

## Youth Ministries and Synod Youth Team – 2018

2018 has been an eventful year for the Southwest California Synod Youth Team. We are a team whose mission is to help youth to find their place in the ELCA and the Synod, and to use their God-given gifts as God directs. Our team members are elected or appointed to serve the youth and congregations within the Southwest California Synod. Through servant events, consulting teams, youth gatherings for High School, Middle School, and Elementary-aged youth, as well as being present and serving at Synod Assembly. Our theme verse for our team is I Timothy 4:12, which says, “Do not let anyone look down on you because you are young.”

Our “year” typically begins at the annual Fall Retreat for High School Youth, at which time elections to the team occur.

We have a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Multicultural Rep, Definitely-Abled Rep, Hospitality Rep, Media Manager, as well as Conference Reps and Adult Leaders.

- Our High School Leadership Event in November 2018 took place at Camp Luther Glen. Our theme was “Dream Team: Who Me?!”, with our speaker being Pastor Kevin Strickland, the worship leader of the ELCA.
- In November, Zoey Alexander (At Large Rep from Another Level, Los Angeles) and Katie Moersdorf (Mt. Carmel, SLO), traveled to the ELCA Youth Leadership Summit in Nebraska, where they discussed many of the issues facing youth in the ELCA. They met people from all over the country and were deeply moved by the things that they did! Tyra Dennis accompanied them as an adult leader.
- We began the 2018 new year with a planning retreat at St. Mark’s Lutheran Church in Los Angeles in conjunction with the Pacifica Youth Team members. We planned several events for the year.
- We helped with the Elementary Youth Gathering at Luther Glen in March.
- Synod Assembly is always a highlight for our team, because it gives us opportunities to mingle with youth and young adult voting members from congregations as well as the many pastors & congregational leaders from our Synod. We usually host a reception, have a youth booth with information and giveaways, and we serve the assembly as pages, worship leaders and more!

### ELCA YOUTH GATHERING

- The ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston happen ED June 27-July 1, 2018. Janet Renick served as the Gathering Synod Coordinator, leading workshops & conveying Gathering info throughout the Synod. The Gathering theme was, “This Changes Everything”, based on Ephesians 2:8 – For by grace you have been saved through faith...”

The Synod Youth Team consists of youth and adult leaders from our Synod who see youth as being the PRESENT of the Church today. Those serving 2018 are:

President – Jaylen Ware (Christ, West Covina)

Vice President & Synod Council Rep – Kir’Ra Hemphill (Another Level, Los Angeles)

Secretary - Vacant  
Definitely-Abled Rep – Sirena Augustine (St. Mark's, Los Angeles)  
Media Manager – vacant  
Hospitality – vacant  
Conference Reps:  
    Twin Valleys – vacant  
    Channel Islands –vacant  
    Central Coast Conference – Anneke Moersdorf (Mt. Carmel, SLO)  
    San Gabriel – Jack Flores (Christ, West Covina)  
    Tehachapi – Katie Moersdorf – At Large (Mt. Carmel, SLO)  
    Foothill – vacant  
    L.A. Metro – Joseph Alexander (Another Level, L.A.)  
    Long Beach - Zoey Alexander (At Large – Another Level, L.A.)

Adult Leaders:  
Janet Renick – Adult Chair  
Amanda Burns (Shepherd of the Valley, Simi Valley)  
Tyra Dennis (Another Level, Los Angeles)  
Ingrid Frokjer (Mt. Carmel, San Luis Obispo)  
Bryan Honda (Shepherd of the Valley, Simi Valley)  
FreXinet Johnson (Another Level, Los Angeles)  
Pastor Matt Keadle (St. Mark's, Los Angeles)

There are still some openings on the team that we hope to fill as soon as possible. Talk to us!  
Respectfully submitted,

I have been serving as the Adult Chair for nearly ten years, and have loved every minute! I have had to move to Florida to be the full-time caregiver for my mom, who has been in Hospice Care. While I will deeply miss my time in the Southwest California Synod, I know I am needed in Florida and my mom is actually improving. Amanda Burns and Bryan Honda, who have served by my side for many years, will take over the Chair position in the coming months.

Janet Renick, Adult Chair, Southwest California Synod Youth Team

## Mission Team for Rostered Ministers

The Mission Team for Rostered Ministers provide a link to the pastors and deacons of the synod, aid in planning the Bishop's Colloquy and other events, and focus on the well-being of the leaders in the synod. We meet 4-6 times a year with Bishop Erwin and Pastor Reg Shultz-Akerson.

This year we have worked on building up the Ministry Team to be more inclusive and to have more members to work on specific projects. One goal is to find ways to build the morale of our rostered leaders. To that end, we have a small group working with the Synod Treasurer Michael Metzger and Synod Staff Andreas Hirshe on our salary guidelines, to make them more realistic for the needs of clergy and deacons serving our Synod. We are also finding ways to provide financial assistance to Rostered Ministers pursuing continuing education.

