

CY2018 & 2019 Program Years @ A Glance

Chapter Report from

AFRICAN DESCENT LUTHERAN ASSOCIATION (ADLA)

Los Angeles Chapter News

To the ADLA National Biennial Assembly
Milwaukee, Wisconsin – August 2019



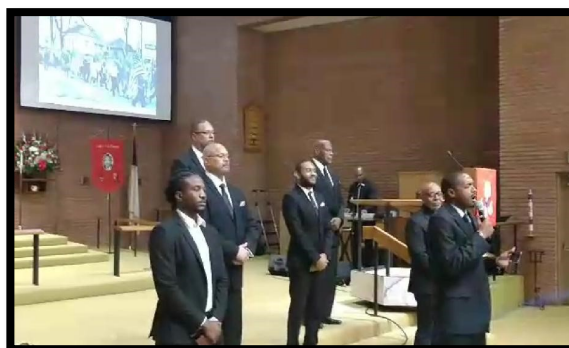
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The ADLA Los Angeles Chapter is 1 of 9 such chapters across the country. The Association serves as a collective “voice” for African Americans and those of African descent in the Caribbean who are Lutheran.

The Los Angeles Chapter seeks to improve our communities with direct assistance programs, promote the qualities of higher education through scholarships and support the Southwest California Synod and the ELCA with its special agency appeals.

MISSION IN ACTION

The 2019-year began by coordinating and hosting with the Southwest California Synod, its 39th Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration and Celebration Worship Service. This is the 5th year in which ADLA has facilitated this synod-wide worship event, which has over time become the 2nd highest attended synod annual event. Each year, the host sanctuary has been filled with the presence of our synod family (over 600 attendees) offering praises and thanks to God for the life of Dr. King, while recalling our respective responsibilities in “keeping the candle of justice lite”.



A gift of \$1,109 was offered to ELCA Disaster Response from offerings received in recognition of the horrific fires in California and the unceasing floods in the mid-west. Here are other notable programs that have received financial support as a result of the annual MLK worship service over the years:

- ✧ *First Call Theological Education (2015)*
- ✧ *Ebola Relief (2015)*
- ✧ *Unaccompanied Minors (2015)*
- ✧ *Synod's Unaccompanied Minors Initiative (2015)*
- ✧ *Showers of Blessings (2016)*
- ✧ *Guardian Angels (2016)*
- ✧ *TruEvolution – Aids Intervention Services (2016)*
- ✧ *Guardian Angels (2017)*
- ✧ *Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Service-IRIS (2017)*
- ✧ *ELCA Disaster Response (2018)*



Total distributed offerings to all recipients amounted to \$11,794.09.

Earlier in the Spring 2018, ADLA Los Angeles held its 4th Gala and Awards Dinner in recognition of those nominees whose “walk with Christ” serves as an example for others to follow and as a platform for raising funds in support of the ELCA Robinson-Conway Scholarship Fund. To date, ADLA Los Angeles has contributed a total of \$4,400 towards this scholarship, which seeks to aid qualified female seminarians pursue their graduate education, \$800 of that was dedicated to the equally important Daniel Payne Scholarship.



For many, just getting through the day, retrieving a meal and finding a place to sleep for the night is a demanding challenge. ADLA Los Angeles is also reminded of those among us who are without as it doubled its “God’s Work, Our Hands” efforts in providing much needed hygiene products and other personal items to those persons residing on Skid Row, downtown Los Angeles. In keeping with the 500th Year of the Reformation, over 500 kits were assembled and distributed in 2017-18, half during Easter and the remainder as part of the September outreach.

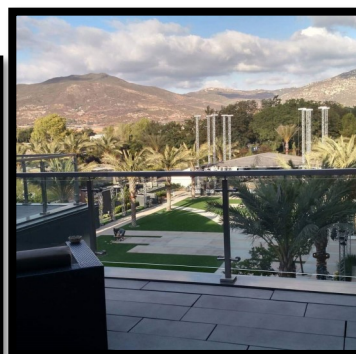
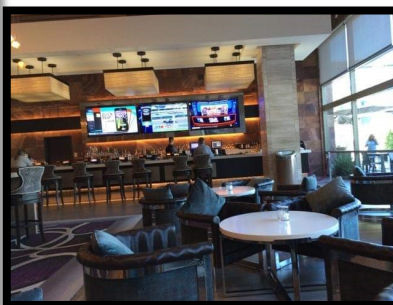
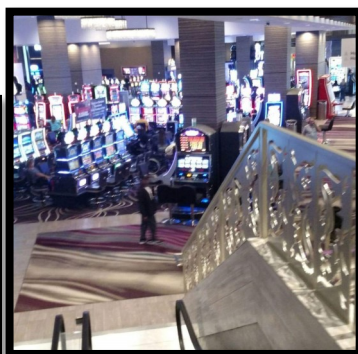
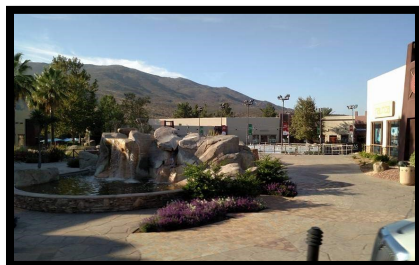


Two hundred special women's hygiene packets were assembled and distributed in December 2018 following a "plea for dedicated aid" from women residing on the streets. Each kit cost \$11.50 (or \$8,050 for the total 2018 service distribution). Personal greetings and prayers are among the wishes we extended to the massive number of recipients in our receiving lines. Not surprisingly, a cold bottle of water was seen as a precious commodity. Pastors, catechism students, ADLA members and, just this year – members from The Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles via Union of Black Episcopalians (UBE), its H. Belfield Hannibal Chapter – joined in the distribution. Even with the presence of these faithful, we were reminded that: *"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few". Matthew 9:37*

For the last four Summers, ADLA Los Angeles has elected to host workshops on the subject of self-help in Christ. 'Grown Woman, Real Talk' is an annual gathering that affords women (ages 17 – 80+) the opportunity to express their personal concerns, having them addressed through scripture, facilitated by Arizona State Bishop, Rev. La'Tresa Jester, Full Gospel Fellowship International. Bishop Jester's presence helps ADLA Los Angeles honor its ecumenical relations with the Baptist Church. Workshop questions are raised and shared by the audience and the facilitator guides the group through scripture for the answers. The bible is the place for answers! Additionally, in 2018, we included suicide prevention as a topic of discussion, warranting its own workshop. This was an all day event with much reflection, contemplation, and prayer. The 2019 workshop reflected the continued interests and growth of the program.

