

African Descent Lutheran Association (ADLA)
“Our Faith, Our Community, Our Purpose”
Report to the Southwest California Synod Assembly



ASSEMBLY Report 2016

The *African Descent Lutheran Association* (ADLA) is one of six ethnic-specific associations in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We greet the Assembly on behalf of your brothers and sisters who invests their time, talents and treasures in the work of improving our communities, helping young people take advantage of higher education opportunities while aiding the ELCA with special appeals in service to our communities.

ADLA – Los Angeles is comprised of nine congregations, one university (California Lutheran University) and has a membership of 123; many are serving the Southwest California Synod through its committees and task forces. ADLA also serves as the Synod’s facilitator for the annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration and Commemoration Worship service, arguably becoming the 2nd largest Synod gathering next to the annual Assembly. Moreover, ADLA is in the service of God’s people providing commodities for social service and justice throughout the community.

MISSION to serve:

ADLA – Los Angeles exists to provide a prophetic voice to the issues, challenges and triumphs of the people of God residing primarily in the urban basin of Los Angeles, to coordinate our work together for the betterment of others, to be part of the answer to the perplexing problems of our day. ADLA – Los Angeles is blessed to be a blessing to others in the Southwest California Synod as we live out our faith in meaningful and measurable ways.

FAITH EMBODIED in Our Work:

Each year *ADLA – Los Angeles* sets its calendar for its outreach projects, seeking the approval of its membership both with regard to what is important but how our time, talent and treasures will be used to ensure each project’s success. We look first to what God has instructed through scripture recognizing that we are God’s hands, eyes and feet in doing the work of our community. It is God’s Work, Our Hands! Each year, we direct our business sessions – for which there are four – to the accomplishment of these preset goals, raising funds while dedicating ourselves to God’s work in our communities. We are most thankful that so many have joined us in this quest, brothers and sisters who desire to be their “brother’s keeper”. We are pleased that this chapter is the only one nationally to have the presence of a University and in particular California Lutheran University as a member. ADLA serves as an example of what congregations can do when they work together. Every other year, ADLA hosts its biennial gala and awards banquet to acknowledge the thoroughness of our interdependency in Christ Jesus.



ADLA members prepare personal hygiene kits for LA-Skid Row residents (left), while collecting shoes for Lutheran Social Services at Christmas time in support of “Soles for Souls” program (right).



Highlights: ADLA’s 2015 Year in Review:

- Provided personal care products as “Basket’s of Promise” through Lutheran World Relief.
- Donated cell phones benefitting *The Cell Phone for Soldiers Program* and those service men and women who are deployed domestically and around the world.
- Donated recyclable pill bottles to Malawi, Africa to ensure medication safety.
- Supported Hope Lutheran Church, Hollywood with the purchase of Recovery Bibles for its prison ministry.
- Donated and distributed personal hygiene kits to Los Angeles Skid Row residents with Bishop Erwin.
- Donated a massive collection of shoes for men, women, and children through Lutheran Social Services ~ Community Care in support of its *Soles for Souls* program.
- Raised scholarship funds for aspiring women leaders seeking rostered status.
- Raised funding for Christ Lutheran Church, Goleta’s “Showers of Blessings” outreach program to the homeless.

Organizational Highlights:

- Tripled membership over three years based on the scriptural mandate: Love God, Love Neighbor.
- Became the largest ADLA Chapter of the 8 ADLA Chapters nationwide under the auspicious that *“United by Faith... We are Better Together”*.
- On-track to increase community service activities by another 2-3 new initiatives, including “Clothes the Deal”, a program that provides business attire to those seeking employment; who are devoid of these essentials.

STORIES of Faith:

While our project contributions are designed to help many, we are often reminded by individuals of the impact these contributions have had on them personally; as was the case while on Los Angeles’ Skid Row when ADLA and Bishop R. Guy Erwin presented the local residents with personal hygiene kits (some needing to use selected items immediately). We had completely run out of the 200 packets (each worth \$12) within the first hour and a half. We began offering kind words and individual prayer as a substitute. They thanked us for both the products and the prayers, the words of intercession. Perhaps as important, they truly blessed us by their kindness in reminding us that all of God’s people matter.

