

southernconnect



Kathleen V. Diaz,
Treasurer/CFO

In *His* Steps

Following Jesus has never been an easy journey; it requires a sense of detachment of oneself. When Jesus called each one of His disciples, they had to leave their plans and follow Him. Jesus was a leader who was able to cast a vision that impressed their minds in a way no other ministry had touched their hearts—a vision worth leaving everything behind to follow Him. Jesus’s plan was to show grace and reveal a plan of salvation to those who needed to hear about the love of God. But to accomplish this plan, He needed to develop a team to carry out the mission. This team was picked and trained to spread out the gospel. Each disciple needed to become a leader to help support Jesus’ ministry and to continue preaching the gospel.

In John 10, Jesus describes Himself as the Good Shepherd—one who cares for the sheep and nurtures them. David had also described God as the Good Shepherd in Psalm 23—a caring and loving Shepherd.

Psalm 23 can be used as a guide in the developing of a great leader. Church leadership should have a deep sense of purpose in bringing others to Christ, developing strategies aimed at spreading the love of God to those who need to hear the good news. The main source of strength of each leader is reflected in the following declaration: **“The Lord is my shepherd” (Psalm 23:1)**. What an amazing way to start this psalm stating God’s authority. In this phrase, assurance is found in trusting in a greater power. It presents a total submission to God’s leadership.

“He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams” (Psalm 23:2, NLT). Take time to present to God what is in your heart. The Lord is gracious to understand our need to have peace in our hearts and a time to rest. Many times during Jesus’ ministry, He needed time to spend alone with His Father. He would seclude Himself to connect with His Father through prayer. Prayer connects us to our Creator and gives us the moment to express our emotions. During prayer, our minds can be impressed with plans the Lord has for us.

“He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name” (Psalm 23:3, NLT). After spending time in prayer, your day will not be the same.

AFTER BEING IN A DARK VALLEY, THERE ARE MOMENTS TO FIND THE GREAT SHEPHERD RIGHT BESIDE US.

All projects will bring challenges and will make us consider if we should actually continue the path we have taken. It is worth noting that the verse says first “He is my strength” and then mentions “He will guide me along right paths.” When our strength comes

from the Lord, with His strength, He will carry us.

“Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me” (Psalm 23:4, NLT). As a leader, you will face seasons of disappointment and seasons of doubt. Many leaders in the Bible faced dark seasons in their life. In this verse, David is acknowledging that after being in a dark valley there are moments to find the great Shepherd right beside us.

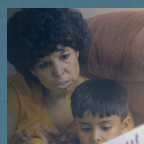
“You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies. You honor me by anointing my head with oil. My cup overflows with blessings” (Psalm 23:5, NLT). Take time to take credit and celebrate what the Lord has

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INSIDE



Quilts of Love Vallejo Drive
The Women’s Ministry team donates quilts to local hospitals



New Video Series
Episode 1 of our new “UNBELIEVABLE: Stories of Faith” video series is out now

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Sharing God's Love With Quilts

BY NINA SORKIN

The Women's Ministry of Vallejo Drive church, under the leadership of Alma Wesley, has been active for more than three decades. Though the pandemic curtailed our face-to-face activities, on October 10, 2021, we gathered together for an outdoor lunch and to work on and complete a small project. That afternoon, more than 20 women tied 40 pre-cut small blankets to provide warmth for

children living at Mi Pequeño Mundo Especial and Casa Ariel in Tijuana.

This year, the team embarked on a more creative project—quilts for several neonatal intensive care units in the Los Angeles area. "What makes these quilts so special?" Wesley asked. "They provide the opportunity to share God's love and comfort, especially for the babies and their parents in the NICUs of Verdugo Hills USC Hospital, Los Angeles General Medical Center, and UCLA Mattel Children's Hospital."

