



“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age’”
(Matthew 28:18-20).

Dear siblings in Christ,

We know the gospel changes lives and that God’s power and grace are real and at work today. Together we are called to bear God’s creative and redeeming word to all the world. What if we could make God known to more people? To the child who’s never heard of Jesus? To young adults who are trying to make sense of the world? To older adults who often feel lonely and isolated?

Our purpose – “to activate each of us so that more people know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love” – is an expression of our calling and our longing for others to know the love of God in Christ Jesus. We live out our purpose through worship and service, in our congregations and communities, through our individual vocations and our collective work as church together.

Many of you have wondered why we set a goal to reach one million new, young and diverse people. We believe that each of us is made in the image of God, redeemed by Jesus on the cross, and filled with the Holy Spirit. Our focus on young and diverse people is not exclusive but an acknowledgment that younger and more diverse people are disproportionately missing from our pews and gatherings. We are challenging one another to reach out across differences of all sorts to meet our neighbors.

Setting a goal to engage with one million is a way for us to know whether the work we are doing is, in fact, reaching new people. It encourages us to work together to be a church that cares about the world around us and is effective and faithful in responding to God’s call.

Join us on this future-focused journey to widen our welcome and break down the barriers that keep people from engaging with the church. Together, we can help people experience the difference God’s grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation.

In Christ,



The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



“Jesús se acercó entonces a ellos y les dijo: –Se me ha dado toda autoridad en el cielo y en la tierra. Por tanto, vayan y hagan discípulos de todas las naciones, bautizándolos en el nombre del Padre y del Hijo y del Espíritu Santo, enseñándoles a obedecer todo lo que les he mandado a ustedes. Y les aseguro que estaré con ustedes siempre, hasta el fin del mundo” (Mateo 28:18-20).

Queridos(as) hermanos(as) en Cristo:

Sabemos que el evangelio cambia vidas, y que el poder y la gracia de Dios son reales y están obrando hoy. Juntos somos llamados a llevar la palabra creadora y redentora de Dios a todo el mundo. ¿Qué pasaría si pudiéramos dar a conocer a Dios a más personas? ¿Al niño que nunca ha oído hablar de Jesús? ¿A los adultos jóvenes que están tratando de entender el mundo? ¿A los adultos mayores que a menudo se sienten solos y aislados?

Nuestro propósito —activar a cada uno de nosotros para que más personas conozcan el camino de Jesús y descubran la comunidad, la justicia y el amor— es una expresión de nuestra llamada y nuestro anhelo de que otros conozcan el amor de Dios en Cristo Jesús. Vivimos nuestro propósito a través de la adoración y el servicio, en nuestras congregaciones y comunidades, a través de nuestras vocaciones individuales y nuestro trabajo colectivo como iglesia juntos.

Muchos de ustedes se han preguntado por qué fijamos la meta de alcanzar a un millón de personas nuevas, jóvenes y diversas. Creemos que cada uno de nosotros está hecho a imagen de Dios, redimido por Jesús en la cruz y lleno del Espíritu Santo. Nuestro enfoque en las personas jóvenes y diversas no es exclusivo, sino un reconocimiento de que las personas más jóvenes y diversas están desproporcionadamente ausentes de nuestras bancas y reuniones. Nos estamos desafiando unos a otros a avanzar a través de diferencias de todo tipo para conocer a nuestros vecinos.

La meta de comprometernos con un millón es una forma de saber si el trabajo que hacemos está, en efecto, llegando a nuevas personas. Nos anima a trabajar juntos para ser una iglesia que se preocupa por el mundo que nos rodea y que es eficaz y fiel en su respuesta al llamado de Dios.

Únase a nosotros en esta jornada concentrada en el futuro para extender nuestra bienvenida y romper las barreras que impiden que las personas participen en la iglesia. Juntos podemos ayudar a la gente a experimentar la diferencia que la gracia y el amor de Dios en Cristo hacen en todas las personas y la creación.

En Cristo,

La Rvda. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Obispa Presidente
Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en América



「耶穌進前來，對他們說：『天上地下所有的權柄都賜給我了。所以，你們要去，使萬民作我的門徒，奉父、子、聖靈的名給他們施洗，凡我所吩咐你們的，都教導他們遵守。看哪，我天天與你們同在，直到世代的終結。』」（馬太福音 28:18-20）

親愛的主內弟兄姊妹們，

我們知道福音改變生命，上帝的能力和恩典是真實的，並且至今仍在做工。我們蒙召一起向全世界傳播上帝創造和救贖的聖言。如果我們能讓更多人認識上帝會怎樣？對於從未聽說過耶穌的孩子？對於試圖理解世界的年輕人？對於經常感到寂寞和孤立的老年人？

我們的目的——「激勵我們每個人去讓更多的人認識耶穌的道，發現社區、公義和愛」——表達了我們的呼召和我們渴望幫助他人在基督耶穌裡了解上帝的愛。我們通過敬拜和服事，在我們的會眾和社群中，通過我們個人的職業呼召、和我們作為教會集體作工來實現我們的目標。

你們當中的許多人都想知道，為什麼我們設定了一個「觸及一百萬新進的、年輕、多元化的人」的目標。我們相信，我們每個人都是按照上帝的形象造的，被耶穌在十字架上救贖，並被聖靈充滿。我們對年輕人和多元化群體的關注並非是排斥其他群體，而是承認我們的教會座椅上和聚會中不成比例地缺少更年輕和更多元化的人。我們正在挑戰彼此去跨越各種差異，以與我們的鄰舍相遇。

設定與一百萬人互動的目標，是我們了解我們正在作的工是否真的接觸到新人的一種方式。它鼓勵我們一起努力成為一個關心我們周圍世界的教會，並有效和忠實地回應上帝的呼召。

加入我們這個以未來為中心的旅程，以擴大我們歡迎他人的程度範圍，並破除阻擋人們與教會接觸的障礙。我們可以一起幫助人們體驗上帝在基督裡的恩典和慈愛對所有人和受造物所帶來的不同。

在基督裡，

以利沙伯伊頓 牧師 (The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton)

總監督 (總主教 Presiding Bishop)

美國福音信義會 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Bishop's Report – Synod Assembly 2023

In my role of bishop, I realize I ask a lot of questions. I ask questions of God, certainly. I ask questions of congregations and their leaders. I ask questions of my staff and I ask questions of myself. A key question I ask is “What does it mean to be a Lutheran in Southern California?”

In the spring of this year, the bishops of Region 1 and 2 of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America met to discuss what it meant to be Lutheran in the Western United States. These bishops care for ELCA congregations from Alaska to Texas, and we believe we have a unique perspective. We cited our deep commitment to the land, with our coastlines and mountains. We have national parks, we have big cities, we have wide open spaces. Much of the region has spectacular weather. Our connection to God is deeply tied to our connection to nature.

Another thing which makes Lutheranism in the West, and more specifically in Southern California, is our diverse culture. When a Southern Californian travels to other parts of the country, we may marvel at the homogeneity of places so different from our hometown. I delight in hearing several languages a day if I walk down our streets or shop in our stores. I love the different stories I hear when I ask about ancestors. I celebrate the rainbow flags I see in shop windows all year round, and the military heroes and first responders celebrated on street banners. I know wide swaths of Southern California struggle with poverty, and others have immense wealth, sometimes within city blocks of each other. Of course we still live with xenophobia, anti-Asian hate and other forms of racism, classism and transphobia, but, thanks be to God, we are fortunate to live in a part of the world where few people feel like “the only one” in their community, and we have the resources and will to support people from a variety of walks of life.

So what does it mean to be Lutheran in Southern California? Our neighborhoods and our theology call us to care deeply for a neighbor who may not be the same as us. Our congregations and agencies excel when they become experts on the people who live next door, when we hear their needs and respond to them. This is hard work. We have to abandon the idea that we know things and agree our neighbor is the one who has the wisdom we are missing. Then we have to change our services and our outreach to respond.

In the past year, the synod staff and council has focused on the needs of the communities of faith. We understand the people in the pews and in the street are the hands and feet of God. This is where we need to send our resources.

I have already reported the sale of two buildings, the former Messiah Lutheran in Pasadena, and the former Holy Shepherd in Chatsworth. Those two buildings, plus San Pablo in North Hollywood, which was sold in the previous fiscal year, have netted almost \$6 million. We will be hiring an investment firm to manage this money carefully and faithfully, aligning with our values. The plan is for the income from our investments to be a key funder of future ministry.

I wrote in a quarterly report about \$300,000 being allocated to synod-owned properties at Fe Y Esperanza in South Gate and Pueblo de Dios in Compton, repairing roofs and cleaning up serious rain damage. We had a lot of deferred maintenance at those sites and this is the first place the synod's money was sent. \$50,000 from the sale of Messiah Pasadena was awarded to homeless ministries at Trinity, Pasadena, as a request from Messiah before they closed. Emmanuel North Hollywood tithed \$185,000 from the sale of a property, and Hope Hollywood and Shepherd of the Valley Simi Valley both tithed from bequests they received. Yes, tithing is a faithful thing to do, but it is also courageous in light of the economic challenges so many of our congregations face. We celebrate this brave generosity and pray God's blessings to all who share in this mission. These gifts will make a significant impact on our bottom line, and most importantly, free up other funds to be used in direct service for our communities.

I will also be proposing some of the proceeds are available for large projects, such as new starts and creative ways to fund experimental ministries. Across the country, and across denominations, congregations are shrinking, and some are closing. This is a trend which has been happening for decades. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to harm some communities of faith. Some have found ways to become strengthened and revitalized, with a deeper sense of mission to neighbors. A key change is the economy. It is harder than ever to offer a living wage to pastors and deacons in Southern California. Therefore, we are having a harder time filling our ministerial vacancies. Of course God is able, but we are having to think about combining calls between congregations. Two-point parishes and circuit rider models are happening all over the country. In fact, we are one of the few synods who does not utilize this frequently. Pastor Toni Casteneda Carrera, Pastor Chryll Crews, Pastor Tracy Williams and our support staff spends a great deal of time working on regional strategies and will continue to do so.

