

NORCO CHURCH TIDINGS

NEWSNOTES FROM THE NORCO
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH



Our Church Family Newsletter

Nov 2017-May 2018

Our New Pastor—John Choi and Family—Join Norco Church

Last November we were pleased to welcome Pastor John and Nanci Choi and family to our congregation. Pastor Choi also pastors the Colton Seventh-day Adventist Church and is with us on the second and fourth Sabbaths of each month. We are blessed with their talents of music, ministry, and sharing the Word. We are looking forward to becoming better acquainted with daughter Emily (away on a mission trip when this photo was taken) and sons Chris and Nathan. See page 8 of this newsletter for a special message from Pastor John.



La Sierra Academy Choir and Band Bless us with Music



Our church was filled with music and guests this spring as the La Sierra Academy band and choir regaled us with song. The choir, led by Edwin Rumbaoa, and the band, with director Jason Coffey performed to perfection. It was a delight to have these groups as part of our worship service.

Fall 2017 Holiday Events—Catching up on news!²

The Healthy Holiday Meals class was a tremendous success! Delicious recipes were demonstrated by Morena Diaz, Mrs. Armas, Patricia Thomas, Priscilla Schmidt, Kathy Jones, Lori Sanchez, Juliana Smith, and Julie Roth shared some quick and easy holiday table settings and decorating ideas. The best part of the day was enjoying the tasty samples after the dishes were completed! Our Norco Church is extremely blessed to have such talent!



Women's Ministries Sabbath—Sharing Our Gifts...



Sabbath, March 17, the women of our Norco Church presented a special worship service spotlighting Women's Ministries. A praise team (above) led by Priscilla Schmidt with Ota and Sisilia Manu, Cindy Rivas and Juliana Smith accompanied by Judith Nelson on the guitar lifted our hearts in music. Patricia Thomas (left) blessed us with special music and Juliana Smith (bottom left) presented a special skit on prayer (with Jim Racobs as the voice of God). The day's message was shared by Rocio Castellanos (bottom right) who inspired us to persevere in prayer.



Member Spotlight—Jaime and Christine Platas Interviewed by Judith Nelson

Christine's Story: I was born in Long Beach CA and grew up in Lakewood area. I wasn't raised a Christian, no religious background. The only religious influence I had was my Grandma, from Mexico, who was very devout, and she would look at us six girls and say, "I know you're thinking about Jesus." She gave me a cross she brought from Spain, and that got me started thinking about these things. I asked kids at school what they knew about God, so I would think about spiritual things. There was a girl down the street who rode her horse home, and that began my love for horses.. Grandma, loved horses too; in fact she met my Grandpa while she was riding a horse! She was born in Sonora Mexico and they came over to California. My dad was from Pennsylvania and his mother was German Dutch so on one side I had relatives who were speaking Spanish and on the other side relatives who spoke some German and French, but all I basically knew was English.

I went to high school in Lakewood but wasn't happy at home; all us girls left home by the time we were eighteen. I rented a home with other girls, and I worked two jobs to get a horse. The only place I could afford to board my horse was called 'The Christian Ranch. I didn't realize they had set up the ranch with evangelism in mind. They were so nice, so kind, the sweetest people. One day they came up to me and said, 'We're gonna get married again. What a trip! Old people getting married again?! And they invited me to their wedding. They went to the Central Church in Pomona. So I went watched them get married again. The pastor there shared that a relationship with God could be like a good marriage, and how we could accept Jesus. And he made 'a call.' I was scared, but people there offered to go up with me to the altar, and they showed me from Romans how to accept Jesus as my Savior. I asked Jesus into my heart. The girls with whom I rented a room, when they found out I was a Christian, said, "Chris, what's happened to you, you're not swearing anymore!" and I started shaking, and they said, "Either YOU go , or we go!" So I said I'd go, if they felt that way. And it's been a journey with God ever since.