FORWARD to Serve God's People in 2016:

ADLA is committed to its mission to serve others. We do so through our presence and actions for which we've identified the following recurring annual initiatives for 2016:

- Secure funds and purchase recovery bibles in support of prison ministry
- Join St. Marks Lutheran Church, Los Angeles in obtaining and delivering personal hygiene kits to Skid Row on "God's Work, Our Hands" Sunday
- Join Lutheran Social Services – Community Care with "Soles for Souls" shoe collection
- Raise and fund scholarships for prospective seminary candidates

ABUNDANT Opportunity

- ADLA membership is open each year from October – February, which includes both national and local affiliation. Membership fees annually range from \$30 for individuals to \$60 for senior couples.
- We welcome you to stop-by the ADLA booth during the Assembly and pick-up a packet of information, see the video of our MLK, Jr. Worship celebration and have some tasty treats to eat!
- ADLA appreciates your support, your prayers and your involvement. Come and be part of this exciting ministry.

ADLA Officers & Representatives

Carolyn C. Foster, President

Kathleen Elliott Chillison, Vice President

Gwendolyn P. Jackson, Treasurer

Valerie Shaw, Secretary

Dale Washington, Region II Representative

ADLA c/o

Community Lutheran Church

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MISSION TEAM FOR GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS 2015 Annual Report

The Mission Team for Global Partnerships helps the synod and its congregations establish connections with the global Christian community by supporting growth in Companion Synod relationships, creating partnerships with congregations in other parts of the world; learning about issues of globalization; and by lifting up opportunities to accompany global churches in their mission. We emphasize the importance of accompaniment (“walking with”) and sustainability of projects in other countries.

Global connections: two Companion Synods - Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong and Salvadoran Lutheran Synod; 17 congregations support long-term missionaries worldwide and 7 have Sister Congregations in El Salvador.

Team members for 2015: Carol Bjelland; Bishop Guy Erwin; Rev. Steve Herder; Julie Jacks; Rev. Ellen Jennrich, chair; Barbie Johnson; Tom Laquidara; Susanne Maliski; Maria Paiva; Rev. Frank Wang

2015 activities:

- Met goal for the Malaria Project
- Continued work with Justice Team on immigration and refugee issues:
 - Welcoming Congregations – a network that provides support for immigrants –
Medical, legal, employment, counseling
 - Guardian Angels – accompanying refugee and immigrant families and children through the Los Angeles court system
- Trip to El Salvador 7/31-8/11 – 30 persons - engaging in ministry with the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod – worship; schools; farm; homeless ministry; dental clinics
- Information for congregations to celebrate Global Church Sunday, including video featuring Bishop Guy
- Trip to the Holy Land and Petra 12/26/15-1/5/16 – Led by Bishop Guy and The Very Rev. James Newman from St. Bede’s Episcopal Church - 25 persons – Biblical sites and Lutheran ministries
- Representative to the Sister Congregation Conference in El Salvador – Maria Paiva
- Representatives to the Regional Global Missions Conference in Santa Ana – Julie Jacks, Rev. Ellen Jennrich

2016 goals:

- Identify point persons in each congregation to lift up global concerns
- Increase participation in Sister Congregation program with churches in El Salvador
- Continue encouraging participation in Welcoming Congregations Network and Guardian Angels
- Raise \$60,000 for the ELCA Campaign
- Trip to El Salvador – July 31-Aug 10
- Trip to Germany in celebration of Luther Anniversary – Aug 16-29
- Continue to develop web site and facebook pages

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Ellen Jennrich, chair

Lay Leadership Mission Team
ASSEMBLY Report 2016

The Lay Leadership Mission Team (LLMT) serves the congregations of the Southwest California Synod by providing opportunities to identify and support lay leaders as they witness and serve in their congregation and in daily life.

