



## Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC)

Congregations in Kumamoto

Rev. Hitoshi and Satoko Adachi

ELCA Missionary and Associate

### EASTER BLESSINGS and THANK YOU

Hitoshi's third anniversary of missionary life in Kumamoto just passed on April 30th and Satoko's May 28th anniversary is coming soon. They could not anticipate how drastically the world would change in three years, but this is the new normal. They feel God's Love and Mercy through the risen Lord who defeated death. They always thank you for your prayers and thoughts supporting God's ministry in Kumamoto.

Although they hear good news that vaccinations are going well in the States, almost none of their friends in Kumamoto received it except one member who attends International Worship and works for a hospital as a nurse. In these continued pandemic conditions, major Japanese cities are now experiencing the fourth wave of Covid-19. Even in this situation, Hitoshi & Satoko and people in the communities they interact are healthy at least.

The previous newsletter mentioned the concern for the International Service because of J3 transitions, but amazingly volunteers for the International Service appeared and God is allowing them to continue Sunday evening English services. However, challenges continue. Hitoshi and Satoko beg your pardon, again, for this short newsletter.

### GOD WORKS AMONG SMALL CHILDREN RAISED IN NON-CHRISTIAN ENVIRONMENTS

In past newsletters starting in May 2020, it was repeatedly reported that children visited the Adachi's home almost every day. During visits children read easy Christian picture books, saw Icons, colored Easter eggs and so on in their living room. There have been opportunities for children to ask questions about Easter because most children have never celebrated it before. However, one day, one of the eldest junior high school girls, who comes most often, started to teach other younger children about the Bible, saying that the Bible is a best seller and is the most read book in the world. Hitoshi and Satoko don't remember when they said such things to that girl, but a phrase from a famous hymn, "Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see" comes to Hitoshi & Satoko's minds very often recently.

They may soon start telling more metaphorical Bible stories according to God's will.

### LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF

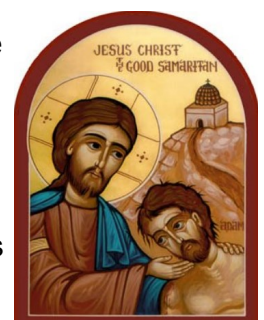
- Hitoshi's Reflection

We hear that more women are losing their jobs due to the pandemic, at least, in Japan. Looking at the United States, there has recently been explicit discrimination against Asians. Deeply rooted discrimination by sex, race, ethnicity, etc. are still occurring all over the world.

Hitoshi remembers the story of Rev. Stephen Bowman, who preached sermons to the ELCA congregation leaders in the United States over a decade ago. He often used the phrase "They Are Us," and made it the title of the book he published. When meeting with people from countries around the world trying to move to the United States, the title of the book makes people in the US remember that they were also immigrants. In other words, all the people living in the United States were immigrants, dating back to their ancestors.

Hitoshi had some experiences talking to the Navajo people, who are indigenous people. One of them told Hitoshi that he thinks his ancestors came from Mongolia through Alaska to North America around the 12th century. He also taught words with similar pronunciations in Japanese and Navajo, such as "acchi, meaning there", "kocchi, here", and "senaka, back". This made Hitoshi think that many of the Japanese and Navajo people had migrated from Mongolia to the Japanese islands and the North American continent through Alaska respectively.

Jesus says, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Hitoshi thinks that we are told to put ourselves in the position of our neighbors. Even in Kumamoto, a local city in Japan, at grocery stores, they see many people who migrated from other countries, especially from South Eastern Asia. Hitoshi is now giving sermons to people in congregations in Kumamoto, most of them have lived in Kumamoto for generations, what if you were a person who recently moved from an overseas country? If you are a man, what if you were a woman? If you're a woman, what if you were a man? Or what if you were part of the minority gender? Jesus asks us to love our neighbor, remembering that God loves each and every one of us unconditionally, and that Jesus works with us to make everything good. Amen.



