

CONFERENCE

Connections

The Road to Constituency Session

This October, we will gather for our Third Quinquennial Session of the Southeastern California Conference (SECC). During this session, delegates from each church elect the conference officers and committee members. We vote changes to our bylaws. We also share reports highlighting our progress and chart our future.

The theme for this year's constituency session is "Connecting through Christ." Christ is the unifying force that transcends our backgrounds, cultures, and generations. And though we have many differences, Christ brings us together and helps us create a sense of community.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to love and serve others as He did, with acts of service and outreach to those in need. This fosters meaningful connections and relationships as we expand God's kingdom.

To prepare for our constituency session, our team has put in a lot of work. Many of you joined us as delegates as we held our area presession meetings. Delegates gathered in the five counties of this

conference: Imperial, Orange, San Diego, Riverside, and San Bernardino.

According to our bylaws, the purpose of these presession meetings is threefold: to discuss the session and possible agenda items, to propose amendments to the conference's bylaws, and to suggest the names of people

eligible to serve on the Executive Committee.

We did this and more. We had the opportunity to share our gratitude to God for keeping us over the past five years. It was also a time to see and connect with one another. Our host churches provided a reception for our delegates where we had the opportunity to meet one another and catch up. I want to personally thank the El Centro Spanish, San Diego Fil-Am, OC Grace, Riverside Community, and Loma Linda Korean churches for hosting our presession meetings.

As we prepare for our session, we want to encourage you to pray for us as a conference that God would lead us. Pray for our nominating committee as they meet to nominate officers and committee members to recommend to our delegates. Pray for our delegates as they serve our conference in this special way, and pray for those who will be chosen to lead this conference for the next five years. Finally, pray that being connected through Christ will not just be words but our work.

By Jonathan Park



Jonathan Park
SECC President

Constituency Session Notice



Notice is hereby given that the Third Quinquennial Session of the Southeastern California Conference is called to convene as follows:

La Sierra University Church
4937 Sierra Vista Ave.
Riverside, California
9 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 1, 2023

The purpose of this meeting is to receive reports; to elect conference officers, vice presidents for ethnic ministries, the executive committee, and the bylaws committee; and to transact any other business that may properly come before the delegates in session.

Jonathan Park, President
Patty Marruffo, Executive Secretary
Verlon Strauss, Treasurer



Asian/Pacific Ministries Takes on Seven Churches

This spring, 42 Asian/Pacific pastors and Southeastern California Conference (SECC) staff members left Los Angeles for a 14-day trip to Dubai, Greece, and Turkey. This was the third department trip, following the Holy Land Tour in 2016 and the Reformation Tour in 2019.

Some may wonder why someone would want to visit the seven churches, especially since they are in ruins. Adventists often study the book of Revelation, an intriguing book to be sure. The messages to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 have been dissected and interpreted for centuries. The Bible described the churches individually, and each had their own unique characteristics and a specific message from God. In visiting all seven churches, the group was able to better understand not only those messages, but also what Christians were going through back then. It also shed light on how and why Christianity is where it is today.

Klenth Sasil, associate pastor at Moreno Hills, was impacted by the trip. He appreciated how it gave him a sharper view and a deeper understanding of the Bible. "As a Seventh-day Adventist pastor, it gives me a clearer and immersive understanding of the prophecy with its practical and biblical application. Through immersive learning, I can be more effective in communicating the prophetic truth to our young people in church," said Sasil.

Pergamum was one of the most memorable churches. The ruins are situated on a hill. The visitors had to take a tram to get there. On the way up, the tour guide warned the group that it always rains; however, they were not prepared for the amount of rain waiting for them. Once

they got on the hilltop overlooking the current city of Bergama, they realized Pergamum was a different world. They were able to see two worlds from different eras. The group wanted to explore, but thunder, lightning, gusts of wind, and rain literally ran them out of Pergamum. When John called this place "Satan's seat," it was no understatement.