We also need to lift up and revitalize lay leadership. Again, this is a solution utilized throughout the ELCA. This fall we will be re-starting lay leadership training, with the intention of equipping leaders to lead congregations who cannot afford an ordained minister, even on a part-time basis. Some of these leaders may seek ordination, others may not. We could wring our hands about the lack of ordained pastors and deacons, or we can get out of the Holy Spirit's way as new ways to be church continue to emerge. We have very powerful leaders in our midst and I truly believe God is pointing us in this direction. Pastor Abel Arroyo Traverso is working on adapting curriculum used throughout the country to the specific needs of Southern California churches, and the diverse candidates we will lift up.

We do have ordinations to celebrate in the past year. I was delighted to ordain Elizabeth Denton to St. Timothy's in Lakewood and Diana Washington to Peace in Lompoc. We expect to ordain several other candidates in the coming months, as several people have recently completed their candidacy requirements. Our staff is also working with a variety of candidates. A few years ago there was only one traditional path to ordination: a 4 year Masters of Divinity program. Now our seminaries offer over 20 different ways to be educated and to gain the experience the ELCA needs for qualified candidates.

Special education events were offered, including two gun violence prevention workshops, worship workshops at Bishop's Colloquy, a rostered leaders gathering at Serra Retreat on trauma, two workshops on grief and Theosis, offered in tandem with Pacifica Synod, on trauma and preaching. Boundaries training and training for Congregational Presidents, Secretaries and Treasurers was offered.

Peace Lompoc opened a parallel development with Paz, Lompoc, a new start with the hopes of bringing Music and Arts to the Spanish-speaking community in Lompoc. Pastor Chryll Crews ushered this community forward with Mission Developer/Pastor Diana Washington. Our Evangelism and Mission Outreach Team approved additional grants for our mission starts and strategic ministries. We are committed to strengthening our vulnerable congregations and hope to offer several programs in the coming year. Pastor Crews will work on a few other new starts in 2023-2024.

One last area we have focused upon in the past year is congregational care. The trauma of COVID, the stress of diminished resources, past conflicts which have not been resolved have all weighed upon the lives of our people. Our staff meets regularly with congregations, seniors, young people and rostered leaders to provide hope and healing. This is a critical part of the synod's mission.

Now we need to move into stewardship, marketing and visioning. Lisa Higginbotham, our ELCA Gift Planner, has already had several successful meetings with congregations, helping people discover their goals and a way forward. Pastor Marj Funk-Pihl offers Living the Resurrection workshops. Our Spring Conference Assemblies focused on Fundraising in Uncertain Times with Regina Biddings-Muro, the VP of University Advancement at CLU. We know financial stability is a key part of any healthy organization, including the synod itself.

Youth Ministry Coordinator and Organizer Tyra Dennis produced worship blogs for Advent. Assistant to the Bishop for Senior Adult Ministries Deacon Dr. Cecelia Travick Jackson consulted with several senior ministries throughout the synod and is forming a Senior Ministries Task Force to determine the needs of our most seasoned Lutherans.

There is a large group working together, including synod support staff Taylor Dariarow, Warren Ani, Claudia Iao, Robin Lujan, TaSh Elzie, Samantha Henderson, Holly Ann Walker, Bill Nuzzo and Juan Mansilla. Our synod council is passionate and focused. A special thank you to Vice President Sarah Stegemoeller who has pushed my own professionalism and called the council to high standards of excellence. Her one term was impactful.

Our focus and resources will continue to move toward our communities as you are the heart of our work. God is present. God is moving. God is calling us to love our neighbor intentionally. The Office of the Bishop is committed to strengthening your ministry and equip your leaders, possibly leaders you did not realize were among you, to answer the call to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

ACTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE SOUTHWEST CALIFORNIA SYNOD COUNCIL (SC) AND SOUTHWEST CALIFORNIA SYNOD COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EC) FROM MAY 2022 THROUGH MARCH 2023

“MSC” means a resolution or action was moved, seconded and after a vote was carried.

EC 5.10.22

MSC – to list the Chatsworth property with Emil Akopian with a deadline for Letters of Intent of June 15 at a price of 2.75 million.

MSC – to request the Synod Council to grant the following Synodical Letters of Call: Pr. Rebecca Iverson (serving as a Hospital Chaplain for Dignity Health); Pr. Albert Staff (serving as Interim Pastor at Mt. Olive, Santa Monica); and, Pr. LB Tatum (serving as Interim Pastor at Emmanuel, North Hollywood).

MSC – to request that the Synod Council adjust the Housing Allowance of Bishop Brenda Bos to \$40,000.

SC 5.21.22

MSC –to grant the following Synodical Letters of Call: Pr. Rebecca Iverson (serving as a Hospital Chaplain for Dignity Health); Pr. Albert Starr (serving as Interim Pastor at Mt. Olive, Santa Monica); and Pr. LB Tatum (serving as Interim Pastor at Emmanuel, North Hollywood); and,

MSC – to adjust the Housing Allowance of Bishop Brenda Bos to \$40,000; and,

MSC - to set the following meeting dates:
Synod Council Orientation Retreat, August 20 in-person
Synod Council Meeting, September 24 in-person; and,

MSC – to approve the following Roster Changes thus far for 2022:

LETTERS OF CALL

- Dr. Cecelia Travick-Jackson to serve at Mount Cross, Camarillo as Deacon 11/21/2021
- Rev. Stephanie Jaeger to serve at Saint Matthew’s, North Hollywood as Pastor 11/21/2021

ORDINATION

- Deacon Cecelia Travick-Jackson, Mount Cross, Camarillo 12/12/2021

DECEASED

· Rev. Paul Nakamura 11/11/2021

ON LEAVE FROM CALL

- Deacon Megan Hogstad 01/01/2022
- Rev. Albert Starr 01/20/2022
- Rev. Jeff Kallevig, *date is last day in call, on leave date 02/28/2022 (details to be determined)*

RETIRED

- Rev. Robyn Provis 12/31/2022
- Rev. James Phillips 02/20/2022

TRANSFER OUT OF SYNOD

- Rev. Elizabeth Radtke
- Rev. Pam Challis, called to Rocky Mountain Synod 03/01/2022

MSC – to recommend the Proposed 2023-2024 Budget to the Synod Assembly as printed for approval.

EC 6.1.22

MSC – to direct Bill Nuss to explore security options for Fe y Esperanza, South Gate, including the Lincoln House, and report back to the Executive Committee on July 5.

MSC – to allocate up to \$2500 (20 hours contracted) to utilize the HR consultant to search for a new Synod Accountant.

SC 6.16.22

MSC – to approve Resolution 22-05: Adoption of Gender-Inclusive Language.

WHEREAS, The Churchwide Assembly voted to accept the response to memorials about Gender Identity (Churchwide 2019 Assembly Action CA19.02.09 per Category 4: Gender Identity)

WHEREAS, That we thank the Churchwide Assembly for accepting the Memorial from the Sierra Pacific Synod in 2019 and requesting “that the Church Council consider authorizing development of a social message on gender identity and gender expression.” (pg. 48)

WHEREAS, The Memorials and Resolutions Report of 2019 (adopted above) requested “the Office of the Presiding Bishop provide materials to facilitate education among ELCA members so as to

build awareness of the broad varieties of gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation among God's people, as well as to provide pastoral care insights regarding concerns and issues of the transgender experience and gender nonconformity.”

WHEREAS, In the ELCA Social Statement “Faith, Sexism, and Justice” (adopted in 2019) the ELCA commits to use inclusive language (all genders) for humankind and inclusive and expansive language (other than human) for God. (pg 8, paragraph 27)

WHEREAS, Some demographic requirements and data collection remains rooted in binary gender norms.

WHEREAS, Nonbinary and gender expansive lay leaders of our church deserve the use of inclusive language to determine where they are eligible to serve in synod roles.

RESOLVED, That the Southwest California Synod in Assembly memorialize the Churchwide Assembly to adopt gender-inclusive language across all governance documents, forms and reports by the end of 2022; specifically including options for “gender nonbinary” and “other” for all demographic data gathering regarding gender.

RESOLVED, That the Southwest California Synod in Assembly memorialize The ELCA Church Council to adopt a social message on gender identity and gender expression to be applied throughout ELCA official forms, documents, and resources by 2025.

MSC – to approve Resolution 22-06: Review of Conference of Bishops’ Relational Agreement.

WHEREAS, The ELCA Constitution (8.11) states, “This church shall seek to function as people of God through congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, all of which shall be interdependent. Each part, while fully the church, recognizes that it is not the whole church and therefore lives in an interdependent relationship with the others.”

WHEREAS, The ELCA Constitution (10.81.01) outlines that, among other duties, the Conference of Bishops shall “respond to referrals from the Church Council.”

WHEREAS, The ELCA Constitution (10.81.A16.a) states that one of the duties of the Conference of Bishops is “be a forum in which goals, objectives, and strategies may be developed and shared concerning pastoral leadership, care, and counsel for the synods.”

WHEREAS, The Relational Agreement adopted by the Conference of Bishops, nor other official documents, does not provide a clear process for accountability between synods.

RESOLVED, That the Southwest California Synod in Assembly memorialize The ELCA Church Council and the Office of the Presiding Bishop to initiate a review process for the “Bishop’s Relational Agreement” for the Conference of Bishops.

RESOLVED, That the Southwest California Synod in Assembly memorialize the ELCA Church Council to refer recommended changes of the “Bishop’s Relational Agreement” to the Conference of Bishops for increased accountability when the actions of one Bishop or Synod may harm other Bishops and Synods.

MSC – to approve Resolution 22-08: ELCA Name Change.

WHEREAS the word “evangelical” appears in the name of our denomination (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: ELCA) and our primary worship book (Evangelical Lutheran Worship: ELW), and

WHEREAS the constituting members of the ELCA and the Commission for a New Lutheran Church which led into the ELCA’s formation held to the historic view and value of the word “evangelical” as meaning “pertaining to the Gospel,” and

WHEREAS the word “evangelical” was hoped to be maintained in its historic usage and sense at the time of the ELCA’s formation, and

WHEREAS the word “evangelical” has become culturally synonymous in the U.S. with a religious expression and belief that is not compatible with the ELCA, and

WHEREAS the word “evangelical” in the U.S. now culturally refers to fundamentalist Christianity including many forms of exclusion which we find to be contrary to the “evangel” (gospel) including the ordination of women and LGBTQ persons, and

WHEREAS the word “evangelical” is now representative of a narrow swath of conservative Christian denominations and sects rather than a broad notion of being Gospel-centric and inclusive of all persons, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the word “evangelical” be discontinued in use and stricken from the name of our denomination and future books of worship, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ELCA Church Council determine the nature of the transition in the use of the word “evangelical” in our denominational title leading up to the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Southwest California (and Pacifica Synods) memorialize the ELCA 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to discontinue the use the use of the word “evangelical” in our denomination name and to adopt a new name for the denomination which more faithfully reflects its identity in the U.S.