LUTHERAN MARITIME MINISTRY  
Ports of Los Angeles & Long Beach  
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Chaplain Samson Chauhan 2020 Annual Report

What a year!

In January, we had the 25th Anniversary Celebration with a well attended event at First Lutheran Church in Torrance. The guest speaker, Virginia Sharma, reflected on her experiences founding this ministry in the Ports of Hueneme (Oxnard) and here.

Working out of the Long Beach Seafarers' Center, Chaplain Chauhan was having the usual slow Winter months when the pandemic closed the Center in March. Access to most terminals was denied for awhile, then gradually reopened. Well known to most security officials, he has been able to get to most ships, and board many. "Parked" for days out in the local ocean, seafarers call on him to get items they need when they get into port. Only those with U.S. residency or citizenship can get off ship. LMM provides Bible, prayers, and personal support-witnessing Christian love!

With on-going relationships around the world, Chaplain has stayed in touch with literally hundreds of officers and seafarers during this difficult time. While many of them are Filipinos, Chinese and from India, some are from Eastern Europe, North Africa, Ghana, Bangladesh, and Korea.

In addition to the support from congregations, the Synod, and individuals, the ministry received a grant this last Fall from North America Maritime Ministry Association that enabled more watch caps and "Christmas" gift bags to be distributed on the ships.

This ministry has continued through these difficult times due to your support and prayers. The Ports' cargo volumes are setting records! Terminals and trains and trucks are very busy; but, the seafarers can not get off the ships. They need us to come to them!

At the end of 2020, many congregations and individuals donated clothes from their closets and garages that fill hundreds of bags for a very successful Savers Fundraiser on February 6th. Thanks for your generosity.

Thanks for our volunteers and board members who continue to bless this ministry. We celebrated the life of Fay Mandalia who who passed away in August. She had "cooked" hundreds of meals for seafarers and supported her husband, Chaplain Chim Mandalia, one of our "volunteers" in this ministry and on the board of the seafarer center.

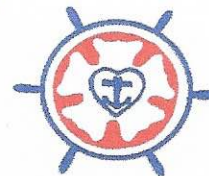
GIVE US A CALL! YOU TOO may join in this ministry! We have a world-wide impact!

LMM Board of Directors,  
Ron Nelson, Cathe Erickson, Janice Saruwatari, Terri Wall



# Lutheran Maritime Ministry of Southern California

120 S Pico Ave, Long Beach, CA 90802



## LUTHERAN MARITIME MINISTRY Treasurer's Report for 2020

### INCOME:

SW Calif. Synod (Grants):	\$ 9,600.00
SW Calif. Synod (Benevolence):	\$ 2,998.00
Direct from Congregations:	\$ 6,755.00
Individual donors:	\$36,200.00
Interest /Dividends (from statements)	\$ 595.00

**Total Income:** \$ 92,348.00

**Savings:** \$ 54.82

### DISBURSEMENTS:

Payroll	\$ 14,606.00
Chaplains Housing	\$ 13,800.00
Phone Allowance	\$ 720.00
IRS/ Taxes	\$ 4,338.00
State Comp. Ins. (Worker's Comp)	\$ 514.00
Van Operation:	
Gas	\$ 2,846.40
State Farm Insurance	\$ 2,859.72
DMV Registration	\$ 144.00
Maintenance/Repair	\$ 456.94
NAMMA Membership Renewal	\$ 250.00
Office supplies	\$ 514.00
Visa finance charges	\$ 25.44
25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Luncheon	\$ 644.00
ACCU overdraft fees	\$ 99.00

**Total Disbursements:** \$41,816.96

Submitted by Terry Wall, Treasurer, Lutheran Maritime Ministry April 2021

## **SYNOD MISSION TEAM FOR JUSTICE REPORT TO THE SYNOD ASSEMBLY – 2021**

The Synod Mission Team for Justice is the umbrella organization for several committees and task forces in the Southwest California Synod. Representatives from the committees meet monthly on the second Tuesday to share information. We have been meeting on Zoom during the past year. I asked the chairpersons of these groups to write a report of their activities. I have compiled them below.