In the fall we facilitated a meeting of the Rostered Deacons and the African Decent Deacons, for each to better understand each other's training and calling and find ways they can support each other. We expect to facilitate further meetings.

2020 is the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Ordination of Women in our Church and we will be working with Synod Council and women pastors to have a yearlong celebration of the many ministries of women in the church, as outlined in the Memorial from Churchwide Assembly.

We look forward to another year of working for our Rostered Ministers.

Faithfully,

Pastor Ruth Sievert, Chair

Deacon Tempie Beaman, Pr. Jim Bessey, Deacon Lynn Bullock, Pr. Ryan Chaddick, Bp. Guy Erwin, Pr. Jonathon Hemphill, Pr. Megan Hunt Fryling, Pr. Ralph Midtlyng, Pr. Reg Schultz-Akerson,

## Lay Leadership Mission Team – Education 2018 – 2019 Synod Assembly Report

The Recovery & Spirituality Task Force planned several events. An informative presentation on our task force at the *Theoasis* event in October 2018, a workshop on spiritual care in addiction treatment in January 2019, and upcoming *Soul Surfing* under the myths and misconception of addiction, uncovering the *buried treasures* that lie within ourselves in June 15, 2019. Dan Gibson served on the planning committee for our first annual churchwide *Addiction & Faith Conference* in September 2018. See the Recovery and Spirituality Task Force Report for more details.

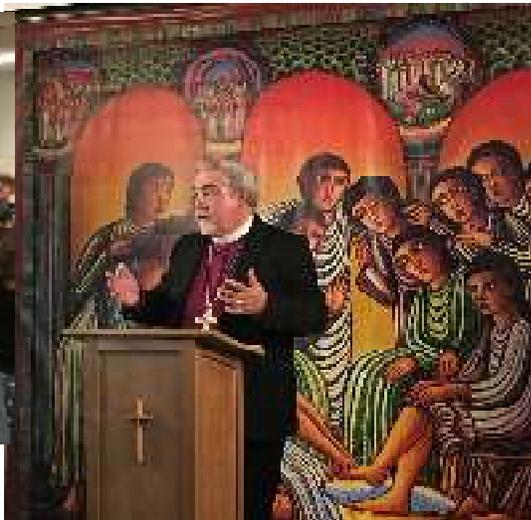
The Lay Leadership Mission Team met to discuss the Bishop Teaching's scheduled for second Saturday in April, May, June and July noon to 2:00 p.m at the Lutheran Center in Glendale. The Cross at the Center: The Faith of Lutheran Christians. A four-part series on the central aspects of Christian faith, designed for pastors, laypeople, and anyone interested in what makes us Lutheran led by The Rev. Dr. R. Guy Erwin, Bishop of the Southwest California Synod, ELCA. Dates and themes:

April 13, Reading the Bible the Lutheran Way: The Bible as source, not object of our faith  
May 11, God, Jesus, and the Spirit: Lutheran ways of understanding and speaking of God  
June 8, The Church We Believe In: Lutheran teachings about the church and its ministry  
July 13, Setting Our Moral Compass: Lutheran views of life, work, money, and relationships

Thank you to the churches hosting the live stream and discussion of The Cross at the Center

April 13: Ascension Lutheran Church, Thousand Oaks, CA  
Christ Lutheran Church, Long Beach, CA  
Emmanuel Lutheran Church, North Hollywood, CA  
Lutheran Church in the Foothills, La Canada, CA  
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Santa Maria, CA  
The Church of Hope, Canyon Country, CA

The Synod staff out did themselves with the preparation for the Bishop's Teachings as did the Bishop. Several LLMT team members were in attendance to offer support.



The team will be reviewing the LLMT purpose in the Synod Constitution to determine the future mission. With the departure of Janet Renick, Pastor Matt Keadle will assume Youth responsibilities through the Synod Assembly. LLMT budgets were reviewed for submission for the 2020 year.

The Lay Leadership Mission teams is looking for new member if you are interested please let me know.

Thank you, Bishop Erwin for developing your Bishop's Teaching series. We look forward to more opportunities in the future.