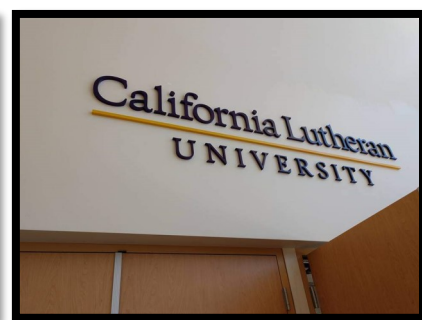
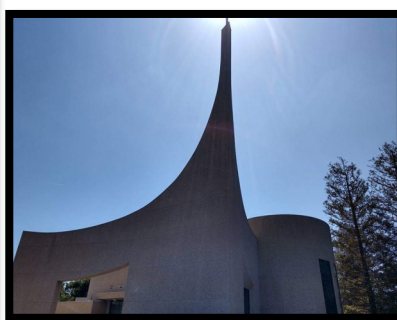
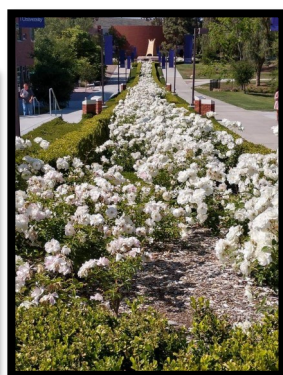


Sometimes it is necessary to set some time aside for fellowship. Each Fall, usually in September, ADLA Los Angeles charters a 54 passenger bus for a trip to Veijas Casino and Resort. Yes, a few hours of financial intrigue and prospecting. While much fun and camaraderie occurs, the net proceeds are gifted to Hope Lutheran Church, Hollywood in direct support of its prison ministry. Resources are used to purchase "recovery bibles" for the incarcerated. To date, ADLA has raised \$1,250 for this expressed purpose. Additionally, ADLA members often attend the dedication worship service for the bibles that are placed into service. *"The Word of God will never return to Him void". Isaiah 55:11*



AS IF THAT ISN'T ENOUGH....!

ADLA Los Angeles continues to address both local and national chapter goals, having met with the Southern California Chapter of the National Black Presbyterian Caucus in 2018 while participating in the 2019 UBE 51st Annual Business Meeting [channels of communication and collaboration], collected and submitted 54 pounds of aluminum pull-tabs in support of The Ronald McDonald House, Long Beach [family support and services to chronically ill children], provided annual contributions to Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary and California Lutheran University [solidarity in mission], as well as its promotion of intra-worship service exchange among the metropolitan churches, providing ADLA Los Angeles the chance to support the individual worship sites of its members.



SPECIAL THANKS

A special thanks goes out to our affiliate churches and university that help form the basis for ADLA Los Angeles's outreach and service to the community:

- ✚ Another Level Ministries – Los Angeles
- ✚ Ascension Lutheran – Los Angeles
- ✚ California Lutheran University – Thousand Oaks
- ✚ Chapel of Peace Lutheran – Inglewood
- ✚ Lutheran Church of the Master – Los Angeles
- ✚ Community Lutheran – Los Angeles
- ✚ First Lutheran – Carson
- ✚ Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran – Inglewood
- ✚ Messiah Lutheran – Los Angeles
- ✚ Olivet Lutheran – Hawthorne
- ✚ St. Mark's Lutheran – Los Angeles

A Special
THANK YOU

A decorative flourish consisting of a central diamond shape with symmetrical scrollwork on either side, rendered in a gold and green color scheme.



NECROLOGY – “WE REMEMBER...”

“Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my end be like His!” Numbers 23:10

In remembrance of those ADLA Los Angeles Members who have transitioned from God’s Creation to God’s Heavenly Dominion, we lift in name:

- ✠ William Raymond Williams, Another Level Ministries, Los Angeles
- ✠ Thelma M. Boykin, Community Lutheran, Los Angeles

You have joined the Church Triumphant!

PLANS ON THE HORIZON

ADLA Los Angeles members play an integral role in helping to shape ADLA on a national level, having served on various Chicago-based committees for the ELCA, led national assembly plenary sessions, conducted parliamentary services, while offering “chapter best practice models”. Members of the Los Angeles Chapter also participated in the creation of the ELCA’s documented acknowledgement of the 35th anniversary of rostered “Women of Color” in its coordination, and narrative. ADLA Los Angeles will certainly have a presence at the ADLA National Assembly, amplifying its aforementioned work.

ADLA’s ministry on behalf of others is unending, as is the Grace of God!

2020 Report to the SW California Synod - Synod Hunger Team

Members: Sheri Groenveld, Melissa Henry, Pastor Steve Herder
and Mary Wennes

Domestic Hunger Grants - This year we had three organizations or churches in our synod apply for a Domestic Hunger Grant. The review process is complete and our review notes are on their way to the Hunger Office in Chicago. We have reviewed each grant and submitted our information through the Grantmaker system. All grant reviews are due by September 14, 2020 and we are ahead of schedule. Each organization was an organization that I am proud to support and to know that they are in our synod. Grants should be announced late in 2020 and each grant is given for three years. If an organization does not receive the grant, they are invited to apply next year. Last year ELCA World Hunger gave over 600 grants.

