



Grace Notes from Kristie

What is next for circuits?

That is the question I am hearing in my journeys around the area. Happily, it is usually offered with a smile and sometimes, a brief story. Lay people have told me:

“It was great when all our circuit churches got together for one big church conference celebration. We’re talking about having a big music festival.”

“We met a nearby pastor as he led our church conference. I think he enjoyed hearing about us – we’re so close to each other, but we didn’t know about each other’s churches.”

“We are talking about doing some things together, like youth ministry. It will bring together several different cultures, which is a good idea. We can’t do it alone, but if we share our ideas and resources, we can make it happen!”

“Our church is reorganizing around the Five Practices and so are some of our circuit churches. We have learned a lot by meeting together.”

How encouraging! It is good to see new ministries and connections. But I feel that we are truly in one of those times when only **God can see what is unfolding among us.**

The circuits have started a new way of connecting our pastors. While circuits are new to our Conference, it is not a new idea. We have had clusters and L3 groups, formal and very informal pastor groups. The model for our circuits is grounded in our history of Wesleyan small groups, where people gathered regularly to pray and to share “the state of their souls.”

We are beginning to talk about **accountability** in those groups. What does it mean for pastors to hold one another accountable? We can encourage each person to turn in Conference reports and attend the circuit meetings, as they are required to do. But accountability should be directly tied to our mission as a church.

Which gives me an opportunity to ask again, What IS the mission of the United Methodist Church? Altogether now: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Your Bishop and Cabinet and circuit groups are starting to wonder if “what’s next” are the questions, **since we have gathered, how have you and your church made disciples for Jesus Christ? How have you transformed the world?** The answers may come as a personal response from the pastor, or she or he might answer for the church.

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Suggestions for LIFE Board Members

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing you with a concern that is on my heart, and that I trust you to hold prayerfully in yours.

I believe all of you know of, and others of you have volunteers participating in, LIFE, the UMC East Salinas Family Center located after school tutoring, nutrition and life skills program directed by awesome Sandy Gomez.

We have a Board of Directors that meet monthly during the second Thursday of the month at 5:30 at the East Salinas Family Center, 995 North Madeira, Salinas, CA 93907.

We have had some resignations from the board that will be taking affect shortly, and we could use some more individuals joining us. People do NOT need to be United Methodist to be part of the Board. In fact, we hope to maintain our ecumenical nature of the Board.

The Board oversees not only the finances of LIFE, much of which is generated from grant monies, and the rest from church or individual donations and community organizations that are concerned about gang prevention in Salinas, but oversees the staff of the program and initiates new program areas.

People who are on the Board are expected to donate to LIFE. This can be done with a monetary gift or with in kind donations of skills that are helpful to the Board. People with grant writing knowledge or skills are especially helpful at this time.

If you know of persons in Salinas or in your churches that might be interested in being part of this critical ministry, please let me know.

Sincerely,
Alice Ann Glenn
aaglenn@aol.com

San Jose District Quarterly Conferences

February 13 at Korean UMC of Santa Clara Valley, San Jose

“As we rethink church, what is the role of lay leadership?”

Speakers: Rev. Ted Virts, Burt Yin, Gayle Shearman, with Nina Klepac
Registration form in this newsletter.
SIGN UP TODAY!

April 17 at Los Altos UMC

Focus: **Youth Ministry in Your Church!**

Speaker: Kelly Newell, Conference Coordinator of Youth and Camping Ministries

Worship leader: Dirk Damonte

Welcome, Rev. Chesung Justin Ryu!

On February 1, Rev. Justin Ryu will begin serving as pastor of the New Creation United Methodist Fellowship in San Jose. The fellowship is an English Language Ministry that grew out of the Korean UMC of Santa Clara Valley.

Justin comes to our area after serving the Downieville, North San Juan, and Sierra City churches. He and his wife Hannah recently welcomed their third child into the family. JJ, or Justin Ryu Jr., was born on December 14. The appointment of Rev. Ryu to New Creation follows the appointment of Rev. Jin Oh to Cornerstone Fellowship, the English Ministry of the Korean Community United Methodist Church of Englewood, New Jersey.