LLMT helps implement the Mission Goals of the synod:

- intentional outreach to children, youth and young adults
- oversight and support for “the School for Equipping Leaders for Mission” (ELM).
- assist implementing synod sponsored workshops
- communicate activities that provide learning and leadership development for lay members.

FAITH EMBODIED in Our Work:

The LLMT discussed moving forward with more ELM 2 workshops/studies. Reducing the ELM program to nine months did not allow much planning time and teacher availability for the next session. So LLMT / ELM became anchored to other Synodical events.

The ELM program sponsored by LLMT:

July 25, 2015 How to Read Revelation led by Dr. Julia Lambert Fogg, Associate Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity and Chair of the Religion Department at California Lutheran University at the Lutheran Center. Dr. Fogg introduced the symbolic world of “apocalyptic” literature. How history, politics and religion shape John the Seer’s first century critique of the Roman Empire.



LLMT partnered with the following programs in 2015/2016 all held at the Lutheran Center:

September 23, 2015 Strategic Thinking: Business Basics for Missional Congregations led by Beth Lewis, President & CEO of Augsburg Fortress the ministry of publishing of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Congregational leaders learned to apply strategic thinking techniques to mission congregational planning such as: who should participate, when to launch a plan, how to think strategically instead of tactically, environment assessment, and educate members of the process and importance. Thanks to Desta Goehner for the foresight to plan this workshop and include LLMT.

January 30, 2016 Ancient Israel Modern Questions: Israel in the Bible, History, and the Contemporary Middle East presented by Dr. Sam Thomas, Associate Professor of Religion at California Lutheran University. Dr. Thomas engaged participants in reflection upon questions of religious and national identity, conflict and peace building. Thanks to Lana Norton for including the LLMT.

March 22, 2016 The Living Water Meditation - World Water Day 2016 led by Rev. Peg Shultz-Akerson, Bishop Erwin, Rev. Ryan Chaddick and the Green Faith Working Group. Participants had the opportunity to mediate on water as they walked the labyrinth. Thanks to Rev. Peg and the Green Faith Working Group for planning and including LLMT.



In addition to the activities above the LLMT approved the following:

- contributed \$500.00 toward Jonathan Hemphill's ordination under Campus Ministry.
- contributed \$1500.00 to 15 LA Metro / South Bay area youth of color to attend the High School Leadership training event at El Camino Pines November 13 - 15, 2015.

Please review the separate reports of the groups that the LLMT relates to: Lutheran Youth Team; Young Adult Task Force; Synodical Women's Organization; Men's Ministry; Lutheran Retreats, Camps, and Conferences; and Campus Ministries.

STORIES of Faith:

The LLMT is very proud of the Lutheran Youth Synod team for continuing to plan and launch many dynamic programs giving youth of the Southwest California Synod opportunities to grow and flourish. Education and participation is a key to our faith and life with our Savior.

Karen L. Moyer
Lay Leadership Mission Team, Chairperson

THE SYNOD MISSION TEAM FOR JUSTICE

Our Synod Mission Team for Justice meets once a month on a weekday from 10:30 to 1:30 at the synod office. Attendance is generally 12 to 15 people. However, we have close to 100 people who receive Peace and Justice information by e-mail throughout the year. We have several committees who have separate meetings, and are very active in education and advocacy efforts. The synod goal of **Faith Formation and Education** is also our goal. Our committees and their leadership are listed below.

Guardian Angels/Welcoming Congregations - Pastor Alexia Salvatierra

Middle East Peace Committee - Lana Norton

Prison Ministry Committee - John Halbert

Green Faith Committee - Co-chairs Pastor Peg Schultz-Akerson and Jane Affonso

Gun Violence Prevention Task Force - Pastor Dan Gibson (They work with the Episcopalians.)

Racial Diversity Point Person - Ross McConnell (A committee will be formed soon.)

Hunger Committee - Sheri Groenveld (They meet separately and have a separate report.)

