

## RYC: Western Regional Youth Conference in La Verne January 15-17, 2016

**The Conference is ON!** Starting on Friday and finishing on Sunday at the University of La Verne, in sunny La Verne, California.



Photo from RYC in 2004

**What is Western Regional Youth Conference (WRYC) you ask?** WRYC is like National Youth Conference but just for youth of the Pacific Southwest, Pacific Northwest and Idaho. The event includes worship, small groups, workshops, music, recreation, and more. Participants stay on the college campus for the weekend and eat meals in the college dining hall. It is a perfect opportunity to reconnect with friends from NYC, meet new friends and strengthen your faith in community!

**How can I learn more?** Representatives from the University of La Verne, Dawna Welch (PSWD), Ken Rieman (PNWD) and Jessi Miller (Idaho) along with support from the PSWD Youth Cabinet will discern a theme, speakers, music and activities.

**STAY TUNED. This is going to be GOOD!**

[www.pswdcob.org/youth](http://www.pswdcob.org/youth)



## Camp La Verne

6,900 feet above San Bernardino, CA

Contact Kathy Doramus for information  
909-593-8836

[k.doramus@gmail.com](mailto:k.doramus@gmail.com)

[www.camploverne.org](http://www.camploverne.org)

### *Camp La Verne Schedule*

- July 26 - Aug. 1, 2015 – Junior Camp (grades 3-5)
- August 2-8, 2015 – Jr High Camp (grades 6-8)
- August 2-8, 2015 – Sr High Camp (grades 9-12)



## Camp Peaceful Pines

6,500 feet on Sonora Pass in the Sierras

Contact Peggy Hoover for information  
209-521-1525

[WePaint@sbcglobal.net](mailto:WePaint@sbcglobal.net)

[www.camppeacefulpines.org](http://www.camppeacefulpines.org)

### *Camp Peaceful Pines Schedule*

- June 12-14, 2015 – Women's Retreat Camp
- June 19-21, 2015 – Men's Retreat Camp
- July 2-7, 2015 – Discovery Camp
- July 19-24, 2014 – (to run concurrently)  
Junior Camp – Jr High Camp – Youth Camp
- July 24-31, 2015 – Family Camp
- July 31 – August 02, 2015 – Married Couples
- August 7-9, 2015 – Beginners Camp



## From Around the District

- ♥ **Restoration LA** is hard at work giving their children’s area a facelift with brilliant colors on the walls and other creative elements to inspire the young ones when they gather.
- ♥ **Modesto** has broken ground on a prayer labyrinth in their central courtyard. The labyrinth will be open to the community and stand as an invitation to peace and prayer for all who enter.
- ♥ **District Moderator Eric Bishop** has preached in two congregations so far: La Verne (his home church) and Bakersfield. He still has a few openings in his schedule so feel free to reach out to him at: [moderator@pswdcob.org](mailto:moderator@pswdcob.org)
- ♥ **Circle of Peace** has a new look with signage to help the community find the congregation, and then find their way around the building. Check it out on their facebook page and website: [www.circleofpeacechurch.com](http://www.circleofpeacechurch.com)
- ♥ **Live Oak** has formed a search committee and is beginning to look for their next pastor. **Jack Storne**, a licensed minister from the Live Oak congregation, is serving as the interim pastor.
- ♥ **Dr. Phil Corr** has been called to serve the **Church of the Living Savior** in McFarland and began on March 1.
- ♥ **PSWD Youth** at CCS: Christian Citizenship Seminar, April 18-23, 2015 in New York City and Washington, DC. [www.brethren.org/ccs](http://www.brethren.org/ccs)



PSWD Youth on the Brooklyn Bridge



PSWD Youth at the United Nations



## Pastor / Spouse Retreat June 8-12, 2015

Monday evening through Friday noon  
Attendance is limited – Register before May 18, 2015  
[www.pswdcob.org/events/pastors](http://www.pswdcob.org/events/pastors)

The 2015 Pastor / Spouse Retreat is being held at the Serra Retreat Center in Malibu, California, located 45 minutes from the Los Angeles & Burbank airports. This retreat is meant for your spiritual and physical health. Clergy today face chronic pressures which harm them spiritually and physically. The Ministry Commission of PSWD takes it as our mission to care for the women and men who have answered God’s call to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our churches and faith institutions.

We are again blessed to have Christian Yoga Instructor and Occupational Therapist Lorelei Woerner-Eisner. She will be leading us in our daily Prayerful Movement & Meditation. We are blessed to have Ted and Sue Swartz of Ted & Co. lead us in daily hour-long Bible Studies. New District Executive Russ Matteson will lead opening worship and preach on Monday evening, assisted by District Moderator Eric Bishop.



This event is financially supported by the Ministry Commission of PSWD. Registering for this event implies a promise that you will faithfully participate in the activities listed. However, ample free time is available for your own faith journey, health, and recreation. The only cost to the Pastors / Chaplains will be a minimal registration fee of \$50 per person and the cost of transportation. Additional scholarship money may be available to help those in need of covering transportation costs.

Brochures were mailed to churches March 12.

