

The Advocate

At the heart of our calling

“At the heart of our calling as members of Christ’s body is the summons to follow Christ as his disciples.” These words from the Church of the Brethren Manual of Organization and Polity succinctly describe why we bond together into the organization called “church.”

To help us answer the summons to follow Christ, the Deacons are having Membership Reaffirmation Month in January, 2005 and a Member-

ship Renewal Sunday on January 9, 2005.

During the month, and specifically on January 9, members of the church are invited to renew or reaffirm their relationship to the church.

The reason for this reaffirmation is that the church, “...has a covenantal responsibility to care for its members, to encourage growth in freedom and discipleship, to help members discover their gifts and find ways to serve,

and to provide ministries that respond to both spiritual and physical needs.” And each member, “...has a covenantal responsibility to participate regularly in the life of the congregation, to seek the counsel of the church in living out the way of Christ, to challenge the church to greater accountability to its calling, to respond to opportunities to serve in the congregation and beyond, and to contribute to the

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Supporting the tsunami relief effort

Church of the Brethren disaster relief is supporting Church World Service (CWS) relief work in Asia following the earthquake and tsu-

nami of Dec. 26. “We need churches to respond by shipping more health kits and financial support,” said the General Board’s Emergency

Response director Roy Winter. “Our focus will be to purchase relief supplies closer to south Asia because of all the

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Special points of interest:

- Church of the Brethren helps tsunami victims
- January 9—Membership Reaffirmation Sunday
- January—Membership Reaffirmation Month
- King parade Saturday, January 15

Thank you, Eldon!

Six years ago, in our search for person to moderate our church business meetings, we decided to go outside our own membership and elected Eldon Eller from the North County Church. In addition to his hard work to help lead the San Marcos church, Eldon also made regular trips to San

Eldon has shared with us his good wisdom, insight and humor

Diego to officiate at our business meetings.

Eldon has shared with us his good wisdom, insight and humor through some difficult decisions at our meetings. He has gently prodded us into action, dealing with our 'cantankerousness' (or at least-- asking us if we are 'cantankerous'). He also has

helped maintain order with his knowledge and use of Robert's Rules of Order. Eldon will continue to share his expertise on Robert's Rules as he serves as our parliamentarian.

We thank you for your six years of leadership as moderator, Eldon, and look forward to your continuing service in our congregation!

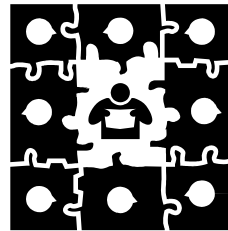
Ken Aeschbacher

Pacific Southwest District asks for your ideas for Spring Event

Last spring, the Pacific Southwest District presented inspiration, workshops, and training surrounding the theme of *worship*. This year, the planning committee for the event wants to provide inspiration, training and workshops on *calling, equip-*

ping, and inspiring the laity.

The committee would like your input on what types of workshops would interest you, or would be relevant to your church. The dates for the



events are May 7 (Papago Buttes) and May 21 (Sacramento). Please email Bryan Boyer at DistrictExecutive@pswdcob.org with your ideas for what workshops you would like to see at these events.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Parade & Festival

The San Diego Coalition for Peace and Justice will participate in the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Parade and Festival on Saturday, January 15, 2005. This annual event will feature marching bands and floats, as well as a colorful contingent from the



Coalition, carrying banners against the war in Iraq. The parade starts at 10 AM from the County Administration Building. A multi-cultural festival will be held from 11 AM to 5 PM at the Martin Luther King

Jr. Promenade. SDCPJ will be part of the annual All People's Breakfast on Monday, January 17th at 7:30 AM at Golden Hall, San Diego Concourse. For general questions on this event please contact Bonnie Graff at (858) 535-1111, ext. 3128.

Footings, floors, rebar and pours: a Friends Center update

The West wing footings and floor of the future home for American Friends Service Committee offices have been completed. The second section of the footings for the building project is well underway and approaching readiness for concrete pouring. This section is the round Friends meeting room and includes six eighteen foot steel poles which are the main support structure for the high part of the roof.

Alvin and Ken, with help from some Peace Resource Center

volunteers, built and attached a lighted rebar star and peace sign to the top of two of the poles. These are easily seen from the I-805 and I-15 freeways.

