

## Bishop's Report—Synod Assembly 2021

*Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. — Isaiah 40:30-31*

As I write this report in mid-March, it is about a year since we in the Pacifica Synod first suspended in-person activities—along with all of society—to protect ourselves and our neighbors from COVID19. I recall at the time thinking we would be back together by Easter. I had no idea that a year later we would still be practicing physical distancing, still mostly worshipping online, still doing what we can to battle the pandemic. In speaking to pastors, deacons, and key lay leaders, I hear our leaders are exhausted. Many of our clergy, and many of our paid lay professionals, have deferred vacations until they can travel to be with family and loved ones. Many are working extra hours to produce online worship. Many, myself included, have Zoom fatigue, and spend too much time in front of screens. It has been an exhausting year.

But we have a promise from God: those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength. We are not alone in this pandemic. God is with us and has never left us. I believe that God is not only guiding us through this exhausting time but is also guiding us to a new future for the church. Many of our churches have learned to do ministry in new ways. I doubt we will return to church as it was before 2020, but will bring what we have learned with us into a new era, one in which God will guide us to continue to share the good news of Jesus Christ in a variety of new ways, with a world that is starving for the gospel. My prayer for all of our congregations, our camp, and our campus ministries is that we will use the new things we have learned during this time of separation to share the gospel, love one another, and love our neighbors.

**Share the gospel.** Our theme for this Assembly is “Sent out with Good News.” We chose the theme based on John 20:20-20:21. To be honest, we searched out verses numbered 20:20 – 20:21 in the Bible since our Assembly is for both 2020 and 2021, and when we came to the book of John, we discovered these verses had something to say to us today. Jesus comes to the disciples in their locked room where they are huddled fearfully, as Jesus has just been crucified and the disciples also fear arrest and death at the hand of the authorities. The risen Jesus announces to them, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” We have been huddled in our rooms and homes for a year now, but as vaccines get into arms, we will find ourselves sent out again. We are to remember that we go out not only to reunite with family and friends, but also to reach out with the good news of Jesus’ love for all humanity. We are to share that good news so all may know of God’s boundless grace.

Last May, at about the time we would have held our Assembly, the Synod Council adopted a new strategic plan for the Pacifica Synod. We have a new Mission Statement: *Together in Christ, we equip, accompany, and serve boldly, so all may experience God’s boundless grace.* Together in Christ, we in the Synod share the gospel with boldness, trusting that the Holy Spirit will work in and through us to share God’s grace with a world in need.

We adopted Mission Result Areas with underlying goals to carry out our mission. The first Mission Result Area is *Strengthen Support for Congregational Ministry*, and the first goal states: *Pacifica Synod members will share their ancient faith in a modern world and strengthen our meaning and purpose as disciples of Jesus*. An Evangelism Team has begun work on this goal, seeking to equip Pacifica members with what they need to appropriately share our faith stories so that others can know of the hope and help we receive from the Triune God. The team plans to share a bit about their work in this year's assembly. It is my hope that we will not be shy about sharing our faith but will look for opportunities to invite others to hear the gospel and rejoice in God's good news.

Not only will our synod do this work, but the ELCA on the churchwide level is committing itself to the following purpose: *to activate each of us so more people know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love*. We in the Pacifica Synod join with our sibling ELCA Lutherans to share the good news of Jesus Christ, crucified and risen for the sake of the world.

**Love One Another.** Mission Result Area 1, Goal 1, calls for Pacifica Synod members to *strengthen our meaning and purpose as disciples of Jesus*. On the night of his betrayal, Jesus told the disciples, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another." (John 13:34) As disciples, we are called, indeed commanded, to love one another. As your bishop, I have seen congregations harmed when this command is not lived out.

Sometimes, conflict and mistrust within a congregation make it difficult to love one another. At other times, congregations love each other so much that they are not as open as God might be calling them to be to change or to the community that surrounds them. Training congregational leaders, both clergy and lay leaders, how to deal with conflict, build trust, and be open to change, helps the church grow in our call to love one another. Mission Result Area 2 of our strategic plan calls for us to *Support Resilient and Faithful Leaders*. We have two goals under this Mission Result Area: *Help Rostered Ministers Thrive* and *Connect and Empower Lay Leaders*. We are committed to helping our leaders find workable strategies for dealing with conflict, building trust, and being open to change, so that they will have what is needed to help them share God's love with each other, their surrounding communities, and the world.

I have been in awe of our lay and rostered leadership during this pandemic. If I had asked congregation presidents, lay musicians, and pastors and deacons at the beginning of 2020 if any of them had plans to expand their online worship presence, I doubt many would have responded with a "yes." But the pandemic forced all of us to pivot, and I have been proud of our congregations for putting together meaningful worship services to help themselves and their people continue to remember that God is with us at all times.

