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PSWD Ministry Focus and Finances

The PSWD Board is working hard on bringing better clarity and understanding to the ministry focus that the District engages and provides among the Brethren in Arizona and California. Part of this conversation has come to the forefront as we take a hard look at the district's finances and work to plan for our future together. And part of the conversation is related to making certain that our resources – human, financial, and spiritual – are being directed towards the ministry objectives that we name as the priorities for PSWD.

We do many things as a district: call people to ministry, support congregations that are working towards vitality, provide pastoral support in some challenging settings, support disaster and disaster childcare ministries, work to develop youth and their leadership, provide training for new ministers and professional growth for existing ministers, create a district conference annually, manage investments and resources, help congregations with risk management, support congregational website activity, and many other efforts. It has been a powerful activity to have the Board name the hosts of ministry areas, and to work at providing a deeper sense of priority to the full listing of the many good things we do. They have also reflected on what elements might be missing from our focus that would strengthen who we are as a district.

On the finance side, we operate each year with a planned, but significant deficit. This year that number is about \$500,000. The way that we do this is to use the money the District has been entrusted with from the proceeds from selling closed church properties. We have invested back several million dollars over the years in congregational support, targeted staffing, and church planting – all in efforts to strengthen the congregations that make up the PSWD. As we move into the future our hope is to not be closing congregations and selling properties, but rather to explore what new ministries PSWD might support in that hopefully rare instance when a church is closed. As we have looked at our operations and earnings on the funds, it is possible that we might

have used all of those funds over the course of the next 4 to 7 years.

So how do we prioritize our human and financial resources, while seeking to provide for a vital district structure to support our ministries for the next 15 to 20 years and beyond? That is what the Board and I continue to work at, and we are hoping to share with the district when we gather at District Conference in November. If you have thoughts, dreams, ideas – please be in touch and add your voice to the conversations. I encourage you to be praying for the Board as we work to follow God's leading in our work on the ministry focus and finances in the months ahead.

Pace y bene (Peace and all good),

Russ Matteson

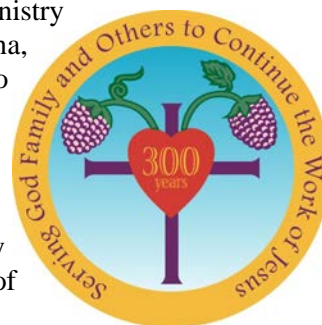
District Executive Minister
 de@pswdcob.org
 909-392-4052



We Are Family, The Family of God Called to Obedience and Service

A Word on our District Conference theme

As I began to think about the theme for the 2016 District Conference I had many thoughts on how we might be able to live together as brothers and sister in Christ. As I see it the Church of the Brethren is at a crossroads. We can pull together or we can pull apart. We seem to be pulling apart faster than together. There have always been different points of view and ways of living out our faith. The main two being Conservative and Liberal, now Progressive. I was raised what we call conservative. When I came back to California, after a failed ministry attempt in Indiana, where I was asked to leave, I was asked to be part of the PSWD Board. I began working with Christians of different Theology and Expressions of



Faith. I decided to offer them the same consideration I expected from them. I came to understand that they were as dedicated to their beliefs as I was to mine. That they did believe in Jesus as Lord. That they wanted to live out their faith as much as I wanted to live out mine, it was just different. I came to appreciate those I had considered “wrong” in their faith position.

I wanted to offer this journey to our District Conference in 2016. My first thought was: “Can we be a Family?” Then I put a positive spin on that in our Theme: “We Are Family.” If God is our Father then we are all Brothers and Sister in Christ, His Family! Then the question becomes: can we offer the love of Christ to those who differ theologically and in practice. Can we love each other as Family? Yes we can! If we “Choose” to. I am asking us to: “Choose To,” to move from distrust to tolerance, then from tolerance to acceptance, then from acceptance to embracing one another as the Family of God. Recently I was thrilled to remember the meaning of the “Holy Kiss.” Long ago, in my home congregation it was done at Love Feast after washing the brother or sister’s feet. I remember kissing the beard stubble cheek of a member of my home congregation. I also remember the awesome experience of washing my father’s feet and sharing the “Holy Kiss” with him. If we are going to be the Family of God then we must be able to embrace each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Here in the PSWD we have our wonderful Unity Statement that declares we are willing to struggle together. But instead we gather in familiar, comfortable groupings. The Native Americans had a saying about walking a mile in another’s moccasins in order to better understand the person. We experience God in various ways. We express, live out, that faith in various ways. Why can’t we extend grace to one another allowing each of us to find our faith and the way we want to live it out with equal acceptance? Father God is looking for obedience to His word and service to one another. Can we, here in the PSWD, commit to becoming “The Family of God”? I know we can and I am encouraging us to enter into the blessing of that family. Peacefully, Simply and mostly Together.