## Annual Conference Prayer Guide

[www.brethren.org/ac/2015/prayer-guide.html](http://www.brethren.org/ac/2015/prayer-guide.html)

*In the sincere hope that all of the Brethren have been holding one another in prayer, the Annual Conference Officers have created this prayer calendar for these weeks leading up to the 2015 Annual Conference in Tampa, Florida. The Annual Conference Officers join in prayer each Wednesday morning at 8:00 am whatever time zone they are in. You are invited to join in prayer with them each Wednesday morning as we pray for the Church of the Brethren. – David Steele, moderator@brethren.org*

**April 29** ✝ The Annual Conference Program and Arrangements committee; Christy Waltersdorff, Shawn Flory Replogle, Rhonda Pittman Gingrich, David Steele, Andy Murray and Jim Beckwith meet via conference call this week. Hold this group in prayer as they continue planning for the 2015 Annual Conference.

**May 6** ✝ Pray and give thanks for Annual Conference Office staff; Chris Douglas, Jon Kobel, and Debbie Noffsinger as they coordinate the many details involved in conference planning.

**May 13** ✝ Pray for Annual Conference Worship Planners; David Witkovsky, **Russ Matteson** and Audrey Hollenberg-Duffey, that the Holy Spirit will inspire their continued planning so that Christ's call to *Abide in My Love...and Bear Fruit* will touch the hearts and minds of the gathered worshipping body at the 2015 Annual Conference.

**May 20** ✝ In your prayer today, give thanks for General Secretary Stan Noffsinger, the work of the Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board and all of our staff members, as they *Continue the Work of Jesus* through denominational ministries. May their work for the church be a blessing to themselves and to others.

**May 27** ✝ In your prayer today, give thanks for the work of the Annual Conference Agencies: On Earth Peace, Bethany Theological Seminary, and Brethren Benefit Trust. Pray that their ongoing ministries continue to strengthen our common ministry together.

**June 3** ✝ Annual Conference depends heavily on numerous volunteers to accomplish the many tasks that come with a meeting of this size. Volunteers do everything from unloading trucks, to providing child care, to helping with audio-visual equipment and much,

much more. Give thanks to God for the large number of persons who have been planning and will help this summer in Tampa, and especially for the Atlantic Southeast district for their work in hosting the "Big Meeting."

**June 10** ✝ Give thanks for our Annual Conference preachers: David Steele, Rodger Nishioka, Katie Shaw Thompson, Don Fitzkee and **Thomas Dowdy** as they prepare to proclaim God's Word around our theme, *Abide in My Love...and Bear Fruit*.

**June 17** ✝ Pray for the Standing Committee today, especially for the Standing Committee delegate from your district (**Marlin Heckman**). They have an important job, and our denomination is continually blessed by their efforts.

**June 24** ✝ Pray for our Church of the Brethren brothers and sisters around the globe: Nigeria, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Haiti, India, and Spain, for their faithful efforts to bear fruit of Jesus Christ.

**July 1** ✝ Pray for all those who will be traveling in the coming days to Tampa for the start of the 2015 Annual Conference, and that our gathering of the body of Christ will be inspired to *Abide in My Love...and Bear Fruit*.

**July 8** ✝ Pray that love will be the motive out of which all decisions are made and that we will bear fruit by building community based in response to the abiding presence of Jesus and in mutual acts of love.



"Abide in My Love...  
and Bear Fruit"

... Continued from back cover

### Policy Board begins conversations

... The Policy Board indicated an openness to look at new possibilities and this conversation will continue when they meet again in April.

The Board also picked up conversation about the Resolutions on Church Planting and Church Revitalization that were approved at the 2012 District Conference. Some initial work began in 2012-13, but not much has been done in these areas since. This will continue to be an active area of work for the Board in the months ahead.

The final conversation was around the theme for 2015 District Conference, "*Called to be Just Christians*" and invited the Board to reflect on how we are faced with and engage issues of justice in our world as we live our lives following Jesus.

# New Life

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## Plan to be at District Conference in La Verne November 13-15, 2015

Moderator Eric Bishop hopes you've already marked the weekend on your calendar with plans to be at Hillcrest in La Verne for District Conference. The Program Committee is working hard at making this year's gathering a wonderful time with meaningful worship, spiritual renewal, opportunities to expand your gifts for serving in the church, business, and so much more. We will gather under the theme "Called to be Just Christians," with scriptural focus coming from Matthew 5:1-12 (the Beatitudes) and Matthew 25:33-45 (Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats).

So mark your calendar now, and look for registration information this summer. On-line registration will begin in August.

[www.pswdcob.org/distconf](http://www.pswdcob.org/distconf)

**JUSTICE**  
Called to be Just Christians  
PSWD 2015 – Matthew 5:1-12; 25:33-45

## Policy Board Begins Conversations by Russ Matteson



The District Policy Board met at the end of February to begin their work for 2015. Key portions of their time together were focused around four areas of conversation which invited them into conversations around directions for ministry and focus in the Pacific Southwest District. The first conversation was around the Query from our district related to Climate Change which was returned without an answer by the 2014 Annual Conference. The Board had a healthy discussion and felt the need to keep the concerns of this query alive and active within our district. A Task Force to work at how we will do this is being formed.

A conversation was also held around the current grant process we are using in the District to support congregations, and if we wanted to consider additional possibilities for grants that would support ministry other than just pastoral support?

*Continued on page 7*