

Santa Cruz Valley United Methodist Church
2010 Desert Southwest Annual Conference Report
By Lyle Bitker, Lay Member

The theme of this year's annual conference was the same as last year's "Extravagant Hospitality, God's Abundant Grace". The annual conference started with a worship service. The sermon was given by Bishop Carcano. She shared her recent experiences with the youth at the protest of SB1070 at the Phoenix Capital. She stated that while the objective of the demonstration was to convince the Governor not to sign the bill she speculated that perhaps not signing the bill would have been a quick fix to the illegal immigration issue. Perhaps the Governor signing the bill was God's hand to obtain a more complete and lasting solution to the problem.

Following the service the lay and clergy separated into separate sections. The lay session consisted of conducting some exercises to help emphasize the importance of aggressive hospitality within the church.

Parliamentary sessions were conducted Thursday afternoon, Friday and Sunday morning. Daily Proceedings for the sessions are available on the Desert Southwest website (www.desertsouthwestconference.org).

There was discussion related to Claremont University with respect to their joint studies University which includes Muslim and Jewish studies. The discussion focused around their funding which had been temporarily stopped and the appropriateness of the joint studies University. It was reported that the funding had been reinstated and that the new University was to promote understanding and would have no impact on Claremont's mission of Christian Education.

Mike Pierson (South District Superintendent) noted during his report on the south district that one of the highlights was the Santa Cruz Valley and Community Church joint youth program. It was also noted that Santa Cruz Valley had the highest percentage increase in membership (18.9%).

An update on Pine Canyon Camp property was provided in the Board of Trustees report. The trustees did receive one offer for the camp assets. They felt that the offer was insufficient. They have initiated a mass marketing effort. They have mailed out 4000 postcards to nonprofits, large churches and other camps in Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas.

Saturday was spent in a study with Rev. Clif Christopher (faithful stewardship in a challenging economy). Clif Christopher is the author of "Not your parents offering plate." Additional information on the study is available on the conference web site to include a pdf of the slides from his presentation.

During the Sunday morning parliamentary session recognition of the 100 percent apportionment contributions was held. Santa Cruz Valley was among those recognized. The Bishop requested that I express her thanks to the congregation.

Respectfully submitted, Lyle Bitker, 2010 Annual Conference Lay Member