Will you join me in living this blessed life?

John E. Price, District Moderator

moderator@pswdcob.org
209-480-2778



Pastor Transitions

Jeff Glass begins as interim pastor at Pomona Fellowship on August 1. He and the leadership will be assessing their mission and leadership needs as they look into the future.



Jeff Glass

Andrew Sampson, who served the congregation for 2 years, has returned to Indiana with his family.

Celebrations of Calling

It is an exciting moment when we celebrate ordination and licensing. Ordination marks the setting apart for a role of spiritual leadership among us of one who has taken time to prepare, to explore, and to begin the practice of ministry. Licensing marks a moment of intention to deepen one’s exploration of call and preparation for the practice of ministry. The PSWD Nurturing & Credentialing Committee is responsible for working with individuals as they explore the call to ministry.



Mike Boeger, Jack Storne, Erik Brummett, Nancy McAvoy, Russ Matteson

On June 12 the Live Oak congregation was the setting for the ordination of Erik Brummett. Erik is a 2013 graduate of Bethany Theological Seminary, licensed by the Southern Ohio District, who began serving as Live Oak’s pastor in February, while completing his ordination paperwork. The worship service focused around covenants, those that God has made with us as God’s people, and the covenants that we enter as we move into ministry and as congregation and pastor. Erik’s installation as pastor was a part of the worship service as well.

On June 19 the Circle of Peace congregation held the licensing service for Joshua Longbrake. Joshua has a M.Div. from Seattle School of Theology and Psychology, and began work as associate minister in the congregation in January of this year, relocating from Chicago with his wife Kirby and infant son Waites. Growing up Baptist, Joshua has explored several Christian communities and is excited to be deepening his connection to the historic roots of Anabaptism and Radical Pietism as found in the Church of the Brethren. During his time of licensing Joshua will be continuing to explore his call to ministry and working to gain a deeper understanding of the Brethren.



Russ Matteson & Joshua Longbrake

Ministry Partnership Funds at work

This new area of our district budget opens the door for the District to come alongside and partner with congregations to encourage them to step out into something new that will encourage them along the pathway to congregational vitality. Church of the Living Savior (McFarland) used their partnership funds to engage the community and congregation in the “What on Earth am I

here for?" study initiative. The relationships developed during this time of intentional study continue to grow and invite the congregation into more connections with their community. The Empire congregation applied for Partnership Funds to support their work in Vital Ministry Journey (VMJ) as they seek God's leading for their future ministry. They are in the midst of the 60 days of small group prayer and Bible Study time, looking forward to their celebration and future directions gathering on August 7. Vital Ministry Journey is produced by the Church of the Brethren Congregational Life Office and their journey is being facilitated by Stan Dueck, staff for Transformational Practices. Stan is also training two leaders in the District to be able to lead other congregations in VMJ.

Applications for Partnership Funds are received on an ongoing basis throughout the year, and the Congregational Vitality Task Force meets regularly to review requests and make responses within 45 days (and usually faster than that). To explore what your congregation might do with partnership from the District, contact District Executive Minister Russ Matteson, or check out the information online at: www.pswdcob.org/churches/grants

Hope, Imagination, Mission

This was the theme for the 2016 Church of the Brethren Church Planting conference, at which the PSWD was well represented. The group of PSWD attendees, from seven different congregations, were there to listen, to engage, to dream, and to consider what God might be speaking to our district in the area of new church development.



PSWD attendees: Jessenia Pineda, Flor Merlos, Jeff Glass, Robert Aguirre, Russ Matteson, Dawna Welch, Edgar Pineda, Michael Fletcher, Joshua Longbrake, Rudy Amaya

Keynote speaker Efre Smith encouraged participants to consider church planting as a sneak preview of the Kingdom of God – communities of reconciliation across race, of worship with expectation that God is acting, places where the troubled are being transformed. Smith encouraged the church to follow Jesus into the places that we wouldn't normally want to go, and to go low like Jesus in humility and service.