In doing this work, many of our leaders look to the synod for ideas and best practices. In recent months, we have provided opportunities for congregation presidents to gather with one another for small group discussions, training from Synod attorney Phil Allen on the fiduciary responsibilities of church councils, and words of encouragement from Synod Vice President Lori Herman. A survey of this group indicated they would like to meet quarterly, so we are putting together a team of congregation presidents to help plan future Zoom meetings for training and support.

Our rostered leaders met recently for what we called “A Time of Theological Reflection,” to discuss how their ministries have changed during the pandemic, what they will bring with them into the future, and how they have survived this year of distancing. Our Deans led in the planning of that event, and have also encouraged pastors and deacons to meet regularly for mutual support and prayer in conference meetings.

We want our leaders, rostered and lay, to have all they need to continue to proclaim the gospel by loving one another as Christ loves us. Teams to help us meet the goals of helping rostered leaders thrive and connecting and empowering lay leaders are being formed. Watch for how these teams seek to make the Mission Result Area of supporting resilient and faithful leaders become a reality.

**Love our Neighbors.** Lutheran congregations grew in Hawai’i and California after World War II at least partially because Lutherans moved to warmer climes and wanted a Lutheran church. Society has changed. Denominational loyalty has diminished. Gen Xers and Millennials are less likely to bring their children to church than were their parents. Congregations that were built in the midst of Scandinavian and German neighborhoods that were Lutheran by heritage are now surrounded by neighbors who have no idea what Lutheran Christianity is all about.

When asked what was the greatest commandment, Jesus gave two: Love the Lord you God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. When asked in the gospel of Luke, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus told the story of the good Samaritan. Samaritans were the ultimate outsider in Jesus’ day. By calling us to love Samaritans, Jesus calls us to love all who are different from us.

This year we have been challenged to love our neighbors in significant ways. I have asked congregations to follow local health standards regarding indoor services or activities in order to protect our neighbors from the spread of the virus. Part of loving our neighbors meant wearing masks and maintaining social distance not only to protect our neighbor from getting sick, but also to care for medical workers whose COVID cases threatened to overwhelm hospitals--particularly Critical Care Units--at times in parts of our synod.

The Black Lives Matter protests also challenged us to love our neighbors. I asked for congregations to take time to discuss racial justice and to ask God’s guidance in how to respond to racial tensions that erupted after the death of George Floyd. This request was not always received well by congregations. Yet many took time to reflect and discuss what God might be asking of us during this time.

Mission Result Area 3 calls for the Synod to *Deepen Diversity and Inclusion*. Goal number 2 calls for the synod to: *Expand diversity training for lay leaders and rostered ministers*. An Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion team has been formed to work on this goal, and on the Mission Result Area as a whole. Plans are being made for Anti-Racism training for leaders in the synod, and the team has discussed other ways to expand diversity training. I am grateful for their faithful work.

Goal number 4 states *Congregations will reflect the diversity in their neighborhoods*. The Synod provides Mission Insite, a service that allows congregations to accurately determine the demographics of their

neighborhood so that they know who their neighbors are. The ELCA has produced materials to help congregations look more like their surrounding neighborhood, so that they can serve their neighbors and invite them to join them in community and in works of justice and love. All of this is done so that we might serve our neighbors, share the gospel with them, accompany them in their lives, and invite them to join us in following wherever Jesus leads.

**Final Remarks.** I am grateful to many for their faithful service this past year. I work with an incredible staff, who give of themselves to our leaders and congregations. I am thankful for the work of Pastor Terry Tuvey Allen, Pastor Tom Goellrich, Terri Robertson, Carol Youngman, and Rachel Line. I am grateful to the Strategic Planning team, who not only helped put together the plan but also participated in its roll out by pre-recording a Zoom introduction that was used last Fall at the Bishops' Gatherings. The team consisted of Pastor Moses Barrios, Pastor Brenda Bos, Anthony Eder, Lori Herman, Pastor Jeff Lilley, Nicolette Rohr, and Sheila Wenzel. I feel blessed to serve with our incredible Synod Council, with our Finance Committee, Candidacy Committee, and with all those who have worked on Synod projects.

I am grateful to our Deans: Rev. Ricard Vevia, Rev. David Nagler, Rev. Laura Ziehl, Rev. Sandy Bentz, Rev. Linda Brown, Rev. Matt Anderson, Rev. Marty Jacobson, Rev. Jennifer Schultz, Rev. Cate Luehr, and Rev. Kathryn Zurcher. They have gathered their pastors and deacons for mutual support and encouragement, as well as for sharing best practices, during this pandemic. They have led their conferences in discussions about expanding the often male-centered language we use for God and humanity, encouraging the use of female and other Biblical images, in fulfillment of the resolution we passed at the 2019 Assembly. They have reached out to colleagues when they knew they were discouraged or in need of prayer. They have extended the care of the Office of the Bishop, and I am thankful for them.

