SANTIAGO COMMUNITY CHURCH: A brief description

Santiago Community Church (SCC) is a Protestant Christian church. Since the merger of St. Andrew's Anglican Church and Union Church (mainly Presbyterian) in 1979, we are an international and interdenominational church, welcoming everyone. As of 2023 SCC is legally an independent religious institution, constituted under Chilean law ("Ley de Culto"). Our legal statutes include a Mission declaration and a Statement of Faith, which summarize our theological standing.

Mission

By the undeserved grace of God, we strive to be an instrument of God's love in the world, to share that love and the Gospel with others, to pray for and encourage one another, and to fight against sin and injustice as we await the return of Christ in glory and the fulfillment of God's promised kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

We commit to carrying out all these ministries in the Chilean society and, especially, among English-speaking people in Santiago, in fellowship with other Christian congregations.

Statement of Faith

God:

We worship one God in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The central doctrines of our faith are contained in the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed.

Salvation:

We believe that our sin separates us from God. Reconciliation with God and eternal life come only by God's grace in Jesus Christ, who through the Holy Spirit calls us to repentance, forgives our sins, and gives us the power to lead new lives characterized by love, joy and compassion.

The Bible:

The Bible is the word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit. It is the primary authority regarding matters of Christian love, hope, faith, life, teaching, doctrine, discipline, and morality, and contains all things necessary for salvation. Scripture in its entirety (both Old and New Testaments) must be interpreted through the same Holy Spirit, in light of the birth, life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

The Church:

We hold that the church is the body of Christ, the community of believers, created and strengthened by the Holy Spirit to promote the Kingdom of God and fulfill the commission to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all that Jesus commanded. The Holy Spirit gives gifts and ministries to His people so that they may build each other up to worship and serve God, and to love and enjoy fellowship with one another.

Sacraments:

We recognize as sacraments Baptism and Holy Communion (also known as the Eucharist) as the two special means of grace ordained by Christ.

Church structure and governance

SCC is a congregational Protestant Church. Its highest authority is the Annual General Assembly (AGA), constituted by all SCC statutory members.

Between AGA's, the Church is directed by the Church Council (CC), comprised of nine SCC members elected by the AGA, who then designate the positions of Council President, Council Vice-President, Council Treasurer and Council Secretary amongst themselves.

The SCC Council takes on the Minister and has the authority to name assistant ministers, either clergy or lay, to cooperate with the Minister under his/her direction.

The SCC Minister is an ordained priest, in communion with a recognized Protestant denomination. He or she is the main spiritual leader of our Church. The Minister is "ex-officio" a non-voting member of the AGA and participates in the CC meetings without a voting right. (The Minister is also called Pastor).

Staff (remunerated personnel)

The members of the Staff are hired and dismissed by the Church Council. There is a personnel Committee chaired by the Council's President. The Church staff positions include at present: The Minister, two part-time office assistants, a part time organist, a part time director of children's ministry, a full-time caretaker and an additional weekend caretaker.

Volunteer teams organize our social and fellowship events.

SCC Regular activities:

Sunday Services:

There is a Sunday morning Service from 10.30 am to 11.30 am. Holy Communion on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month and Morning Worship on the 2nd and 4th Sundays. Our Sunday morning Services follow a flexible Protestant liturgy.

(Note: SCC shares its premises with the Spanish-speaking Iglesia Anglicana de Providencia -Anglican Church of Providencia, a Parish in the Anglican Diocese of Santiago – who have their Sunday Service at 12 noon and schedule their weekly activities, coordinating with the church office to avoid clashes of space requirements).

We currently have three small Sunday School groups: for 3 – 6-year-olds, 7- to 12-year-olds and 13- to 18-year-olds - as well as a play area set up adjacent to the church where parents can entertain their children of 2 and under, should they get restless in church.

The average Sunday morning attendance is approx. 100 across the ages, with at least 12 nationalities represented.

We have a roster of Sunday morning Service assistants, comprising some 35 members of the congregation who volunteer for a variety of responsibilities, including: welcoming, ushering, leading the service, reading the lessons, preparing and leading the time of prayer, serving communion, teaching Sunday School, helping in Sunday School, setting up and clearing refreshments and manning the fellowship table after the service.

A regular choir and musicians provide the music ministry.

We have been implementing a Sunday evening Service, at 7 PM in the Church Chapel in a freer liturgical style, aimed at younger generations. The average attendance was 10.

Weekly activities:

- Monday Morning Women's Bible Study, meeting in different homes and taking turns to lead.
- Tuesday Men's Breakfast Fellowship, generally led by the Pastor.

- Wednesday Evening Bible study, for everyone but attracting young adults, run by a youth group leader.
- Thursday Afternoon Women's Online Bible Study, meeting via Zoom, led by one of the women.
- Choir practice Thursday evening and Sunday mornings prior to the service.

Other events:

Annual events include Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, International Dinner, Thanksgiving Dinner, All Church Retreat and Christmas Carol Service – as well as our Annual Book & Bake Fair and Bi-annual Book & Rummage Fair.

SCC has implemented Alpha Courses and Alpha Marriage Courses in previous years. We intend to implement them on a yearly basis.

Outreach

SCC dedicates 10 % of all its income to support several Chilean charities with financial and in-kind contributions (including monthly financial contributions to Youth for Christ and Fundación Crescendo, the latter helping adults with disabilities). Other church-sponsored charities include: Hogar La Granja (a home for children in need), Casa Esperanza (a home for students in need), Clamor en el Barrio (a rehabilitation centre for those with drug/alcohol addictions), Habitat for Humanity (helping with their construction workdays) and Salvation Army.