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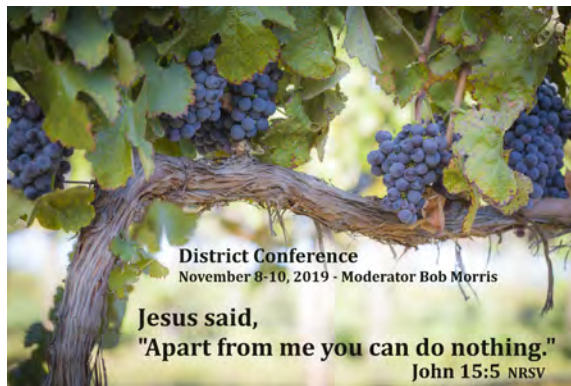
New Life Subscriptions (a \$10 value) are **Free**. New Life, the newsletter of the Pacific Southwest District of the Church of the Brethren, is sent to all of our ministers, church officials, and others who request it.

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See You in Scottsdale!

God willing, sisters and brothers, we will be meeting in a brand new building on the campus of the Franciscan Renewal Center in beautiful Scottsdale/Paradise Valley, Arizona! (Yes, the facility was just completed and is ready for occupancy!) We will be gathering to continue pondering Jesus' words, "**Apart from me you can do nothing**" (John 15:5). Let us continue to think about what it means to remain connected to Jesus as branches are connected to the Vine. Let us continue to be connected to each other as individual branches of the Vine, Jesus Christ.

District Conference is a time of renewal: a renewal of our commitment to Jesus Christ; a renewal of our connection to each other from different congregations in Arizona, California, and now, Nevada; and a renewal of our mission in the world to continue the work of Jesus, peacefully, simply, together. Appropriately, we will be meeting at Franciscan Renewal Center (FRC) for worship, business, fellowship, food, fun, and ice cream! All part of our shared renewal experience.



Plan now! Put Pacific Southwest District Conference on your calendar for November 8-10. Registration will "**go live**" September 2nd. *That means you can register as a delegate or attendee and reserve your room on September 2nd.*

In addition to my Moderator's Address on Friday evening, we will be privileged to have Bethany Professor Dan Ulrich preach on Saturday evening, and 2020 Annual Conference Moderator Paul Munday preach on Sunday morning. The schedule will be **loaded** with wonderful insight sessions and learning opportunities including some provided by FRC.

I'd like to tempt you with pictures and information on the Franciscan Renewal Center. Go to <https://thecasa.org/> See if you can resist the beauty, the tranquility, the peace, and the serenity of a place dedicated to God for Peace – Renewal – Good.



See you in Scottsdale!

Bob Morris,

District Moderator
 moderator@pswdcob.org

Conference Schedule Highlights

www.pswdcob.org/distconf/reg/schedule

Friday, November 8

- 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. - Pre-Conference workshop with Dan Ulrich
- 3:00 p.m. - Registration and exhibits open
- 5:30 p.m. - Dinner (pre-paid with web registration, as part of lodging, or meal registration *)
- 7:00 p.m. - Opening Singing and Worship with the offering of Refugee Aid items followed by an Ice Cream Social
- 8:30 p.m. - Youth Activities begin

Saturday, November 9

- 8:00 a.m. - Breakfast (pre-paid, see Friday *)
- 8:00 a.m. - Registration and exhibits open
- 8:30 a.m. - Business Session begins
- 11:00 a.m. - Insight Sessions Round 1
- 12:00 noon - Lunch (pre-paid, see Friday above *)
- 1:00 p.m. - Business Session
- 3:00 p.m. - Insight Sessions Round 2
- 4:15 p.m. - Business Session
- 5:30 p.m. - Dinner (pre-paid, see Friday *)
- 7:00 p.m. - Evening Worship with renewal of Licensed Ministers

Sunday, November 10

- 7:30 a.m. - District Board Reorganization Breakfast at FRC
- 8:00 a.m. - Breakfast (pre-paid, see Friday *)
- 9:30 a.m. Youth Activities end
- 9:30-11:00 a.m. - Worship at FRC and consecration of leadership
- 12:00 noon - Lunch at FRC or boxed for the road (pre-paid, see Friday above *)

District Conference Information

November 8-10, 2019

Franciscan Renewal Center, AZ

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



Reserve your housing when you register on the web!