Finally, I want to thank Lori Herman for her faithful service as Synod Vice President. She had planned to end her term last Spring, at the 2020 Synod Assembly, but when the pandemic hit, she agreed to continue to serve until a new Vice President could be elected. There is a lot to do in this job, and Lori worked diligently, even though she has a full-time job as a nurse in San Diego. We have been fortunate to benefit from her calm demeanor, constant faith, and steady leadership during this time. Neither Lori nor I had served on the Pacifica Synod Council when we were elected in 2016. Our learning curve was steep, but Lori rose to every challenge. Please thank her for her service when you have a chance to do so. I will miss working with and learning from her, but I know God will be at work in and through our new Vice President, and I am looking forward to what I will learn from that person as well.

God be with you, good people of the Pacifica Synod. May God bless us as *Together in Christ, we equip, accompany, and serve boldly, so all may experience God's boundless grace.*

Bishop Andy Taylor

**Pacifica Synod ELCA  
Ministers of Word and Sacrament  
and Roster Date**

Adachi, Hitoshi	06/26/2010	Egenes, Jay	02/15/2009
Aden, Charles	06/29/1997	Egertson, Glen	07/28/2001
Ajer, Richard	06/07/1985	Eichler, Timothy	09/16/1990
Allen, Terry	02/21/1993	Eller, Dianne	06/03/1984
Allen, Nathaniel	02/08/2015	Elliott, Richard	11/25/1962
Allert, Beverly	12/01/1974	Elmer, Lynda	08/03/1997
Anderson, Milo	03/27/1977	Embree, John	08/25/1974
Anderson, Mark	08/01/1977	Erlenbusch, W. Daniel	06/26/1977
Anderson, Matthew	03/23/2013	Espeseth, Gloria	09/20/1984
Awbrey, Steven	08/03/1986	Fajardo-Perez, Misael	02/16/2014
Baesler, Ronald	04/04/1976	Falk, George	06/14/1970
Barber, David	06/20/1971	Finck, Murray	06/29/1975
Barrios, Moses	02/02/2019	Flohr, Anke	05/15/1988
Barton, John	04/13/2019	Fossey, Derek	08/16/2008
Bell, Jake	06/16/2001	Foxworth, Brian	03/21/2010
Bengtson, William	04/02/1967	Freiberg, Shane	07/26/2008
Bentz, Sandra	06/01/2000	Freistedt, Robert	05/15/1960
Bieber, Paul	09/23/1990	Friedrich, James	08/14/1977
Bieghler, Steven	06/07/1987	Fry, Richard	09/14/2012
Black, Paul	06/08/1975	Geikow, Ronald	04/28/1979
Boye, Karin	12/14/1986	Goellrich, Thomas	06/24/1990
Brown, Linda	10/22/2011	Gray, M. Laurel	05/28/1956
Bullock, James	08/11/1963	Hailu, Solomon	10/20/1997
Buma, Christine	03/17/1985	Hale, James	06/03/1973
Bunge, John	06/26/1978	Hall, Elwood	06/22/1977
Burke, Dale	08/13/1972	Halvorson, Karla	12/15/2007
Cansino, Mark	01/05/1985	Hamada, Yukio	09/16/1979
Caudill, Kenneth	06/02/1963	Hand, Lawrence	06/13/1982
Chen, Betty	11/22/2009	Harman, William	01/04/1967
Chen, David	12/30/1964	Hegele, Paul	09/19/1976
Chen, Thomas	03/25/1984	Hendrickson, David	07/16/2016
Christenson, Kurt	08/13/1989	Hodgson, David	06/03/1973
Chutimapongrat, Pongtep	10/21/2012	Holtz, Eugene	09/30/1962
Cole, Daniel	12/03/2000	Hong, Hyunho	12/13/2010
Corneliussen, Cheryl	06/16/1991	Hormann, Phyllis	07/29/1995
Craft, Bruce	05/21/1961	Jacobson, Martin	06/06/1993
Crawford, Jerry	06/17/1972	Jensen, Steven	06/23/1973
Dale, Kenneth	06/17/1951	Jiang, Franklin	08/28/1994
Doolittle, Jonathan	07/16/1994	Johns, Theodore	06/02/1965
Duttera, Margaret	06/27/1982	Johnson, Darin	11/22/1997
Edmondson, Timothy	06/10/1990	Johnson, Donald	05/02/1963
		Johnson, Joseph	07/26/1971
		Jones, Cynthia	07/27/2019
		Jorstad, David	01/05/1986
		Kieffer, David	08/04/1984