Steel reinforcing rod has also been bent into a circle shape, and enclosed in square frame cages, to fit inside the trench and concrete forms for this section's footings. The concrete pour for this section should occur early in January 2005, weather permitting. The next section will be the North wing, which will house the offices of the Peace

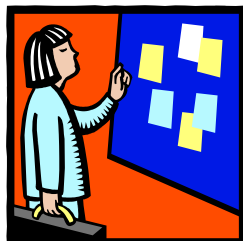
Resource Center.

A big thanks to all who have volunteered their time and labor to this building project so far, and to those who have contributed money, materials and tools. Your continued support is needed as we still have a long way to go in paying for and completing the project. Skilled and unskilled volunteers are needed every day, Monday through Friday, to help with construction.

Ken Aeschbacher

Pastoral Search update

The Committee has received individual profiles from the Pacific Southwest District in the next stage of searching for a settled pastor. The Committee is reviewing the profiles for potential matches with our congregation.



Each profile is read by each Committee member so the process is time consuming. The Committee discusses the profiles and if a decision is made to garner more information then individuals are contacted to discern their availability

and interest. If the ultimate candidate is in a parish position it is likely the person would need to give a ninety-day notice.

The Committee members are: Cheryl Old (Chair), Aleta Stern (Church Liaison), Jason Stern, Pat Perry, and Pearl Hartz.

“At the heart of our calling” continued

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church's ministries in every way possible.”†

The service on January 9 will include a time for reaffirmation of membership and for each following Sunday during January there will be a time for anyone

who is a member to come forward and reaffirm her or his membership commitment.

“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” (1 Cor.12:13), so that we, “though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one

another” (Rom. 12:5).

† Manual of Organization and Polity, 2001, Brethren Press. P. 86

The Church Organization

(Continued from page 1)

shipping costs when sending from the US. A good example is the family shelter kits which Church of the Brethren funding will support," he added. Contributions to the tsunami relief effort can be sent to the Emergency Disaster Fund, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120. For information about how to assemble Gift of the Heart Health Kits go to www.churchworldservice.org/kits. For more information about the disaster and for situation reports from Church World Service, see www.cwserp.org

Acknowledging the personal struggle to face such a disaster during a time of celebration of the Savior's birth, general secretary Stan Noffsinger urged

"We can't all jet off to Asia, yet what an opportunity to show our goodwill. The appropriate people will be there. Our presence is not the gift, our unselfishness is our gift."

*Stan Noffsinger,
General Secretary,
Church of the Brethren*

Brethren to remember that "all who perished and all who survive are created in the mind of God, as we all have been. We feel so hopeless," he added. "We can't all jet off (to Asia), yet what an opportunity to show our goodwill. The appropriate people will be there. Our presence is not the gift, our unselfishness is our gift."

The Emergency Response/Service Ministries program of the denomination's General Board is requesting an initial grant of \$30,000 from the board's Emergency Disaster Fund to support the CWS effort, and expects to send more funds in the near future, Winter said. Staff at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Md.--which warehouses relief supplies for CWS

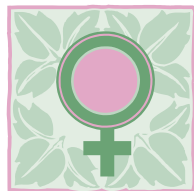
and other agencies--will be shipping light-weight blankets, health kits, and IMA medicine boxes as part of the response.

CWS deployed an emergency assistance team Dec. 27 from its Indonesia office to aid in recovery efforts in Aceh, Indonesia, the hardest-hit area on Sumatra's northernmost tip. CWS also deployed an emergency response team to Sri Lanka. In India, CWS is supporting regional response by longtime partner Church's Auxiliary for Social Action. The material assistance as of Dec. 29 included 500 family shelter kits; 75 Emergency Medicine boxes that will provide basic medicines and antibiotics to 75,000 people for three months; 44,000 Gift of the Heart Health Kits; and 5,000 light-weight blankets. CWS also is undertaking regional deployment of rapid response support and emergency material airlifts of additional shelter and hygiene materials.

Women of Wit & Wellness — WOW Retreat 2005

The 2005 WOW Retreat "Women of Wit & Wellness" is celebrating who we are as women through humor, healing, and wholeness.

April 29 - May 1, 2005 —
Friday - Sunday



Registration is at 4 PM Friday. (Dinner on your own.) The opening program is at 7 PM. The Retreat ends Sunday morning after breakfast with a worship celebration. Snacks and four meals are included.