- We have reserved 44 private guest rooms at the Franciscan Renewal Center (FRC) so reserve early in September. All private rooms are equipped with central air conditioning, private baths, comfortable double-sized or queen beds and well-lighted space for relaxing, reading, writing, or using computer wi-fi.
- Check in Friday at 4:00pm, Check out Sunday by 10:00am. Lodging at FRC includes 3 meals per night: Dinner, Breakfast, Lunch. Those staying off-site need to pre-pay for any meals during registration *.
- 10 of the rooms are available on Thursday night for the Minister's Education Event.
- If you would like to extend your time for a private retreat, contact FRC.
- Children under age 18 have free lodging with parents. For those 13 and under the food is also free. For ages 14 to 17 the cost is \$15 a day for their meals. *



Nightly room & meal packages:

(Scottsdale area hotels cost much more than FRC)

- Single Occupancy: \$138 (includes 3 meals)
- Double Occupancy: \$198 (includes 3 meals each)
 - 2 Smaller than queen, "double-sized" beds
- Triple Occupancy: \$255 (includes 3 meals each)
 - 2 Queen beds
- Quad Occupancy: \$260 (includes 3 meals each)
 - 2 Queen beds
- Children under 18 have free lodging with parents.

* Pre-Paid Meals for those at home or a local hotel:

- Breakfast \$10.50 ● Lunch \$13.50 ● Dinner \$16

On-Line Registration Goes Live: Monday, September 2, over two months before conference. Tuesday, October 15 registration for meals and age level events closes, which allows us time to finalize youth advisors, nursery care, and more. Prices also go up for web & onsite registration.

Time Difference: In November Arizona will be one hour ahead of Nevada and California

Come Worship with us

Friday evening worship features Moderator Bob Morris, Pastor of Glendora Church of the Brethren.

Saturday evening worship features Bethany Theological Seminary's Dan Ulrich, outside at Altar Ramada. Candlelight labyrinth walk will follow worship.

Sunday morning worship features Paul Munday, Annual Conference Moderator.

Come, let us worship together!

DC Looking for volunteers

All around our time together in Scottsdale there will be the chance for those attending to help out with some of the work that makes the conference happen. We will be looking for folks who might help usher at worship services, check people in at registration, serve as tellers for business, and a few other possibilities. When you register for the conference you will have the chance to offer your help, and the Program Committee will be most grateful for any way that you might be able to serve.

Needed:

Youth Chaperones

this is true for all youth events

We all love seeing youth gather together and be a part of what is happening at District Conference each year. But to keep it happening, we need help! It can be a challenge for the local church to find someone who can come and give the weekend so that youth from their church can be at DC. Sometimes the folks who work with youth need to be in attendance in the meetings of DC. But anyone who likes to support our youth can be a chaperone!

We need to have at least 2 men and 2 women (age 22 and up, senior adults welcome) commit to chaperone the youth program at District Conference. We will cover your housing (on an air mattress at the Papago Buttes church) and meals, and can help with transportation if needed. Chaperones will need to pass a background check and agree to what it means to work with youth as an advisor/chaperone.

For more information or to volunteer, contact

Nohemi Flores youth@pswdcob.org 909-643-4726
or

Russ Matteson de@pswdcob.org

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 \$75 registration by the October 15, 2019 deadline (meals & lodging extra).

Registration Cost *See also Housing on page 2.*

- \$75 Delegates (meals & lodging extra)
- \$35 Adults (meals & lodging extra)
- \$30 Youth grades 6-12 (activity fee included)
- \$15 Children grades K-5 (activity fee included)
- \$0 Children under 5 are free (food is extra)

Nursery & Children by Circle of Peace

working through "Busy-Bees"
www.busybeesbabysitting.com

Nursery during Friday Workshop & All 3 Worships

Infants through 2nd grade. (meals with parents)

Childcare & Children's Activities

These 3 options are only available until October 15th so we can plan for enough volunteers based on registrations.

- (1) Friday workshop & all worship services
Nursery: infants through second grade
 - 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
 - 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
 - Saturday 8:15 a.m. – 5:15 p.m. This activity has lunch together, so parents simply return by 5:15pm.
 - \$15 registration activity fee
 - Activities may include: Exploration of the conference theme, Bible stories, games, crafts.

Advanced Registration by Web / On-Line:

- Opens September 2
- Changes October 15 at midnight.
- Saves you money!
- More choices in activities and insight sessions.
- Reserve special conference meals.

After October 15 Web & On-Site Registration:

- Your options are limited and more expensive.
- On October 15 the **price increases** \$25 for individuals and \$50 for families.
- On October 15 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.

Meal tickets & Activities are **not available with late registration**.

District Conference Youth

an event for grades 6-12

Jr and Sr High youth are encouraged to join us for a great weekend of fellowship fun and activities with youth from all over California, Nevada, and Arizona! Register for conference for \$30 which includes all meals on Saturday and Sunday breakfast. Our time together will include catching up with friends, joining the district for worship, and more activities just for the Youth! Housing at the Papago Buttes COB will be available for High School Youth and 8th graders (6th & 7th graders will need to stay with family at FRC).