Kim, Jae-Bum	02/11/2001	Myers, Donovan	05/21/1952
Kings, Marina	09/15/1996	Nagler, David	01/30/1993
Kishino, Yutaka	07/08/1979	Nelson, Samuel	02/25/2018
Knudson, John	07/27/1958	Nelson, Jeffrey	08/25/1985
Kozak, Darryl	07/23/2006	Nguyen, Minh-Hanh	08/08/1999
Kraft, H. Ivor	06/11/1972	Nielsen, Anne-Grethe	11/06/1991
Krogstad, Kim	08/12/1984	Nordstrand, Patrice	07/28/1978
Kumissa, Samuel	11/16/2014	Norman, William	08/29/1965
Kuo, Ying-Chhi	10/13/1963	Olivar, Deogracias	01/23/2011
Kupka, David	06/01/1966	Olson, Linda	08/09/1997
Laherty, Dennis	06/05/1975	Oltman, Brian	09/30/1990
Lape, Stephanie	04/12/2015	Orris, Glenn	06/14/1997
Larson, Paul	05/21/1958	Parker, Karen	09/10/1978
Lee, Simon	03/08/1981	Parmeter Dyer, Carole	05/26/2013
Licht, Kenneth	06/18/1967	Patterson, Roger	07/09/1983
Lilley, Jeffrey	02/17/1990	Paxton, Joseph	02/08/2020
Listug, Cliff	06/19/1966	Perry, Steven	06/03/1979
Lloyd, Scottie	08/07/1983	Pike, James	06/25/2005
Lohrmann, Marcus	10/14/2017	Puccio, Ken	11/13/1977
Lohrmann, Rebekkah	02/22/2015	Raaen, Daniel	06/26/1994
Lopez, Charles	09/28/1975	Radatz, William	06/06/1971
Lubs, Frederick	06/20/1976	Refera, Berhanu	06/12/2016
Luehr, Catherine	06/06/2009	Rennegarbe, Ronald	09/09/1979
Lund, Kinndlee	02/29/2012	Retamoza, Manuel	09/17/2004
Lundblad, John	07/27/1969	Reynolds, David	05/16/1962
Lunn, John	06/07/1990	Rierson, Richard	06/04/1972
Marohn, Karen	04/27/2003	Riggs, Charles	07/28/1974
Martin Lara,	10/19/2008	Roberts, Marda-Ruth	08/23/1992
Martinson, Diane	08/23/1992	Roessler, James	01/13/1974
Martyn, Joel	08/31/2003	Rollefson, Richard	08/01/1980
Martyn, Richard	06/13/1976	Ronning, Greg	10/29/1988
Mason, Timothy	05/25/1991	Rozen, Lee	11/13/1971
Matoush, Joseph	06/06/1974	Rufsvold, Victoria	05/23/1999
Mattson, David	06/26/1987	Sabbithi, Jayaprakash	02/08/1988
Meeks, Tomas	07/08/1973	Santa Cruz, Maria	01/23/2000
Mehl, Raymond	06/09/1957	Scheitlin, Paul	07/22/1979
Menke, Wesley	11/30/2014	Schlechter, Kathryn	03/06/1994
Miller, Keith	06/23/1996	Schneider, Michael	03/24/1996
Miller, David	06/07/1970	Schoenrock, James	10/10/1973
Miller, Gary	05/05/1968	Schowalter, Richard	06/04/1978
Moffat, Doug	06/01/1974	Schultz, Jennifer	08/04/1996
Moody, John	04/15/1972	Severa, Kenneth	06/01/1987
Mooney, Robert	10/22/1983	Seyb-Stockton, Karla	09/04/1988
Moore, Gilbert	08/16/1953	Sharon, Gerald	10/28/2019

Shaw, Jennifer	01/31/2016
Shonk, Ronald	03/20/1967
Snyder, William	07/10/1977
Spann, John	05/19/1949
Stienstra, Bradley	08/31/1975
Sumner-Eisenbraun, Sarah	07/01/2007
Sundry, Charles	05/31/1965
Sweetman, Sherry	03/18/1979
Symons, Luther	01/11/1998
Taylor, Brian	10/29/1978
Taylor, Andrew	08/10/1986
Tsui, May	06/20/2006
Tuohino, Kent	03/06/1988
Vadis, Bohdan	06/22/2003
Vevia, Richard	06/26/1981
Vogelgesang, Linda	05/19/2002
Volkman, Edward	06/17/1956
Wade, Raymond	07/12/1981
Walker-Thode, Andreas	01/26/1996
Waltz, Kathy	07/21/1996
Watland, A. Joris	01/05/1968
Waworuntu, Robert	12/29/1985
Wendt, Dianne	07/28/2017
Wenger, David	08/11/1963
Wildberger, Karla	10/18/1993
Winick, Mark	03/12/1978
Witt, Carl	06/26/1977
Wolter, Keith	10/21/1984
Worthing, Carol	07/25/1982
Zahnow, Jennifer	02/04/2006
Zarate, J. Ramon	05/18/2013
Ziehl, Laura	08/30/1997
Zurcher, Kathryn	07/12/2006