The other keynote presenter, Mandy Smith (no relation), encouraged church planters and pastors to engage

our humanity as Jesus did, and to be unashamed of who we are created as by God. She called us to have and encourage our imaginations to be like God's, an alternative to the messages of limitation and shame that the world provides in so many ways. Mandy Smith reminded us that in God's imagination we begin to ask questions that begin with "what if" and "I wonder."

A variety of workshops and other plenary sessions invited interaction with current Church of the Brethren planting leaders, and opportunities to explore ministry across culture, building discipling communities, and building and sharing God's vision given to you with others, to name just a few.

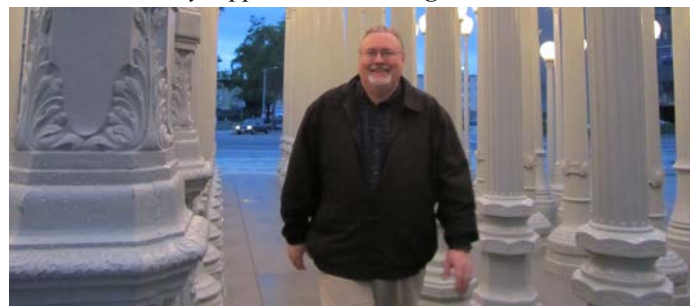
Members of the PSWD team will be gathering by conference call over the next few months to talk about how we might encourage and support congregations of the district in the work of planting new churches.

Remembering Bryan Boyer

Bryan L. Boyer, 57, former district executive for Pacific Southwest District from 2003-2007, and husband of Susan Boyer, a pastor at La Verne (Calif.) Church of the Brethren, died unexpectedly on April 23. Bryan held a degree in history and psychology from the University of La Verne; a master's degree in counseling from Cal State Fullerton; a Master of Divinity degree from Bethany Theological Seminary; and a Psy.D. degree from the Illinois School of Professional Psychology. His work life was varied and included service as a pastor, district executive minister, adjunct professor, licensed clinical psychologist, and clinic supervisor. He was a member of La Verne congregation. Memorial gifts are received to the New Community Project. Please continue to hold Bryan's family in your prayers.

Many have shared memories of Bryan's service and presence as District Executive, and perhaps one of his most lasting influences was guiding the creation of the PSWD Unity Statement. That statement reads in part:

Recognizing we are a living peace church, and that God is constantly revealing, we commit to humble ourselves, and to engage in the tension of community necessary for new birth. Not focusing on our differences, but in the spirit of love and acceptance, we choose to focus on Christ. We purpose to remain open, as we listen to one another and to the Holy Spirit, working in love to mutually support and encourage our various ministries.



Bryan Boyer

District Conference Information

November 11-13, 2016

Modesto Church of the Brethren

www.pswdcob.org/distconf/reg
Details on the web



Reserve your motel early !

Ask for a reservation under: PSWD Church of the Brethren, *in order to get the discounted rate.*

Motels with special PSWD rate	Miles	Rate <i>(taxes will be added)</i>	Amenities
Comfort Inn. (209) 544-2000 2025 W Orangeburg Ave Modesto, CA 95350	1.8	Rates until November 1 1 King \$59.00 2 Doubles \$59.00	Full breakfast, WiFi, \$10 per night for pet, All non-smoking
Modesto Hotel. (209) 577-3825 1720 Sisk Road Modesto, CA 95350	2.0	Rates until October 10 1 King \$89.00 2 Queens \$89.00	No Elevator , Full breakfast, microwave, fridge, WiFi, pool, hot tub, \$35 flat fee for pet, All non-smoking
Marriott SpringHill Suites. . (209) 526-2157 1901 W Orangeburg Ave Modesto, CA 95350	2.0	Rates until October 28 2 Queens plus pullout sofa \$139.00	Full breakfast, living room, WiFi, Microwave, fridge, pool & hot tub, fitness center, No pets, All non-smoking
Holiday Inn Express. (209) 543-9009 4300 Bangs Ave Modesto, CA 95356	5.2	Rates until November 3 1 King \$119.00 2 Queens \$119.00	Full breakfast, microwave, fridge, pool & hot tub, WiFi, fitness center No pets, All non-smoking

On-Line Registration Goes Live: Thursday, September 1, two months before conference.