If more than 3 youth from a congregation are attending your church needs to register an adult advisor who will be present at all youth events through the weekend, including the overnight sleepover. More details on exact activities will be available during registration.

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

Saturday Conference Events

* **Exciting Insight Sessions** have something for everyone. Our host the Franciscan Renewal Center is providing: Learn about St. John's Illuminated Bible (an art experience), Spend time in the Meditation Room, Take an Art Tour of the Church Sanctuary. Other sessions include Paul Munday on Evangelism and Witness, time with Dan Ulrich from Bethany, learning about Church Planting, or joining Nelda and Russ to learn about the Business items. There will be a Spanish language session, topic to be decided, with translation into English. The program includes two rounds of insight sessions, one before lunch and one after lunch. See the updated session list at www.pswdcob.org/distconf/reg/insight

You'll choose during Conference online registration.

* **Items Coming to Business:** In addition to the usual things like calling out leadership and approving the 2020 budget, a few other items will invite conversation and action by the gathered delegates. The Policy Board will bring a recommendation on how the District use the monies generated by the sale of property in the Koreatown section of Los Angeles. This past year the Board has been in 14 congregations having conversation about what God might be calling us to do with these funds. Between these meetings and a 2018 District Conference conversation about 350 people have been involved in bringing ideas forward. The Board hopes to complete the proposal at their August meeting and details will be available through the Business booklet by early October. The conversations have been an exciting time of listening for God's leading. The Board will probably bring a proposal on how the insurance settlement for the Paradise congregation

might be used to support facility growth for the growing congregations in the district. Look for the complete business schedule and action items in September on-line when the booklet is completed by October 1. Each church has at least 4 delegates to consider and vote. Come be a part of the larger body as we work together.

www.pswdcob.org/distconf/business-book

Appreciating Intercultural Biblical Interpretation

www.pswdcob.org/events/ministers

Dr. Dan Ulrich, Wieand Professor of New Testament Studies at Bethany Theological Seminary, will lead participants in an experience of intercultural biblical interpretation. Discussions will focus on John 15:1-17, plus other related passages from the Gospel of John. The conference theme comes from John 15:5, "Apart from me you can do nothing." The workshop will include two-way translation in English and Spanish so that pastors and other leaders can fully participate without a language barrier.

Intercultural biblical interpretation seeks to deepen understandings of scripture through intentional conversation between people who view the text from different cultural standpoints. To use an illustration by Justo González in *Santa Biblia: The Bible through Hispanic Eyes* (Abingdon, 1996), when people view the same valley from different ridges, they tend to see different things. They can get a more complete picture of the valley by sharing with one another what they see. Similarly, understandings of scripture often deepen when people with different experiences help one another see it through their eyes. Attention to the cultural backgrounds of the authors and earliest audiences of biblical texts is also an important aspect of intercultural interpretation. The workshop will offer .6 CEU in Biblical Interpretation.

Dan is the lead faculty member in the Certificate in Intercultural Biblical Interpretation program at the Seminary. He has co-taught a study of 1 Corinthians with Dr. Pandang Yamsat, a professor emeritus at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria. A video connection facilitated intercultural conversation between participants meeting in Jos, Nigeria, and in Richmond, Indiana. In another recent course titled *Santa Biblia: The Gospel of Mark in Puerto Rico*, Dan led face-to-face discussions between North American seminary students and Church of the Brethren leaders in Vega Baja, Puerto Rico. Dan is fluent in Spanish, and this fall will teach *Evangelio de Mateo* for students in the SeBAH program.



Dan Ulrich

Registration cost for the event is \$25 and includes lunch at Franciscan Renewal Center. Registration for this will occur as part of registering for the conference. If you need childcare for this event (provided for those up through grade 2), you must indicate that in the registration process so that we make plans to provide for this need. Registration for the event and childcare closes on October 15.

Conference Service Project – Refugee Aid –

www.pswdcob.org/distconf/reg/service

The District Conference Program Committee has selected Refugee Aid as our service project this year. Refugee Aid is an organization started in Phoenix and is supported by the Papago Buttes congregation in Scottsdale, Arizona. Specifically ***our offering will collect:***

- New socks and underwear for children and adults (small and medium sizes only, please);
- Gently used clothing for children and small adults is also appreciated;
- Monetary donations can also be made with checks to PSWD and the funds will be passed along.