A year later in a horse accident—it wasn't my horse—I was helping another girl, that I nearly died and the whole church prayed for me. In recovering from that accident I had to return to my parents' home. And it was there that I learned about the Seventh-day Sabbath. My oldest sister had a husband who had an Adventist background in the past and left the church. But she had gotten this booklet 'A Day to Remember' by George Vandeman (and here, it might be a coincidence, that Judith Nelson's staff at the Adventist Media Center It Is Written Headquarters might have sent that very book to Christine's sister!). I had learned from the Baptists that the Bible is the Word of God, so I looked up every text reference in that book to make sure. And through that I learned to accept the Sabbath, and it led me to becoming a Seventh-day Adventist in 1972. And then after that, the Pastor mentored me at Bellflower SDA Church, because I went back and forth for awhile between the Baptist Church and the Adventist Church. The Baptist Church told me it was heresy, that they would rather I became a Roman Catholic than an Adventist! So because they had already taught me well that the Bible was God's Word, that kept me believing in the SDA message, and I've never looked back. It's the truth, it's God's truth.

I was at the Bellflower Church and was very active and would go out with ministries. The Baptist Church had also taught me how to lead people to Christ. And I would help with the children, bringing them to church. At Bellflower the Pastor wanted me to be a Bible Worker, and there were two doctors who had purchased a hospital, a commu-

nity hospital, and they hired me to work there. They had me go into chaplain training at White Memorial with Howard Maxson, and I went back and worked in the community hospital as a chaplain, I didn't have the degree. I was there about four years but the pastor recommended I get my Ministerial Studies Degree at La Sierra when it was Loma Linda University campus. And I got that four-year degree in three years—I carried heavy loads, and I also worked as a resident assistant dean in the apartments there. So I worked as a Chaplain after getting my degree. I had gotten married at this time, and after that my ex-husband wanted to move to Colorado where he had grown up. It was very difficult for women in ministry, so I decided to take nursing because I loved nursing. My grand-aunt had been in WWII and told amazing stories about being on the front lines how the nurses there might be sick but they just hooked themselves up to IV's and kept working on the soldiers! That was incredible! And I decided I wanted to be a nurse. I already had my four-year degree with the chaplain program, but I went into Nursing studies at a Community College, Cerritos College, took the two-year degree- and got my license. I worked at a little Community Hospital in Colorado where I learned to do everything—I did everything from delivering babies to working in ICU and ER! I learned an incredible amount.

But our marriage wasn't doing well, so I wanted to come back to California. I came back with my two children and went through a divorce in CA, and I was a single mom for ten years as I worked as a Nurse—did ICU and ER. I decided the children should go to Church School and I worked night shifts so I could be there for my children in the daytime.

They attended Simi Valley Adventist School and then Newbury Park Academy (where Judith Nelson worked with those two children at NPAA!). Crystal and Stephen McLean! Now Crystal lives in NH married with kids, and my son is living with us at home. It's such a small world!

We attended at the Camarillo Church, until my children graduated from Newbury Park Academy. Since I was a single mom, in order for them to stay in college—(my daughter attended La Sierra University and my son went to Walla Walla) I moved in with my parents for a year to save money. The first years were covered by scholarship but those last years was when I was with my parents. My daughter did graduate from LSU and my son returned from WWU. I commuted to Glendale Adventist to work. And then I went to Whittier Church: I had been a licensed foster parent in the past—had one foster daughter for almost two years. (She still considers me her mother.) Because she was having spiritual struggles I started at Whittier Church and helped her with her issues.

But in the process of that, Jaime showed up at Whittier Church with some of his friends!

Jaime's Story: So my friends and I, there were a couple of single friends and I made up a group of three. We wanted to attend a church that had potluck every week, and one of my friends heard that Whittier had a potluck every week! I met Crystal, Christine's daughter and she made us feel welcome and invited us to potluck. So I met Christine through her daughter! A year and a half Christine and I would have potluck together—my friends noticed I was rather 'cool' to Christine and I said, "well maybe she has a husband at home watching football during Sabbath!" And then one of my



Jaime and Christina Platas

friends found out that she was divorced—I was like ‘nooooo’ but I figured I’d ask her out. She shared that she had thyroid cancer and needed treatment. So we lost contact.