*Karen L Moyer*  
LLMT Chairperson

## **MISSION TEAM FOR GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS 2018 Annual Report**

Team members for 2018-19: Carol Bjelland; Jennifer Carter; Bishop Guy Erwin; Rev. Steve Herder; Julie Jacks; Rev. Ellen Jennrich, chair; Barbie Johnson; Tom Laquidara; Maria Paiva; Rev. Steve Jerbin

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. YAGM (Young Adults in Global Missions) – 5 young people began serving in August: Abbey Lauten - Senegal, Anjelica Padilla – Australia, Oscar Alvarado – Argentina and Uruguay, Renee Roeber – Mexico, Carlee Wood - Mexico

### **2018 Activities:**

- Continued work with Justice Team on immigration and refugee issues: Guardian Angels – accompanying refugee and immigrant families and children through the Los Angeles court system
- Trip to El Salvador 7/31-8/7 – Julie Jacks co-chair with Rev. Kristian Johnson, Pilgrim Lutheran, Chicago. 33 persons from Southern California, Illinois, Arizona and Washington - engaging in ministry with the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod – worship; schools; farm; homeless ministry; dental clinics; solar panel installation; donations of dental and medical supplies.
- Encuentro 5 in La Palma, El Salvador 11/6-11 – celebrating Synodical and Sister Church relationships. Bishop Erwin, Maria Paiva and Rev. Ellen Jennrich attended. Presentations, small groups and conversation: migration, health, climate change, pastoral training, family care, projects for sustainability. Worship, visits to local congregations and sister churches, Lake Illopango sustainability project. Plans for continued ministry together.
- El Salvador visit by Rev. Steve Jerbi and members of Bethel, Encino, to investigate possibilities for a sister congregation.
- Accompaniment trip to Peru. Theme: “Listen, Learn, Love”. Led by Maria Paiva and her family. The group of 14 included Rev. Steve Herder and Carol Bjelland from our Global Partners Team. Visits to ministries in Pachacamac, Lurin, Lima, and Cusco including the Huch’Uy Runa orphanage supported in part by ELCA World Hunger, and LWR office in Lima. Joyful worship and memorable personal experiences!
- Information for congregations to celebrate Refugee and Immigrant Sunday and Global Church Sunday
- Fund-raising for construction of a new building at Resurrection Church in San Salvador (central Lutheran church) now almost completed.
- Keeping contact with volunteer Suzie Gill in El Salvador
- Pursuing a new Companion Synod relationship with the Diocese of Helsinki, Finland

**2019 goals:**

- Continue to identify point persons in each congregation to lift up global concerns
- Increase participation in Sister Congregation program with churches in El Salvador
- Develop a Synodical database of congregations and their global partners
- Continuing to support our Companion Synod in El Salvador by contributing to the construction of Resurrection Lutheran Church in San Salvador
- Continue to develop web site and Facebook pages
- Develop Task Forces for companion synods and other international connections
- Continue work toward partnering with Helsinki, Finland
- Continue to provide congregations with materials for celebrating global ministry days: World Day of Prayer, Refugee/Immigrant Sunday, Global Partners Sunday, World Aids Day

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. Ellen Jennrich, Chair

## SW California Synod Hunger Team Report

March 29, 2019

### Team members:

Sheri Groenveld (Holy Trinity, Thousand Oaks), Melissa Henry (Mount Cross, Camarillo), Pastor Steve Herder (Ascension Lutheran, Thousand Oaks), Susanne Maliski (Ascension Lutheran, Thousand Oaks) and Mary Wennes (Ascension Lutheran, Thousand Oaks)

For 2018 our team set the synod wide goal to raise \$275,000 for ELCA World Hunger. We did not quite hit our goal with fundraising at \$259,086. We did not make our goal, but a substantial amount was raised in our synod. Thank you to all who support ELCA World Hunger either through their congregation or individually.

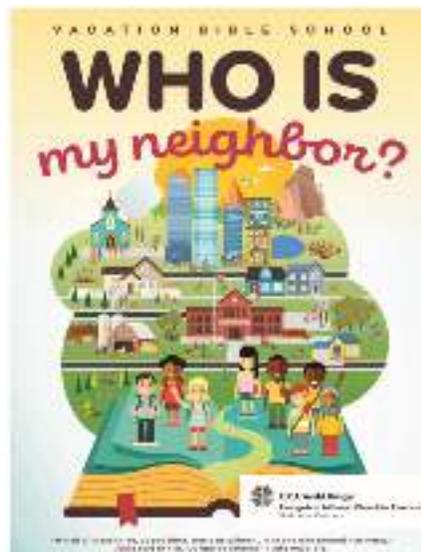
We participated in the **Super Bowl Challenge** and on Super Bowl Sunday this year we raised \$8,000 for ELCA World Hunger. We're sad that the Rams lost the game but being able to help those who are hungry is a positive.



One organization from our Synod was chosen as a Domestic Hunger Grant recipient. The organization chosen was **My Friends House, Inc.** My Friends House is a ministry of Ascension Lutheran, Los Angeles. It is a weekly food pantry for 150 households feeding over 400 individuals. They provide dairy, meat, fish, chicken, varied produce and non-perishable foods. They seek to provide healthy alternatives to processed and fast food whenever possible. They offer interactive cooking classes to encourage the healthy preparation and eating of a varied diet that includes more fruits and vegetables. We are very excited that My Friends House was chosen, and we want to lift up this wonderful ministry.