**Pacifica Synod ELCA  
Ministers of Word and Service  
and Roster Date**

Bugaj, Mindy	07/09/2017
Darrow, Betty	02/13/1966
Decker, Georgia	06/08/1986
Deming, Phillip	06/29/1996
Fisher, Taflin	02/23/2003
James, Melissa	11/07/2004
Kieschnick, Melvin	09/09/1950
Lee, Shirley	02/17/2002
Lind, Leah	11/30/2008
Martyn, Barbara	12/09/2001
Prechel, Lynne	10/28/2007
Rennegarbe, Paula	05/01/1974
Schmitt Ajer, Margy	06/15/1996
Sensmeier, Randall	08/01/1971
Stohlman, Mary	09/27/1987
Sumner-Eisenbraun, Kevin	06/21/2009
Wall, Roberta	08/23/2015

**FULL COMMUNION PARTNERS  
INVITATION TO SERVE**

Jasmine "Jazzy" Bostock, Episcopal  
Maluhia, Waianae, HI

Maggie Goodwin, Presbyterian  
Salem, Whittier

Dave Madsen, Episcopal  
The Welcome Ministry, El Cajon

Lisa Rotchford, Episcopal  
Redeemer, Seal Beach

Mary Tororeiy, Episcopal  
Shepherd of the Desert, Barstow

Jonathan Vincent, UCC  
Bethany Lutheran, Norco

## **PACIFICA SYNOD STAFF**

1801 C Parkcourt Place, Santa Ana CA 92701 (714) 692-2791  
office@pacificasynod.org

### **BISHOP**

**THE REV. DR. ANDREW A. TAYLOR**

ext. 736, email: AndyTaylor@pacificasynod.org

### **ASSISTANTS TO THE BISHOP**

**THE REV. TERRY TUVEY ALLEN,**

Rostered Leadership, Candidacy, Call Process, & Congregational Care, ext. 739,  
email: TerryTuveyAllen@pacificasynod.org

**THE REV. TOM GOELLRICH,**

Director for Evangelical Mission, ext. 735  
email: TomGoellrich@pacificasynod.org

### **ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

**MS. RACHEL LINE,**

Executive Assistant to the Bishop, ext. 733  
email: RachelLine@pacificasynod.org

**MS. TERRI ROBERTSON,**

Executive Assistant for Accounting & Communications, ext. 732  
email: TerriRobertson@pacificasynod.org

**MS. CAROL YOUNGMAN,**

Executive Assistant for Rostered Leaders and Congregation Support, ext. 731  
email: CarolYoungman@pacificasynod.org

*Reverend Terry Tuvey Allen*

*Assistant to the Bishop for Rostered Leadership, Candidacy, Congregational Care and Transitions*

**John 20:20 / 20:21**

**<sup>20</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”**

We are living through unprecedented times. The last time I wrote a report to you (2019) I talked about the gigantic 500-year wave of change that some sociologist predicted for our time. Our fixed ideas of physical, social, political, and spiritual truths are in upheaval. amid the fear, grief, and social isolation under a pandemic that has blanketed not only the USA but the world. Oddly enough, I find these verses from St John 20 comforting. They resonate with me because I imagine the disciples know what it is to have the world as they know it – ripped apart. After all they were having a truly bad weekend. They had witnessed the crowds turning from pro-Jesus to pro-Barabbas, shouting “crucify Him. Some had stood on Golgotha as Jesus breathed His last and then buried Him. Then some of the most supportive, levelheaded women evidently could not sleep, so they got up before dawn and came back crazy telling stories about an empty tomb. spreading rumors of Jesus’s resurrection. And now it is evening, they are huddled together behind locked doors in fear of what else could possibly happen. Yup, I am certain the disciples get what it is to have their lives turned upside down and inside overnight. When Jesus drops in and says “peace.” PEACE! Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

I am pretty sure my heart would be going so crazy, I might – they might of – missed the whole sending part! And yet, that is precisely what Jesus says to all of us. “As the Father sent me, so I send you.” We’ve been working out what that means ever since. First, I think we should take Jesus at His word and stop to take a deep breath, to breath in God’s Spirit with the knowledge that we are not alone. God is with us and God knows what is next. After all God knew that Good Friday was not the end of the story. That same God fills us with the Holy Spirit to grant us peace and empower us to share the good news that Christ is risen! This crazy wave of change has equipped us in magnificent ways to share the gospel so that the people around us, people we love, and even some that we do not particularly get along with, and those who are terrified in a world all topsy turvy that God loves them, **God loves us all.**

