

Welcome to the New Year!

Are you fired up about 2020? I get so excited when I think about the men and women who will find new life in Jesus Christ this year as a direct result of the prayer, hard work, and boldness of our congregations here in EFCA West.

As you're thinking about what is possible for this new year, remember the two words that define us: First, we are *Evangelical*. That simply means we are *messengers of Good News*. Nothing could be more precise about our job here on earth – to help as many people in our community know that Jesus truly is Lord.

Second, we are *Free*. That means we have the opportunity to dream big and be creative about how to get the message of Good News out to people in our own communities. We trust in the Spirit of God to guide us, grateful for the past but having the courage to step into the uncharted waters of the future.

As for me, it's been one month since I stepped into the District Superintendent role, and the photo represents one of the highlights so far, the chance to spend time with pastors, elders, and congregations in EFCA West, in this instance, with Pastor Mike Cratch and the elders of Compass Church in Simi Valley, CA. Mike invited me to preach and then have lunch with their leadership. They are excited about moving into their new facility in 2020 and how they're going to use it to get the good news out to their neighbors.



I also had the chance to preach at Dove Creek Bible Church in Bakersfield, CA, and hang out with their leadership as well. Pastor Jeff Harrington was one of the members of the search team that hired me, so you can blame him! But seriously, I was so blessed by his hospitality and felt very welcomed by the great men and women of Dove Creek. I stuck around in the Central Valley for a few days so I could be a part of the regional pastors' gathering at Tulare Evangelical Free Church. Once again, I was encouraged by the faithfulness and devotion of these great pastors and leaders.

So, as we look ahead to this year, if there is *one thing* I'd like to throw your way in terms of a specific event that will bring us together as a district in 2020, it will be our **District Conference happening June 19-20 at North Coast Church in Vista, CA**. Our theme is "Seasons" – because as the Scripture tells us in Ecclesiastes, there is a season for everything. The question is, *how do you navigate it?* What do you do when you know "it's time" - time to make a serious change in your congregation, alter your leadership structure, start something new, or even say goodbye?

What season are *you* in right now? Wherever you are in your life, you and your team will be blessed by this experience.

We are also in a season of transition here at EFCA West. By now you may have heard that after thirteen years of incredibly faithful, godly, and effective service, Paul Schliep will be stepping off our team. I can't tell you how much I've appreciated Paul over the past three years that I've served on the staff part time. He is a deep well of wisdom and insight, and he has a level of Christian love and maturity that is unmatched as far as I'm concerned. He has truly run his race at EFCA West with excellence, so please join with me in praying for him and Sharon as they consider their next steps.

Finally, 2020 is off and running, and if there's one thought I want to leave you with, it is this: *your work matters!* Wherever you are across these western United States, whatever size your church or type of community, whatever language you speak or Sunday morning worship style, the people of God are looking to *you* for life, love, and guidance. So, thank you for what you do. I love what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:17. "For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison..." Remember that our team is praying for you and we stand ready to help however we can.

Blessings,

Tim Jacobs
District Superintendent
EFCA West