Pastor Alexia Salvatierra has done a fantastic job organizing, training, and getting grants for our Guardian Angels program. We have an intern and volunteers who go to court wearing Guardian Angels t-shirts, so they can help some undocumented persons gain asylum in our country. The judges take notice of our people and it can help the outcome. Our people are also able to direct the immigrants to other services. Alexia has been our teacher since forming our mission team by helping us set realistic goals, and training us in advocacy. Our Synod Refugee and Immigrant Sunday was planned for February and Alexia directed the creation of resources made available to all congregations. Our Synod Refugee and Immigrant Sunday in 2017 will be March 19. We give a big THANK YOU to Alexia for her faith-filled leadership.

Lana Norton has directed the Middle East Peace group in a benefit concert to raise funds; a well-attended workshop on ANCIENT ISRAEL, MODERN QUESTIONS given by Dr. San Thomas from CLU; and dispersing much information on the Middle East via our e-mail system.

The Green Faith group has planned several faith-filled and educational activities for the synod. On the Tuesday of Holy Week WORLD WATER DAY was celebrated with devotions, live music, a guided labyrinth, and a light lunch at First Lutheran, Glendale. April 22-24 EARTH DAY events are planned for several congregations.

Our newest task force is the Gun Violence Prevention group. Pastor Dan Gibson is leading the Lutheran portion of the group, and they are working with a similar group in the Episcopal

Diocese. The group has staffed tables of information at several events, and more are planned. Rather than being anti-gun, the emphasis is on gun safety, domestic violence prevention, and other related information.

John Halbert serves as the Justice Team recording secretary, and as our communications person. He works on the website connected to the synod, and has created a Justice Team Facebook page. Join the Facebook page, and check out our information in Synews.

One function of the ELCA is being a publicly engaged church. A portion of their statement reads, "This is Christ's Church...Join us as we do God's work in Christ's name for the life of the world." We will welcome all who want to join the Mission Team for Justice or one of our committees. Contact me at heck37@verizon.net for more information or to add your address to our e-mail database.

Sharon Heck, Chair

Southwest California Women of the ELCA

A Women's Organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Southwest California Synod.

The synodical women's organizations (SWOs) establish a partnership with units in their geographic areas and with the churchwide women's organization. SWOs exist to support women in congregations. Each SWO has a board whose members are elected at an annual or biennial convention by delegates from units. Each SWO establishes clusters or conferences of units within its geographic area.

Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is quite a mouthful, we know. Our organization includes Lutheran women who gather in over 7,000 locations in the U.S. and the Caribbean, for service, study, advocacy, fellowship and more! Women of the ELCA embraces all kinds of ministries that support our mission of mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ. There is a place for you in Women of the ELCA.

How it works: There are three expressions of Women of the ELCA, each with its own constitution:

- * Congregational, inter-congregational and special units (about 7,000)
- * Synodical Women's Organization (in 64 of the ELCA's 65 synods)
- * Churchwide Women's Organization

MISSION to serve: Mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.

Our Purpose As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.

FAITH EMBODIED in Our Work:

Autumn Renewal at The Oaks, Lake Hughes October 3, 4, 5 2015 – Flip-Flops, Faith and Friends

Pastor Peg Schultz-Ackerson leading her Bible Study and group acted out one of the three Bible studies. The offering we received at Sunday worship totaled \$1475 and was split equally between Churchwide Women of the ELCA and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS). In addition, we had an ingathering of gift cards for LIRS totaling more than \$860. Pastor Ellen Jennrich was our chaplain for the weekend.



Highlights:

2015 Autumn Renewal



FLIP-FLOPS, FAITH & FRIENDS
REMEMBERING OUR WEEKEND RETREAT
OCTOBER AT THE OAKS AT LAKE HUGHES



- Winter Gathering February 19, 2016, Reformation Lutheran Church, Pasadena
The Rev. Michelle Magee, First United Methodist Church, Santa Paula, CA presented the program Balanced Life. Theme verse: Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.—Matthew 11:28 (NRSV). Offering: Split equally: Reformation Mission Congregation and Churchwide Women of the ELCA.