The chair of our **Immigration Committee** is the Rev. Dr. Alexia Salvatierra. Here is her report:

“Under the Trump administration, over 400 regulations and other executive policies were passed that restricted immigration or expanded detention and deportation. COVID also added another level of restriction (worldwide) -- Title 42 is an immigration restriction related to public health which effectively closed down most immigration under COVID. Offices were closed and processes shut down in ways that also impacted the immigration process. ECAS (the Ecumenical Collaboration for Asylum Seekers) continued our work of accompanying asylum seekers that came to us for help -- including extending the original commitment of hosts who had an asylum seeker living with them from three months to over a year. We were not able to provide new hosts but our support circles ended up working to find asylum seekers other living situations and continuing to help them financially, practically and spiritually. The Thousand Oaks support circle is led by Lutherans. We are now actively looking for new hosts, particularly for families and for unaccompanied migrant minors who age out (turn 18 in custody.)

Under the Biden administration, there is a concerted effort to undo the majority of the Trump area restrictions, including a position dedicated to the rollback. The new administration has also proposed comprehensive reform legislation as well as supporting bills focusing on Dreamers and Agriculture workers (which passed the House with bipartisan support and now must be taken up by the Senate.) We need to advocate for these bills and for a broader commitment to immigration reform. However, at the same time, the Biden administration has been struggling to cope with the influx of unaccompanied migrant minors, families and single adults at the border fleeing the human rights crisis in Central America. This crisis has also led to reluctance to fulfill their initial promise to raise the extremely low caps of the Trump administration on refugee reception and resettlement. The administration is working on root causes in Central America and on the rebuilding of the infrastructure for the vetting and processing of asylum seekers, including prompt processing of unaccompanied children. There are two temporary shelters for children in our Synod as well as two providers of second level care. These can use donations and anyone with a foster care license can work with the latter providers to directly care for the children. Contact Rev. Dr. Alexia Salvatierra for more information -- [alexia@alexiasalvatierra.com](mailto:alexia@alexiasalvatierra.com).”

The chair of our **Lutheran Palestine Israel Network of Southern California (LPIN SoCal)** is Bishop Emeritus Dean Nelson. Here is his report:

“The mission of the Lutheran Palestine Israel Network of Southern California (LPIN SoCal) is to advocate for justice and peace in the Holy Land. Formerly known as the “Middle East Peace Task Force,” the LPIN So Cal brings together clergy and laypersons from both the Southwest California and Pacifica Synods who advocate for a just and peaceful solution to the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine. The

network relates to the ELCA's Peace Not Walls network whose goals are 'awareness and advocacy' of the issues, and 'accompaniment' especially of our partner church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL). LPIN SoCal also supports Opportunity Palestine, an organization that provides scholarships to students in the elementary and high schools operated by congregations of the ELCJHL, and Bright Stars of Bethlehem, an organization that provides scholarships for students enrolled at Dar al-Kalima University in Bethlehem. The Network has sponsored speakers and films that highlight issues resulting from the Israeli occupation of Palestine, and regularly discusses books by Palestinian, Israeli and American authors. Participants regularly share updates from numerous local and national ecumenical, interfaith and secular groups that host webinars, forums, and advocacy opportunities. The LPIN SoCal meets bi-monthly on the third Tuesday of the month. During the pandemic the meetings have occurred virtually via Zoom. Previously meetings were held at the Synod Office and Christ Lutheran Church in Long Beach. Bishop Emeritus Dean Nelson serves as the chair and convener of the Network. Anyone interested in learning more or wanting to participate can contact him at [bpdwnelson@aol.com](mailto:bpdwnelson@aol.com)."