Here are just a few ways that the Pacifica Synod is doing just that. Your pastors and deacons, musicians and office staff learned about live streaming, recording sermons, and reaching out in a variety of ways. Home visits were masked and socially distance from a driveway or sidewalk. You changed in the twinkling of an eye from in person worship to recorded, YouTube, ZOOM and socially distanced in person and back to online many times. People joined you from around the country and even throughout the world hearing the “good news” of God’s love and salvation. You jumped in to care for one another with online meetings, fellowship, Bible and book studies, prayers groups, cards, letters, and phone calls. You helped one another learn to use computers, iPads, etc. pastoral care calling one another. Amidst all these pressures you have been faithful stewards caring for the ministries and mission that God has charge us with.

This is just a glimpse into the ways the synod [**you**] have adjusted to a “new normal” *since we last met:*

- 23 congregations have called a rostered leader
- 6 congregations are being served by a full-time communion partner
- 16 congregations are in transition seeking a new rostered leader
- 4 congregations are being served by TEEM Candidates (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries)
- 7 pastors are serving in their first call [1 pastor awaiting ordination]

- 8 pastors and deacons on leave from call
- 5 candidates were approved for Word & Sacrament
- 3 candidate awaiting call
- 3 candidates finishing their internships ready to meet the Candidacy Committee for Approval for Word & Sacrament Ministry in April
- 1 pastoral candidate entering a second year of internship with Luther Seminary MDivX (ask me!)
- 1 candidate will be beginning the first of two years of internship with Luther Seminary MDivX
- 1 pastor was received from another Lutheran tradition
- 5 people are in discernment about their call to Word & Service / Word & Sacrament
- 18 people are at various stages in preparation for rostered ministry

Lutheran Retreats, Camps, and Conferences had to close during the Covid'19 pandemic, however, it looks as though they will be re-opening this summer.

Please ask me about:

**Candidacy:** We are all called to serve, using our God given gifts to help and encourage one another. Some are called to serve as a rostered leader in the ELCA. Do you know someone that God is calling? We are blessed to have been working together with Southwest California Synod for many years.

**Mobility and Congregational Transitions:** The Spirit has been very active in Mobility/Rostered Leader Transitions this past year.

**Lutheran Retreats Camps and Conferences:** a ministry of Pacifica and Southwest California Synods. This vital ministry continues to shape the faith of people of all ages.

**First Call Theological Education:** During their first call deacons and pastors participate in First Call Theological Education (FCTE.) Pacifica Synod does this jointly with the other four Region 2 Synods.

**Pastoral Care:** Caring for one another and bearing one another's burdens is part of our call to be in community together. If you know of a concern, please let us know in the synod office. **Worship:** Although our weekly worship has been on hold, the synod office has provided to recorded worship service (one is Sunday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> and participated in a Region II service for the Sunday following Easter. Additionally, the staff has upload sermons to be used throughout the synod.

We are blessed when we experience constant transition, from one stage or movement or development or evolution to another – it is what it means to be **alive**. The church, in the midst of transitions, is far from dead. Whether your congregation is raising up a candidate for rostered ministry (**candidacy**), writing a ministry site profile (**mobility**) to call a new pastor or deacon, re-writing by-laws, updating a constitution, aging, feeding people in your community or building a well on the other side of the world, reading scripture, inviting someone to church (**mission**), praying for the healing of a friend or a congregation (**pastoral care**), sharing a meal at the Lord's table (**worship**) you are safe in the promise of God's immense, enormous, sometimes terrifying, always awesome love.

Together in the hands of God, Pastor Terry

**Rev. Tom Goellrich**  
**Director for Evangelical Mission**  
**Assistant to the Bishop**

**+ Worship God + Be Transformed + Love People + Change the World +**

Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen Indeed, Alleluia! In the midst of a pandemic year, Easter reminds us that we are a resurrection people! Some highlights of past and forward looking activity:

- ❖ While we have seen a slow down of vitality surveys, a couple of surveys were completed with results helping congregations in understanding their current state of vitality, viability and sustainability. If you desire to lead your congregation through this process, please let me know and we will get it scheduled.
- ❖ Our new ministry start in Palm Spring has celebrated its 2<sup>nd</sup> year of ministry and held strong through the pandemic. The ministry has announced its name change on Easter Sunday. The new name is River of Hope, and we will be looking for the ministry to become an official ELCA congregation by years end. We continue to be grateful to Hope, Palm Desert, for their continued partnership as we move forward.
- ❖ We have had two ministry closures during the past year: Atonement Lutheran Church, San Diego, and Grace Lutheran Taiwanese, Anaheim. We also have an additional ministry that has voted to close (Grace Lutheran, Jurupa Valley) and this ministry will be closing officially in June.
- ❖ We have a couple more ministries discerning their future at the time of writing this report.
- ❖ We have two new ministries in the works as SAWC's (Synod Authorized Worshipping Communities). We also have two planned explorations as potential ministry locations in the works as well.

