

# southernconnect



**Velino A. Salazar,**  
*President*

## Gathering to Move *Forward*

All of us have watched the political maneuvering at conventions of the political parties in our country. Each state elects their representation, and they go to the meeting as a block, cheering for their preferred candidate. Sometimes, what happens at these gatherings turns the election process into a disrespectful and unpleasant experience.

Instructing on how leadership should be in the Kingdom of God, Jesus said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant" (Matthew 20:25-26, NKJV).

On Sunday, Sept. 22, 2019, about 900+ church members of the Southern California Conference will convene in constituency session to:

1. Receive reports.
2. Elect the conference officers, superintendent of education, executive committee, and bylaws committee.
3. Revise conference bylaws.
4. Transact any other business related to the advancement of this conference.

### WHAT IS THIS SESSION ALL ABOUT?

The constituency session is an assembly of delegates representing every single church of our conference to make decisions to advance the work of the conference. These delegates

are elected and authorized by the local church in business meeting to represent the church at the constituency session.

Since our denomination has a representative governance system, this process allows every member to have a voice through their delegates. Also, under the guidance of the pastor, every church member—delegate or not—can recommend changes to the conference bylaws or submit items to be included on the session agenda after the scrutiny of the executive committee.

The most crucial decision in the session is the election because such a decision will impact the future of the conference. The officers elected at the session will lead the conference under the counsel of the executive committee to operate the organization according to the bylaws approved at the session.

The conference is the administrative unit in our denomination. It is in charge of hiring, training, and overseeing the employees (pastors, educators, office staff) who serve the churches, schools, and the conference office.

In a nutshell, a constituency session empowers delegates to make decisions as a group, representing each member, instead of leaving a single individual to make these decisions for the entire constituency.

### WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A DELEGATE?

Once the local church has selected its delegates to the constituency session, the delegates will attend:

- Representing their local church members.
- Seeing their local church as part of a whole.
- Being responsible for the entire conference welfare.
- Making themselves susceptible to the direction of the Holy Spirit.

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**"THIS PROCESS ALLOWS EVERY MEMBER TO HAVE A VOICE."**

INSIDE



### Pastor Reis Ordained

*For this pastor, ministry is a family affair. It's evident in his call to ministry years ago and in his daily service.*



### Palmdale Turns 60

*Many current and former members gather to celebrate the milestone anniversary of this church.*

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# Ministry Is a Family Affair

BY ARAYA MOSS

At a young age, family introduced Denilson Reis to the ministerial call. Years later, it was family who encouraged him to answer that call. Reis was born and raised in Brazil with the Adventist message embedded in his upbringing. Although his dad's desire was that he would become a pastor, Reis got a degree in mathematics and spent 15 years teaching math, physics, and computers in elementary and high schools. On the weekends, he worked for recording studios and as a music consultant. In each job, ministering to others was at the heart of his work.

After arriving in the U.S. in 2001, he worked in construction while learning English. He later met his wife, Becky,

a former missionary teacher, who inspired him to reconsider ministry.

"I can't be in construction the rest of my life. I'm thinking of ministry," Reis confessed to his friend and spiritual mentor, Pastor Tom Dodge, during that time. "Be patient," Dodge said. "The call to ministry can only be answered by you and God." Dodge shared the call to ministry at Reis's ordination service.

Reis soon saw God change the trajectory of his career with a move to Michigan to pursue his master's in divinity at Andrews University. Fulfilling his dad's dream from 25 years prior, he started pastoring the Los Angeles Portuguese and Highland Park Spanish churches in August 2012.

The ordination service, conducted



Photo by Lauren Lacson.

in Portuguese, Spanish, and English, was filled with music and emphasized the importance of familial support. "Ministry is a family affair," prayed pastor Bill Payne, as he and all ordained pastors present laid hands on the Reis family. "Lord, let them know that you will never leave or forsake them."

In his response, Reis described pastoring as being like a beggar who finds bread and teaches others how to find bread. "My wife and I hope that in this walk together, we can learn more about each other," Reis concluded, "so one day you could look back and say, 'You brought me to heaven.'" ●



Photos provided by Ronda Harrison.

This spring, the Palmdale church celebrated 60 years of ministry. Attendees gathered together for worship outdoors under a camp meeting-style tent on the beautiful sunny day. Previous pastors Rockne Dahl, now retired, and Riva Robinson, current pastor at the Santa Barbara church, were present, along with the current pastor, José Gutierrez. Current and former members alike came to celebrate this joyous occasion.

## Palmdale Church Turns 60

BY LAUREN LACSON

The church's history highlights its blossoming ministry, from growing out of the Lancaster church, to bringing a Hispanic ministry to life, and finally, planting a fellowship in Acton.