EC 6.28.22

MSC – to accept the offer from TG on the Chatsworth property with Lutheran Social Services of Southern California serving as a possible back up if escrow falls through with TG.

EC 7.5.22

MSC (by unanimous vote) – The Executive Committee, acting on behalf of the Synod Council of the Southwest California Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, determines that the membership of Faith, San Dimas “has become so scattered or so diminished in numbers that it cannot provide required governance and that it has become impractical for the congregation to fulfill the purposes for which it was organized;” and furthermore, the Executive Committee, acting on behalf of the Synod Council, “determines that it is necessary for this synod to protect and preserve the congregation’s property from waste and deterioration.” (S13.24)

MSC – to begin State Unemployment Insurance for all Synodical Employees; and, to begin State Disability Insurance for all Synodical Employees (unless contraindicated by Portico Benefits); and, to recommend the same for all rostered leaders in the next edition of the Compensation Guidelines.

EC 9.13.22

MSC – to offer the proposed buyer a forty-five day extension on the current sales contract for the Chatsworth property coupled with a requirement of a \$20,000” release from escrow” from the buyer; while also sending a thirty day notice to vacate to the current tenant coupled with a cash incentive of \$10,000 (in 5 days).

EC 9.19.22

MSC – to instruct Realtor Emil Akopian to respond to the purchase offer for Orange Grove from Tai Ji Men Academy with a counter-offer of \$3.6 million.

SC 9.24.22

MSC – to approve the following Roster Changes thus far for 2022:

TRANSFER OUT OF SYNOD

+ Pr. Lisa Dahill – Transferred to New England Synod to a new position at Hartford International in Connecticut – April 7, 2022

+ Pr. Anna Kari Johnson – Transferred to Metro Chicago Synod

RESIGNED FROM ROSTER

+ Pr. Dana Hanson – Disaffiliated – June 30, 2022

DECEASED

+ Pr. Howard Wennes – Deceased – July 13, 2022

+ Pr. Harold Banks – Deceased – July 18, 2022

ON LEAVE FROM CALL

+ Pr. John Yu – On Leave from Call (Disability) – April 2022

+ Pr. Garry Mohr – On Leave from Call – July 31, 2022

CALLS TO SPECIALIZED MINISTRY

+ Pr. Abel Arroyo – Assistant to the Bishop for Faith Formation (subject to approval by the Conference of Bishops)

+ Sem. Jill Disbro – Director of Admissions of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (subject to approval by the Conference of Bishops leading to ordination)

MSC – to appoint Prs. Jennifer Chrien and Caleb Crainer to Co-Chair the Nominating Committee.

MSC – to approve the dates of June 2-3, 2023 for the 2023 Synod Assembly with housing to be determined.

MSC – to amend the proposed Compensation Guidelines to include the following language: “to credit each year of prior experience, up to 10 years, by multiplying that experience x .5.”

MSC – to amend the proposed Compensation Guidelines to clarify that those who are invited to provide pulpit supply even if not presiding, should receive the full honorarium recommended by the Guidelines.

MSC – to approve the Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Leaders for 2023.

MSC – to add Taylor Dariarow as an authorized signer on the Synod’s checking accounts at America’s Christian Credit Union.

MSC – to nominate Pr. Libby Denton and Todd Honda as Convocators for California Lutheran University.

MSC – to approve the recommendation of the Evangelical Outreach Mission Team to allocate \$20,000 from the First Lutheran Los Angeles Fund per year for the mission redevelopment at Peace, Lompoc prorated for the remainder of the fiscal year.

MSC – to accept the dates for the upcoming Synod Council meetings as outlined with an assumed 9AM beginning and a close based on the Chair’s discretion when preparing the Agenda:

SC September 24 (Zoom); EC October 25 (Zoom – 5PM); EC November 22 (Zoom – 6PM); EC December 13 (Zoom – 6PM); SC December 17; EC January 24 (Zoom – 6PM); EC February 7; EC March 7; SC March 11; EC April 11; EC May 9 (Zoom – 6pm); SC May 13; Synod Assembly June 2-3; EC June 20; EC July 18; EC August 15.

MSC – to affirm the Bishop’s desire to create two new Synod Mission Teams (Anti-Racism Team and Senior Ministries) with language for the Continuing Resolutions to be developed by the Bishop.

EC 10.25.22

MSC – to contract Green Accounting as the new Synod accounting firm.

MSC – to cover with Synod funds Pastor Marta Moscoso’s benefit payments and other “essential” bills when Fe y Esperanza, South Gate does not have the funds, and to pay all benefits bills on a timely basis. Related fiscal responsibilities will be clarified by June 2023.

MSC – to approve En Bloc to place Dn. Martha Santrizos on “Retired” roster status; to issue a Synodical Letter of Call to Pr. Abel Arroyo Traverso to serve as Assistant to the Bishop for Faith Formation and Theologian In Residence; to appoint Diana Washington to serve as Mission Developer at Peace, Lompoc; to place Pr. Brian Hiortdahl “On Leave From Call” in anticipation of his transfer to another Synod

SC 10.31.22

MSC - To extend a synodical letter of call to Rev. Abel Arroyo Traverso to serve as Assistant to the Bishop for Faith Formation and In-House Theologian. Pastor Abel will serve in a half-time capacity;

AND to extend an appointment to Diana Washington to serve as a Mission Developer at Latinx Pax Lutheran Music and Worship Community in Lompoc, CA;

AND to approve Mik Spann of Green Accounting having access to our on-line banking and investment accounts in his role of accountant for the Southwest California Synod.

EC 11.22.22

MSC – the Executive Committee moves to invoke S13.24.d and S13.24.e with the Bishop and the Synod’s legal counsel informing Faith, San Dimas of the decision to place the congregation under Synodical Preservation.

MSC – to correct Robin Lujan’s compensation from the previous months of her disability to level it out to full payment without overpayment.

MSC – to empower the Officers of the Synod to negotiate the sale of the Chatsworth property in a timely manner with a minimum sales price of \$2.5 million dollars.

EC 12.12.22

MSC – to begin the process to transfer the deed to the property of Holy Cross, Ojai to the Synod after officially closing the Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community located at the site.

MSC – to recommend to the Synod Council that Pastor James Phillips and Deacon Martha Santrizos be transferred to the Retired roster of the Synod and of the ELCA.

MSC – to recommend to the Synod Council to approve the optional changes to the Synod Constitution from the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.

SC 12.17.22

MSC – to approve EN BLOC as printed (with two abstentions):

1. To transfer Pastor James Phillips and Deacon Martha Santrizos to the Retired roster of the Synod and of the ELCA.
2. To approve the optional changes to the Synod Constitution from the 2022 Churchwide Assembly:

S7.14. One-half *One-third* of the members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum.

S7.22. This synod may establish processes that permit retired rostered ministers, or those designated as disabled *granted disability status*, or on leave from call, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, *provided that such processes not result in fewer than 60% of the voting members of the Synod Assembly being laypersons in contravention of consistent with* †S7.21.c. If the synod does not establish processes to permit the rostered

ministers specified above to serve as voting members, they shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.

S7.24. Ministers under call on the rosters of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the rosters of this synod. Lay members of the Synod Assembly representing congregations shall continue as such until *the opening of the next regular synod assembly, or unless replaced* by the election of new members *for a special synod assembly*, or until they have been disqualified by termination of *congregation* membership. ~~Normally, congregations will hold elections prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.~~

S7.26. This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit *lay* representatives of congregations under development and authorized worshipping communities of the synod, which have been authorized under Evangelical Lutheran Church in America bylaw 10.02.03., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.

S7.27. This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council to grant an minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly ~~of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America~~ the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that minister's service in a congregation of this church.

S8.42.01. The treasurer shall be responsible for:

- a. Management of the monies and accounts of this synod, its deeds, mortgages, contracts, evidence of claims and revenues, and trust funds, holding the same at all times subject to the order of this synod.
- b. Investment of funds upon the authorization of the Synod Council.
- c. Receipt and acknowledgment of offerings, contributions, and bequests made to this synod, collecting interest and income from its invested funds, and paying regular appropriations and orders on the several accounts as approved and directed by the Synod Council. The treasurer shall transmit each month to the treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the funds received by this synod for the general work of this church *as well as any funds to support restricted programs of this church*.
- d. Maintenance of a regular account with each congregation of this synod and informing the congregation, at least quarterly, of the status of this account.
- e. Rendering at each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly a full, detailed, and duly audited report of receipts and disbursements in the several accounts of this synod for the preceding fiscal year, together with the tabulation, for record and publication in the minutes, of the contributions from the congregations.
- f. Giving of corporate surety in the amount determined by the Synod Council, which shall be in the custody of the secretary, and the premium therefore shall be paid by this synod. Fidelity coverage provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be deemed a

fulfillment of this requirement.

~~S11.10.~~ General Provisions

S14.13. The pastor shall:

- a. keep accurate ~~parochial~~ records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation;

S14.15. Each minister of Word and Sacrament on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of ~~his or her~~ ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

S14.34. Each minister of Word and Service on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of ~~his or her~~ ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

MSC – to approve the following Roster Changes:

- 1) To transfer Rev. Christopher Lindstrom to the retired roster of the Synod and of the ELCA as of 1/1/2023;
- 2) To place the following rostered persons “on leave from call:”
Rev. Brian Hiortdahl
Rev. Thomas Voelp
Rev. Amy Beveridge
Rev. Marc Mohr

MSC – to accept the report of the Evangelical Mission Outreach Team and to approve its recommended funding formula for 2023.