St. Andrew's Sponsors Family of Bhutanese Refugees

On July 12, 2009, the Outreach Committee of St. Andrew's United Methodist Church of Palo Alto voted to sponsor a family of Nepali-speaking Bhutanese refugees. This action was prompted by Eric Nedervold, a St. Andrew's member who previously served with the Peace Corps in Nepal a number of years ago and more recently served as a translator for United Nations human-rights observers during Nepal's civil war.

Our family of 4 arrived at the San Jose airport on November 17, 2009. They are Rup-Narayan and Radhika Acharya and their sons, Himal, 14 and Niraj, 9. In a flurry of activity the week before their arrival, many St. Andrew's church members donated or shopped for bed linens, pillows, kitchen dishes and utensils, pots and pans, coats, futons, blankets, tables, chairs, lamps and a sofa. An affordable apartment was secured in a complex that houses other Nepali-speaking Bhutanese refugees.

Julia Shepardson, who also worked in Nepal as a translator, has been a key person in walking the church through the steps to help "our" family adjust to life in the United States. She assists the family in getting to and from the necessary appointments and filling out required paperwork. Both parents are enrolled in English as a Second Language classes and their sons have started local schools.

Eric Nedervold transports the family to St. Andrew's church services. The church has been raising funds to help with rent, the cost of the plane tickets, bus passes and school supplies. Each family member was also provided a welcome backpack with basic supplies.

At least eight people came together with money, time and transportation when Himal and Niraj needed sturdier shoes and heavier coats during the cold spell in December. A teacher in the congregation visited the family to make suggestions about learning English. It is very humbling to see the many adjustments for the family in this new country and how courageously they step forward each day.

To learn more about the political situation and journey of Bhutanese refugees visit <http://bhutanese-refugees.com/>, and www.reftrans.org. For ways your church might support refugees, contact

Lisa Weyland
St. Andrew's UMC, Palo Alto
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From left: Radhika Acharya, Pastor David Park, Narayan Luitel (Radhika's brother), Rup Narayan Acharya, Eric Nedervold, Niraj Acharya, Himal Acharya, Indra (Radhika's sister).



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Free demographic information available for your local church

Do you know what the projected population is for your community for 2015? What are the primary ethnic groups in your area or the breakdowns of age groups?

The Board of Missions of the California Nevada Annual Conference offers a **free resource for your church** that can answer these questions. Though we have used other resources in the past, our new provider is called **Missioninsite**. They offer projections for population, households, ethnicities, generations, and other categories, by the numbers and in colorful graphs. All this data can help your church think ahead to how you might reach out to your neighbors and friends with mission or ministries.

If you are interested, please check the instructions on our Conference website, www.cnumc.org. Under the Resources button, you will find Missioninsite Demographics Instructions. Through any computer, you'll be guided to the website, www.missioninsite.com. Because our Conference has a contract with them, there is no cost, but you will need the code to access your information.

Still time to give to Apportionments

- Starting churches in far off lands and our own cities and towns.
- Funding camps and trainings in California, Nevada, and the classrooms of Africa.
- Shaping leaders in seminaries and to make disciples in local churches.
- Reaching out with a cup of coffee and a cup of cold water.
- Keeping the doors open, the lights on, the friendly assistant on the phone.

All the work of your gifts to Apportionments.

For many churches, 2009 was a year that challenged churches financially. Local churches and your Annual Conference have spent many hours strategizing how to live kingdom-making dreams with smaller pocketbooks. In the best of times and the not-so-good times, we know that good work comes when we share our gifts through Apportionments. Thanks to each of you! Each dollar you have committed helps nurture bodies, minds, and spirits. **You change lives.**

There's still time to increase your church's giving for these vital ministries. Donations will be accepted for 2009 if received in by the Conference Treasurer by **January 21**. Questions? Call your district office.

In hope and grace,

Kristie Olah



NOR/CAL ECUMENICAL MEDIA RESOURCE CENTER

MEDIA UPDATE –January 2010

408-378-2532 FAX: 408-378-2652

emrcvideos@aol.com www.emrclibrary.org



CHOOSING FAITH

For Children

Richard Wurmbrand chooses faith in spite of the great risk of losing his life in **The Richard Wurmbrand Story: The Pastor Who Became God's Prisoner (DVC-310.6)**. In war-torn Romania, there is only one way for churches to get the protection of the government: give their support and allegiance to the Communists who are in control. Pastor Richard Wurmbrand chooses to speak up for Christ, thereby placing his own life and the lives of his family in great danger. When Richard's choice lands him in a Communist prison, his faith and wisdom are tested to the limits.