"Palmdale church is unique in that it's the only West Region church to have fully Spanish, fully English services every week," said Greg Hoenes, West Region director. "The two groups share some ministries and work to make the church a space that fosters growth

for both. Pastor Gutierrez is leading the church to greater communion and growth. It's clear God is leading!"

According to the program distributed to attendees, a challenge given to the church in 1984 still rings true: "We need to accept the challenge to bring more souls to Christ than we have in the past. Let us all faithfully witness in Palmdale and surrounding areas, finish God's work, and have an eternal home in heaven!" ●





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- Voting according to personal convictions.

However, before going to the session, those delegates need to prepare themselves by:

- Praying earnestly.
- Reading the materials posted online ([www.2019sccsession.org](http://www.2019sccsession.org)).
- Attending called meetings (pre-session, town halls, and session).
- Asking questions to make informed decisions.
- Interacting with other delegates.

#### WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A NON-DELEGATE CHURCH MEMBER?

Also, those non-delegate church members, who care for the church, can participate in another role: They can pray for the guidance and the impression of the Holy Spirit on the delegates chosen to represent them.

The nature of this meeting is spiritual—not mere business. Therefore, church members, delegates, and non-delegates are encouraged to pray for the Spirit of God to permeate the proceedings at the constituency session. And beyond that, they can become informed by reading the material posted online ([www.2019sccsession.org](http://www.2019sccsession.org)).

To conclude, the fundamental purpose of this administrative process known as constituency session is to increase the level of trust in the church, its mission, and its leadership.

May the Lord help us to honor Him as we conduct the business of His church. ●



EXALTING  
*Christ*

Southern California Conference

*65th Constituency Session · September 22, 2019*

WHITE MEMORIAL CHURCH · 7:55 A.M.

VISIT THE WEBSITE AT [WWW.SCCSESSION.ORG](http://WWW.SCCSESSION.ORG)  
FOR MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES.

## REGION NEWS

### Greater L.A. Region

The Greater Los Angeles Region (GLAR) is continuously seeking new ways to share the gospel and bring souls to the kingdom. To continue this work of evangelism, a series of GLAR Bible workers' guild training events took place at Los Angeles Adventist Academy and Fifty-Fourth Street church from May 5 to June 23, presented by Sherlene Kelson, a Bible worker for Mt. Rubidoux church in Riverside. The goal of the intense training was to motivate, mobilize, and assist local church members in their follow-up with people interested in receiving Bible studies. Participants were trained in conducting more in-home Bible studies, guiding Bible study interests in making decisions for Christ, and preparing interested individuals for baptism.

by *Royal L. Harrison, Region Director*

### L.A. Metro Region

Two of our churches are in the process of re-envisioning ministry for the 21st century: Long Beach church and Journey church. As you enter their churches and websites you will discover a new kind of "down to earth," incarnational approach to ministry. Long Beach describes this new incarnational ministry model as "Let's Do Life Together." Doing life together encompasses love for God, love for our neighbors, and a life of service in Jesus' name. Journey church's motivational call to mission is "Belong, Believe and Be Love—all in Jesus' name!"

The members of these two churches are taking to heart that incarnational ministry must always encompass contextualization and flexibility. Contextualization: being where people are. Flexibility: moving at the pace of the people we serve. All within the framework of the power of God's Holy Spirit.

by *Gerard Kiemeney, Region Director*

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#### EDITOR

Lauren Lacson

**Submit a story**  
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## in transition

### NEW EMPLOYEES

*Voted May 23 and June 13, 2019*

**Jonathan Fox** | Teaching Principal, Linda Vista Adventist Elementary, as of July 1, 2019.

**Lisa Topete** | Assistant Coordinator, SCC Literature Ministries, as of June 17, 2019.

**Filemu Filemu** | Pastor, Gardena Genesis Community and El Monte English churches, as of June 1, 2019.

### RETIREMENTS

*Voted June 13, 2019*

**Marsha Lee** | From Teacher, Los Angeles Adventist Academy, as of June 30, 2019.

### LEAVING CONFERENCE EMPLOYMENT

*Voted May 9, 23 and June 13, 2019*

**Heidi Carpenter** | From Coordinator, SCC Literature Ministries, as of April 30, 2019.

**Bie An Tjia** | From Undertreasurer, SCC treasury, as of April 30, 2019.

**Abraham "Abe" Febre** | From Custodian, SCC office, as of May 9, 2019.

**Ann Marie Riccio** | From Executive Assistant, SCC treasury, as of May 9, 2019.

**Teresa Bietz** | From Teacher, Antelope Valley Adventist School, as of June 30, 2019.

**Lois DeWitt** | From Teaching Principal, Linda Vista Adventist Elementary, as of June 30, 2019.

**Sheri Lira** | From Teacher, Glendale Adventist Academy, as of June 30, 2019.

**Elizabeth Vigil** | From Teacher, Glendale Adventist Academy, as of June 30, 2019.