MSC – to amend Continuing Resolution S11.30.D18 by striking the phrase, “Anti-Racism;” and, to approve the following Continuing Resolutions under S11.30. regarding Mission Teams:

S11.30.F22 The Mission Team for Anti-Racism shall be responsible for helping the synod and its congregations, institutions and agencies work to name and disrupt racist systems and structures within the denomination and its agencies. This team will advise the bishop and other leaders on current trends, education and legislation regarding

anti-racist practices. This team will work closely with the bishop and any synod staff tasked with diversity and/or anti-racism goals.

S11.30G22 The Mission Team for Senior Ministries shall be responsible for monitoring demographic trends within the senior population of our synod and providing information to congregations, synod and our institutions for the needs of seniors, specifically persons over the age of 55, retirees, widow/ers, caregivers, homebound and infirmed. This team will work closely with the bishop and any synod staff tasked with Senior Ministry.

S11.30H22 The Mission Team for Mental Health shall be responsible for helping the synod and its congregations, institutions and agencies remove stigma around mental illness, offer resources and education about mental health services and assist the Office of the Bishop in finding and distributing mental health grants.

MSC – to focus the 2023 Synod Assembly on accessibility issues gathering around the theme: “Caring for the Body of Christ.”

EC 1.24.23

MSC – to engage the services of RHW Consulting for Staff Development Training at a cost of \$40,000 with funds to be derived from the 1/3 of property sale proceeds designated for Synod operations from recent property sales (or other available Synod funds) if separate grant funding should be unavailable.

EC 2.7.23

MSC – that the proceeds from the sale of Synod owned properties in Chatsworth, North Hollywood and Pasadena earmarked for Synod management fees in the sum of roughly \$340,000 be designated for use of emergency repairs which are immediately needed related to roof and storm damage (as well as electrical and HVAC and related repairs) at Fe Y Esperanza, South Gate and Pueblo De Dios, Compton without either congregation incurring any further debt to the Synod; and, to approve the current HVAC and carpeting work at the Lutheran Center, Glendale.

EC 3.7.23

MSC – to recommend to the Synod Council the adoption of the revised Synod Goal’s as outlined by Bishop Brenda Bos.

MSC – to recommend to the Synod Council to issue a one-half time Letter of Call to Dn. Cecilia Travick-Jackson to serve as the Assistant to the Bishop (ATTB) for Senior Adult Ministries with the increase in compensation to be covered financially from already funds already appropriated for staffing

MSC – to recommend to the Synod Council to approve the following Roster Changes:

- To transfer Pr. Misael Perez to the Synod from the Pacifica Synod.
- To transfer Prs. Kevin and Amber Bergeson from the Synod to the St. Paul Area Synod.
- To transfer Pr. Brian Hiortdahl to the Sierra Pacific Synod.

MSC – to recommend the Synod Council approve the Congregational Constitutions of: St. Mark’s, Hacienda Heights; and, St. Timothy’s, Lakewood.

MSC – to approve a compensation increase of 8.6% for the Bishop for fiscal year 2023 as recommended by the 2023 Rostered Leaders Compensation Guidelines Workbook.

SC 3.11.23

MSC – to approve EN BLOC as printed:

1. To adopt the revised Synod Goal’s as outlined by Bishop Brenda Bos:
 - a. Communicating the gospel powerfully and clearly;
 - b. Shaping the faith of the baptized through education and support in all phases of life;
 - c. Fostering congregations in becoming healthy communities;
 - d. Creating opportunities for rostered and lay leaders to thrive;
 - e. Investing time and money to develop area ministry strategies;
 - f. Establishing clusters of congregations around similar ministries; and,
 - g. Surrounding vulnerable communities with financial and spiritual support
2. To issue a one-half time Letter of Call to Dn. Cecilia Travick-Jackson to serve as the Assistant to the Bishop for Senior Adult Ministries with the increase in compensation to be covered financially from funds already appropriated for staffing.
3. To approve the following Roster Changes:
 - a. to transfer Pr. Misael Perez to the SWCA Synod from the Pacifica Synod;

- b. to transfer Prs. Kevin and Amber Bergeson from the SWCA Synod to the St. Paul Area Synod; and,
 - c. to transfer Pr. Brian Hiortdahl from the SWCA Synod to the Sierra Pacific Synod.
4. To approve the Congregational Constitutions of: St. Mark's, Hacienda Heights and St. Timothy's, Lakewood.

MSC – to recommend the Synod Assembly adopt the Rules of Procedure as printed with commentary to be offered in registration materials welcoming persons of various gender expressions as well as with the addition of a footnote clarifying that male/female language shall be understood to include non-binary, gender non-conforming, and transgender persons.

MSC – to accept the Charter of the Mutual Ministry Committee as printed.

**Synod Assembly Report from the Assistant to the Bishop for Leadership Development and Authentic Diversity,
the Reverend Toni Castañeda Carrera, MPP**

April 2023

Dearest God, hold us tightly in your care and help us hold ourselves lightly as your church is transformed. Center us to know your will and lead us discerning the power of your Grace for today. Create ready hearts in us and our communities to endure and innovate. We ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

In October 2022, Julia Morales was hired as Project Manager of Candidacy, First Call Theological Education, Mobility, and Authentic Diversity. Pastor Toni and Julia collaborate to address high level strategy and day-to-day follow up of the shared work, providing more thorough care and intervention into areas of need.

Candidacy

- Southwest California Synod continues to collaborate with Pacifica Synod to coordinate the Combined Candidacy Committee and oversee candidate's progress through candidacy.
- Supported candidates on internship and those completing the educational requirements for ordination.
- Met and support interested laity in exploring rostered leadership, including the application process and understanding various routes to ordination.

First Call Theological Education

- Met with first call Rostered Leaders three times for theological education, covering the following topics: community organizing, Bowen Family Systems Theory, and Imago Dialogue Communication Dialogue.
- Each first call theological education topic dovetailed with the next, ensuring that the roster leaders have knowledge of dynamics present in knowledge, skills in avoiding identified obstacles, and communication techniques to facilitate their congregational leaders.
- FCTE currently has seven rostered leaders active.

Mobility

- 33 of Southwest California Synod's 106 congregation are in pastoral transition.
- Most congregations in transition are unable to move into a traditional call process, and instead discern available options for moving forward in God's ministry. The options are collaborating with other organizations, including other ELCA Congregation in vicinity, full communion partner congregations, and community-based organizations.
- Collaborated with lay leadership to identify and arrange interim solutions for congregations in transition.
- Evaluated and continued to refine the synod's Transition Coach project to provide thorough and holistic interim support for congregations.

- Provided pastoral support to many rostered leaders who are discerning vocation and call to ministry, including support in refining Rostered Minister Profiles.
- Met with dozens of rostered leaders throughout the national church to discuss synod's open Ministry Site Profiles and identify fit for congregations, matching leaders with call committees for interviews.
- Redesigned Mobility Process and Structures and currently implementing and creating tools to communicate with congregational leaders.

Authentic Diversity

- Created a Authentic Diversity/Accessibility Committee for Synod Assembly to ensure strong inclusion and justice practices.
- Presented initial Authentic Diversity Training to Synodical Council at retreat.
- Provided pastoral care to rostered leaders struggling with diversity-related conflict and partnered to create innovative and care-centered solutions to move forward.
- Supported and advised Bishop Bos and synod team with diversity issues and long-term interventions with ethnic-specific congregations and leaders.
- Served on national Strategy Team for Authentic Diversity Task.
- Began convening synodical Authentic Diversity Officers to amplify impact and facilitate collaboration.

Deep and sincere thanks for the companionship of the synod in my life, transition, work and the explorative journey forward. Let's keep going.

**Director for Evangelical Mission (DEM)
Southwest California Synod
Synod Assembly 2023 Report
Submitted by: Rev. Chryll D. Crews, M.Div., JD**

New Starts/SAWCs (Synod Authorized Worshipping Community)/Parallel Developments:

AdoreLA, Hollywood

Former Teem Pastor, Ed Ramirez, completed their service at AdoreLA, Hollywood. As of April 14, 2023, AdoreLA and Hollywood Lutheran do not have a permanent pastor. Hollywood has used supply pastors, specifically, Rev. Marc Mougeot Mohr, Pastor Toni, and myself.

I am in the process of coordinating a Ministry Review with churchwide about this ministry and leadership. In addition to seeking permanent leadership, we are seeking guidance on compensation for AdoreLA's administrator. Flaff Synod grant money and Churchwide's SAWC grant have been secured in the amount of \$38,000.

Another Level Ministries, Los Angeles, CA

Teem Pastor Maurice Ingram attended Mission Developer Training in Chicago, IL, September 2022. Pastor Maurice is the Mission Developer for Another Level and the pastor of Chapel of Peace, a parallel/development ministry.

During Another Level's Ministry review they discussed the strong desire to have their own building. They believe the ministry is stifled, especially during the weekdays, because of limited remaining space after other tenants. Another Level received \$36,000 for 2023.

Finnish Ministry, Santa Monica (St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Parallel Church and Fiscal Agent)

Pastor Toni and I hosted, Bishop Kaisamari Hinntikka, Bishop of the Diocese of Espoo in Finland, at the Synod office. Pastor Tarkki wanted, Bishop Hinntikka, to get a good idea of his ministry here in CA and a tour of the Synod office. Pastor Tarkki was also using the bishop's visit to support his request for continued support from ELCF (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland).

Pastor Tarkki requested earlier in the calendar year that EOMT (Evangelism, Outreach, and Mission Team) consider the Finnish Ministry as a future Strategic Ministry. I forgot his request and would like the new revised/structured EOMT to consider his request. This ministries' funding is from the ELCF and monies were anticipated to begin decreasing this year.

Fruit of the Spirit, Torrance, CA (Parallel at Christ the King Lutheran Church)

Pastor Hongsun Kim, Japanese and LGBTQIA+ Ministry:

Pastor Kim serves the Southwest California Synod and the Pacifica Synod (Resurrection, Huntington Beach).

I am in the final step of completing Pastor Kim's change of Fiscal Agent request. The final step is uploading the new banking information into the churchwide portal. The new treasurer needs to give me a voided check or bank statement and the transfer is complete. The new Fiscal agent is Saint Paul's, Santa Monica.

Fruit of The Spirit was awarded \$34,000.