- The SWO Board meets quarterly to conduct the business and plan the activities. Save the date October 14 -16 for the 19th Convention of the Southwest California Women of the ELCA at the Grand Vista Hotel, 999 Enchanted Way, Simi Valley. This is where we elect our offices and board members. Triennial delegates will also be elected to attend the Triennial Convention of the Churchwide Women of the ELCA in 2017 in Minneapolis.

Theme is “Blessed to Be a Blessing. Based on Genesis 12:2: *I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.*

Bible Study Leader: Rev. Erin Martinson CHTP Pastor of Trinity Church Ventura a certified healing touch practitioner and spiritual development coach. Chaplin and Worship Leader: Rev. Nancy Switzler, Pastor of Our Redeemer, Oxnard.

STORIES of Faith:

Our What’s News, newsletter for the year of 2015 / 2016 contained many faith stories.

- Stop Human Trafficking by Claudia Cuevas, President of the SWO wrote you may have heard the report on Human Trafficking. Churchwide has raised up this issue for units to recognize and act in helping youth, women and others who are victims of human trafficking. Women of the ELCA asked the units to consider helping in the agencies and in turn the victims. One of the first steps is to educate yourself as to the extent and tactics of trafficking.
- Jacqueline BrownGaines, a 12th grader at Olivet Lutheran Church and Ramon C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts, had a life-changing experience. Through the Palazzo Strozzi Foundation, she studied in Florence, Italy in July. The Palazzo Strozzi Foundation hosted an essay competition for 11th grade students across the country and by the grace of God, my school was chosen to participate. The essay topics focused aspects of the Italian Renaissance. Jacqueline thanks the Lord every single day for her amazing summer, the Palazzo Strozzi Foundation, the friends she made, and God for watching over her. Through Him Jacqueline shared this message and His grace with others forever thankful, humbled by this wonderful adventure, and forever in God’s debt.

FORWARD to Serve God’s People in 2016:

There's a new kid on the block! Prince of Peace, San Gabriel Valley Cluster, in Covina first met July 2015 with SWO president, Claudia Cuevas, attending. They have put together health kits for their food bank program. Introduced and selling Equal Exchange Coffee, candy bars and hot chocolate. A Lenten goal was to have a Buca-Chick donation along with their Lenten Services. Preparing feminine essential bags for their food service program. Enjoyed their Miracle Springs Retreat February 19, 20, 21, 2016. The Lord has blessed their group and they are doing great things.

SURVEY SEZ....

I want to invite you to consider how you might mobilize the next generation of girls, young adults and women of all ages to “act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ” and to find their place as a part of the Women of the ELCA. When you gather in your groups, think about change. It can be challenging because it is part of the unknown, is unpredictable, and oftentimes exciting. Have you evaluated your group, its activities, mission, and purpose? If not, discuss what has worked and what has not. Develop a survey/questionnaire that invites all women in your congregation to be a part of your evaluation and planning. Provide a place in your questionnaire for young adult women to share what interests them. Hearing the voices of all women— those who participate in your group now and those who might not even know about Women of the ELCA—may spark ideas and offer a place for women to be heard and supported. Written by Eva James Yeo, director for membership for Women of the ELCA 800-638-3522 x2450 Eva.yeo@elcaorg

SWO Board President, Claudi Cuevas, Board Members: Lillian Simons, Linda Medina, Janet Simmons, Treasurer, Sharon Heck, Secretary, Dianne Tillman, Board member: Pastor Donnella Silveira. Vice-President Karen Moyer taking the picture.



SYNOD YOUTH MINISTRIES ANNUAL REPORT – 2015

2015 was a great year for the Southwest California Synod Youth Team, even though we are still in the infant stages.