The activity summarized above begs the question ... **What new ministry models are there that we might consider for both new and existing ministries in the Pacifica Synod?**

In the coming weeks we will be inviting congregations to enter into conversations by regions. The purpose of the conversations will be to look at future possibilities for ministries to consider shared ministries. There are a handful of possibilities to talk about and consider. As we face various headwinds for ministry viability, vitality and sustainability, these conversations could lead to various partnerships for future ministry. These conversations will be valuable for all of our ministries to participate in. Partnerships in any form become the choice of our various ministries themselves.

In conclusion, I would like to commend our rostered leaders and congregations for your incredible leadership during this pandemic year. The resiliency demonstrated in these challenging times is incredible. The Pacifica Synod is your partner in ministry. My prayer is that we continue to find constructive ways to work together; that we always make the priority of God's active presence in our midst; that the Holy Spirit continues to poke and prod us to consider things we may have never considered!

Blessings ... Pastor Tom

**+ Worship God + Be Transformed + Love People + Change the World +**

## 2021 Report of the Vice President

Dearest Pacifica Synod,

*For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. ~ Roman 8:38-39*

This is my final Report of the Vice President to the Pacifica Synod Assembly. Because our planned in-person 2020 Assembly was disrupted by the pandemic, I found myself with a bonus year to serve you and this synod, as did several of my synod council colleagues. It has been an extraordinary year in so many ways and so much has happened since the last time we were together in Palm Desert for the 2019 Pacifica Synod Assembly. We have all learned so much. We have learned how to be connected even if we can't be in the same physical space. We have learned how to make Zoom a worshipful place. We have learned how important we are to each other. We have learned how much we took for granted, and if we are mindful, we have learned that we should never do so again. We have learned that doing things in new ways will not, and did not, break the church. We have learned that nothing separated us from God, even as we sheltered in place for the love of our neighbors, family, and friends.

During the past year, and since my last written report, the Pacifica Synod Council has continued to meet regularly by Zoom on behalf of this Assembly. Emergent matters, such as moving forward on the PPP loan and accepting time sensitive property sale agreements, brought the council together more frequently than in the past. The Executive Committee and our various steering committees, including the Finance Committee and the Mission Funds Committee, have also met more often to keep up with evolving business. I encourage you to read through this annual report and review the actions of these councils and committees. Perhaps more importantly, please extend your thanks to all of these faithful people of Pacifica, who have given of their time and talents to keep ministry going over the past two years. I offer my deepest gratitude and thanks to God for those I have been honored to serve alongside since 2016.

In my report last year, I wrote the following: "Had we been able to be together in May, I would have thanked you on behalf of the Synod for your donations of Mission Support to the Synod. Your Mission Support makes it possible to pay the Synod staff so they can be here for you when you need them. Your Mission Support makes grants possible for Mission Starts and support of congregational ministry. It supports the greater church so the ELCA can reach out to an even larger part of God's creation so that together we can be church for the sake of the world. These are challenging times for everyone, but these are the times we find faith through generosity. That we trust the future to God in thanksgiving for all we've been given. That we find abundance enough to share." I look forward to being able to say thank you "in person" this year for your generosity in giving that has made it possible for this synod to serve God, our neighbors, and each other.

I look forward to welcoming you to the online 2020/2021 Pacifica Synod Assembly on May 1<sup>st</sup>. And I look forward to the time when we are able to safely be together in person. Until then, please stay safe and take good care.

Peace,  
Lori Herman (she/ her)  
Synod Vice President

## Synod Assembly Actions 2020

### Synod Assembly was postponed due to Covid-19

#### Actions of the Synod Council

May 2020 – March 2021

Roster Changes: Synod Calls, On Leave from Call, Remove from Roster and Retirements

#### **RETIREMENTS**

Pr. Agapito Aviles 03.01.2020  
Pr. Milo Ken Anderson 06.01.2020

#### **ADDED TO PACIFICA ROSTER**

The Rev. Joseph Paxton Ordination 02.08.2020  
Deacon Margy Schmitt-Ajer Transfer from Metro NY Synod 05.26.2020  
**SC.20.05.02 VOTED** to approve the roster changes as listed. (m/s/c)