Iglesia Luterana Cruz, Santa Maria, parallel with Bethel Lutheran Church, non- ELCA congregation

TEEM Pastor Estaban Salazar

Bethel Lutheran Church, almost a year ago, requested Iglesia Luterana Cruz Church to be housed somewhere else. However, Iglesia Luterana Cruz is still housed at Bethel. We were recently contacted by Bethel requesting, again, that Iglesia Santa Cruz find a new location. We once thought they could yoke with St. Peter's Episcopal Church, both in Santa Maria. I am presently coordinating time and schedules with Bishop Bos and the leaders at each church to discuss a new location.

The heavy rains brought challenges to this ministry and the migrant congregants. I began the application for disaster relief from churchwide. I need more information and assessment from the Salazars to complete. Bishop and I are planning a site visit in May plus, if we are successful in relocating this ministry, there needs may change.

Iglesia Santa Cruz 2023 funding: \$30,000.

Latinx Paz Lutheran Music & Worship Community, Lompoc, CA (Parallel, Peace Lutheran Church)

Thanks to the leadership of retired Interim Pastor, Bruce Wollenberg, and his service to Peace Lutheran Church.

Diana Washington was ordained and installed on February 18, 2023. Diana is the pastor of Peace Lutheran and as Mission Developer of Latinx Paz Lutheran Music & Worship Community.

2023 funding: 49,000 (Synod and Churchwide); Peace Lutheran: \$50,000

Redimidos, Oxnard, CA (parallel, Our Savior Lutheran Church

Pr. Jade Ortiz serves as pastor and mission developer.

Pastora Jade completed her TEEM certificate at PTLs. She began her internship. Pastor Julie Morris of Mount Cross Lutheran Church has agreed to be her supervisor. I know that Pastora

Jade met recently with Candidacy and she has some essays to complete. I anticipate an ordination service for Pastora Jade soon.

2023 funding: \$24,000.

Trinity Faith, Monterey Park (parallel with St. Paul's) Chinese Ministry

TEEM Pastor David Lin.

Pastor Lin and his wife Grace recently attended Mission Developer training in Chicago. Pastor Lin was the only Mission Developer to not attend formal training. He was enrolled in CPE at the time of the last training. The Lins had a chance to meet and network with other Pacific Islander colleagues. Additionally, it gave us some quality time to meet and worship together.

I am currently working with them, our treasurer, and Portico to help Pastor Lin have a better understanding of his and Trinity's finances. The synod serves as their fiscal agent.

Trinity's total funding for year 2023 is \$26,000.

Strategic Ministries

Central Lutheran, Van Nuys, Pastor Marsha Harris

Pastor Harris supervises TEEM student, Mary Ann Harrison. I'm also the Academic Mentor for Mary Ann and attended the TEEM fall Theological Conference in Berkeley, CA.

Pastor Tracy, Pastor Toni, Bishop, and myself have been praying and conferring with each other in placement for Mary Ann as she moves to a position on par with other TEEM pastors. We are hoping for a placement soon.

I tried to make sure Pastor Harris received her grant funding as soon as possible, since she had other critical maintenance issues. Total funding for 2023: \$22,000.

Fe Y Esperanza, Southgate:

Pastor Marta Moscoso

Pastor Moscoso's contract was renegotiated by Bishop Bos this year. Additionally, Fe will share in the monies for repairs with Pueblo after the heavy rains. Synod Council and EOMT are needed to discuss what happens to the parsonage, since the tenants have vacated the property.

Fe's leaders received budget and administrative training at the beginning of the year. Additionally, during Ministry Reviews, Fe expressed the need for a copier machine to further promote their health ministry. They received last week a printer donated by the Finland

Consulate. Pastor Tarkki at pastor Diana's installation in Lompoc asked me if I knew of any ministries that needed a copier. I remembered Fe's request. Thank you to our Property Manager, Bill Nuzzo for working with me to get the printer delivered and installed. It is a Canon product and fairly new, valued at \$5,000.

Fe's funding for 2023: 40,000.

Pueblo de Dios, Compton

Pastor Samuel Nieva

I have been to Pueblo with our property manager, Bill. The roof has been repaired.

Pastor Nieva's Ministry Review brought out that they desire a new truck. When they are transporting items for their feeding program, the truck has broken down often. I have some ideas I intend to share with EOMT.

Pueblo's funding for 2023 is 40,000.

Sharing Hands, St Matthews Noho

This ministry serves those who are deaf. It is part of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in NoHo. Pastor Stephanie Jaeger is the primary contact.

I had a wonderful visit with Pastor Jaegar and the members of Sharing Hands. They received \$1,000 recently, but they requested more funding to hire someone to work as an administrator or hire a more advanced interpreter for their weekly gatherings. Their funding for 2023 is 4,000.

St John's, Gardena:

Pastor Maria Paiva

I worshipped with Pastor Paiva and spent some quality time with her during TheOasis and most recently in Minnesota at the Assistant to the Bishop Conference. I had a chance to learn more about Candidacy and mobility with both Pastors Tracy, Toni and Maria as they serve on the Candidacy Committee.

2023 funding: \$24,000.

I will spend the remainder of the year doing site visits prior to Ministry Reviews in the fall and I'm excited about working with EOMT in the future as we vision and plan beyond just the grant decisions and distributions. I thank all those who served and helped me to increase funding for all of our ministries.

A present SAWC goal I am working on is an Arab speaking ministry with a potential site in Altadena. This will be a combined ministry with the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, CA.

Assistant to the Bishop for Faith Formation and In-House Theologian

Southwest California Synod

Synod Assembly 2023 Report

Blessings in the name of God, who leads us to freedom and resurrection.

This year my call as Assistant to the Bishop has led me to many places of opportunity that have both challenge and empower me to continue serving the people of this synod, the ELCA, and the Church.

This year afforded me the opportunity to accompany pastors as a kind of theological consultant, which is an unexpected role, but it makes absolute sense that the synod's theologian is available for pastors in the synod for consultation. I hope I can further lend my expertise to the people of the synod.

This year I was also part of the delegation that participated in the Encounter of Sister Churches hosted by the Lutheran Church of El Salvador. This trip was a great opportunity to not only witness international Lutheran collaboration, but also gain a greater awareness on how we as the synod and ELCA can participate in this kind of relationships with other Lutheran bodies honoring their self-determination and vision.

I also had the opportunity to participate in the healing of the church as a member of the Investigation Team called by the Sierra Pacific Synod to investigate cases of racism and abuse of power. Seeing this facet of the church, rather than being discouraging, has been an opportunity to learn and recognize where our growing edges as a denomination. Acknowledging that there is injustice happening in our denomination is not a reason to despair, but to continue trusting in the God who calls us to be prophetic voices in a broken world that God continues to love.

Bishop's Colloquy was a great opportunity to get together with colleagues around the synod to learn, refresh, and recommit ourselves to the crafting of liturgy and liturgical arts that speak not only to our congregations but to our larger contexts.

By instruction of the Bishop, I started researching options for lay leadership education. The synod office is aware of many of the needs of our worshipping communities, and we are committed to training our leaders to continue the holy work of proclaiming the Gospel in our communities.

One of the roles I get to fulfill in my position as In-House Theologian of the synod is to stay in prayerful dialogue with Bishop Bos every time, she needs to create a statement or pastoral letter. This role has afforded me a particular insight into our Bishop's compassionate pastoral heart.

This year in the synod and our denomination has been filled with challenges, but because of them, it has also had plenty of places where I have been able to witness God's power of reconciliation and restoration at work.

In my prayers as we continue to find God in unexpected places.

Yours in Christ.

The Rev. Cesar Abel Arroyo Traverso

Assistant to the Bishop for Faith Formation and In-House Theologian.

Theological consultant for the bishop



It is both a privilege and a pleasure to share with you the first report from the Senior Adult Ministry. The year has gone so quickly, I find that much has been accomplished and yet there is so much more to do. My first real introduction to the Southwest California Synod came on June 11, 2022, at the synod assembly where I did a short sermon on Seniors or the Gray Hairs based on Proverbs 20:29 "The glory of youths is their strength, but the beauty of the aged is their gray hair." (NRSV).

I have had the opportunity to attend several worship services throughout the synod, representing senior adult ministry where I have met with church members, adult forums, attended Bible Study, attended luncheons, watched, listened, participated in food distribution, and met with church council representatives to discuss senior adult ministry, and its impact on worship attendance and participation. I always feel honored when a pastor or church members ask me for new ideas about senior ministry or various ways to engage and encourage adult seniors.

I helped put together a four-part series on grief where I worked closely with my synod colleague Pastor Abel Arroyo Traverso. Of course, I regularly attend staff meetings, retreats, workshops, special programs, conference colloquy, and one-on-one meetings with the bishop, synod staff, and synod colleagues.

In the wider church, I remain active in Deacon Dialogues and other programs that focus on the ministry of, for, and by deacons. I became a board member of California Lutheran Homes (St John's Lutheran Church) Glendale, Arizona.

I am currently part of the Synod Assembly Planning team, and TheOasis Planning Team. I was asked to deliver the message at our Chrism Mass, I willingly obliged preaching from Luke 4:14-21 equating the gospel to a modern *Jubilee Journey*. I submitted a proposal to the Rostered Ministers Gathering. It was accepted. In July I will lead a 75-minute roundtable workshop titled *Perks, Quirks, and Possibilities* discussing the concerns of congregations with aging populations. At the writing of this Synod Assembly Report, I was asked to write an endorsement for an upcoming publication from Fortress Press on dementia and the church, which I enthusiastically wrote.

Greetings in the Name of Our Lord and Savior,

I have been working as the Assistant to the Bishop for Congregational Care for about nine months. Since coming on staff, I have worked with about eight churches. I work with the churches in conflict, transition, grief, or any other issues they encounter in their church. The churches are:

- The Church of Hope – Santa Clarita
- Eagle Rock – Los Angeles
- Emmanuel – No. Hollywood
- Lauren Hall School – No. Hollywood
- Ascension – Los Angeles
- Hope Lutheran – Hollywood
- Holy Trinity – Inglewood
- Community – Los Angeles

It has been my pleasure to work alongside these wonderful congregants and pastors as they come to a place of hope and peace. Some of the work with many is on going and about three have come to resolutions and able to move forward.