Refugee Aid is a volunteer group of concerned individuals who assist refugee families seeking asylum in the United States. “We are disturbed by the mistreatment of refugee families, particularly refugee children. We believe all people deserve to be treated humanely. The refugee families we serve have permission from our federal Government to remain in the U.S. with their sponsors while their asylum case is pending. Their sponsors provide them with air or bus tickets to cities across the U.S. Many families will travel for days with little or no food or money, and would travel in the clothing they have worn for weeks or months without some local intervention.



Refugee Aid supports a network of churches, mostly small, Spanish-speaking congregations with few resources. There are a growing number of churches involved in this effort, but the network we support is now coordinated through Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest (LSS-SW), the main refugee resettlement organization in the Phoenix valley. There are no local or state government funds available in Arizona to assist in providing for these families.

Refugee Aid volunteers help serve about 1500 persons each week, providing hot food, a shower when available, a change of clothing, a place to sleep for the night, some travel food and a few dollars, a ride to their plane or bus, and a large helping of God's love and comfort. Refugee Aid volunteers are organized into teams, each team to address one of the diverse needs of the families.

Your support in helping to care for these families is welcome and appreciated!

Karen Haynes Shankster
Papago Buttes CoB, Scottsdale, AZ

Update on Paradise

www.pswdcob.org/fire

Over six months have passed since the destructive Camp Fire burned through most of the northern California town of Paradise and the surrounding area. The work in the community at recovery efforts and the making of plans for rebuilding the town continue to move forward, but the pace has been slow--in part because of a rainy winter and spring.

Pacific Southwest District is blessed to be able to pass along funds to seven families who lost their homes and possessions in the fire, thanks to the generosity of Church of the Brethren congregations and individuals. More than \$103,000 was donated to support those Brethren affected by the Camp Fire and this has been distributed to those in need. About 80 congregations and 80 individuals sent funds in support. The funds have been used to replace belongings, from something as simple as a pair of scissors to purchasing clothes and furniture that were needed to start again.

Many homeowners are still waiting on settlements with their insurance companies. Those receiving support from the church have been most grateful for the generous response of sisters and brothers in Christ who do not know them but shared love through their relief support.

Policy Board Meets by Zoom

www.pswdcob.org/ministries/board

Coming to meetings of the PSWD Policy Board involves travel flights or long drives (either by distance or just getting across Los Angeles) for those involved. But this May the Board met via Zoom video conference, bringing 25 members together for a face to face time on the internet, and no one had to leave their home to be present. The Board and other committees have been using Zoom for the past three years to conduct smaller meetings, but this was the first time for a meeting this big. The Board had large group time for reporting and action items, and then utilized the Zoom Breakout Room feature to gather in groups of 4 to 5 for conversation, before being brought back together as a large group to share from the small group discussions. While there are a few bugs to work out, the attempt was fruitful and provides the opportunity for more video meetings as we move into the future. Combining a mixture of longer in-person gatherings with shorter Zoom connections looks like a positive way to move into the future across the many miles which make up the PSWD.



WOW Weekend of Wonder PSWD Women's Retreat

www.pswdcob.org/wow

Have you ever attended a WOW women's retreat? Let me share some of the highlights of the most recent one. It was held April 5-7 at the Murrieta Hot Springs Christian Conference Center in Murrieta, a nice hour and a half drive from the La Verne area. Although the "super bloom" of poppies was over, there were still a few patches of our state flower along with lots of yellow blooms, adding plenty of color to our drive. The conference center has numerous buildings and rooms for meetings, along with a book store, coffee house, rec room, exercise room, chapel, dining room, pool, pond, walking paths, and best of all, several hot pools of varying temperatures for soaking. This was a great location for the relaxing part of our Weekend of Wonder.



The theme for our retreat was Water of Life and used the scripture Isaiah 43:2, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze." Under the gentle guidance of our speaker, Julia Wheeler, we were led through two different reflections regarding "hot spots" in our life. The first reflection was about a "hot spot" from our past, and the second one was about what we are currently dealing with. For each there was time to journal regarding that loss, suffering or challenge and explore how the experience changed us, taught us and added to our life. After each journaling session we gathered in small groups to share our "hot spots" and our experiences, practicing eye contact and listening skills, and sharing suggestions for dealing with current "hot spots." Sunday closed with sharing a miracle we had experienced at some point in our life and a favorite Bible verse.



By the way, did I mention the wonderful hot pools? Our time together was full of song, laughter, stories, sharing, a few tears, getting to know others, and soaking. If you get a chance to attend a WOW retreat, I highly recommend it!

