

# southernconnect



**Gregory L. Hoenes,**  
*West Region Director*

## What It Means to *Serve* Like Jesus

In this brief letter, I'd like to share with you two things about what it means to serve. First, and most important, of these is that Jesus embodied what it means to serve.

By word and deed, Jesus poured out His very life to serve and save, always for the benefit of the one served and always to the glory of the Father. By contrast, language (at least the English language) labors to narrow the meaning and definition of the term. Culture subverts the concept by connecting it to citadels of military and economic power. The service industry tends to make service transactional, something to critique or reward.

My second point is the observation that service happens in the context of community. How can we serve in spiritual isolation, away from Christian community, disengaged with church fellowship? I ask because post-pandemic Adventist churches are struggling to recapture their attending audiences. Not everyone has returned to church. Of those who've returned, fewer have reengaged their volunteer roles and positions, which means we're also struggling to recapture the ideals of service within our church and with our outreach ministries.

Mark 10:45 (NIV) says, "even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." This Messianic reference to Daniel, contextualized by the use of "Son of Man," tells us Jesus is a radically different figure than the Messiah was expected to be. This Jesus isn't about conquest, accolades, power, fanfare, and the luxuries of having people meet His every need. This "Son of Man"

Messiah came to serve to the point of redemptive death! Jesus embodies love and pours Himself out as an offering that all might live life abundantly.

Jesus took the role of a common household servant and washed the disciples' feet when it was their failure to hire a Shabbat "goyim," a non-Jewish servant who could perform acts of service and work on Sabbaths as a non-Jew. In doing so, He modeled something extraordinary! This wasn't service born of position, reflective of status, wealth, or a deep sense of unworthiness. This was service given in order to demonstrate the kind of kingdom and power and community Christ had come to live out. The greatest would serve the least, not to prove an alternative sort of greatness, but because that's the way things work in God's universe. There is no other way.

### THIS EMBODIMENT OF LOVE IS TAKING ON CHRIST— HIS YOKE, HIS CROSS.

We who claim Christ must pour ourselves out in acts of self-sacrificing love and service to and for the world God so loved.

Perhaps reengaging the prophetic imagination that foresaw a self-sacrificing Messiah might relate to post-pandemic reengagement with service in the form of servant-leadership to a post-pandemic church. Might following Jesus actually require service to the body of Christ and the God-loved world? I believe this is clearly the case. Our mission isn't to herald a soon-to-come Christ but to embody love by pouring out ourselves in service to a dying world. This embodiment of love is taking on Christ—His yoke, His cross. It's following Him.

There's no other true path. We, like our Lord and Master, must be "meek and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:29, KJV). It's only in taking up Christ's burden that we can experience His rest. Can we pour out our lives for something much greater in return? ●

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*Junior high students preached on the book of Daniel at a special vespers*



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*Park shares about his ministry journey as he is ordained to ministry*

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# New Generation of Preachers at Olympic Korean

BY ARAYA MOSS

Olympic Korean church held a special Friday night vespers this spring where six junior high students collaborated to preach on the book of Daniel.

"If we train our young people to speak about God, it becomes part of them," Enoch Lee, senior pastor, said. "We want Olympic Korean church, every single one of us, to be a gospel worker."

The church studied Daniel during the first and second quarter of the year every Friday for vespers. At the end of each night, participants, many of whom were youth, would share what they learned through written summaries that were later presented to the rest of the congregation. From there came the idea for a second

junior preacher series, this time on the book of Daniel. The first junior preacher series last year featured high school students.

To prepare, junior preachers started with a rough draft of their messages. Then, they were each matched with a young adult member of Olympic Korean church to receive one-on-one mentoring and public speaking lessons through Zoom.

Each junior preacher introduced themselves with a personal anecdote before diving into their expository messages. For the content of the message, each speaker provided a summary and their takeaway from one chapter in Daniel.

"Expository preaching involves the exposition, or comprehensive



Lee (left) translates the messages for the six junior preachers in both English and Korean.

explanation, of the Scripture," Lee explained. "It presents the meaning and intent of a biblical text, providing commentary and examples to make the passage clear and understandable."

"As we read the book of Daniel, we were able to confirm that it is the book for the young people by the young people," Lee said. ●

## Ron Park Is Ordained

BY LAUREN LACSON & ARAYA MOSS

The sanctuary of the Santa Clarita church was full for the ordination of Ron Park, Santa Clarita church pastor, this summer. The service was filled with powerful music and expressions of encouragement. Park recognized members of his family watching the service both in person as well as livestreamed from

Korea. Southern California Conference (SCC) and Pacific Union Conference leadership participated in the program, affirming his call.

Greg Hoenes, SCC West Region director, presented Park for ordination. "I praise God that he's brought Ron through these trials and tribulations and made him strong, capable, and clear," Hoenes said. "I'm proud of the person I know who has taken this journey and who stands today to take this step and commitment to God and the church before you all."