I have also worked independently/ confidentially with some pastors. Most of the pastors were dealing with conflict with councils and hurt from various issues, as we spent time together in conversation, prayer, and discernment, they look to Christ to help build working relationships in the churches.

I am happy to say that I spent time with the bishop and staff in confidential conversation to help ease tension while work alongside their colleagues. We have had some very open and candied conversations that has brought some peace and new insight as we work together in ministry.

We had a staff retreat in which I had the opportunity to facilitate. There were several issues brought forth and we were able to resolve some. There are many different areas as a staff that need to be resolved and I trust these issues will be resolved with our consultant. As a staff everyone is committed to the work and ministry of the bishop's office, and we will always come together to serve our pastors and congregations of the Southwest Synod and the ELCA church.

We recently had a book signing and talk with the Rev. Dr. Kenneth Wheeler, regarding his book, *“US, The Resurrection Of American Terror.”* I was responsible for planning and hosting with the help of the staff.

The event was well attended, the conversation was stimulating as Rev. Wheeler challenged us. We closed with a wonderful luncheon and the signing of his book. The Trout dedication of the chapel was beautiful and well attended. There was a closing service in honor of Dr. Trout at Community on Sunday afternoon where I am the interim pastor. It was our honor to host this ending celebration.

In addition, I am the Pastor of Holy Redeemer in Bellflower, which I am proud to serve with these people of God in ministry. I am happy to be working with Holy Trinity in Inglewood and Community in Los Angeles assisting in various ways as well as preaching.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Tracy Williams

Assistant to the Bishop for Congregational Care

Pastor Holy Redeemer, Bellflower, CA

Assisting Ministries, Holy Trinity, and Community

Synod Youth Director Report 2022-2023

In August 2022, the role of Synod Youth Ministry Coordinator and Organizer was designed with the following goals in mind:

- to give increased attention to the revitalization of youth ministry work across our synod.
- to strengthen connections between youth ministry groups and our synodical partners (such as LRCC, CCL divisions – Youth Ministry, Young Adult Ministry, YAGM, etc...and more)
- to continue connecting youth ministries in our synod to opportunities in the wider ELCA (such as the YCLT and its Summit, ELCA Youth Gathering, Western States Youth Gathering, Advocacy Campaigns, etc...and more).

In an effort to start the process of revitalizing youth ministry, the Youth Ministry Coordinator and Organizer (who will be referred to as YMCO for the remainder of this document) teamed up with LA Metro Conference Pastor (and predecessor) Matthew Keadle and ADLA -LA President, Mrs. Carolyn Foster, to host a movie outing to see the Marvel Comic sensation- Black Panther: Wakanda Forever. Together, we welcomed 17 groups from various organizations and congregations from all over our synod. We spoke to the young people about what they were looking for and from there, more planning and implementation began. After listening to what youth ministry was like in various contexts of our synod, and asking how the synod could be supportive, the Youth Symposium concept came to life.

The Youth Symposium is a direct response to listening to high school and middle school students express what they needed to hear from the church and what they wanted to discuss with the church. A worship concert with conversations and training around some difficult topics in a space designed to be brave for high school students to bring their full selves, seek refuge in Christ and be reminded that through it all, they are loved no matter what.

We had 2 high school students attend this years ELCA YCLT Youth Leadership Summit in Nebraska at one of our Lutheran Camps: Carol Joy Holling. They served and they served well. These 2 young people are Karin Gargus (First Lutheran, Torrance) and Dieedra Welch (St. Mark's Lutheran, Los Angeles). Each year, 2 high school students and 1 adult leader are asked to attend the summit to learn how to do peer leadership, advocacy and faith formation through an ELCA Lutheran Theological lens. We hope to see one of your high schoolers there this coming fall.

There are some people that have been asked to help spread the work of youth ministry out beyond the synod office walls as this is a very large synod and YMCO is on a very quarter time basis for work. These individuals have been extremely helpful. One of those individuals is Bryan Honda. He was recently appointed as the ELCA Youth Gathering Synod Champion. Stay tuned and connected to get his updates on the Gathering.

Moving forward, it is the hope and work of the YMCO to work with the Pacifica Synod and revitalize our Synod Youth Team. We will be looking for adult volunteers that will be willing to assist in it's return and operations. As always, you can reach the YMCO via youthministry@socialsynod.org.

Respectfully submitted,

Tyra Dennis – SWCA Synod Youth Ministry Coordinator and Organizer

Lay Leadership Mission Team

April 17, 2023

The Lay Leadership Mission Team has not met. I continue to attempt to recruit team members. Once I have a team in place, we will review the Synod Constitution to determine the purpose of the Lay Leadership Mission Team. Please let me know if you are interested in serving on the LLMT.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen L Moyer

Karen L Moyer

Chair of the Lay Leadership Committee

Mission Team for Rostered Leaders

Southwest California Synod

Report to Synod Assembly 2023

The Mission Team for Rostered Leaders had one big project in the last year, which we plan to repeat. We had a retreat for Rostered Leaders on Trauma and Recovery. This process began in the fall of 2022 as we discussed the trauma that we were all still feeling the shut-down. For pastors and deacons, our work is among people and COVID made that nearly impossible. We suffered, and our congregations suffered, and we are all still struggling. We worked with Kevin Connors, MFT who is a trauma specialist and is a consultant to the Hecht Trauma Institute.

While the enrollment was small, the retreat was exceptionally presented by Mr. Connors and well received by the participants. We believe many more of our Rostered Leaders will take advantage of another offering in Fall,2023.

Pastor Ruth Sievert, Chair

Pastor Jim Bessey

Bishop Brenda Bos

Deacon Lynn Bullock

Pastor Ryan Chadwick

Pastor Megan Hunt Fryling

Mr. Michael Nelson



WWW.PLTS.EDU



This spring more than 50 students are studying at PLTS to be capable, equipped leaders in the modern church. Of those students, 33 students are in a Master of Divinity pathway, four students are working on their Certificate of Advanced Theological Studies, and three are earning a common MA with the Graduate Theological Union.

THE CENTER FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE & FAITH

The PLTS Center for Climate Justice and Faith (CCJF) launched their Spanish-language Certificate in Climate Justice and Faith this February. The inaugural cohort of this program includes 24 students from 14 countries throughout North America, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Spain. The course was developed with Seminario Luterano Augsburg (SEMLA) in Mexico, Universidad Luterana Salvadorena, Instituto para la Pastoral Contextual of the Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Unida of Argentina and Uruguay, and the ELCA.

A total of 60 students representing 26 different countries are currently enrolled in the CCJF's programs, which also include Community Organizing for Climate Justice as Love in Action. These programs were developed in collaboration with Lutheran World Federation and ELCA World Hunger. CCJF also held a hybrid screening of the film *The Ants and the Grasshopper* in February. More than 200 people tuned into the program which included a Q&A with the film's director, Raj Patel. Visit the QR code to get updates on upcoming application deadlines and other educational opportunities.



Pr. Shede Habila (left) leads a tree planting activity as part of a three-day seminar on Climate Justice he organized in Yola, Nigeria. Pastor Habila is a 2022 graduate of the Certificate in Climate Justice and Faith.

MASTER OF ARTS IN SPIRITUALITY & SOCIAL CHANGE

The 2022-2023 Academic Year is the first time that PLTS has offered a Master of Arts in Spirituality and Social Change. The curriculum is designed to prepare students to serve in a wide variety of faith-based leadership roles in diverse contexts, including rostered deacons, chaplains, community organizers, non-profit leaders, and much more. Use the QR code on the left to learn more about the Master of Arts in Spirituality and Social Change.

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FOR EMERGING MINISTRIES

The PLTS TEEM cohort gathered in person in Berkeley this winter for a week of instruction, worship, and community. There are 31 TEEM students in the 2022-23 academic year; these are students training as pastors in their local contexts and congregations. In May, four students are expected to graduate with a TEEM certificate and continue in ministry. The summer session for the PLTS cohort will be June 5th-9th at Luther Seminary. You can learn more about TEEM by scanning the QR code at the left.



TEEM students in the Berkeley cohort studying with Dr. Dan Peterson.



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



Updates from the ELCA Foundation

Synod Assemblies 2023

The vision of the ELCA Foundation is to be a thriving ministry that develops a culture of intentional generosity and financial stewardship to expand the work of the ELCA. Our mission is to support and sustain ELCA ministries by enhancing gifting capacity and stewarding resources.

As a ministry of the ELCA, we serve individuals, congregations and worship communities; synods; the churchwide organization; and institutions, agencies and other related ELCA organizations.

The ELCA Foundation exists to:

- Provide gift planning, administration and processing.
- Manage endowment funds and offer investment management services as an acknowledged fiduciary.
- Engage individuals and organizations in thoughtful planning to pass on philanthropic values and support ministry passions.

In 2022 the ELCA Foundation's gift planning network walked alongside 200 donors/families in developing their gift plans, which resulted in \$76.5 million in future planned-gift commitments. Nearly \$26 million of this will go to provide direct support to individual ELCA congregations. The network generated \$116.1 million in total gifts and investment assets. This includes new planned-gift commitments, \$10.3 million in current gifts, including funded trusts, gift annuities and individual endowments, and \$29.3 million in new assets invested in the Ministry Growth Fund (previously known as Fund A). Thank you for the opportunity to work in your synod, for trusting your endowment dollars to the ELCA Foundation and for allowing us to work alongside your ministries.

The ELCA Foundation and your regional gift planner are here to support your ministry through shared expertise with endowments, gift acceptance policies and practices to promote planned giving. We also work with individual donors to ease the complexity of estate plans, planned gifts, trusts and noncash gifts. Our services are free of charge to your congregation and its members. A local representative from our network of regional gift planners is available to work with you. Learn more about the ELCA Foundation by watching "[ELCA Foundation: Make a Plan. Change the World.](#)" visiting our updated website at foundation.elca.org or contacting your regional gift planner to help your congregation grow its culture of giving today.

Contact your regional gift planner:

Lisa Marie Higginbotham
lisa.higginbotham@elca.org
(805) 910-5048
foundation.elca.org

Helping Members Refill Their Cup with Responsive Benefits

In 2022, Portico invited plan members to use their full range of benefits to care for themselves following the challenges and stress of the last few pandemic years. We continually seek cost-effective and nimble ways to support ELCA leaders, congregations, and organizations with high-quality, innovative, and stable benefits that promote holistic well-being.