Our team met by Zoom to review the grants, but our other work has come to more or less a standstill due to Covid-19. The synod assembly is usually one of our big events for the year. We know that the congregations in our Synod are stepping up to feed those who are hungry due to the pandemic and the resulting economy. Our prayers are with everyone affected by the virus, the recession and by racism. 2020 is a year that needs many prayers.

Our team continues to work and pray for a world where all are fed.

Peace,
Sheri Groenveld, Hunger Team Leader
Thousand Oaks, CA

Lay Leadership Mission Team Report - 2020

At the last live Synod Council meeting in February 2020, Bishop Erwin and I discussed offering a learning series on Luther's treatise *The Freedom of a Christian* for the commemoration of its 500th anniversary. Bishop Erwin would locate speakers on the subject and he would be facilitator. Then the Covid 19 pandemic hit.

Although we were not able to offer this learning opportunity, on August 5, 2020 the Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), invited the church to read, study and reflect on *The Freedom of a Christian*. The treatise's text and a study guide is available on the ELCA Website at elca500.org.

We had also planned classes on understanding and resisting systemic racism. Although we cannot meet in person, Churchwide offers materials at www.elca.org/Resources/ such as Ethnic Specific and Multicultural Ministries; African Descent; Explanation of the Declaration of the ELCA to People of African Descent; American Indian and Alaska Native; Arab and Middle Eastern; Asian and Pacific Islander; European Descent Lutheran Association for Racial Justice; Cross Cultural Conversations; Race, Ethnicity and Culture; Freed in Christ, Race, Ethnicity, and Culture; and many more. Materials are also available from Women of the ELCA (www.womenoftheelca.org/resources) such as The Story of Peter and Cornelius; Historical timeline of Race Relations; How to have helpful conversations about race in the church; and Listening to the Third Slave.

Pastor Stephanie P. Jaeger, Pastor Joseph Castañeda Carrera, Tuhina Rasche, and Tyra Dennis offered *How Strategic and Authentic is our Diversity?* (hosted via Zoom). I mention this here because it was great conversation and the hosts should be commended for leading this.

The ELCA Anti-Racism Pledge

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him (Colossians 3:17).

As church we are called to confess the sin of racism, condemn the ideology of white supremacy, and strive for racial justice and peace. Beyond statements and prayers, we are called to also act and respond to injustices. We invite you to commit to one or more of the actions below:

1. Sign the pledge found under [https://www.elca.org/racial-justice-pledge?](https://www.elca.org/racial-justice-pledge), "I commit to study, prayer and action to become an anti-racist individual in an anti-racist church," and share your participation on social media using #ELCA4justice.
2. Work to dismantle racial injustice by [listening](#) to voices, experiences and the expertise of people of color. Learn about the [ELCA ethnic-specific associations](#) and their [strategies](#).
3. Learn the history of systemic racism in this country and the ways racism and white supremacy impact every aspect of our life together.
4. Join, support or attend your synod's anti-racism team or work with your synod leadership to start one in your congregation. Study the ELCA social statement "[Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture](#)" and the "[Explanation of the Declaration of the ELCA to People of African Descent](#)."
5. Explore and use on "God's work. Our hands." Sunday the forthcoming ELCA Advocacy resources on a "Just Society Supporting the Health of All," which are focused on advancing

racially equitable public policies, and by engaging in [ELCAvotes](#) to encourage and ensure voting rights for all.

6. Start where you are by joining community organizations working for racial justice.
7. Reach out to build or [deepen relationships](#) with Historic Black Churches. Consider using the congregational resource “[Understanding One Another](#),” co-authored by the ELCA and the African Methodist Episcopal Church, or our [Joint Statement of Mission](#) with the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church as a way to get started.
8. Explore and use the [anti-racism resources](#) of our ecumenical partners through the [A.C.T. Now to End Racism](#) initiative of the National Council of Churches.

I have signed the pledge. I have read the books: *Dear Church A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the* by U.S. Lenny Duncan and *White Fragility, Why is it so hard for White People to talk about racism* by Robin DiAngelo. Both books have opened my eyes, and I recommend them for everyone to read.

In Christ,

Karen L Moyer



WOMEN OF THE ELCA GATHERING
AUGUST 5-8, 2021 | PHOENIX
WELCATG.ORG



Our Triennial Gathering has been postponed from July 202 to August 5-8, 2021 in Phoenix. If you were registered your registration will carry over. If you will be unable to attend the new dates, your registration can be transferred to someone else – or gifted to someone else. So continue to plan and save to attend this event that is always full of inspiration, fellowship, worship, and music.



We were able to hold our March Event on the 7th just prior to when all events were postponed or cancelled due to Covid-19. Hope Lutheran in Palm Desert hosted our event under the theme “Love Bears All Things”. Shelter from the Storm and Mama’s House were the recipients of our Love Gifts and we heard a presentation from each organization.



Pastor Karen Stephenson gave a very interesting and engaging Bible study on Mary of Magdala. The event was well attended.



We selected the theme “Weave” for our November Convention and Gathering. At this writing we have not officially postponed or cancelled this event. A final decision will be made August 15th at a combined Zoom board and planning team meeting. Hope Lutheran in Temecula was selected as the host for our event and we planned to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the ordination of women. One idea is to postpone until our March 2021 Event rather than simply cancel until next November.

See www.pacificawomen.org and www.womenoftheelca.org for updated information and more pictures of our events.