Lisa Stamatis, La Verne Church of the Brethren

Spring Youth Gathering

www.pswdcob.org/youth

On Saturday, April 27th, 25 youth and advisors from five congregations met for an amazing time at Bakersfield CoB for the Spring Fling. We were able to learn more about each other during our time of Icebreakers, fellowship, and in an on-site service project. Our fellowship meal was two 30" Pizzas, and a side of veggies and fruits. We had time to reflect in a devotion, prayer, and learn more through a game of Bible Jeopardy.



The service projects helped the Bakersfield church by picking oranges and helping with moving books as part of a cleanup project. To close our event, youth talked about future events & social media presence and created a giant postcard to the Bakersfield CoB saying, "Thank You For Hosting Us." It was a fantastic time and many thanks to our hosts Pastor Alan McLearn-Montz and the head Steward Scott Lecrone.

Nohemi Flores, Youth Advisor
Youth@pswdcob.org



Ministry Updates

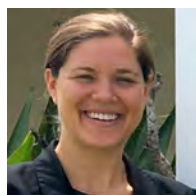
www.pswdcob.org/churches

❖ **Andrew Sampson** started June 1 as pastor of the **Modesto** congregation. Andrew and his family return to the PSWD (formerly at Pomona Fellowship) from several years in Indiana.



❖ **Robert Aguirre** started June 1 as pastor of the **Glendale** congregation. Robert served previously at the Cornerstone Reedley congregation, and has relocated to Glendale from Fresno.

❖ **Annali Topf** completed her service as **Glendale's** interim pastor, and will soon begin a CPE Residency at UCLA hospitals.



❖ **Work to Begin in Waterford** This August signs of a new work in Waterford will be seen as **Florencia Merlos**, her husband José, and their youngest child Hillary, move into the parsonage and Florencia begins to reach out with the love of Jesus. Florencia has been praying for many years about where God might be calling her to serve in ministry. After visiting Waterford and sharing with the Church Planting Task Group about what she sees God calling her to do, this summer will see this work



begin. Florencia is licensed out of the Principe de Paz (Santa Ana) congregation and is nearing the completion of the SeBAH training program. In the months ahead she will be getting to know Waterford and particularly the Spanish speaking community there. She has a heart for sharing the good news with young people and looks forward to seeing how this new church can grow in meeting needs in Waterford. The group will use the church buildings the District held on to following the closing of the Waterford congregation in 2016. There may be some opportunity for volunteers to help with repairs to the church building in the months ahead. Que Dios bendiga este nuevo trabajo en Waterford, y la familia Merlos mientras sirven (May God bless this new work in Waterford, and the Merlos family as they serve.)

New Churches Celebrate First Love Feasts

Maundy Thursday gatherings were held for the first time at the new churches in Las Vegas and Los Banos as these groups shared together in footwashing, a common meal, and communion. Both groups are participating in Educacion Para Ministerio Compartido (EPMC), a spanish language version of the EFSM training program, and the first study unit they are doing is on Creencias y Practicas (Beliefs and Practices) of the Church of the Brethren.



Learning about and then sharing together in Love Feast fit in well with the training the pastors and lay leaders are doing through EPMC. Ministry Training Coordinator Gilbert Romero attended the Las Vegas gathering and shared that there was energetic preaching prior to each portion of the Love Feast, and good conversation around the need to have one's feet washed if we are to have a part in Jesus. District Executive Russ Matteson joined the Los Banos group, whose leaders had ventured to the Empire congregation the prior year to experience Love Feast. Los Banos leaders worked hard to recreate the simple sop they had enjoyed at Empire, and learned they want to start making their own communion bread as they could not find what they had enjoyed before. These two churches are using the basins and towels, as well as communion trays and cups, that have been gifted to them from the Lindsay and Tucson congregations after they closed.



New Life

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**All you need to know about District Conference, November 8-10, 2019 is inside.
See you in Arizona**

Renewal in Malibu

Pastors Gathering Different this Year
Last week of May in Malibu, CA

A group of 33 pastors (and spouses) representing 15 of our churches gathered for their annual renewal retreat at Serra Center in Malibu. Things were changed up from years past, as the sessions and worship were all done in



both English and Spanish. Daniel Topf, a doctoral student at Fuller who is multilingual, switched back and forth between the two languages as he invited participants into the book of Revelation and the opportunity to see Jesus, the church, and the new Jerusalem with new eyes. Moderator Bob Morris had someone translate his sermon, and the worship was filled with sharing together in scriptures, readings, songs, and prayers in Spanish and English. And the group had two birding outings as the embodied spirituality time of the retreat. These were led by Jeff Strogen and took us to the Malibu Lagoon and Malibu Creek State Park. This gathering provides time for spiritual renewal, rest, and relationship building for the pastors of PSWD.