- We began the year with a planning retreat at Luther Glen, where we talked about duties & responsibilities of serving on this team, planned an Elementary Youth Gathering, a High School Youth Leadership Event, discussed training events for Detroit, and planned our part in Synod Assembly.
- Our theme verse as a team continues to be I Timothy 4:12, which says, “Do not let anyone look down on you because you are young.”
- Sophie Puchalski (Christ, West Covina), our president, served us well. Other officers included Vice-President Sean Parrott (First, Torrance) and Secretary was a team effort!
- We planned an Elementary Youth Gathering in March at Camp Luther Glen but unfortunately we had to cancel because of lack of attendees.
- Synod Assembly was a highlight for our team, because it gave us opportunity to mingle with youth and young adult voting members from congregations as well as the many pastors & congregational leaders from our Synod. We hosted a reception, gave a video/verbal report, had a youth booth with information and giveaways, and we served the assembly as pages, worship leaders and more!
- The ELCA Youth Gathering happened in July in Detroit, MI. Pacifica Synod and Southwest California blended resources, and did our Synod Day together. Bishop Erwin was very present throughout the event, participated in our Servant Event, and led the Synod Day.
- In November, we hosted the 3rd Annual Youth Leadership Training Event. Pastors, youth leaders and youth & young adults all were part of this event. Colleen Windham-Hughes, Youth Ministry Professor Extraordinaire at CLU enhanced our training time. Elections to the Synod Youth Team took place as well. There were over 60 people in attendance. We now have a full Synod Youth Team, where newly-elected members at large will serve one year terms as Conference Reps for those Conferences that were not represented at our event. A new position was created – Hospitality Rep – as a result of one of the workshops we had.
- Also in November, Adult Chair – Janet Renick – along with youth team members Darius Ware and Kaytlynn Haywood went to the Youth Leadership Summit in Ashland, Nebraska. There we participated in conversations with ELCA youth and adults from across the nation, representing 42 different synods. We learned & were trained in Peer Ministry (led by Lyle Griner) & discussed many topics facing the Church today. There was also an “Adult Leader Track”, which was led by Peggy Hahn of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Synod about their ministry called “L.E.A.D.”
- The Middle School Youth Gathering, held in Woodland Hills, was also a great event. Over 300 middle school youth from Southern California were in

attendance. Youth from both Synod Youth Teams served as speakers, workshop leaders and servant corps. Bishop Erwin attended & showed his support as well.

- In early December, there was a Youth Worker Retreat, held at Luther Glen and led by Scott & Nikki Fielder. Theme was “De-Cluttering Your Life”! I left early so I could go home & clean house!
- The Synod Youth Team consists of youth and adult leaders from our Synod who see youth as being the PRESENT of the Church today. Our team for 2016 is:

President – Sophie Puchalski (Christ, West Covina)
Vice President & South Bay Conference Rep – Kaytlynn Haywood (Prince of Peace, Covina)
Secretary – Darius Ware (Christ, West Covina)
Definitely-Abled Rep – Chiane Hill (Olivet, Hawthorne)
Multicultural Rep – Shawntelle Augustine (St. Mark’s, Los Angeles)
Hospitality – Julia Fickenscher (Mt. Cross, Camarillo)
Synod Council Rep - Sean Parrott (Westchester Lutheran)

Conference Reps:

L.A. Metro & President Elect – Cheyenne Boykin (St Mark’s, L.A.)
Twin Valleys – Janelle Arevalo (At large) (Mt. Cross Camarillo)
Channel Islands - Emma Griffis (Mt Cross, Camarillo)
Central Coast Conference – Anneke Moersdorf (Mt. Carmel, San Luis Obispo)
San Gabriel Valley Conference Rep – Brittney Rodriguez (Christ, West Covina)
Foothill Conference – Rosalie Tarsala (Hill Ave Grace, Pasadena)
Long Beach – Shannon Storer (At Large) – Mt Cross, Camarillo

Adult Leaders:

Janet Renick – Adult Chair (Christ, West Covina)
Ingrid Frojker (Mt. Carmel, San Luis Obispo)
Mark Tennyson (Westchester Lutheran, Westchester)
Bryan Honda (Shepherd of the Valley, Simi Valley)
Meredith Gardner (Mt. Cross, Camarillo)

It was a wonderful year. We are looking forward to many more exciting events together. Plans are underway to start a similar team for Young Adults (18-25 year olds). Keep watching Synod publications for more information!

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Renick, Adult Chair
Southwest California Synod Youth Team