For Park, the call to become a pastor was instilled in him by his mother. "She dedicated me to be a pastor," he said. "Throughout my upbringing, I was repeatedly told I would become

a pastor." Though he faced moments of uncertainty, he ultimately studied the Bible for himself. Park has various ministry experiences, from summer canvassing to youth pastor to missionary teacher. He served for six years as the pastor at Van Nuys church before serving at Santa Clarita.

"My personal experience is not like a miraculous encounter like with the Apostle Paul, but rather a gradual unfolding of His presence in my life," Park said. "I realized that in the wilderness, that's the place that you really see how God is working in your life because there's nothing else you can rely on. That's been my journey."

Watch at <https://scc.adventist.org/ron-park-ordination>. ●



Ordained pastors in attendance lay hands on Park as Cress offers the ordination prayer.



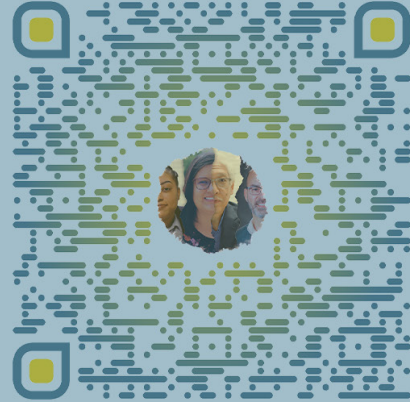
## we are SCC

AN INSIDE LOOK BEHIND THE SCENES

Watch the playlist  
and stay tuned for  
new releases:

[scc.adventist.org/wearescc](https://scc.adventist.org/wearescc)

Have you ever wondered what the Southern California Conference does? Why do we even need a conference in the first place? "We Are SCC," a new multi-episode documentary, explores the inner workings of the conference and the dedicated employees who work there. Discover the people behind the mission and how their jobs affect local churches and schools within the SCC territory.



# in transition

## NEW EMPLOYEES

*Voted May 11, June 8 & 22, 2023*

**Geoff Sewell** | Director, Senior Youth & Young Adult Ministries, SCC Office, as of May 1, 2023.

**Austin Rosen** | Teacher (9th-12th Grade), Newbury Park Adventist Academy, as of July 1, 2023.

**Michael Taylor** | Teacher (9th-12th Grade), Newbury Park Adventist Academy, as of July 1, 2023.

**Jordan Ong** | VP of Finance, San Gabriel Academy, as of June 12, 2023.

**Andy Villanueva** | Literature Ministries Director, SCC Office, as of June 8, 2023.

## TRANSFERS WITHIN SCC

*Voted June 8 & 22, 2023*

**Leila Dali** | From Teacher, Adventist Education Simi Valley Elementary School, to Teacher, Conejo Adventist Elementary School, as of July 1, 2023.

**Tricia Koh-Valdez** | From Teacher, San Gabriel Academy, to Teacher, Adventist Union School, as of July 1, 2023.

**Joel Albritton** | From Teacher to Principal, Newbury Park Adventist Academy, as of July 1, 2023.

**Neil Ramroop** | From Community Development Director to Chaplain/Religion Teacher, Newbury Park Adventist Academy, as of July 1, 2023.

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This summer, a team of 10 missionaries from SCC traveled to Honduras to minister to the local community.

In 2021, Bonacca Key in Guanaja experienced a fire that burned down about 1/3 of the key. Most of the population of Guanaja lives on Bonacca Key.

The purpose of this mission trip was to rebuild the school that was burned down as well as provide medical work (vision and gynecology), dental services, a Vacation Bible School program, and an evangelistic campaign. ●



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Lauren Lacson

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### LEAVING SCC

*Voted May 11 & 25, June 8 & 22, 2023*

**Manuel Avita** | From Pastor, Oxnard All Nations church, as of December 31, 2023.

**Lauren Cline Lim** | From Pastor, Vallejo Drive church, as of May 27, 2023.

**Nirsa Oshon** | From Teacher (5th & 6th Grade), San Fernando Valley Academy, as of June 30, 2023.

**Sheldon Parris** | From Principal, Newbury Park Adventist Academy, as of June 30, 2023.

**Branon Shea** | From Athletic Director/PE Teacher, Newbury Park Adventist Academy, as of June 30, 2023.

**Sandra Candelario** | From Teacher, Glendale Adventist Academy, as of June 30, 2023.

**Sophia Grise** | From Vice Principal/Teacher, Newbury Park Adventist Academy, as of June 30, 2023.

**Sheri Hansen** | From Teacher, Glendale Adventist Academy, as of June 30, 2023.

**Timothy Hansen** | From Teacher, Glendale Adventist Academy, as of June 30, 2023.

**Caroline Lipman** | From Science Teacher, Glendale Adventist Academy, as of June 30, 2023.

**Evelyn Ricketts** | From Teacher, Ridgecrest Adventist Elementary, as of June 30, 2023.

**Fernando Rossi** | From Religion Teacher/Chaplain, Newbury Park Adventist Elementary, as of June 30, 2023.



SCHOOL STARTS THIS MONTH

**PRAY FOR OUR  
STUDENTS &  
TEACHERS**

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR SCHOOLS  
[scc.adventist.org/edu](http://scc.adventist.org/edu)