On-Line registration drops meals & age groups, Wednesday, October 26, two weeks before conference, which allows us time to finalize counselors, nursery care, and more. Prices also go up for web & onsite registration.

RV Parking & Host Families

Limited Free RV Parking is available on the Modesto church property, but the RV must be self-contained. Showers (late afternoon and evening only) and restrooms are available at the church. Also, there are a very limited number of rooms available with host families of the Modesto Church of the Brethren.

Please make requests for RV parking or host housing before Wednesday, October 26 to:

Gayle Hernandez, *(Please call the cell phone first.)*
510-789-8204 cell or 209-857-5982 home



Modesto Church of the Brethren
2301 Woodland Ave, Modesto CA 95358

In Whom Shall We Trust ? Facing fear in the midst of change

Pre-Conference Professional Growth event for Ministers

Carol Sheppard will engage ministers and other interested persons in what it means for the church to encourage living faithfully in times of fear in the church and society at large. Drawing on the exile experience in the Hebrew Bible, and reflecting on the New Testament church and examples from Brethren history, participants will engage text, history, and our contemporary setting as they explore God's faithfulness.



Carol Sheppard

Carol is the 2017 Annual Conference Moderator and professionally is Vice-President and Dean for Academic Affairs at Bridgewater College. Dr. Sheppard earned M.Div. at Princeton Theological Seminary and Ph.D. at University of Pennsylvania. She joined the department of philosophy and religion at Bridgewater College in 1998, teaching such courses as history of the Christian church, medieval women's spirituality, history of biblical interpretation and biblical themes in literature. Carol is an active member of the Lebanon Church of the Brethren in Mt. Sidney, Virginia.

The event begins at 9:00 a.m. and concludes at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, November 11. Registration is \$25 and includes lunch. Childcare is provided for children age 6 and under at no cost, but participants must register for childcare by October 26. This event will generate 0.6 CEUs.

www.pswdcob.org/events/ministers

"Restorative Conflict Engagement" PSWD Conference, 2016

11:00am – 2:15pm (we will meet while we eat)



Debbie Roberts

Debbie Roberts, representing Bethany Seminary, joins us at District Conference leading a special three hour session on "Restorative Conflict Engagement." The session spans both insight session slots and the lunch period, allowing the participants to learn about transforming conflict as restorative engagement.

Evaluation sheets from the 2015 District Conference indicated a desire on the part of many for support in the area of Conflict Resolution, as a way to look at engaging in a restorative way in our congregations and as a part of the wider church. The Program Committee opened up a 3 hour slot for any who would like to learn about and practice ways to work with our brothers and sisters in love as we find ourselves in different places.

Debbie Roberts has provided districts across the denomination with the tools to work in restorative justice and conflict transformation. See the website for more detail:
www.pswdcob.org/distconf/#Roberts

* **Additional Insight sessions** Saturday before and after lunch will offer a mix of opportunities to interact with our denominational agencies on topics that matter to us, opportunities to explore conference business, and sessions that enhance specific ministries in meaningful ways! *Make your choices when registering for conference on-line.*

* **Business** will bring reports from local, district and national church leaders. Be ready to call new volunteers to the district's boards, commissions and committees. Your church has at least 4 delegates to consider and vote. Come be a part of the larger body as we work together.

Are you intrigued? Reserve the dates now, and plan to be *surprised, renewed, and enriched* as we gather!

District Conference Youth an event for grades 6-12

District Conference will be in Modesto this year, so that is where you are going to want to be November 11-13, 2016! Join us for a great weekend of fellowship, fun and activities with youth from around the Pacific Southwest District! Register for conference (\$60) and Youth Activities (plus all meals Saturday and Sunday breakfast) are included. Highlights of our time together will include catching up with friends, participating in an awesome Saturday worship service and a special off-campus event just for the YOUTH!

On-site housing will be available for High school aged Youth. If there are more than 3 youth from a congregation your church needs to register an adult advisor who will be present at all youth events through the weekend, (including, potentially, an overnight sleep over).