Months later a friend knew a pastor at Camarillo Church and we visited there (and Camarillo Church had a fantastic potluck by the way!!). I had just taken a bite and I looked across the room and saw someone with Christine’s hair color and it was chestnut, like Christine’s—and I was kind of irked- why did that memory come back to me? Then I realized it WAS Christine!! My friends wondered what was wrong with me, my jaw dropped—! I went over and covered her eyes and said ‘Guess who?’ and she said another guy’s name! And imagine, we were supposed to have attended Camarillo the week BEFORE but it so happened that THAT Sabbath Christine had been working so here she was at the same church we were. I asked Crystal for permission to ask her mom out. But she said, ‘no.’ And I was trying to figure it out—why did I ask the daughter? But my friend encouraged me to ask Christine out and we dated for half a year, having already known each other previously.

We got married in 2006 and at that time Crystal and Stephen came to live with us. We got married at the Whittier Church and then we went to the Costa Mesa Church with Pastor Dave Peckham, and from that church we went to the Orange Church... and now we’re here at Norco!

Jaime continues: I was born in ‘65 in Fresno CA, and we moved several places because my dad had a business hauling trash to the dump for different people. Then we were living in East LA and then moved to Santa Ana and were attending the McFadden SDA Church and then to the Garden Grove Church. I went to secular high school but wanted to attend LSU and I got a different financial package than my sister did which was strange! So for financial reasons I attended UC Santa Cruz and Grad Work at University of Arizona at Tucson in PsychoBiology. I taught for awhile at the community college level in Tucson. Then my mom passed away; my sister had taken care of my mom and my dad was the old-fashioned Hispanic type where the mom did the housework and the man was the breadwinner. I moved back with him and stayed with him a total of five years; he had Alzheimer’s. In the last few months of his life, I married Christine. I was 42.

Before I got married, I wasn’t sure where I wanted to live. California is expensive. When I attended Garden Grove I did date other SDA women but didn’t like them—I told God I was going to start dating secular girls. But within six months I reconnected with Christine; we had been friends at Whittier and then we reconnected.

Christine: Our wedding reception was so hot, no AC in the reception room! We had mariachi dancers at our reception! And we wanted a dance from Oaxaca where Jaime’s family was from.

Jaime: My dad lived in an area of Orange County across from UCI Medical Center of Orange, and at that time he’d have a setback of symptoms. So temporarily I worked at the Front Office of UCI Med Center. I could walk to work, actually I cut across the Crystal Cathedral Property getting back and forth from work. When I as a kid, on Sunday Morning if I wanted to go to The City which was an outdoor mall—if I wore nice Sabbath pants and a nice shirt I would walk through the Outdoor Drive In which was the original Crystal Cathedral—people would be in cars ready for their outdoor offering—and they’d eagerly offer me money thinking I was one of the ushers!! But I didn’t take any!



I also volunteered at the Crystal Cathedral Crisis Help Line, Sabbath mornings early and then go home and shower and go to church. There were a few people who called in who were close to committing suicide, and many who were lonely because they didn’t have Jesus in their lives. It was interesting work. But there was a layoff at UCI Med Center around ‘04 and I found myself working for a temp company that sent me to do work at headquarters at AAA—they let me have Sabbaths off. And they asked me to stay on permanently. And they had a call center. People would want to make changes on their already-established policies. I enjoyed the helpful work I did and then a position opened up in underwriting and I’ve been in that department six years—I have to review clients who have had a few claims and whether we should renew their policies or not for another year.

I enjoy the people with whom I work, and I’ve had a couple instances where I’ve been able to share my faith and pray with my co-workers. And friends talked to friends and other employees there would ask for prayer—and months later they’d share there was a miracle—amazing. One woman lost designer sunglasses—and as we have 350 people in my department—I told her I’d pray for her to find her sunglasses. Next day she still hadn’t found them. And

after a week I asked her again. After a week she told me a fellow worker had found them in the restroom and finally got them to her—and that woman thanked me for the prayer. One of my team mates also a couple years ago mentioned that his dad had brain cancer. My friend is a macho Hispanic guy, good man to know—but he couldn’t come up with the words to ask me to pray for his dad. But I’d overhear that his dad was getting worse. And I knew there was a sister who was graduating from UCLA and the dad was declining fast with the brain cancer metastasizing. I was praying, dear Lord, maybe he can’t be healed but maybe he could go to his daughter’s graduation with a degree in Psychology and Education (here Jaime shed some tears).

And the father was able to attend that graduation! He passed away a couple of weeks after the graduation. As a good Catholic family they had a viewing and a wake. And I saw the father in the casket—and his daughter put one of her graduating sashes on her father to honor him helping her with her education.

