

2021 Region 1 Annual Report

This has been a challenging first year serving as a Regional Coordinator! Challenging and joyful! I came on board just as the COVID-19 pandemic was revving up. Following in the footsteps of Kim Brownlow would have been difficult in any circumstances, but the necessary restrictions rendered it even more challenging. We have not been able to gather in person like we normally would have and many of our Secretariat activities were postponed or cancelled all together. However, things are looking up and we may soon be gathering in person once again! I look forward to the opportunity to visit my communities soon.



One thing this pandemic has taught us is how important connection is. Although no in-person weekends were held during 2020, many Secretariats held virtual Ultreyas, “Ice Cream Socials” and “Happy Hour” events that kept us all connected. In October 2020, we held a Regional Grand Ultreya via Zoom that was a fantastic hit and led to a National Virtual Ultreya the following spring. We have had quarterly virtual regional meetings where we have checked in with each other, shared the challenges of COVID-19 and brainstormed ways to stay connected. We learned the value of staying in contact and sharing ideas to keep things moving even in the midst of the craziness that was 2020. Our most recent virtual meeting was attended by every Secretariat (save Colorado due to illness) in our region!! Yay us! I believe moving forward we will continue to have great discussions and sharing of ideas that will keep things fresh in Region One!

As COVID-19 becomes more controllable and restrictions begin to ease, our Region One Secretariats are prayerfully considering having weekends and other in-person events again, using the COVID guidance provided by the National Secretariat as a starting point. California and Oregon have decided to forgo weekends until the spring of 2022. However, Colorado, Arizona, Washington and Nevada are currently planning weekends for the fall 2021.

Unfortunately, the pandemic has been particularly difficult for our Utah community. Their Lay Director, Pauline Smith, was diagnosed with stage four cancer early during the shutdown and remains in treatment at this time. In her absence, other Secretariat positions have remained unfilled and the overall energy for the movement is currently low. I have been actively reaching out to other community members to try to engender a renewed enthusiasm. Two of those members have signed up to attend this Annual Gathering. In addition, the neighboring Light in the Desert Secretariat in Nevada has offered their assistance to try to boost their community support. Prayerfully with this support and those members still interested in VdC, we can infuse some life into the Utah ministry. Please keep them and the rest of your western community members in your prayers as we continue to navigate these changing times.

Yes, 2020 was a challenging year and a difficult time to be transitioning to a leadership

position in the community. However, I see this time as a blessing. The advance of technology and specifically the use of the Zoom platform has made us much more accessible to each other. Face-to-face via Zoom seemed better than voice-to-voice via conference calls to make things feel more “normal” and helped advance the connection we feel amongst ourselves. I hope that this will continue well into the future! I have been blessed to be a part of Region One and look forward to increased contact as we move into 2021 and hopefully, prayerfully out of this pandemic!

God loves you and so do I,

Karen Weires

Region 1 Coordinator

region1@viadecristo.org