Our **Prison Ministry committee** is chaired by John Halbert. John also serves as the secretary of our Mission Team for Justice, and we really appreciate his service. Here is his report:

"The Prison Ministry monitors developments in criminal justice reform movements in California and around the country. On the death penalty, there has been some good news of late. The state of Virginia recently abolished the death penalty, being the first Southern state to do so. There is movement to do the same in Nevada and Wyoming. In California, Gov. Newsom imposed a moratorium on capital punishment as one of his first acts in office. There had not been an execution for a number of years before that. Despite an anti-death penalty ballot initiative failing in 2016, we have a de facto abolition on capital punishment in California, despite having more than 700 prisoners on death row. We were working with a group, California People of Faith United Against the Death Penalty, but the LA affiliate of that group has effectively disbanded. The new LA County District Attorney, George Gascon, was elected on a progressive platform and is not pursuing the death penalty, a strong contrast to his predecessor, Jackie Lacey. Support for the death penalty is falling nationwide. On other issues of criminal justice reform, there are too many programs and progress on too many fronts to describe, but we are hoping to be working with the Lutheran Office of Public Policy to choose which legislative initiatives are particularly deserving of our support."

Our **Health Care committee** is chaired by Robert McDuff with assistance from Jane Affonso. Here is Robert's report:

"While 2019 saw the historic US Congressional hearings on Medicare for All (Jayapal HR 1384 with a majority of the Democratic caucus as co-sponsors) in four House Committees, the focus in 2020 was largely on the pandemic, the upcoming election and getting prepared for a reintroduction of the bill in 2021. The same can be said for 2020 legislative activity at the CA state level, where the 2019 SB 562 discussion was stalled by the Assembly. There was however monitoring of the Governor's Healthy California for All Commission which was pitched to "work to develop a plan for advancing progress toward achieving a health care delivery system for California that provides coverage and access through a unified financing system". A debrief in August stated that discussions have been led largely by



consultants from the health care industry but that public comments were overwhelmingly in support of single payer and some commissioners did seem to be allies for the cause.

During the Election of Nov 2020, the Single Payer (SP) campaign supported opposition to the CA Assembly Speaker and raised his awareness to people's support for the issue. On the national level, progressives were not pleased with Democratic Party platform opposed to SP but relieved to cast aside Trump efforts to dismantle the ACA. President Biden issued an executive order (Jan 28) directing a limited strengthening of Medicaid and the ACA.

The overriding message for 2021 has been that the pandemic has exposed some serious weaknesses in our health care system and systemic racism. Communities with larger proportions of underlying health conditions, essential workers who cannot afford to stay home, families living in relatively crowded conditions, and those without easy access to health care are disproportionately getting infected, hospitalized and dying.

Your Synod Health Care Team has been participating in webinars and discussions at both the Federal and State level. The new House bill HR 1976 (Jayapal) and the new CA State bill AB 1400 both have stronger pushing by legislators than two years ago, broader public support and grass roots efforts focused on awareness, education, and local city and county resolutions to win backing of a majority of legislators. For example, as part of the CalCare campaign we are working with multiple neighborhood councils to issue Community Impact Statements (CIS) in favor of passage of the LA City Resolution in support of the State AB 1400. Fact sheets on the current health system reform issues along with proposed legislation are available. We encourage anyone interested and in agreement with the Synod Health Care Resolution passed at the Assembly in June 2019 (Resolution in support of single-payer improved Medicare for All (19-03)) to please contact either of the co-chairs for this effort. God Bless this social justice effort!"