The next **Hunger Leaders Gathering** has been announced for July (18-21) in Minneapolis, MN. These gatherings happen every 18 months and bring together the hunger leaders from each synod. Our synod will be sending three participants. Because of the Mary & Howie Wennes Hunger Leadership Endowment our registration fees have been greatly reduced.

Our team is getting ready to greet everyone at the **Synod Assembly**. Please look for our table. We are especially excited about new VBS Curriculum that is available through ELCA World Hunger. This year the theme is "Who is My Neighbor?" This curriculum is completely free and can be ordered through [www.elca.org/resources](http://www.elca.org/resources).



We are always looking for new members to join our team. We meet in the Ventura County area but can join anyone in via a conference call.

Peace,

Sheri Groenveld, Synod Hunger Team

e-mail: [sherigroenveld@yahoo.com](mailto:sherigroenveld@yahoo.com)

## **SOUTHWEST CALIFORNIA SYNOD MISSION TEAM FOR JUSTICE REPORT**

The Mission Team for Justice is the umbrella for several committees or task forces including Green Faith co-chaired by Pastor Peg Schultz-Akerson and Jane Affonso, Middle East Peace chaired by Bishop Emeritus Dean Nelson, Gun Violence Prevention chaired by Pastor Janet Hansted, Healthcare chaired by Robert McDuff, Immigration chaired by Pastor Alexia Salvatierra, Anti-racism & Diversity chaired by Ross McConnell, and Prison Ministry chaired by John Halbert. The Justice Team meets almost every month on the second Tuesday at the Lutheran Center to hear reports from the various committees.

Pastor Alexia has kept us informed of the immigration crisis at the border. We have agreed to use funds set aside for the Guardian Angels project for legal and humanitarian aid to those seeking asylum. Any person may legally seek asylum in the U.S. However, they are processing 20 persons per day when they could process 200. The wait to make application is now six months. Pastor Alexia is working with a group of American lawyers who have set up a service in Mexico to assist with the reunification of thousands of children who were taken from their migrant parents at the border. There is a court order that all children and parents must be found and reunited, but the order is being ignored in many cases. She is also working with Matthew 25, an organization of religious groups that is providing humanitarian aid to those waiting in Mexico. A Migrant and Refugee Sunday was held on March 17, and Pastor Alexia prepared wonderful resources for use by the congregations. Pastor Alexia is now The Rev. Dr. Alexia Salvatierra, and we are very proud of her and truly appreciate her expertise.

The Middle East Peace group has been very active meeting alternate months at the Lutheran Center and Christ Lutheran, Long Beach. Christ, Long Beach has been participating in a Prayer Vigil for Middle East Peace on the 24<sup>th</sup> of each month for several years. This year the 24<sup>th</sup> falls on a Sunday in three months, so special events with a movie showing were held in February and March. Another will be held on November 24 and all are invited to attend. Watch for more information on the event. A collection of photos from Palestine is being displayed in some congregations of the synod. Contact Bishop Nelson if you would like to host the display.

Green Faith has been active promoting our synod as a Lutherans Restoring Creation (LRC) one. Jane Affonso attended a coaching training session in Las Vegas on LRC education and resources for congregations. Contact Jane for information on the LRC education and resources. Green Faith held an event at the Los Angeles river to celebrate World Water Day on March 22.

Robert McDuff has been working on Single-Payer Healthcare for all in California. The Justice Team has expanded this to incorporate the national plan for Single-Payer Improved Medicare for All.

Our Lutheran Office of Public Policy-CA (LOPP) in Sacramento is part of our Justice Team. With the retirement of Mark Carlson a new director has been chosen for LOPP. Her name is Regina Banks and she was chosen by the LOPP transition team after reviewing several applicants by phone interviews and then in person interviews. She has a law degree from Valparaiso, a Lutheran college in Indiana. She has experience working with the legislature in Sacramento and we believe she will do a wonderful job. The LOPP Policy Council met with her on February 2, and we chose three priorities to work on for the coming year – Deep Childhood Poverty, Immigration and Migration, and the Environment-especially water justice. A LUTHERAN LOBBY DAY in Sacramento was planned by Regina for Wednesday, May 29 and all were invited to attend. She is off the ground running and it is a new day at LOPP-CA.

Dixie Hanson held a Prison Ministry forum at her church on “inside out” where students from California Lutheran University (CLU) are taking a class with an equal number of inmates from a jail. The program and class are being run by Schannae Lucas of CLU.

The Gun Violence Prevention group is still meeting with their Episcopal counterparts. Check out their display at this Assembly. Be sure to check out all of the displays by our many groups.

The Justice Team has many opportunities for everyone to be involved in carrying out what was written in Micah 6:8. “He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Come join us – all are welcome.

Sharon Heck, Chair