



January

HAPPY NEW YEAR, FCCA!

INSIDE:

- Article by Pastor Jim
- New Year's Wishes from Cameroon
- Small Group Study
- Christmas Update
- ...and more!

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Website: fcca.org
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Angella Kissoon—Accountant
Linda Freud—Missions
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“Embracing Change”

An Article by Pastor Jim

New Years is an opportunity to reflect on the past year with all its ups and downs, with its celebrations and times of sorrow. In 2023, we as a church had many opportunities to reflect on the faithfulness of God in our journey together. It also reminds us **to embrace change** for the New Year.

I believe it's a healthy thing for a church to assess its progress. What has been achieved? Where are its weaknesses? What are its immediate goals and how they can be obtained? We do this by publishing our annual report and as a church council having a yearly planning retreat. But during times of evaluation it's important to ask ourselves, "What is God doing in our church?" The following are some of Highlights of 2023 and hopes for 2024.

We opened our facilities to more churches needing a place to meet – today we have 9 churches speaking 4 languages using our facilities. Easter Seals and the Montessori School also meet here.

We had a combined Thanksgiving meal as well as combined worship services with some of the churches using our facilities this past year. What wonderful times of celebration!

Small Group Bible Studies, meeting in person and on Zoom, were well attended.

A combined Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Iglesia Bethel, including a drama presentation of the Nativity story by a drama group originating from Venezuela, was very meaningful.

In 2024 we hope to add a staff person to help build our children's ministry.

Isaiah 43:18-19 reads:

"Do not call to mind the former things, or ponder things of the past. Behold, I will do something new..." *(Article Continued on Page 7)*

Connect

Sunday Morning Worship

10:45am on Sundays

Connect Online

Facebook: Anaheim Chapel at First Congregational Church of Anaheim.

YouTube: First Congregational Church of Anaheim

Instagram: FCCAnaheim

Website: www.fcca.org

JOG: Just Ordinary Guys

Monday, January 8th

Speaker: Tom Mena

12:00-1:30pm, McKenzie Hall

Small Groups: Old Testament

Characters

We are continuing our study on Old Testament Characters! The study is not cumulative, so it is easy to jump right in. Join us on Wednesdays at 6:30pm around the table in Pastor Jim's office or via Zoom. Email the church office at fccaoffice@gmail.com to join.

January study dates:

January 10th, 17th and 24th

Dinner on January 31st

Women's Lunch

Monday, January 22nd

11:30-1:00pm, McKenzie Hall

FCCA News & Events

Christmas at FCCA

It was fun to try something new for Christmas Eve! We had Sunday morning worship at our regular 10:45am time. Raffia Thomas shared Christmas carols and led us into a powerful moment



of worship as she sang, “O Holy Night.” It was a joy to have a choir, led by Tom Mena! “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen” and “Mary Did You Know?” warmed our hearts as we celebrated the birth of Christ. Later in the evening we joined Iglesia Bethel for their Christmas Eve service. They had invited guests originally from Venezuela to share a drama presentation of the Nativity Story. It

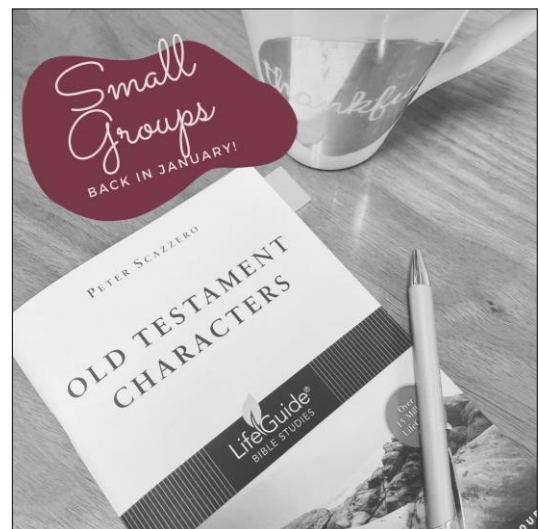
was precious to see them act out the nativity story complete with a live, happy baby squirming in Mary’s arms. The service closed to “Silent Night” as candlelight was passed through the congregation. We were grateful for the invitation to join Iglesia Bethel this year.

Small Groups: Old Testament Characters

We are continuing our study on Old Testament Characters this month! The study is not cumulative, so it is easy to jump right in. Each week focuses on a different Old Testament Character. Join us on Wednesdays at 6:30pm around the table in Pastor Jim's office or via Zoom. Email the church office at fccaooffice@gmail.com to join.

Study dates: Wednesday, January 10th, 17th and 24th

Dinner on Wednesday, January 31st



Women’s Lunch

Monday, January 22nd; 11:30-1pm, McKenzie Hall

Our lunches typically include a potluck meal, group activity and devotional/prayer time. Come enjoy a tasty meal with other women from the church!

