

CARING FOR THE BODY OF CHRIST

Southwest California Synod Assembly
Workshop Offerings
Friday, June 2nd, 2023
Sessions 1 & 2

Session 1 – 11:30 AM

Crippling the Space

Rev. Ryan Chaddick

Noted Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel once noted that words create worlds — reflecting on God’s acts of creation in Genesis 1. How might we, as faithful followers of Christ, use our words to cultivate space that is inclusive and welcoming of the disability community? This is more than simply being politically correct. This is about faithfully working together — abled and disabled — to curate accessible spaces, and understanding that words have some kind of architectural power. And yes, that might even include reclaiming the word cripple. Join Pastor Ryan, an autistic and disabled pastor, as we together discuss the power of language.

About the Speaker:

Rev. Ryan Chaddick is a disabled and autistic pastor who passionately organizes and advocates within disability organizations. Prior to serving as a pastor in the greater Los Angeles area, he worked as a high school teacher within at-risk and incarcerated populations. Curating and designing accessible spaces is his lifetime ministry and call.

California Public Policy, Disability, And the Church

Regina Banks

Want to know what is currently happening in California public policy surrounding disability and accessibility? Want to know how you or your congregation can get involved in advocacy justice for people with a wide range of disabilities? Then Join Regina Banks, Chief Executive of the Lutheran Office of Public Policy California for conversation.

About the Speaker:

Regina Q. Banks, JD joined the Lutheran Office of Public Policy – California as director on January 2, 2019. Banks has served as Policy and Legislative Director for both statewide memberships organizations and within the California Assembly. Her skills and relationships will support LOPP-CA’s expansion goals.

Ms. Banks is a proud alumna of Valparaiso University School of Law, where she was a Jurist Scholar, and Lincoln University of MO.

Lunch Workshop

Planned Giving Best Practices for Congregations & How to Link them to Stewardship

Lisa Higginbotham

A focused conversation on planned giving avenues of approach that you may not have considered, but bring creativity and efficiency to the mission and ministries you love!

About the Speaker:

Lisa Higginbotham. CFRE, Regional Gift Planner, ELCA Foundation Lisa has served our Synod faithfully for five years as our Regional Gift Planner. Formerly a financial advisor, she helps our congregations discuss funding mission and ministry through planned giving concepts and endowment best practices. Lisa is available to work with your congregation free of charge. She also hopes to inspire generosity and work individually with donors supporting the mission and ministries they love.

Session 2 – 1:15 PM

Perks, Quirks, and Possibilities: Aging in the Southwest California Synod

Deacon Dr. Cecelia Travick-Jackson

“We need more young families”. “My grandchildren don’t come to church?” “I raised my children in the church, and they refuse to come on Sunday mornings.” I am sure that you have heard statements like these. Statements of frustration, anger, and confusion. Church doesn’t look the way it did, 75, 50, or even 25 years ago. Should we just lock our sanctuary doors and open them again as beautiful museums of a bygone era? This workshop is for congregations whose membership is aging. We will address such concerns as What are we currently doing in our churches? Who are the adult seniors? What should adult seniors be called or named—Gray power people, seasoned saints, keen agers, wheels of steel, silver citizens? How do we as church leaders minister to this special group of people? How do we engage our senior population? What are some of the challenges? Has zoom made seniors lazy on Sunday morning? We will leave the workshop with ideas and practices to be tried in our home congregations as we are called to engage and minister to our aging population.

About the Speaker:

Deacon Dr. Cecelia Travick-Jackson is Assistant to the Bishop for Senior Adult Ministries in the Southwest California Synod ELCA. Dr. Travick Jackson was ordained as a Minister of Word and Service in December 2021 and is serving Mt. Cross in Camarillo. Before being ordained, Dr. Travick Jackson was an Associate Professor of Education at California Lutheran University. She has travelled extensively throughout the world and lived from coast to coast in the United States.

Creating Space for Accessibility

Rev. Paul Walters

Why are there so many stairs in churches? Why is the lighting so dim? Why are the bathrooms so small? We want to be welcoming people, but sometimes no matter how gracious we are our building tell folks, “This is not a place for you.” Learn how to evaluate your building for accessibility and make plans for opening up your space to all people. Then discover how life-giving and hopeful the process of funding the project can be.

About the Speaker:

Paul Walters is an ELCA pastor and consultant with GSB Fundraising. An author of a number of books he has a passion for helping congregations fulfill the mission God is calling them to. When not in the States he’s likely leading another Holy Land pilgrimage. Paul is an avid cyclist, a Knight of Sufferlandria, and a Moth Story Slam winner. His wife Brandy is a lactation consultant and together they are the proud parents of three sons, fast becoming men.

Caring for the Body of Christ Assembly Bible Study

When we read the healing stories found in the New Testament, we carry with us certain biases that can influence how we interpret these stories. The western world's understanding of health and healing is very different from how people in the time of Jesus understood health and healing. These biases can also influence how society understands and relates to people with disabilities.

People with disabilities often find the healing texts in the New Testament troubling for various reasons, including western bias on health and healing, albeit disability being seen as something that is a sickness that needs to be “cured,” and how people with disabilities have been treated or ignored by the Church.

During our Synod Assembly Bible Study, we will come to learn and understand some of the western bias of biomedicine that shapes and forms how we understand health and healing in society and in scripture. We will explore the challenges that these healing stories present to people with disabilities. Finally, we will learn about how we can change our perspectives on these healing texts, both as the Church and society, in order to help us become more accessible to the entire body of Christ.

About the Presenter:

The Rev. Zachary W. Johnson is the pastor of Hill Avenue Grace Lutheran Church ELCA in Pasadena, CA. Pastor Zach received his M.Div. from LSTC and was ordained in 2012. Pr. Zach has previously served congregations in Minnesota and Iowa before being called to serve in southern California. Pr. Zach lives in Santa Clarita, CA with his spouse Kristin, two daughters, and their dog Snickers.

In October of 2020, Pr. Zach was diagnosed with a rare disease known as Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy (CIDP). This disease has caused physical impairment in Pr. Zach's legs/feet and arms/hands. This physical impairment transformed his life to the daily challenges of living with a disability. It also made him more aware to the social structures and systems that can oppress people with disabilities. Pr. Zach feels called by God to make people aware of the challenges people with disabilities face; to help the Church and society understand the need for accessibility; and to present a different approach to understanding the healing stories in the gospels.