Ten Things to Know about 1517 Media Spring 2020

1. This year we'll release the third set of materials based on Daniel Erlander's timeless work. An updated version of his classic *Baptized, We Live: Lutheranism as a Way of Life* will be accompanied by a new, comprehensive *Baptized, We Live Leader Sourcebook*. The new resources complement two sacramental resource series released recently, *A Place for You* (Holy Communion) and *Come to the Water* (Holy Baptism). augsburgfortress.org/bwl
2. Also inspired by the work of Daniel Erlander is the Lutheran Welcome series of highly visual and engaging booklets about the Lutheran expression of faith. Place them in a narthex or welcome area display rack, or keep them handy for whenever someone may have questions about the Lutheran basics. augsburgfortress.org/lutheran-welcome
3. Recent additions to the **Worship Matters** series include *Embodying Confidence and Grace: A Handbook for Presiding Ministers* and *Sing with All the People of God: A Handbook for Church Musicians*. These volumes join several existing books that help leaders and laity develop a richer understanding and practice of worship. augsburgfortress.org/worshipmatters
4. Fall 2020 will see the release of a new liturgy and song supplement to Evangelical Lutheran Worship, titled *All Creation Sings*. Three new liturgies, a complement of selected new prayers, and approximately 200 hymns and songs will supply a rich new collection prepared to enliven your congregation's worship in these rapidly changing times. augsburgfortress.org/all-creation-sings
5. Fortress Press and Luther Seminary have partnered to launch a new series of books to bring new life to the preaching task. 2020 releases in this series include *Leading with the Sermon* by William H. Willimon and *A Lay Preacher's Guide* by Karoline Lewis. augsburgfortress.org/working-preacher
6. **Broadleaf Books** is the newest imprint in our book publishing program. Titles published by Broadleaf Books will explore the expanse of human experience—seeking to deepen faith and understanding and bring wholeness to readers and society. Look for nonfiction books in the areas of religion and culture, personal growth, spirituality, social justice, and Christian living. broadleafbooks.com
7. Sparkhouse Digital is in its second year of providing access to a wide range of resources for a low annual subscription fee. One example in Sparkhouse Digital Youth is *Wholeness and Holiness*, guiding students to embrace the wide-ranging wholeness and holiness of people and communities. augsburgfortress.org/sparkhouse-digital
8. Newly available are two guidebooks for congregations' summer ministry, *Journey Together: Twelve Intergenerational Summer Events* and *Creative Arts Camp: Four Summer VBS Programs*. Also available on Sparkhouse Digital Children. augsburgfortress.org/sparkhouse-summer
9. The latest release in the video-based series *Dialogues On* addresses one of the most critical topics in church and society today: *Dialogues On: Race*. Other titles in this series are *Dialogues On: The Refugee Crisis* and *Dialogues On: Sexuality*. augsburgfortress.org/dialogues-on
10. Beaming Books continues its mission to publish high-quality children's books that help kids thrive in every part of who they are—emotionally, socially, and spiritually. New releases for 2020 include *The Memory Book: A Grief Journal for Children and Families* and *Let's Eat!: Mealtime around the World*. beamingbooks.com

California Lutheran

UNIVERSITY

With joy I share with you about the work of California Lutheran University who as member of the Network of Colleges and Universities of the ELCA equips graduates who are called and empowered to serve the neighbor so that all may flourish.

4,303 Cal Lutheran students learn at 5 different centers in California. We offer 20 undergraduate majors and 29 graduate programs of study. 53% of our undergraduate students are from underrepresented populations and one third are the first in their family to attend college. Our students come from 42 states, 49 countries, and represent a diversity of faiths and cultures. With a network of 30,000 alumni, students from our founding in 1959 until now have discovered their purpose and are transforming their community and the world.

Exciting ventures are on this way this summer.

A dedicated space in the Student Union for a **Black Student Union/Sister's Circle headquarters** is being built for students to raise awareness of and share the richness of black history, African culture, and current issues affecting the black community.

On July 25-29, Cal Lutheran will welcome high school students and adults from Regions One, Two, Three and Four at the [Western States Youth Gathering](#). As the journey of faith comes with the challenge of the unknown, students will FOCUS on grace, fear, love and Jesus. "SHIFT", a one-day leadership event for youth from racially diverse congregations will be held on July 24 in advance of the gathering.

Two sessions of "[Executive Skills for Church Leaders: Learning from the world of the MBA](#)" are offered yearly so that church leaders from outdoor and social ministry settings, congregations, and clergy can apply concepts from management to the complex arena of ministry today. The next sessions are July 13-17 at Cal Lutheran (scholarships available) and January 11-15, 2021, at Spirit in the Desert Retreat Center, Arizona.

Opening this summer, the new [Swenson Science Center](#), a three-story, 47,000-square-foot facility will more than double the amount of space dedicated to science featuring 12 labs for teaching biomechanics, organic synthesis, physiology and neuroscience, marine biology, cell and developmental genetics, exercise physiology ergometry, and nuclear magnetic resonance and 8 labs designated for faculty and student research.

The [Thriving Leadership Formation](#) program brings ELCA leaders together to cultivate skills and networks of trust, support, spiritual practice and accountability. Fueled with \$1million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc., this project helps pastors and church leaders throughout 14 Western States avoid burnout and thrive in their ministries.

The university has opened the new [School for Professional and Continuing Studies](#) which include the Bachelor's Degree for Professionals program, the Center for Nonprofit Leadership, and a new Center for Lifelong Learning. A Fifty and Better program for older adults has been launched to serve older adults who want to take non-credit classes for the joy of learning and social engagement.