Paul Jeon, pastor at Riverside Korean church, claimed the underground city in Cappadocia as his favorite part of the trip. "Going into the clandestine area where early Christians hid from invaders and authorities to worship and keep the faith reminded me of the high cost early believers paid to maintain their faith," he said. "Seeing the stone-carved architecture and walking the ground where they walked, slept, and lived allowed me to experience a small portion of the passion and courage the early Christians possessed. May we also be resolute and passionate in guarding our faith from the Great Invader!"

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*LEFT: The group braves the weather at Pergamum.
BELOW: Group members enjoy the poppy flowers at Laodicea.*



Churches Trip

Ephesus and Laodicea were also memorable. Ephesus did not give a church-like feel. This church had an amphitheater that could seat nearly 25,000 people and even had a marble street! It was breathtaking to see a church on that scale that was magnificent even in ruins.

There wasn't much left of the church of Laodicea, but the ruins were overrun with fields of poppies. In its own way, it was beautiful. Today, worship is not allowed at the church of Laodicea. That did not stop the tour group from worshipping God on Sabbath, though they had to hide from security.

Although the trip was an unbelievably amazing experience, there were still complications, such as travelers being booked on a different flight and random bus breakdowns. They will cherish the memories of the daily morning devotions on the bus, attending a Visayan Adventist church in a Muslim country, learning how to eat whole anchovies without eating the bones, and taking endless group photos.

After 14 days of traveling, eating, and worshipping together, 42 people returned to their lives in California. The 14 days gave them time to immerse themselves in a world that they had only read about. It gave them the opportunity to not just travel to another part of the world but to better understand a part of the foundation of what they study, preach, and try to exemplify in their daily lives. The group came back with an experience that no book or words can describe.

By Juliana Moon



Everyone comes together for a massive group photo!



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kids konnect



The New Kid



Damian was super excited for the first day of school. He couldn't wait to see his friends again and play games at recess—especially his favorite game, Sharks and Minnows. He loved pretending to be his favorite animal, the great white shark, as he chased down his friends.

Damian found his new seat in his new classroom, and he was relieved to see that he was seated next to his two friends, Eddie and Elijah. But there was one more student at his table that he didn't recognize.

"Welcome back to school everyone!" announced the teacher. "We have a new student this year. Say hi, Matthew!" The student at Damian's table waved shyly around to the class. "Let's make sure Matthew feels right at home with us, OK?" the teacher said.

Damian waved back at Matthew with the rest of the class, but he wasn't sure if he actually wanted to be his friend. He didn't *look* like he would be good friends with Damian. He was a lot shorter and smaller than Damian and his friends. He probably

wouldn't be able to keep up with them in Sharks and Minnows.

Damian patiently and happily sat through the morning classes until the lunch bell finally rang. After lunch, it would be recess! Damian got up to go to his cubby to get his lunchbox, but he saw that it was already at the table! Or at least, he thought it was. He stared as Matthew sat down with the same exact shark lunchbox that he had.

"We have the same lunchbox!" Damian exclaimed. "Do you like sharks?"

"Yeah," Matthew replied. "They're my favorite animal!"

"Mine too!" Damian said with delight. "Do you like the game Sharks and Minnows?"

"Yeah!" Matthew nodded. "I like to pretend I'm a great white shark!"

Damian's jaw dropped in surprise. They had more in common than he thought! "You should totally play with us at recess!"

Matthew's face lit up in pleasure, and Damian felt warm happiness in his chest. It didn't matter that Matthew looked different from Damian; they were still bound to be *great* friends.

By Megan Jacobs

Spot the Difference - Back to School

Can you spot the ten differences between these two pictures?



Answer: 1. Alphabet on chalkboard is now numbers 2. Time on clock has changed 3. The pencil next to the book on the desk moved 4. More books on the bookshelf 5. Kid on far right is no longer wearing glasses 6. Red balloon is now purple 7. Headband is now yellow for kid on far left 8. Hair clips on one side now for kid second from left 9. Book on teacher's desk is closed 10. Writing on the paper on the desk