But what brought us both to Norco, we discussed our SDA beliefs together before we got married. Christine had a dream that wherever she lived, she would have a horse—she had owned one for over 20 years—and her dream was to actually have the horse on our property. Riding a horse kept Christine sane during her stressful years as an ICU nurse!

She knew about Norco and later learned about Jurupa Valley being also a horse-friendly area. We had a friend at Costa Mesa Church as a realtor and now we’re in a house... I’m an urban guy, a city kid. I don’t know how to live in rural areas—but now we have a home built in 1940 and added-on-to later, and the best part is, it’s on a parcel .44 of an acre and three successive stables, so Christine can have three horses!! And there’s a community area Christine can ride to and access riding trails. And close enough to Eastvale so I the urban guy can do the shopping an urban guy likes to do!

We welcome this lively, actively-witnessing couple to Norco—they’ve started a weekly potluck here at our church so visitors and guests can have a place to eat and fellowship—and they share their spiritual gifts with warm generosity and friendliness!

Adventurers—Keeping Active!



Top left— Adventurers Fun Day, April 22

Top right—Adventurer Camporee— May 6

Left—Investiture Color Guard bearing the Flag

Right—Adventurers received gift bags with Bibles after the investiture service

Bottom —Investiture service with Area Coordinator JJ Martinez



Pathfinders—Staying Strong and Serving!



We are so blessed to have a strong and active Pathfinder Club. The boys marched in the Pathfinder Fair and showed their woodworking skills in their booth. Serving in church as deacons and working in the garden are just two of the ways they serve our congregation.



Thanks to the contributions of some wonderful church members and local businessmen, Frances Racobs and Pastor Rob were pleased to present the Pathfinders with scholarships to attend summer camp at Pine Springs Ranch. The boys will soon be packing their bags and heading off for a week of adventure on July 15! We are praying for them and this wonderful opportunity.



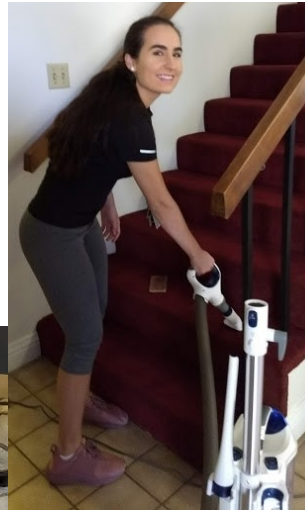
June Work Bee and Yard Sale

Many thanks to all those who came to help with the work bee on Sunday, June 3! We were blessed to have 35 La Sierra University students from Pastor Rob's *Jesus and the Gospels* class join with us in service, cleaning the back lot and play areas. Brother Jaime Platas guided students in window washing, and Mark Thomas worked with several to install new security cameras.

Sister Rosario Diaz led the team who helped out with a fantastic yard sale that netted nearly \$200 for our church's coffers! Many hands made light work!



Above-window washing and stair cleaning
Right-security camera crew and yard sale



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Pastor's Corner

by Pastor John Choi

Hard to believe it's been over half a year already since being installed as your pastor here at Norco church. It is true that time flies when you're having fun. It's been a delight getting to know each of you. Our laughter filled exchanges have been wonderful. What I really appreciate about our Norco church is that we are a grace filled church. Whenever I share the gospel from the pulpit, I see your receptive and smiling faces, and I know that you share in the joy of God's free and abundant salvation.

As we move forward together, I'm excited about what God is going to do to grow our church and make it an attractive place of worship and ministry for people of all ages. We will dream together and pray together and I know God will bless and multiply our efforts. One noticeable change that you will be experiencing soon is an update to our worship service. The Worship Committee has made some recommendations to the Church Board and the Church Board voted to accept the recommendations.

Our main desire and goal is to make the gospel relevant and meaningful today. At a time when it seems that the trend is to segregate and build barriers based on age, ethnicity, beliefs, gender, style, etc. My strong personal belief and philosophy is that the gospel shines brightest when different people with different circumstances come together and commit to finding a way to be together, work together, worship together, and accept and even enjoy each others differences. Thank you for welcoming me as your pastor. Let's join our efforts together in making Norco church a vibrant and exciting place of holy communion for the Lord!