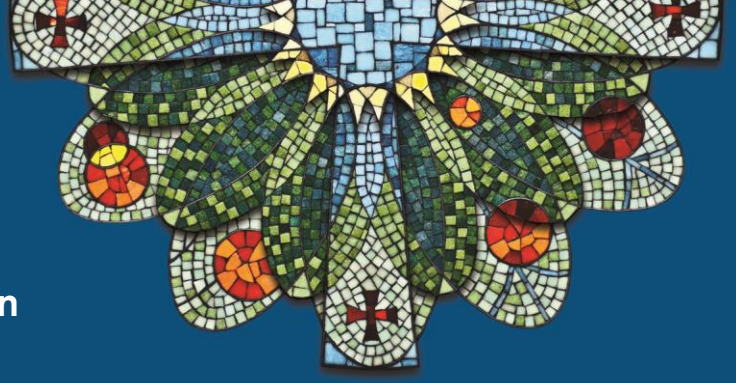
Cal Lutheran is one of eight universities partnering with the state of California on a first-in-the-nation program to help students pay for college through public service, targeting pressing challenges in our region. The students selected as **AmeriCorps Fellows** will dedicate 25 hours a week for 22 weeks to serve as mentors and advisors for low-income and immigrant youth throughout Ventura County.

Launching in fall 2020, an **ethnic and race studies major** will help students build cultural competence and gain deeper understanding of communities of color in the U.S. Student's confidence in their own identities will be strengthened by validating the historical, artistic, and economic contributions of the groups with which they identify.

You can learn about all these things and more by visiting us online at www.callutheran.edu. We are your Lutheran university in the west serving the church and world.



ELCA Foundation
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



Updates from the ELCA Foundation

Synod Assemblies 2020

About the ELCA Foundation

As our faith matures and deepens, so does the way we support God's work in the world. The ELCA Foundation exists to sustain and grow our ministries by stewarding assets for all the related organizations of the ELCA.

Through our national network of 23 gift planners, the ELCA Foundation supports members of the ELCA in their call to live as faithful and generous people. Our gift planners work with congregational members to create life giving plans that ensure successful and lasting legacies are passed on to loved ones and treasured ministries. The Foundation also supports and strengthens ELCA congregations, synods and related entities with gift planning resources and investment management services.

Regional Gift Planners are available to help:

- Work with congregational leaders to identify important considerations, and execute an appropriate plan, to cultivate current and planned gifts
- Develop congregational gift acceptance policies to receive gifts well
- Meet with individual members to develop charitable gift giving plans
- Establish an investment account for endowments and other investable assets utilizing the Endowment Fund Pooled Trust (Fund A)

In 2019, the ELCA Foundation network generated over \$124.1 million in total gifts and investment assets. Of that, \$91.3 million are future planned gift commitments with over \$12m in future planned gifts directly benefitting individual ELCA Congregations. There were \$6.9 million in current gifts, including funded trusts, gift annuities and individual endowments, and \$25.9 million new assets invested in Fund A. Thank you for the opportunity to work in your synod and trusting your endowment dollars to the ELCA Foundation.

In the Southwest California and Pacifica Synods:

- \$22.4m invested in the Pooled Endowment Trust, Fund A.
- \$12.4m in new planned gifts since 2018.

Contact your regional gift planner:

Lisa Higginbotham
805-910-5048
lisa.higginbotham@elca.org

"Lisa meets one-on-one with parishioners to help them make the best choices with their estate. No church is too small to benefit greatly from this service! We are forever strengthened by Lisa's knowledge and expertise."

Christ Lutheran Church
San Clemente, CA



Joy and Peace to you from God our Father and Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

I have the privilege of bringing greetings on behalf of the 150+ employees, volunteers and clients of Lutheran Social Services of Southern California. I want to begin by telling you how thrilled I am to be a part of such a wonderful organization. I am so excited about the chance to work alongside each of you in ministry and look forward to meeting you in person, once guidelines allow.

As I travel throughout our network of over 75 programs in six different counties, I've had the honor to meet the most passionate men and women of God who serve on our front lines. Their love and care for the clients we support and services we provide, inspire our mission to live out God's love by embracing, equipping and empowering vulnerable people in Southern California.

We are committed to ensuring that LSS Southern California is both a transparent and transformative organization, dedicated to living our mission, vision and values. To that end, we have brought on new team members who are equally passionate about our work and the people we serve. They are results driven leaders that, like me, will hold our organization accountable and always act in love.

My life's scripture has always been Jeremiah 29:11, which says: *I know the plans I have for you, says God. Plans to prosper you and not harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future.*

As we enter the new fiscal year, I invite you to join our team in finding a scripture that resonates with you. One in which you hear and feel the very presence of God. When everything is well, thank God through that scripture. When life's challenges arise, cling to that scripture and never, ever forget that God is a person of His Word. He will always deliver on His promises.

We are blessed by your prayers, collaboration and financial support, and pledge to do everything possible to bring the Hope of Jesus Christ to those women, men and children facing a crisis in this season and the next. We are thankful that you see yourselves as servant leaders in Christ and purveyors of His Gospel through our work.

Below you will find our most recent COVID related updates from our offices within the Pacifica Synod. I hope to join you in person at the next Synod gathering but, look forward to virtually meeting as many of you as possible until that time. *Now may the grace of God, the love of Jesus, and the sweet communion of the Holy Spirit, rest, rule, and abide now, henceforth and forevermore. Amen.*

LaSharnda Beckwith

LaSharnda Beckwith, PhD.
President and Chief Executive Officer

✓ Ministry Highlights:

- **CCLM** Construction of a new roof at the shelter is ready to begin, as is the replacement of a sprinkler system. We are waiting for permits from the city of San Bernardino. In addition, the residential house that burned has been totally renovated and clients have moved back into the structure. The external painting of the residential houses is the only significant work that is outstanding. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of shelter clients was reduced for social distancing, but case management continues. Many of our community programs have been suspended but others, like our after-school sessions, are being offered digitally.
- **Orange County** has reduced the number of days our Garden Grove office is open, along with fewer numbers of hours per day. However, clients are still being case managed and assisted in other ways. This location deals with two groups of people. First, women who have been victims of crime and/or domestic abuse. Our **Victims Intervention Program (VIP)** offers both tangible and intangible supportive services, ranging from therapy to emergency housing to remove the client from an abusive partner. Second, we deal with those who are homeless and require immediate intervention. Funds from the Matthew 25 Grant program have been a godsend both to the Garden Grove office and the women, men and children who come there for hope.
- **Riverside County** Our Riverside County office is experiencing a significant surge from those in need of emergency services and rental assistance. The most vulnerable population consists of first-time clients that were secure in their homes prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Calls are up by more than 120%, with many of our referrals coming from the resource line 2-1-1, churches, county and city agencies. Our emergency rental assistance program has assisted 28 families with housing and another 14 are waiting for paperwork to be processed. Most have either no source or significantly reduced income. Because most of these individuals are uncertain about their future employment, the challenge has been goal planning with them. Our goal is to continue to walk alongside them while they rebuild their resources and determine next steps.
- **Rural San Bernardino County** Our Behavioral Health providers have transitioned 98% of their therapeutic clients to remote and telehealth services. In Trona, a growing need for client confidentiality and safe expression has prompted the reopening of our physical office to allow much needed counseling sessions without the distraction or interruption of household residents.
- **San Diego County** has seen a significant surge in clients at our Project Hand food pantry in Chula Vista, nearly tripling previous monthly averages. In-kind donations of non-perishable food and gift cards are always welcome. The LSS Upward Bound/TRIO team has pivoted to remote services, in order to keep those students, already impacted by racial disparities, from falling further behind because of technological disproportions. The Kathy Hopper Senior Friendship Center in Clairemont Mesa is closed because of the pandemic, and the Senior Companion is making wellness contacts by telephone.

We are grateful to the Synod and all the congregations for your prayers and your many levels of support. At this time, when many services for the poor and disenfranchised are being reduced, your faithful commitment to our agency allows us to continue reaching those in greatest need. Thank you, and God bless you.



Mission Investment Fund

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



The Mission Investment Fund (MIF) is the lending ministry of the ELCA. MIF makes low-interest loans to ELCA congregations and ELCA-related ministries for building and renovation projects. With MIF loans, congregations and ministries can purchase property, construct new buildings, and expand or renovate existing facilities.

MIF loans expand the capacity for ministry. MIF loans help create expanded worship spaces, updated space for education and youth ministry, new kitchens for community meals, affordable housing units and much more.

At year-end 2019, MIF had 898 loans outstanding, totaling \$575.1 million.

To fund these loans, MIF offers a portfolio of investments for congregations, their members, synods and ELCA-related ministries to purchase. At year-end 2019, MIF investment obligations totaled \$493.4 million.

MIF is a financially strong and stable organization, with a record of steady, controlled growth. With total assets of \$712.3 million and net assets of \$211.9 million at year-end 2019, MIF maintains a capital ratio of 29.75 percent—positioning MIF in the top tier of well-capitalized church extension funds. For more information, visit mif.elca.org.

MIF loans and investments in the Pacifica Synod (as of December 31, 2019):

- 19 Mission Investment Fund loans, with a balance of \$13,929,041
- \$10,505,205 in Mission Investment Fund investment obligations

MIF representative:

Joel S. Wudel, Regional Manager, Tel: 773-682-1765; email: joel.wudel@elca.org



PACIFIC LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Thank you for being a ministry partner!

We really appreciate all of the ways that you support us. Your prayers, gifts, and encouraging your leaders to consider a vocation in the church are three of the most important things your synod and congregation can do to support us and participate in our common mission to be church together for the sake of the world. PLTS is working hard to grow. We have a vision to provide theological education for more people, in more places, and in more ways. These are three of the exciting things happening at PLTS:

Complete the Master of Divinity in Distributed Learning or Residential Format

Choose Your Pathway:

3 Years: The Fast-Track Pathway

The fast-track pathway is a compact, full-time, three year program of research-oriented, practical, and contextual learning. This includes 2 years of coursework and 1 year of full-time internship. Distributed learning students on this pathway will be on campus two to three times a year for Life and Learning Together Weeks.

4 Years: The Extended Pathway

The extended pathway is a full-time program of four years of research-oriented, practical, and contextual learning. This includes 3 years of coursework and 1 year of full-time internship. Distributed learning students on this pathway will be on campus two to three times a year for Life and Learning Together Weeks.

5 Years: The Flex Pathway

The flex pathway is a half-time program of five years of research-oriented, practical, and contextual learning. This includes 4 years of half-time coursework and 1 year of full-time internship. Distributed learning students on this pathway will be on campus two to three times a year for Life and Learning Together Weeks.

Climate Justice & Faith Concentration

Empowering leaders to cultivate moral, spiritual, and practical power for the work of climate justice in communities of faith. This concentration is designed for students interested in earth-honoring theology, ethics, spirituality, and practices that connect ecological well-being with racial, economic, and gender justice.

This concentration prepares students to:

- Lead congregations in developing climate justice work
- Practice climate justice as a spiritual practice
- Address intersections of climate change with racial, economic, and gender-based inequity
- Articulate biblical, ethical, theological, and spiritual grounding for climate justice
- Employ scientific resources related to climate change
- Collaborate with interfaith and community partners

QUICK FACTS ABOUT PLTS

- Number of PLTS Alumni: 1,633
- Number of MDiv Students: 37
- Number of TEEM Students: 50
- Number of MDiv Interns: 8
- Number of MA Students: 2
- Number of MDiv Graduates (2019): 10
- Number of TEEM Graduates (2019): 18
- Scholarships Awarded (2018-2019): \$383,951 to 100% of need-based qualifying students

Master of Arts in Spirituality and Social Change

Stay tuned for this brand new degree program coming in 2021!

To learn more about PLTS, or to make a gift, visit [PLTS.edu](https://plts.edu).