With the guidance of master quilter Diana Benson, and 60 square kits donated by Jan Stone, more than 22 women accepted the challenge to complete 48 baby quilts during the course of three months. Initially, each member of the quilting group worked independently. However, on March 11 and April 2, 2023, we came together



Vallejo Drive Interim Pastor Terry Benson and his wife, Diana, pictured just before the blessing of the quilts.

to complete the quilts. Each quilt has a label with the Vallejo Drive church Women's Ministry logo and the text, "Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these'" (Matthew 19:14).

On April 8, the completed quilts were blessed during the church service. That afternoon, the quilts were delivered to the three hospitals.

"Our Women's Ministry will continue with this quilting project because it is how we live out our mission to love God, love others, and love service," Wesley said. ●



Bianca Tulgar (left) and Alma Wesley (right) deliver the quilts at UCLA Mattel Children's Hospital.

in transition

TRANSFERS WITHIN SCC

Voted April 14, 2023

Jose Manuel Toledo | From APC, El Rio Spanish church, to Pastor, Panamericana Spanish church, as of March 1, 2023.

NEW EMPLOYEES

Voted March 23, 2023

Jonathan Henderson | Pastor, Vallejo Drive church, as of April 23, 2023.

Brandy Peralta | Pastor, El Rio, Santa Barbara Spanish, and Santa Paula churches, as of March 4, 2023.

LEAVING SCC

Voted March 23, 2023

Jose Alejandro Diaz | From Pastor, Glassell Park Spanish church, as of April 9, 2023.

Robin Suzanne Shea | From Teacher, Conejo Adventist Elementary School, as of March 30, 2023.

Sonatane Vunileva | From Pastor, Los Angeles Tongan church, as of March 31, 2023.

UNBELIEVABLE

STORIES OF FAITH

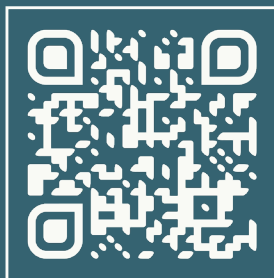
NEW
SERIES



UNBELIEVABLE
STORIES OF FAITH

THE CANCER CAME BACK

Our first video in our new *UNBELIEVABLE: Stories of Faith* series tells the story of Doreen Sevilla, a member of Van Nuys church. She shares her story of a cancer diagnosis and her journey of faith.



UNBELIEVABLE: Stories of Faith explores the incredible real-life testimonies of ordinary people who have experienced tremendous trials of all kinds, yet have come out the other side with a faith in God that cannot be shaken. Join us as we discover the amazing strength, devastating lows, and inspiring beliefs that have shaped the people of the Southern California Conference.

WATCH AT [HTTPS://SCC.ADVENTIST.ORG/UNBELIEVABLE](https://scc.adventist.org/unbelievable)

SPOTLIGHT

Children's Ministries

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The first of two Children's Ministries trainings this year took place at San Gabriel Academy, offering NAD Track 3 certification to more than 100 attendees.

Seven classes during the daylong training expanded on what evangelism is and the different methods and programs that can be incorporated when evangelizing. ●

EDITOR

Lauren Lacson

Submit a story

Email us at:
communication@sccsda.org

WATCH: <https://scc.adventist.org/childrens-ministries-training-NAD-track-3>



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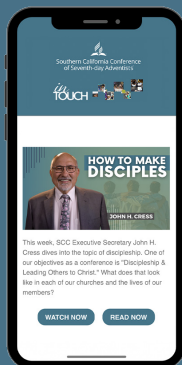
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done through you. I would rephrase "of my enemies" and insert "even with my fears." We each have our own challenges when we start a project; we think we may not be ready or prepared for the task given to us. As we overcome our fears and see how the Lord has prospered our plans, let us give praise to the Lord.

"Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever" (Psalm 23:6, NLT). What a great way to end this chapter. After describing how the Lord is our leader, how He prepares us, takes care of us, and celebrates with us, it gives us hope of being able to stand by the presence of the Lord forever.

If you are new to a leadership position, find strength in knowing God called many when it seemed they were not prepared for the job—but God saw the passion of readiness to serve in their heart. Take assurance in the promises of Psalm 23. Go and lead out in a project that will bring others to the feet of Christ. ●