The Leadership is Tara Hornbacker of Bethany Seminary.

We are at a new site! The serene Mary and Joseph Retreat Center on the cliffs overlooking the Pacific Ocean in Rancho Palos Verdes. Website: www.maryjoseph.org

Summary of Congregational Business Meeting Decisions

First Church of the Brethren
of San Diego
Semi-Annual Congregational
Business Meeting
December 5, 2004

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

1. The congregation thanked Eldon Eller for his service as moderator for the past six years. Judy Stout was elected to the position of moderator.
2. The Pastoral Search Committee reported that the congregational profile was sent to the district office.
3. The Board Chair reported that the church has been
4. The congregation approved an operating budget for 2005
5. The congregation elected Mary Aeschbacher as the Annual Conference delegate and Lee Albert as the alternate. Avery Merrow, Rae Stern and Delores Weaver were elected to the Nominating Committee. Gordon Jacobsen, Alvin Stern and Rae Stern were elected to another term as church representatives on the Friends Center Steering Committee.

challenged to meet the level of giving to organizations that was identified in the Witness Commission budget for 2004. There will be special offerings each week in the month of December to help meet the church's commitments. The church will not "borrow" money from reserves to cover shortages. The Board Chair will write a letter to organizations who are impacted, informing them that the church was not able to meet its giving goals in 2004.

of \$118,146, a reduction of \$4,000 from the budget in 2004.

Report on Tuesday Evening Peace Study & Action Group

The Peace Study and Action Group (PSAG) has had a busy couple of months. Among the highlights was a visit on November 9 by a member of Youth and Non-military Options (YANO) who discussed with eight to ten young people, and several adults, the opportunities available that do not include the violence inherent in joining the military. The deceptive practices by many military recruiters was also discussed. There was a follow-up meeting the following Tuesday for the

*"...discussed with eight to ten young people, and several adults, the opportunities available that do not include the violence inherent in joining the military."
From the visit by a member of Youth and Non-Military Options*

young people to discuss what they thought of the ideas presented.

On November 30, PSAG went on a field trip to see a presentation by the Restorative Justice Mediation Program which included a panel consisting of a mediator, a parent of an offender, and a parent of a victim. An interesting note is that the parent of the victim, who is a retired San Diego Police Officer, was so impressed with the process and results of the Restorative Justice

Mediation Program that he is now a mediator himself!

During PSAG's meeting on December 14, we began talking about Pablo Paredes, the Naval Petty Officer who refused to return to his ship which was headed back to Iraq. We decided that one thing that we could do to support him was to write a letter to the Union-Tribune.

PSAG will meet again on January 4, 2005. We hope to see you there!

Margie Secor

Interfaith Homeless Shelter provides warmth & food

The Interfaith Shelter Network is an 18 year-old collaborative of religious, social service, and government entities arrayed to help homeless members of the San Diego family. The Network consists of two programs: The Rotational Shelter Program and the El Nido Transitional Living Program. They represent the work of more than 120 San Diego County congregations and 3,500+ volunteers who link to offer hands up to people seeking an end to their homelessness. More than half of these guests

leave Network shelters for their own housing because of the help they receive from Network volunteers.

The mission of the Network is to coordinate the efforts of participating congregations, social service agencies, and governmental programs to provide shelter and other resources to homeless individuals and families.

Their vision is to eliminate homelessness in the urban communities of San Diego County. Interfaith Shelter Network is a

program of the Ecumenical Council of San Diego County.

Our volunteers in 2005 are:

Margi Himes & Sally Kurzdorfer on Monday, February 7.

Margie Secor & John Davis on Thursday, February 17.

Donna & Richard Pearson on Friday, February 18.

Cheryl Old & Judy Stout on Saturday, February 19.

Church joys & concerns

Robin Hunt's mother, Margaret Hendrix, died just before Christmas. Pastor Jim conducted the funeral on December 28th at a downtown mortuary. Please keep Robin and the whole family in your prayers.

Please remember all those in our fellowship who are struggling with medical problems.

Thanks Thanks Thanks

The Worship Committee would like to thank all of those in the congregation who contributed poinsettias to the chancel of the church for the holiday season.



It was a joy to see so many this year and we are in hopes of doubling the number next year.