So You Can Embrace Every Day

We are a church that takes care of each other. Portico Benefit Services is proud to continue a 200+ year Lutheran legacy of caring for those who serve, from pastors and their families to staff at social ministry organizations. As the ELCA's benefit ministry, seeing the diverse needs of our national church community drives us to innovate: to control health care costs and increase total well-being, to help plan members retire with confidence, to advocate on behalf of church organizations, and to serve more people well.

At Portico, we're inspired daily by those who commit to a life of service, and we're grateful to walk alongside our plan members — providing benefits designed to help you embrace every day.



The Rev. Jeff Thiemann
President & CEO

Church Benefits Making a Difference

65%

Members Preparing for the Future*

by making their own pretax retirement contributions during 2019 in addition to the contributions from their sponsoring organization.

10,648

Pounds Lost*

by ELCA-Primary health plan members since 2018, when we added a chronic condition management program by Omada® to help reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

1,728

New Members Welcomed

to Portico's benefit plans in 2019 when we added three ELCA social ministry organizations.

3

Pro-Church Bills

enacted into federal law in 2019 thanks to Portico working alongside other denominations to advocate for legislation favorable to church benefit plans.

605

Members Made the Leap

into retirement in 2019. Over 80% of ELCA retirees report feeling financially prepared for this next chapter of their lives. Well done!

65%

Members Being Proactive

with their health by using ELCA-Primary preventive services in 2019.

70%

Members With Diabetes See Improvement

in their ability to manage their condition due to participation in our Livongo® Diabetes Management program.

1,297

Additional Students

attending schools in low-income Midwestern communities thanks in part to a social purpose fund investment.

96%

Users Satisfied*

or very satisfied with their experience on Portico's member and employer websites.

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MISSION TEAM FOR JUSTICE REPORT TO SYNOD - 2020

The Justice Team continued to meet most months through Tuesday, March 10, 2020 at the Synod Office. We heard reports from several of our committees or task forces. In February The Rev. Dr. Alexia Salvatierra and Dixie Hansen reported on the circles of care formed to help immigrant youth who are waiting for a court date on their asylum cases and are aging out of the foster care system. If they do not find a home and sponsor, they will be placed in adult detention. They are given a place to stay in someone's home for a limited time, and are helped to find employment. Dixie has been driving a young woman and her 4-month-old infant to a specialist in Orange County. Circles have been formed in several areas of our synod. Contact Alexia if you would like to help. There is a great need for gift cards to help feed and care for these young people. Gift cards can be sent to the Synod Office and labeled for Pastor Alexia.

The Green Faith group planned an event open to everyone for World Water Day, on Sunday, March 22, 2020, 4:00 at the L.A. River, McAdams Park. There was to be worship and the speaker was to be Dr. Cynthia Moe-Lobeda. It had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. Green Faith is proposing a ban on single use plastics.

The Anti-racism and Diversity Committee urged everyone to send comments to the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Department in Washington DC regarding the proposed new rule that would weaken oversight and national data on fair housing initiatives in low-income communities of color. Comments were to be sent by March 16. The new 'fair housing' rule absurdly ignores race, segregation, and housing discrimination, and incorrectly equates increased housing supply with fair housing choice.

Our Middle East Peace Task Force is considering a name change which would better label their work on Israel and Palestine rather than all of the Middle East. They have read and discussed *The Lemon Tree* by Sandy Tolan. They were planning an event with this author as speaker, but it had to be postponed. Their new book is a graphic novel titled *Footnotes in Gaza*.

Lutheran Office of Public Policy-CA (LOPP-CA) held a fundraiser at Ascension Lutheran, Thousand Oaks on Saturday, January 25, 2020. The speaker was former U.S. Representative Lois Capps on the topic "Faith and Politics." Thank you to Dixie Hanson and Jayne Affonso for preparing the wonderful brunch food, and thank you to our silent auction providers and bidders. The John August Swanson prints were very popular with the attendees. Director Regina Banks of LOPP-CA welcomed everyone and told a bit about our work in Sacramento.

The Justice Team is working very hard. Everyone is invited to receive our emails on justice issues. Beginning on September 8, 2020 our monthly meeting will be on Zoom. Just contact me and give me your email address if you wish to join.

Sharon Heck, Chair

S.Heck4peace@gmail.com



Greetings in the name of our Lord!

As My Friends House, Inc. (MFH) has recently celebrated our official 10th year as a non-profit 501©3 foundation we are happy to say that we are excited about the direction the organization is going. We declared 2019 the year for expansion, and we are glad to see that the mantra for the year was something to not only exclaim, but to live by as well. As a ministry of Ascension Lutheran Church, Los Angeles, MFH is happy to continue this ministry into the new decade of manifestation.

In a continued effort of visibility, we increased our visibility with the 2nd annual Wellness Fair. This Wellness Fair broadened the awareness to the community as well as other churches in our area, to understand that we are not just a feeding site. Part of our mission is to include wellness for the whole body and to that end we incorporate education and resources as often as possible. Our partnering with other vendors was strategic so that we in turn could be a face at their future events. Some of those groups included People United Staying Healthy, Movement Runners and Nutrizone, which are all community based organizations. The reality of visualization and growth even in feeding people, growing gardens and providing cooking classes is ever changing in this world of social media. Social media and youth drive vibrancy into organizations and change. We are happy to ride the wave. These organizations have helped us reach a younger demographic of concerned people and are helping to bring in more volunteers, and teaching us how to depict through social media the story of MFH better, and heighten awareness of our cause. This has also pushed growth in the area of funds raised, as we now look to Instagram, Facebook and YouTube as some of our larger markets to reach out to others.