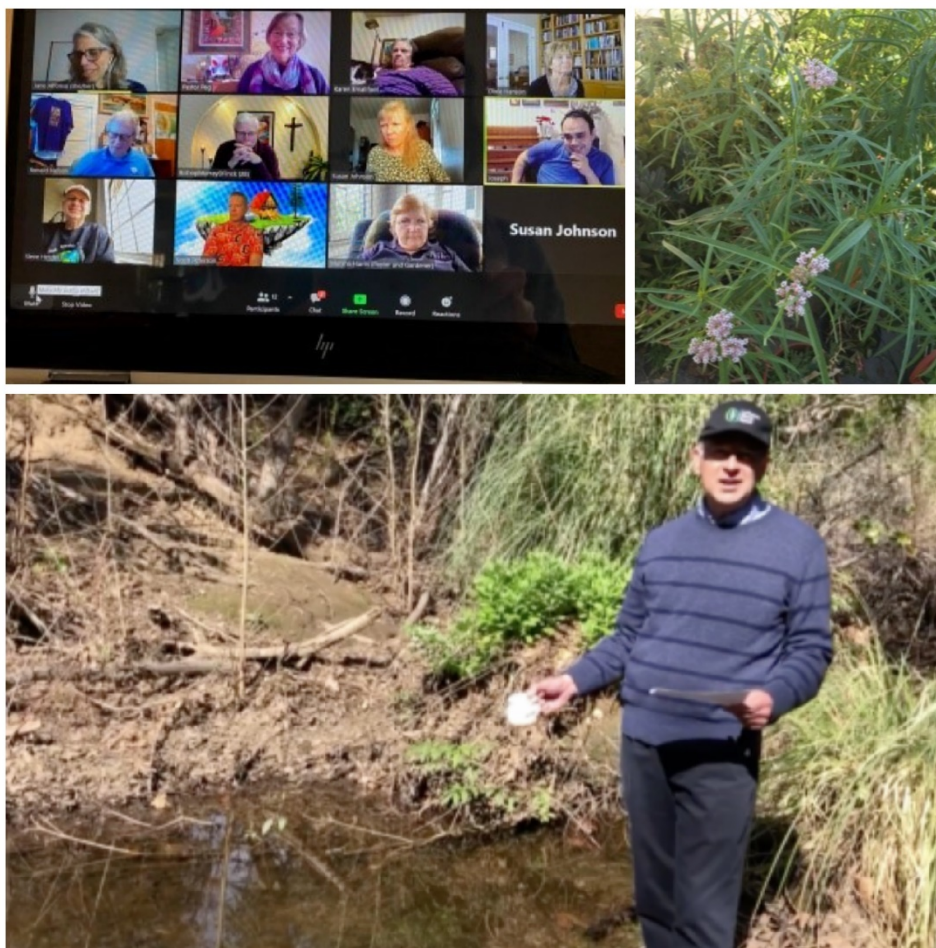
Our **Anti-Racism/Diversity committee** is chaired by Ross McConnell with the assistance of Ron Nelson. The main activity this year was "A Racial Wealth Gap Learning Simulation" presented on Zoom by David Gist of Bread for the World. Participants learned that the current racial wealth gap has been embedded in the fabric of the U.S. economy for centuries and continues today amidst the pandemic. Poverty impacts people of color disproportionately in our nation. We held the event in January 2021, and it is well worth repeating. Contact Sharon Heck if you would like to have a "Simulation" event with your congregation or group. [S.Heck4peace@gmail.com](mailto:S.Heck4peace@gmail.com)

The chair of the **Gun Violence Prevention task force** is The Rev. Janet Hansted. The group works with their counterparts in the Episcopal Church. If you are interested in the activities of this group, contact Rev. Hansted at [jlhansted@gmail.com](mailto:jlhansted@gmail.com).

The co-chairs of our **Green Faith Team** are Jane Affonso and the Rev. Peg Shultz-Akerson. Here is their report:

“The Southwest CA synod Green Faith Team rejoiced to again sponsor, (fifth annual) a United Nations World Water Day celebration. including brief video blessings of watersheds from around our synod. To watch these blessings is to see how dependent we are on living, flowing water of streams, rivers, wetlands, and ocean. The event’s keynote by Dr. Cynthia Moe-Lobeda addressed the challenge of climate catastrophe: today’s world desperately needs Church to be the Church, mustering the courage of truth-telling about climate sin and water terror (droughts, storms, and sea rise), while maintaining hope of our repentance and reversal through the power of God’s love among us. What we do as Church in these years matters!

You can watch the SWCA Synod Virtual World Water Day celebration and blessing of our rivers on the Green Faith page of the Synod Website.