- ELCA-Primary health benefits provided both in-person and virtual access to health care and wellness resources.
- Portico's Financial Planners and LSS of Minnesota helped ELCA Retirement Plan members navigate the weight of rising interest rates and market downturns through no- or low-cost financial planning, coaching services, and financial education.

In recent years, we've added several eligible ELCA- and full-communion-partner organizations to the Portico community. Growing the number of members we serve helps us manage costs and offer innovative benefits not typically available to smaller groups, affirming the importance of church together.



The Rev. Jeff Thiemann
President & CEO

Meeting the Need in 2022

232

Podcast Plays

Of the "Creative Approaches to Innovative Ministry" episode of Being Here last year.

16,002

Total Pounds Lost

Through the Omada prevention program since it launched in 2018, with 2,643 pounds lost in 2022.

591

Retired

With Portico's bundled benefits program — Congratulations to these faithful servants!

1,132

Webinar Views

Of the annual Retirement Readiness Series (live and on-demand).

3,080

Medical Visits via Text Based Care

Through 98point6[®], our virtual primary health care service.

9.75%

Increase in Net Membership

Over the past 5 years.

3,952

Health & Fitness Classes Completed

On Portico's online Bernalong platform.

Over \$2M

Debt Paid Off

By plan members working with LSS of Minnesota financial counseling since the partnership began.

86%

Very Satisfied

With our Customer Care Center, certified for excellence since 2015.

Data as of Dec. 31, 2022; sources available upon request. Availability of and eligibility for benefits will vary.

60-302 (2/2023)

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<p>1,132 Webinar Views Of the annual Retirement Readiness Series (live and on-demand).</p>	<p>3,080 Medical Visits via Text Based Care Through 98point6, our virtual primary health care service.</p>	<p>9.75 % Increase in Net Membership Over the past 5 years.</p>
<p>3,952 Health & Fitness Classes Completed On Portico’s online Burnalong platform.</p>	<p>Over \$2M Debt Paid Off By plan members working with LSS of Minnesota Financial Counseling since the partnership began.</p>	<p>86% Very Satisfied With our Customer Care Center, certified for excellence since 2015.</p>

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California Lutheran University

As your partner in education as the ELCA university within Region Two, we educate leaders for a global society who are strong in character and judgment, confident in their identity and vocation, and committed to service and justice.



Forward Thinking

A future-focused university is purposely planned by the hands, hearts, and heads of many. We are implementing year-one initiatives of the [Strategic Plan](#), readying a [Campus Plan](#), and launching a [Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Plan](#).



University Pastor

Rev. Scott Hamilton Adams and the [Campus Ministry](#) staff are committed to making Beloved Community a reality for the university, this space where we come together in an interdependent relationship of care grounded in the love of God.



Rooted Values

Lutheran educational values emerge from our identity and ground the campus culture and ethos: Grace, Generosity, Inclusion, and Service to neighbor so that all may flourish.



All of Us

We are committed to an inclusive environment for [all of us](#) that values individual differences and respects each person's dignity.



Lutheran Student Scholarships

In addition to the Congregational Partners in Education (CPE) Award, ELCA Partners in Ministry Award, and the Convocators Scholarships, many [scholarships](#) are available to make a Cal Lutheran education affordable.

- 2401 Undergraduates
- 41 Majors
- 43 Minors
- 1102 Graduates
- 32 Graduate programs
- 1 Lutheran Seminary
- 38 Faith backgrounds
- 59 Countries represented
- 39 States represented
- 22 Athletic teams
- 7 Performing + Visual Arts programs
- 15 Average class size
- 4 Years to graduate
- 98% Grads employed or in school within 9 months
- 500+ Student internships
- 95 Clubs + Organizations
- 8 Religious clubs
- 15 Suite-style residences
- 33 Study Abroad programs
- 98% Receive Financial Aid
- \$39k Average financial aid package

Thank you for praying for, supporting, and telling others about Cal Lutheran. We welcome you to learn more about Cal Lutheran at CalLutheran.edu.



The Mission Investment Fund: Your financial partner

The Mission Investment Fund, a financial services ministry of the ELCA, provides a strong, stable, faith-based way for individuals, congregations and ministries to achieve their financial goals. MIF offers a range of investments for individuals, congregations and ministries. We put those investments to work to fund building and renovation loans for congregations and partner ministries, including outdoor camps, senior housing and social service agencies.



The result? Impact investments, with a transformative impact on our communities: Expanded worship spaces ... new space for education and youth ministry ... much-needed day care centers for working families ... industrial-grade kitchens and fellowship halls for community meals.

Why is MIF the right choice?

- **MIF has demonstrated expertise** in church and ministry financing. With longstanding experience in congregation and ministry building projects, we're unique among lending institutions.
- **We consistently offer competitive rates and terms.**
- **We offer a full suite of financial services.** MIF offers congregations, ministries and individuals a host of investment options. We work in deep partnership with the ELCA Federal Credit Union to offer a wide range of financial products and services.
- **The faithful stewardship of Lutheran congregations and their members funds our loans.** The money invested in MIF finances hundreds of capital projects across the church.

MIF has a longstanding tradition of strength and stability. At year-end 2022, MIF had 812 loans outstanding, totaling \$582.7 million. Investment obligations totaled \$559.4 million. With total assets of \$776.3 million and net assets of \$202.9 million at year-end 2022, MIF maintains a capital ratio of 26.14 percent—positioning MIF in the top tier of well-capitalized church extension funds.

Our steadfast support continues for the members, congregations and ministries of the ELCA and the many ways you minister to a world in need. We are honored to walk alongside you as a trusted partner.

MIF at work in the Southwest California Synod (as of December 31, 2022):

- 15 Mission Investment Fund loans, with a balance of \$4,661,067
- \$14,441,841 in Mission Investment Fund investment obligations

For more information about MIF capabilities, please visit our website, mif.elca.org or contact your Regional Manager Joel S. Wudel: 773-682-1765 joel.wudel@elca.org



ELCA Federal Credit Union

Providing a full complement of financial services to ELCA members, congregations and ministries



The ELCA Federal Credit Union, founded in 2016, provides a full suite of financial products and services to members, congregations and ministries of the ELCA. **We are the first of the ELCA's financial ministries to offer loans to individuals.**

The Credit Union offers a rich variety of products—from savings and checking accounts and CDs ... to loans, lines of credit and credit cards. And now, we provide home mortgage loans for new homes or remodeling, along with home equity lines of credit.

We serve ministries with deposit accounts, a flexible credit card program, auto loans and unsecured ministry loans up to \$100,000 for small projects such as building repair and purchases. Our new CU@Work program presents the opportunity for ministry organizations to offer our Credit Union products and services to their employees.

In 2022, we ushered in the fourth cohort of participants in the ELCA's Resourceful Servants program, designed to improve financial wellness and assist rostered leaders in building emergency savings funds. In this matching program, ELCA rostered leaders make ongoing deposits to their Credit Union emergency savings accounts, and our partner MIF matches those funds up to an established amount. Together, we already have served **657 rostered ministers** who, collectively, have made emergency savings deposits of more than \$1 million.

Our strong online presence allows members to access their funds anytime, anywhere—as consumers expect today.

Why choose the ELCA Federal Credit Union?

- **The ELCA Federal Credit Union supports the ELCA's mission of good stewardship.** We provide full services to all ELCA members, congregations and related ministries.
- **Our mission is to offer competitively priced products and services.** We can often offer better rates and lower fees than traditional banks. We have demonstrated success in providing savings to our borrowers.
- **With the church as our sponsor, we operate in ways that are consistent with the church's values.**

Membership is open to every ELCA member, synod, congregation and ministry—and their employees.

For more information about the products and services of the ELCA Federal Credit Union, please visit our website, elcafcu.org or call us at toll free at 877-715-1111.

Lutheran Social Services of Southern California Ministry Report

I bring you greetings again from Lutheran Social Services of Southern California. Unfortunately, we remain in the midst of the world's largest pandemic. On one hand we are inhibited by the characteristics of COVID 19 and on the other hand, the disease and its consequences have heightened the demand for our services even further. Despite this, we continue to do extraordinary things in less than an ordinary environment.

Below is an annual update on last year's LSSSC experience. While we have had to change some of our hours, some of operation delivery systems and develop myriad infection precautions, we remain steadfastly available to the marginalized and struggling women, men and children throughout our service areas in Southern California.

We cannot do this without your prayers collaboration and support. We don't yet know what 2023 will bring us, but we plan to continue to have a positive impact on the communities we serve and continue to fulfill our vision of sharing the love of Christ, and forming a community where the vulnerable are safer and stronger, the dependent are self-sustaining, the isolated dwell in the community and the weary are given hope.

San Bernardino County

Much is happening and progressing at our CCLM site in San Bernardino. We recently announced our intentions to expand and build a Community Wellness Campus on our existing site. Meanwhile our existing men's shelter, which was and is significantly impacted by the pandemic, is existing at a reduced capacity. While the goal is to provide temporary shelter for homeless men seven days a week, the need is exceeding our temporarily reduced capacity. We have recorded at least fifty new clients.

We have also provided sixteen new clients with permanent supportive housing and provided 250 new clients with transportation on 2118 trips to and from necessary medical and other appointments.

Our Integrated Training Program, tasked with acclimating those with intellectual and developmentally disabilities into their communities helped twenty-three new clients in the program despite onerous COVID restriction.

Education and counseling services to residents in San Bernardino saw 64 new clients and 339 counseling sessions while logging more than 1800 minutes of counseling.

Throughout Rural San Bernadino, we provided mental health services through telehealth therapeutic services. In 2020, our adult and children's mental health and child abuse survivor therapy along with a new youth sexual perpetrator prevention and treatment program, assisted more than 17000 individuals and families.

Orange County

Orange County continues to re-level to pre-COVID service volumes. The number of clients presenting for the food and emergency services like rent/mortgage/security deposits have grown. More than 50 clients were aided and six placed in permanent housing. Expanding services and client convenience have necessitated a move from Garden Grove to Fullerton.