As we continue our efforts of helping to alleviate hunger and hunger situations in a community devoid of a wide variety of grocery stores and farmers markets, MFH has been blessed to receive grants from continued friends such as the James and Mary Bell Foundation and new partners the Theda and Tamblin Clark Family Foundation. These large gift sponsors coupled with our annual giving drives have allowed us to do more outreach to more families. We covet the relationships we have with the Southwest California Synod, Los Angeles Regional Foodbank, Sprout's and Aldi Markets, Food to Donate Program, PolosPantry and others, because this allows us to share and bless/gift our neighbors, others in the LA Metro Conference and South Bay Conference.

Within this year we will continue our weekly food distributions, opportunities for health screenings, Cook n Connect and Creative Chefs Cooking Classes, our urban garden and now incorporate our Teen Cooking Class Program with five well known chefs of our community. This new class provides us the opportunity to have more connection to the youth in our community, and will allow us to instill in them better nutrition habits and learn giving back to your community. MFH has declared we will stay relevant, be in service with joy, and minister to a large community who may never enter our churches, in the name of our Lord.

Respectfully submitted,

Temesghen Starr, Executive Director



Women of the ELCA Southwest Synodical Organization - 2019-2020

Autumn Renewal: On the weekend of October 12-13 the Women of the ELCA (WELCA) held our biannual Autumn Renewal at Cal Lutheran University. The theme was “Sharing God’s Love through Gratitude” using 2 Corinthians 4:15:

“Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.”

This was a one night event instead of previous autumn renewals of two nights. Participants in the program included Pastors Jennifer Burgos, Marta Salazar and Tracy Williams leading devotions and worship; Keia Morris as Bible Study leader; Dona Kintzi and Sharon Heck leading music; and Corinne DeVries as vocal entertainment on Friday evening. We especially welcomed our Latina sisters and supported them with Spanish speaking leadership. In carrying out the theme of the event we had gratitude moments throughout as speakers lifted up the activities and causes they are grateful for in their lives and gratitude booklets for each participant to use to daily record their blessings. Our personal renewal activities included both meditative (labyrinth, yoga, nature walk) and creative (rock painting, beading, knitting and creating flowers) activities. We also included the movie “A Question of Faith” followed by discussion. Our offering of \$1346 was divided between Churchwide WELCA general budget and supporting the Triennial Convention delegates which was scheduled for July of 2020.

Conference of Presidents: As president of the Southwest Synod Women of the ELCA, I attended the Conference of Presidents meeting February 21-23, 2020 in Chicago at the Lutheran Center. I was on the planning committee for this meeting which met under the theme “*The Power of Community.*” Questions from the God’s work. Our hands. deck of cards handed out at the last Synod Assembly were used to facilitate discussion among participants at the Conference to discuss building community. Our mission statement begins with the phrase, “As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves . . .” so it was appropriate to explore the power of that community. These annual meetings at churchwide are an opportunity to connect with other presidents around the country as we are inspired by our national leaders to share ideas for synod and unit renewal, for service and for ways to build community wherever we are.

Winter Gathering: We met on March 7 at Olivet Lutheran/Hawthorne with the theme “Hope in Difficult Times.” 86 women attended the event which included devotions by Pastor Johnel Barron who is interim pastor at Olivet, a brunch and three speakers: Shannon Savage-Howie, a Deacon and Spiritual advisor, who told about using “storytelling” to help those in the California Lutheran University and Conejo Valley communities who were impacted by the tragedy of both the Borderline shooting and the fires that devastated so many homes in the Thousand Oaks area to process their grief.

Raquel Bautista, a volunteer Social Worker in the Latino community, who told of her family experiences, her move from Mexico to California which led her to get her HS Diploma and her

participation in LA County Department of Mental Health. She teaches Art Classes that help empower Latina women in dealing with their problems. Outside in the courtyard she had a display of art and jewelry that had been made in her classes.

Lynn Bulock, a Deacon and writer, who found she was in a unique place with her writing gift to aid our synod in obtaining grants. She partnered with the mental health ministry program NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) and wrote a grant for Family and Friends. In her work with NAMI she has learned how to communicate with people who are confronting mental illness. The research shows that one in five of us are dealing with problems due to mental illness. It is often our faith that offers the hope they are seeking.

Dianne Tillman and Sharon Heck led the music. Our offering of \$1530 was divided between Lutheran Social Services/Long Beach, "My Friend's House" (a local food pantry) and the Churchwide Women of the ELCA.

Triennial Convention & Gathering: The Triennial Convention and Gathering planned for July 16-19, 2020 in Phoenix, Arizona with the theme "Just Love" has been postponed to August of 2021 due to Covid-19.

What's News: We published our newsletter *What's News* in April, "Creativity & Inspiration," with each board member sharing how they were coping with the sheltering in place due to Covid-19. Our July edition of the newsletter, "We Can Do It," celebrated the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women with reflections on this theme from some of our synod women pastors.

Our synodical newsletter "What's News" is published quarterly and highlights the events of the synodical women as well as those of clusters and congregational units. There is also a regular column by Sharon Heck on Peace and Justice. Thanks to Maxine Cameron Stenstrom, editor and graphic designer, Karil Drake point person editor and Julie Jensen, Database Manager for facilitating this publication. It is now available to anyone who desires it on line as well as through a subscription price of \$8 for a mailed out copy. For email copy send your email to juliejnsn1@roadrunner.com and for hard copy send your address and \$8 check to Julie Jensen, 921 Gill Ave., Port Hueneme, CA 93041.

Board Members: Thanks to our WELCA board members for being especially flexible and creative in this year of 2020 and who have agreed to add one more year to their term of service due to the postponement of our convention to October of 2021:

Rosemary Lawson, Vice President, Beth Bunnell, secretary, Karil Drake, treasurer, Lillian Simons, Janet Simmons, Mary Stewart, Mary Ridenour-French, Pastor Tracy Williams and Dianne Tillman

Peace and Blessings,

Dixie Hanson, President