For Youth

In **Choose (DVY-550)** students are constantly faced with life-changing decisions in their relationships and faith. In these 4 sessions, Marcus Goodloe introduces Biblical principles to help students make wise choices in a chaotic culture.

For Young Adults

Where Do I Go Now, God? (DVP-808) is a **Restless Hearts Study for Young Adults**. Who am I? Who did God create me to be? How does God want me to live? What am I to do with my life? This study offers a unique opportunity to explore answers to these questions through group discussion and personal reflection.

For Adults

Common Bushes Afire: Discovering the Sacred in our Everyday Lives (DVW-538) is a beautiful devotional about spiritual choices. Near the beginning is the story of the burning bush from the book of Exodus. Near the end are the words from Elizabeth Barrett Browning: "Every common bush is afire with God." Throughout the program is photography of urban life, cathedrals, stained glass windows, and nature.

Pat Strandburg

Media Resource Center

New 2010 Mileage Rates

The Internal Revenue Service has given us the word: the professional mileage reimbursement rate for 2010 is 50 cents per mile. This is the rate pastors and staff should use for their professional duties.

The mileage rate for volunteers is 14 cents per mile. This is the figure to be used to compute your itemized deduction for driving for church work.

Simple Church Workshop February 4 at San Ramon Valley UMC in Alamo, CA

Call Ron Dunn at 925-837-5243 for more information.

Four areas of focus

The Council of Bishops, the Connectional Table, and the Table of General Secretaries and the general agencies are calling for local churches to apply church wide resources to bring four “areas of focus” to life in a wide range of ministries.

Four areas of focus for 2009-2012:

1. Developing Principled Christian Leaders for the Church and the World.
2. New Places for the New People and Renewing Existing Congregations
3. Engaging in Ministry with the Poor
4. Stamping Out Killer Diseases of Poverty by Improving Health Globally

You can get a copy of the brochure by contacting the District Office. We will email a brochure in PDF format.

The Council of Bishops is creating a monthly newsletter highlighting churches that are practicing these areas of focus. Please share your stories! Pam in the district office can answer any questions you may have.

Find a Church: Time to update!

The Conference is asking churches to update Find-A-Church profiles. Why? So new people can find churches that meet their needs. Churches should highlight any of the four focus areas that the church provides. As of October 2009 67% of churches had updated their profiles. You can update your profile on www.Find-A-Church.org. The District Office will be contacting churches that have not updated profiles recently to assist you in adding in current information.

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Or perhaps the circuit will consider how putting together their gifts and graces, they may be able to make a difference in new ways.

Another important “what’s next” is how lay persons might be more connected around our mission. Clearly, that is already happening. But we need more conversation and sharing.

One opportunity for sharing among clergy and congregation members will be at our next Quarterly Conference. On February 13, our Conference lay leaders, our district lay leader, and our Conference Superintendent will share their ideas and invite us into discussions on the topic: **As we rethink church, what is the role of lay leadership?** I hope you will be a part of that special morning. Please look for the registration materials with this newsletter.

It is an interesting time of possibility for the United Methodist Church and our local churches. My prayers join with yours.... **Spirit of the Living God, mold us, make us, fill us, use us, that your vision of hope and grace may come.**

Blessings,

Kristie Olah

District Superintendent

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CALENDAR

January 2010

January 13-15

Ministry Staff and Cabinet

Jan 18

Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

District Office closed

Jan. 19 4:30 pm **Monterey Bay Church**

Extension Society, Salinas First

Jan 28 10:30 am **District Superintendency,**

Calvary UMC, San Jose

Jan 29 **Furlough day District Office closed**

Feb 4 9:30 am to 3:30 pm **Simple Church**

Workshop, Alamo San Ramon UMC

Feb 9-12 **Ministry Staff and Cabinet**

Feb 13 8:30 am -1:30 pm **Quarterly**

Conference, San Jose Korean of Santa

Clara Valley

Feb 15 **President's Day holiday**

District Office closed

January 2010



The District Spirit is published September through June by the San Jose District 408 295 5341. The purpose is to keep district churches connected with information on activities and news happenings around the local churches, District and conference. Send your church information to the District Office at sjdist@sbcglobal.net or email Norah Miller at nkmill52@cruzio.com

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