Long Beach

The LSSSC team in Long Beach continues with a myriad of services designed for those in crisis and need. Programs include those for Benefits Entitlement; Comprehensive Emergency Assistance Program; Intensive Case Management Services; Permanent Supportive Housing Program. In the Emergency Assistance Program alone, more than 1600 clients were served with 1187 new client encounters.

Riverside County

Riverside County continues to offer homeless prevention and rapid rehousing assistance to clients in the community. Also, continuing case management continues to be offered. Showers of Hope, introduced last year, allows women and men the chance to bathe. This place on the campus of Trinity Lutheran Church in Riverside.

San Diego County

San Diego County has continued the Talent Search/Upward Bound programs that mentors and supports over a hundred secondary and post secondary students per month. The program has a remarkable high school graduation and college acceptance rate. In fact, one of the outstanding students has just been accepted to Yale, demonstrating the value of this program to the young and motivated. Her story as an example of the excellent circumstances the program can produce.

Meantime, our Senior Companion program in Clairemont Mesa continues to make home visits and phone calls regularly, checking up on our frail older adult clients to provide companionship and help them remain independent in their home.

Housing Counseling

Our new Housing Counseling Program assists individuals across all our sites in all aspects of home ownership. So far this year, the Housing Counseling program has assisted over 100 Homeowners save their homes from Default/Foreclosure.

THE GREATER LONG BEACH CONFERENCE

The Greater Long Beach Conference has 12 congregations and serves parts of Los Angeles county such as Long Beach, Lakewood, Bell, Bellflower & Downey. These congregations include:

Grace, Bell	Rev. Maria Elena Montalvo
Holy Redeemer, Bellflower	Rev. Tracy Williams
Christ, Downey	Rev. Nancy Hamm
St. Timothy's, Lakewood	Rev. Libby Denton
Gloria Dei, Long Beach	Rev. Steve Beckham (Retiring June 2023)
Christ, Long Beach	Rev. Laurie Arroyo (Interim)
Our Saviour's Lutheran Church	Rev. Scott Fritz
Resurrection Lutheran Church, Long Beach	Aaron Tidwell (Long-Term Pulpit Supply)
St. Luke's, Long Beach	Mark Witte (Long-Term Pulpit Supply with Rev. Kenny Bowen appointed Interim)
Trinity Lutheran Church	Rev. Kenneth Davis (Pulpit Supply)
St. John's, Norwalk (CLOSED?)	
Iglesia Luterana Fe y Esperanza, South Gate	Rev. Marta Moscoso Salazar

There have been a series of transitions and retirements within the Conference this year. Rev. Gary Mohr retired from St. Luke's in Long Beach and Rev. Steve Beckham will retire June 30, 2023.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Scott Fritz
Dean of the Conference

Synod Mission Team for Justice Report to Synod Assembly

April 18, 2023

Our Synod Mission Team for Justice continues to meet monthly on Zoom. Several of our committees and task forces meet at other times during the month and we hear reports of their activities at our meetings on the second Tuesdays. Anyone is welcome to attend these meetings. We have nearly 100 email addresses in our database, and they receive notices of the monthly meetings, copies of meeting minutes, and announcements and reports of justice items as they come to me. We begin each of our Justice Team meetings with a Land Acknowledgement Statement concerning the Native American lands we inhabit. We also take turns giving an opening devotion.

Robert McDuff chairs our committee on Healthcare. The California bill working for a single payer plan is still in the California legislature. Hopefully, it will be brought forth next year.

John Halbert chairs our Prison Ministry and Death Penalty Committee. He reported that the death penalty is being used quite often in several states, but not in California. One state is considering a return to a firing squad for executions.

The Green Faith group planned a great event for World Water Day on Wednesday, March 22, 2023 at noon on Zoom. There was a Land Acknowledgement statement given. Many speakers gave brief presentations, including Bishop David Nagler of Pacifica Synod. The event ended with a question and answer period with Vance Blackfox, Director for Indigenous People for the ELCA

Bishop Emeritus Dean Nelson chairs the Southern California Lutheran Palestine Israel Network (P.I.N.). He also chairs the ecumenical group (P.I.E.N). The ecumenical group held a webinar meeting on October 1, 2022 with the theme: Challenging Zionism, Intra-Christian ecumenism, i.e. encouraging conservative Christian supporters of Israel to listen to Christians on the other side of the Zionism question. The webinar is on YouTube. A fundraiser was held the same day by Bright Stars of Bethlehem. They raised \$350,000 for Opportunity Palestine who gives scholarships to elementary students in Palestine.

The Rev. Dr. Alexia Salvatierra no longer chairs our Immigration Committee. However, she is mentoring the new coordinator of Welcoming Congregations, Priscilla Merlo. A grant from AMMPARO was given to our synod to hire a very part-time person to work with this program that assists immigrants waiting for asylum hearings.

A new Anti-Racism Committee has formed in our synod. We are looking forward to working with this group.

We have worked with David Gist, Regional Organizer for Bread for the World (BFW). We encourage our congregations and individuals to write letters to our federal elected officials to encourage funding for hunger programs. These programs are included in the Farm Bill, and this bill is renewed only every five years. This is the topic of the BFW Offering of Letters Campaign this year.

I am very appreciative of the Justice Team members who faithfully attend our monthly meetings. Many others read the materials sent to those in our database, and when asked, take action. Advocacy with our elected officials does make a difference. Thank you to everyone.

Sharon Heck, Mission Team for Justice Chair

Los Angeles Metropolitan Conference

Southwest California Synod Assembly

Synod Assembly Report, 2023

This year has been a difficult climb for many LA Metro congregations. Out of our 21 LA Metro Congregations and Ministries, 9 are currently in transition (meaning they have supply preaching, an interim minister, or are vacant), and at least 7 of the rest could be in transition in the near future. This is roughly the same as last year. As the dean, I've been in conversation with the Synod and our conference leaders about this situation. Each congregation is handling their circumstances in a unique way, and there are important successes to celebrate along the way as we continue to adjust to new realities. ELCA Congregations in the LA Metro conference remain deeply committed to their faith and to living out the Gospel every day. God is with us in the wilderness and we trust that Jesus' ministry will continue in the city.

FAITH EMBODIED

-St. Paul's is proud to have their newest Vicar, Natalie Benson, who has helped them progress in their effort to live into their Reconciling In Christ calling through anti-racism discussions.

-Hope Hollywood had a fancy Easter with homemade hats and a fantastic celebration of Christ's Resurrection!

-Angelica had a terrific Festival of Saint Valentine for Valentine's Day!

-Church of the Master celebrated the return of their handbell choir!

-Grace Lutheran Church hosted an After School Program for local students and continued their food ministry through Grace Diner.

-Ascension continued to partner with My Friend's House giving out an astounding amount of food every week!

-Chapel of Peace hosted a Fall Jazz benefit concert featuring Paul McDonald's big band music!

-Messiah Lutheran continued to advocate for justice and racial equity in their neighborhood and our city!

-St. Mark's celebrated their L.I.T. (Lutherans In Training) Confirmation Class and Youth Group by inviting them to preach the good news on Sunday!

CHURCH TOGETHER

-Adore LA partnered with Hollywood Lutheran and Mt. Hollywood UCC in an ecumenical service and toy drive in November

-St. Andrew's went on several congregational "field trips" to explore the local connections between justice, history, and environmental stewardship. They visited Mission San Fernando Rey de Espana, Will Rogers State Park, and Kuruvungna Springs in Brentwood.

-Community hosted the African Descent Lutheran Association's Worship Celebration with the Trout Family on the occasion of the dedication of Trout Memorial Chapel.

-Holy Trinity welcomed an outstanding series of guest speakers throughout the year.

FORWARD TOGETHER

-The heavy rains exposed roof leaks at Bethel Lutheran, they hosted a Comedy Fundraiser night to help with repairs.

-Village Lutheran Church is proud to be in the final stages of their facility improvement grant, they are being served by monthly supply preaching.

-Ascension hosted a collaborative Good Friday service featuring outstanding preachers from our Synod!


-Mt. Olive said goodbye to their beloved Pastor Eric Shafer and welcomed the fabulous leadership of Rev. Albert Starr, as their interim pastor.







Save the Date



ADLA ELCA

The African Descent Lutheran Association, Los Angeles Chapter
and The Southwest California Synod -ELCA

Save The Date

for the Dedication and Chapel Naming to the Rev. Dr. Nelson W. Trout Chapel

Save the Date on Saturday, February 25, 2023 at 1PM
at the Lutheran Center
1300 E. Colorado St., Glendale, CA 91205-1406

& Save the Date
Worship Service with the Trout Family
on Sunday, February 26, 2023, 2PM
at Community Lutheran Church
650 E. 135th St., Los Angeles, CA. 90059

Dr. Trout was the First African-American Bishop in the American Lutheran Church
(now the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)

For additional information please contact ADLA at adla.losangeles@gmail.com







Channel Islands Conference

Changes in calls that we hold in prayer:

- Pastor Steve Simpson started at New Hope, Agoura.
- Pastor Mark Marius started at Trinity, Santa Barbara.
- Pastor Amanda Berg started as interim associate at Shepherd of the Valley, Simi Valley.
- Cal Lutheran seeks to call an ELCA Minister to serve as the Associate Vice President for Mission & Identity following Melissa Maxwell-Doherty's retirement.

Foothill Conference Assembly Report

The Foothill Conference represents 13 congregations, stretching from Glendale to Pasadena. Two of our congregations are currently served by interim pastors and are in the interview stage. Our congregations are recovering well from the pandemic.

New ministries in 2022 includes the restarting of a food bank at Eagle Rock Lutheran Church, with help from a synod grant and in association with the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank. At Trinity Pasadena, a grant from proceeds of the sale of Messiah/Reformation Pasadena is helping to fund renovations to bathrooms and showers and the addition of laundry for homeless ministry.



At Salem Glendale, the congregation has been working with Turning West consulting to develop new ministries. They are seeking to raise \$30,000 and 500 volunteers from several congregations to stage a mobile food packing event with Feed My Starving Children in the 2023-24 school year.

At Mt. Olive La Crescenta, the congregation held its first Mt. Olive Holiday Arts Festival in November 2022, and plans its next one for December 2 this year.



St. Matthews in Glendale celebrated its 75th



anniversary in September, with Bishop Bos preaching and presiding. St. Matthews Filipino Ministry is also celebrating its 10th anniversary.