JOG Luncheon

Featuring Guest Speaker, Tom Mena



Tom and his sister attended Sunday school every week until junior high. They were then given a choice to continue and decided to stop attending at the time. Later, Tom began a very long relationship with a Baptist church. He joined the choir and participated actively in a number of the church's ministry programs. Tom majored in history but eventually found his true calling in music. Tom worked as a custodian at the church where he was then called to be youth pastor and to begin a convalescent ministry. He later resigned. Tom met and married his wife, Maria, and had one son, Tommy. He was accepted into a Masters of Music program in Choral Conducting at CSU Los Angeles, which led to a music teaching career. Tom became extremely ill and eventually learned that he had diabetes. He also developed macular degeneration which led to a retinal detachment and vision loss in one eye. It took several operations to stabilize the condition. Tom then retired from teaching. Tom lost his wonderful son this year. It has been the most difficult time in his life. He is rebuilding his present state of being with the Lord's personal involvement. Come hear about the Lord's constant presence in it all.

When: Monday, January 8th, 2024

12:00pm – 1:30pm

Cost: \$12

Enjoy the music of singer and guitar player Bob Goodrich, as well as the humor of Normandy Veteran, Jack Gutman, and football coach, Tom Meiss. We have an excellent meal planned with tables always filled with good fellowship.

Please RSVP via email at chuck@penningtons-inc.com or call Chuck at 714-350-8983

JOG



Of Orange County
Just Ordinary Guys (& Gals)
Meeting the 2nd Monday of Every Month

Missions' Corner

A Letter from Linda Freud, Mission Chair

As we enter the new year I'd like highlight a mission that FCCA supported years ago and added back again in 2022. This is ***"Asociacion Civil Cristiana Congregacional"*** located in Jardin-America, Argentina. The director is Rev. Dr. Harding Stricker who is a medical doctor and an ordained minister. Below is some information from their website:

"We are honored to count friends and donors like you who have made it possible for us, the

Congregational Mission of North East Argentina, to come about and to be around since the end of the last millennium. Over the years we have developed different areas of service; 1- Mission Clinic, 2-Soup

Kitchen, 3- Community Gardening, and 4- Christian Education from Sunday School to regular church services.



At the present we are navigating what may be the tail of the pandemic, but also the onset of a major financial crisis in our country with a yearly inflation rate of over 80% and a low exchange rate for the donations we receive. These factors when combined bring us to the point that our main prayer concern is SURVIVAL.

On December 3rd we will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the ACCC in Jardin America as an officially recognized organization, although preparatory work had started about 10 years earlier under the direction of my father Teodoro. We are

(Missions' Corner Continued...)

planning it to be a Thanksgiving celebration to express our gratefulness for God's guidance through all these years.

And so, we reach out to you in gratitude for all of your past assistance and with a silent cry on our hearts asking you once again for your prayers and support to endure and keep the light of the Gospel and the Congregational Way alive in this part of the world."

Your Mission Board will continue our support of ACCC in 2024 and will prayerfully allocate an amount to them this summer when we meet to designate giving to all our missions. Remember any time during the year you can mark your check or envelope "Missions" or you can name a particular mission. That money will only be used for that purpose.

A Blessed and Happy New Year,

Linda Freud





January Birthdays

1-Jan Salend Krishna

3-Jan Rachel Rolnicki

5-Jan Noah Torres

11-Jan Greg Ramsay

11-Jan Grace Hoke

18-Jan Connie Phillips

21-Jan Dennis Johnson

24-Jan Jeffrey Williams

25-Jan Andrew Ramsay

If you would like to have your birthday included in the CALL, please contact the church office at 714-776-0960 or fccaooffice@gmail.com.

(Article Continued) It's not wrong to look back at the past. There are many other passages where God's people are instructed to remember God's faithfulness to them in the past. But I believe in this passage the author is reminding the people **not to get stuck in the past**. He's reminding them not to think they've arrived but rather they need to keep growing in their faith because God is not bound by the past but longs to do **something new, something fresh, among them**.

When we dwell too much in the past, we can **miss what God is doing in the present**. In the now!! During times of evaluation it's important to ask ourselves, "What is God doing in our church now?" - beyond the leadership, beyond the planning, beyond the strategic use of resources. This has more to do with observing the activity of God in our midst. Listening for the signs of the Spirit's moving we set our sails in such a way so as to catch the wind of His Spirit as it blows through our congregation. I thank God for all that was accomplished in 2023 and am looking forward with anticipation to embracing change in the year ahead.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Jim

A Note from Mission School of Hope in Cameroon:



*Dear First Congregational Church
Family of Anaheim,*

Warm greetings to you and heartfelt wishes for a joyous season. Your steadfast love and support has been a beacon of light for our Baka community bringing them hope for a brighter future. We are deeply grateful for all you do. We wish you a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Blessings, Charles Sagay

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF ANAHEIM

515 N State College Blvd. Anaheim, CA 92806
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