Questions? Call or email Dawna Welch
909-267-5477
youth@pswdcob.org

Visit: www.pswdcob.org/distconf/reg/youth
for updated information as it becomes available.



WRYC: Western Regional Youth Conference January 2016



Service Project for District Conference

This year's service project is a toy shower for Family Promise of Greater Modesto. Family Promise is a nationwide nonprofit charitable organization whose mission is "to help homeless and low-income families achieve sustainable independence through a community-based response." The Modesto affiliate has its offices and day center in the Modesto Church of the Brethren facility and Modesto CoB is one of 12 faith communities taking turns hosting families a week or two at a time.

During a hosting week, families are provided meals and sleeping quarters. During the day, family members go to work and school, or spend time in the day center, receiving counseling regarding searching for housing, budgeting, job searches, parenting, and other skills related to maintaining permanent housing. The Family Promise staff and network of congregations work 24/7/365 under the oversight of a Board of Directors.

Here is a list of suggestions for donations to the Family Promise toy shower:

- Construction toys, such as blocks
- Art supplies, such as crayons, markers, paper and coloring books, or Etch-a Sketch
- Easily cleaned dolls (No stuffed animals!)
- Board games ● Puzzles
- Movies on DVD suitable for children
- Educational toys like reading & counting games
- Children's books, including board books for toddlers

Family Promise clients include children from infancy to adolescence, so they will be able to use toys that appeal to a wide range of ages. Electronic toys are less useful than traditional toys, due to the cost of replacing batteries.

The toys donated to Family Promise will be dedicated during the Friday evening worship service, with an introduction from Executive Director Tamra Losinski.

For those who are traveling long distances to District Conference, and who may not have space in their luggage for extra items, we suggest that you consider online shopping. Companies such as Amazon, Target, Barnes & Noble and others offer a wide selection of items at competitive prices, and shipping may be free or at a nominal cost. If you choose this option, you may ship your gift directly to Family Promise at the address below:

Family Promise of Greater Modesto

2301 Woodland Ave # 7, Modesto, CA 95358-9803

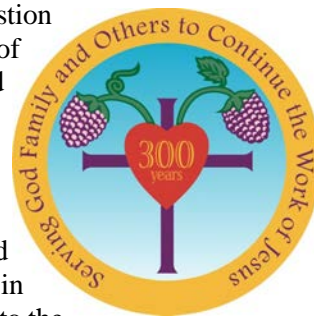
Family Promise is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Your gift is tax-deductible as allowed by law.

www.ModestoFamilyPromise.org

2016 District Conference Come Worship with us

Our Loving God has called the Family Together in Worship and in Deed the weekend of November 11-13.

- * Sunday morning, 10:00 a.m.: Carol Scheppard the 2017 Annual Conference Moderator, will bring the message.
- * Saturday evening, 7:00 p.m.: We will celebrate our life together as the family of God with multiple generations bringing the message.
- * Friday evening, 7:00 p.m.: Moderator John E. Price will be bringing the family together through his theme, *We are Family; The Family of God; Called to Obedience and Service*. One of his leading scriptures for this Theme is found in the New King James Version Romans 12 under the heading: Behave Like a Christian. With special emphasis on the verses: "Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men." Romans 12:17-18. Moderator Price will bring his heart of compassion and open it up to those who have come, in the name of Jesus, to ponder and become. In his life journey he has come to appreciate dedicated, God loving people, who strive to reach the world with peace and healing. Not a club in the form of a Bible. As he sees it, the number one theme of our Lord Jesus the Christ was, and is, to Love as He Loved. The question becomes: what is the loving act of obedience to bring people to God through Christ? Accordingly, in the same spirit, whose job is it to judge and whose job is it to love. People in attendance will be encouraged to love first and foremost. Allowing God to heal in and through those who reach out to the marginalized of our world.



As his gift to the Conference, Moderator Price will be the sponsor of the Ice Cream Social to follow the evening worship service.

Come and open your hearts to the work of the Holy Spirit among us as we offer ourselves to our Heavenly Father to be used for His Glory and Honor now and forever more.