Attendance, Offering, and Specials within the Offering

Date	Attendance	Offering		
12/5	51	\$3,38.61	Holiday Bazaar	\$183.81
			Church Women United	\$25.00
			Witness Evangelism Fund	\$23.00
12/12	48	\$1,906.40	General Board & Pacific Southwest District	\$386.05
			Adopt-a-Benevolence: Undesignated	\$253.00
12/19	49	\$641.80	Camp La Verne	\$30.00
			Association of Brethren Caregivers	\$125.00
12/24	54	\$416.00	Bethany Seminary	\$101.00
			Pacific Southwest District Church Extension Program	\$25.00
12/26	29	\$1,690.61	San Diego Ecumenical Conference	\$55.00
			Restorative Justice Mediation Program	\$80.00

The Walk Across America

Don Vermilyea is continuing his mission to walk across America visiting every Church of the Brethren congregation that extends an invitation. Don's message is that we must continue the work of Jesus: Peacefully, Simply, Together.

In almost three years since his walk began, Don has walked 12,665 miles, picked up \$831.50 along the road and received, unsolicited, \$1967.38 from passing mo-

torists. During the last few months Don has walked



in Missouri,

Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas.

His next scheduled Church of the Brethren stop will be Falfurrias in Southern Texas late in January.

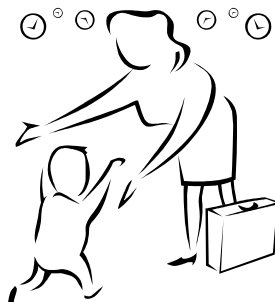
Read more about Don's walk and his reflections on the church bulletin board.

Ken Aeschbacher

Restorative Justice Mediation Program Quarterly Meeting

The Restorative Justice Mediation Program will hold its next quarterly event March 1, 7:00 p.m. at a location to be announced.

A Probation supervisor, retired after 32-years, whose services intertwined with



related judicial and community components, will participate on a panel.

The panel will also include representatives from several social service or-

ganizations in regard to juveniles, anti-social behavior, and best responses.

Pearl Hartz, former director of the Restorative Justice Mediation Program is a member of the congregation.

A Christian organization dedicated to diversity

The Annual Celebration by Church Women United will be at the Logan Temple AME, 302 South 32nd Street, Friday, January 14, 2005. Registration is at 9:30 A.M., the meeting starts at 10:00 A.M. followed by lunch at 12:00 P.M. for a fee of \$5.00.

Dr. Marion Taylor will be the keynote speaker and installation of the new Church Women United Board Officers for the year 2005 will follow.

For lunch reservations please call Anna Lee Harshbarger at (619) 287-8468 by Tuesday,

January 11, 2005.

Church Women United is a women's Christian organization dedicated to diversity in the church and society.

Hope you had a Merry Christmas and you have a great New Year!



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"Continuing the work of Jesus..."

We're on the Web twice!
www.sdbrethrenchurch.org
www.sdpeacechurch.org

A call to hospice ministry

When I moved to San Diego in September, 2003 I knew something good would happen in my life. In my personal life joy abounded but what would I do professionally? I contacted a local hospice to see about a chaplaincy. In time they hired me as a very part-time chaplain. But not before I answered a call to the First Church of the Brethren of San Diego to be your Interim Pastor.

Since March, 2004 I've had two jobs with the blessing of both organizations. The hospice work has been almost exclusively in the evenings, attending to grieving families. The church work is

all the other time. There were even times in which they overlapped and it caused my mind to spin.

Early in December San Diego Hospice and Palliative Care offered me a full-time Chaplain position. After prayer and reflection I accepted the position.

My wish has been for full-time hospice work to come along just as the church was calling its next settled pastor. Alas, it has not worked out that way. Instead, the Executive Committee has agreed to allow me to stay past my January 9, 2005 end date and, if needed, continue as a very part-time Interim Pastor until Febru-

ary 6, 2005. After that I'm willing to provide Pulpit Supply for an indefinite period. Pulpit Supply is writing worship, conducting the service, and preaching. There is no administrative work attached.

I'm going to write more about my experience "amongst the Brethren" in next month's Advocate but please know that I am not entirely the same person who came into your midst a year ago.

I believe being here and knowing you has changed me for the better.

Interim Pastor Jim Bowser

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