We encourage all congregations to intentionally include creation care in all aspects of their church life such as planting native, drought tolerant, or food gardens [we recommend adding the local narrowleaf milkweed to support monarch butterflies], engaging in worship that honors creation in new and

different ways, educational events, personal discipleship, water and energy stewardship, reducing plastic and waste, and advocacy. Your congregation can become a [Creation Care Congregation](#).

We stand with front line communities experiencing the first, most and lasting effects of climate change and pollution and we are grateful for our partners in this advocacy work: Lutherans Restoring Creation, Interfaith Power and Light, Lutheran Office of Public Policy, and our ELCA Advocacy office. We have also become a partner of the new [Center for Climate Justice and Faith](#) at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary with our prayers and support, and encourage you to join in this endeavor. You can view our [Facebook page here](#). To be added to our email list or to join our monthly meetings, please contact [jgaffonso@gmail.com](mailto:jgaffonso@gmail.com).”

Co-chairs:

Jane Affonso

Pastor Peg Schultz-Akerson”

I realize this is a very long report, but I wanted everyone to know all the things that have been happening in our many committees. I appreciate all the efforts of our participants who work so hard to advocate for justice in our world. We try to live by the words of Micah 6:8 – *to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God*. **Amen!**

Sharon Heck, Chair

[S.Heck4peace@gmail.com](mailto:S.Heck4peace@gmail.com)



Following our Winter Gathering in March of 2020, we, along with the world, shut down our in-person gatherings, and met as a synod WELCA board on zoom in March, May, August, October, January and April to plan our newsletters and in the new year our zoom Winter Gathering event. We postponed our fall convention to 2021.

**Newsletters:** Our April Newsletter focused on reviewing the Conference of Presidents meeting in February and the March Winter Gathering (“Hope in Difficult Times”) as well as articles by board members on coping with quarantine times. The July newsletter celebrated the 50 anniversary of women being ordained with articles from some of our women pastors in the synod about their experiences and thoughts about being pastors. In October we added more articles from women pastors and celebrated the 100 anniversary of women getting the vote. We also lifted up the theme of justice and included John Lewis’ last essay before his death passing on the justice baton to those of us still in the struggle.

**Conference of Presidents:** In February, I along with four of our WELCA board members attended the Zoom Conference of Presidents weekend meeting Feb. 18-20, 2021 with the theme, “Pivot don’t Panic”. The biblical story of Shiphrah and Puah, the midwives who saved the Hebrew newborn baby boys from being killed by Herod’s decree found in Exodus 1:15-20 demonstrated their pivoting from death to life. We were encouraged to pivot as well using the analogy of basketball where one foot is anchored while pivoting. We are anchored with our highest calling to love and serve the neighbor. We also explored the concept of leadership using Margaret Wheatley’s definition: “anyone who sees a need for change and is compelled and willing to step forward.” Our pivot toolbox consists of purpose, prayer, praise and plan. Those of us who attended the event brainstormed ways to expand ways of reaching out to congregational units including offering monthly zoom Bible study from *Gather* for those who don’t have the Bible study in their congregations, connect more with Campus ministry at CLU and keep our website up to date.

**Winter Gathering:** In the new year of 2021, we decided to plan a virtual Winter Gathering in March with the theme “Unity not Uniformity.” Jennifer DeLeon, Director of Justice, was our keynote facilitator as we explored the theme. About 50 women participated in the event. Music was offered by soloists from different churches as well as the global group that used to provide music for Global Mission events. Jennifer encouraged us to reach out to Asian women in synod congregations offering them our support in this perilous time for them using the biblical admonition that whenever one of us is hurting, we all hurt. Our offering was divided between churchwide WELCA and LSS food program. Both the Conference of Presidents event and our Winter Gathering were recorded and are available.

**Coming up:** We conclude this very unusual time with planning a one day virtual convention October 16 with the theme “Loving Connections”. We are more aware and appreciative of the possibilities of reaching more women geographically through the use of technology thanks to our experience of quarantine.

**Board Members:** Thanks to our WELCA board members for being especially flexible and creative in this year 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