John E. Price,

moderator@pswdcob.org



District Conference Meals

Lunches: \$12.00 — Dinners: \$15.00

Children 5 - 10 yrs. half price, under 5 free

Friday Lunch:

Quiche Lorraine, vegetarian quiche, salad,
Assorted muffins with flavored butters,
Dessert – pumpkin squares

Friday Dinner:

Chicken Picata, Rice Pilaf with pine nuts,
Vegetarian option: Polenta, mushrooms, spinach,
tomatoes and cheese.
Green Salad with rolls and butter,
Dessert – Crème Brulee

Saturday Lunch:

Chicken salad croissant, vegetarian croissant,
Salad bar with carrots, broccoli, cauliflower,
raisins, garbanzo beans, kidney beans, pickled
beets, cottage cheese, shredded cheese and onions.
Dessert – Brownies

Saturday Dinner:

Pork Tenderloin with apricot ginger glaze,
vegetarian roast, mashed baby red potatoes,
green beans with sautéed onions and mushrooms.
Green salad with rolls and butter
Dessert – Peach Melba Cobbler.

Two Part Delegate Registration

- 1) Congregation fills out an on-line “Delegate Credential Card” for each delegate, but does not register them for District Conference. No cost for the Delegate Credential Card.
- 2) Each delegate registers online: You are responsible for completing your \$80 registration by the October 26, 2016 deadline (meals & lodging extra).

Registration Cost:

- \$80 delegates (meals & lodging extra)
- \$60 adults (meals & lodging extra)
- \$60 youth grades 6-12 (activities included)
- \$30 children grades K-5 (activities included)
- Children under 5 are free (lodging is extra)

New Children’s meal discount:

- Ages 5-10 half price, under 5 free.

Childcare & Children’s Activities

These 3 options are only available until October 26th so we can plan for enough volunteers based on registrations.

(1) Friday workshop & all worship services

Nursery: infants through 6 year olds

- All meals times are with parents, so pickup your child.
- \$0 registration / activity fee = FREE for the weekend.

(2) Saturday business & insight sessions

Nursery: infants through Pre-K, age 6 in option (3)

- Saturday 8:15 a.m. – 5:15 p.m. (lunch with parents).
- All meals times are with parents, so pickup your child.

(3) Saturday Children’s Activities

K through 5th grade, includes 6 year olds

- Saturday 8:15 a.m. – 5:15 p.m. including lunch.
- \$30 registration activity fee = \$30 including Saturday lunch (other meals can be reserved at half price)
- Activities may include: Exploration of the conference theme “We Are Family,” Bible stories, games, crafts.

Advanced Registration by Web / On-Line:

- Opens September 1 at 9:00 a.m.
- Changes October 26 at midnight.
- Saves you money!
- More choices in activities and insight sessions.
- Reserve special meals at the church.

After October 26 Web & On-Site Registration:

- Your options are limited and more expensive.
- On October 26 the **price increases** \$25 for individuals and \$50 for families.
- On October 26 meal registration and age group activities close and will not re-open.
 - NO nursery or childcare registrations
 - NO youth activity registrations
 - NO meal availability

Activities Included in Registration:

Youth activities, Friday after worship through Sunday morning, includes 3 meals Saturday & breakfast Sunday. (Friday meals are *extra*)

Children’s Saturday activities (K-5). During Business and Insight Sessions. Lunch is included.

Saturday Nursery Care (infant-pre-K). During Business and Insight Sessions. *Lunch is not included*, parents pick up their children for lunch.

Activities are **not included with late registration**.

New Life

Pacific Southwest District of the
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Pastor / Spouse Retreat

Second week of June in Malibu, CA

Our leaders spent a week with Glenn Mitchell, spiritual retreat leader and director of Oasis Ministries. They're back home now with refreshed spirits.



Not Pictured: Angie Hostetler, Susan Boyer, Joshua Longbrake, Jeremy Ashworth.

Pictured: (left to right) Bob Morris, Norma Morris, Mary Fleming, Gary Pierson, Karen Pierson, Tom Hostetler, Erik Brummett, Don Shankster, Karen Shankster, Jeff Strogon, Robert Aguirre, Glenn Mitchell, Rita Flores, David Flores, Sara Haldeman-Scarr, Bill Haldeman-Scarr, Lorelei Woerner-Eisner, Russ Matteson, Erin Matteson, Dawna Welch.



The group enjoys the presentation

Speaker Glenn Mitchell

Discover more about the
November 11-13 District Conference
on pages 4-7 within this newsletter