#### **SYNOD CALLS**

The Rev. Karin Boye House of Prayer, Escondido 08.01.2020, Interim Pastor  
The Rev. Karla Wildberger Calvary by the Sea, Honolulu 09.01.2020 Interim Pastor

#### **ON LEAVE FROM CALL**

The Rev. Karen Stephenson Approval for Year 1 05.01.2020  
**SC.20.08.03 VOTED** to approve the roster changes. (m/s/c)

#### **SYNOD CALLS**

The Rev. Daniel B. Cole Interim Hospice, San Diego 04.01.2020  
The Rev. Jasmine Bostock Maluhia Lutheran Church, Maluhia (invitation to serve)

#### **ON LEAVE FROM CALL**

The Rev. Dianne Wendt Approval for Year 1 11.01.2020  
The Rev. Sandra Bentz Approval for Year 1 11.03.2020  
The Rev. Kate Schlechter Approval for Year 3 01.01.2019  
The Rev. Pongtep Chutimapongrat Approval for Year 2 02.01.2020  
Deacon Melissa James Approval for Year 2 01.01.2020  
Deacon Margy Schmitt-Ajer Approval for Year 2 01.01.2020  
**SC.20.12.02 VOTED** to approve the roster changes en bloc. (m/s/c)

Pastor Tim Edmondson be retroactively changed to an interim Synod Call effective Dec 1, 2018 for interim ministry. (This is a correction to our error of calling him as a mission developer)  
**SC.21.03.10 VOTED** to approve the correction stated above. (m/s/c)



**SC.20.12.05 VOTED** to approve the 2021-2022 Spend Plan and the 2022-2023 Budget as presented. (m/s/c)

**SC.20.12.06 VOTED** to approve the Housing Allowances as recommended by the Executive Committee. (m/s/c)

*Motion: To approve the budgets for both years (2021-2022 & 2022-2023) for presentation to the Synod Assembly.*

**SC.21.03.03 VOTED** to pass the above motion. (m/s/c)

*Motion: to approve the distribution of The Atonement Lutheran Church of San Diego proceeds as recommended, designating the ELCA amount to be used for new congregation starts, and designating \$100,000 of the amount that the Synod receives to go into the Bishop Transition Fund.*

**SC.21.03.04 VOTED** to approve the distribution of proceeds from The Atonement Lutheran Church as recommended. (m/s/c)

**SC.21.03.09 VOTED** to approve the Synod Assembly Offerings to be split 50/50 between LRCC and the Basel Christian Church of Malaysia.

### **Misc. Items**

*Motion: The 2021 Synod Assembly will be held virtually on May 1, 2021.*

**SC.20.05.07 VOTED** to approve the motion. (m/s/c)

*Motion: Due to gathering restrictions in the state of California put in place in response to the global pandemic, the synod council votes to postpone the 2020 Pacifica Synod Assembly to May 2021.*

after a lengthy discussion an amendment was made to add at the end of the motion:  
*and combine it with the regularly scheduled 2021 Pacifica Synod Assembly.*

after further discussion a friendly amendment was made:

*Due to the extraordinary circumstances of a global pandemic, Synod Council votes to postpone the 2020 Pacifica Synod Assembly to May 2021 and combine it with the regularly scheduled 2021 Pacifica Synod Assembly.*

**SC.20.06.01 VOTED** to amend the original motion. (m/s/c)

**SC.20.06.02 VOTED** to approve the amended motion. (m/s/c)

*(Motion: That we hold a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly, electronically, on August 22, 2020 with the sole agenda item being to postpone the 2020 assembly to 2021. SC.20.05.05 VOTED* to approve the motion. (m/s/c))

**SC.20.06.03 VOTED** to approve the motion to postpone the 2020 Pacifica Synod Assembly to May 2021 and combine it with the May 1, 2021 Synod Assembly.  
(m/s/c)

*Motion: To close Grace Taiwanese Lutheran Church under S13.24*

**SC.20.08.08 VOTED** to approve the motion. (m/s/c)

*Motion: To assign the following people as trustees: Bishop Andrew Taylor, Lori Herman, Angela Jackson and Thomas Pankow.*

**SC.20.08.09 VOTED** to approve the motion to assign trustees. (m/s/c)

*Motion: At the request of Grace Taiwanese Lutheran Church and the recommendation of the trustees that the Pacifica Synod Council closes Grace Taiwanese Lutheran at this time.*

**SC.20.08.10 VOTED** to approve the closure of Grace Taiwanese Lutheran. (m/s/c)

*Motion: Establish and authorize California Indonesian Lutheran Church (name tentative) as a Pacifica SAWC, pending acceptance and support of the Table Review in Chicago.*

**SC.21.03.05 VOTED** to approve the motion. (m/s/c)

*Establish and authorize a SAWC on the campus of the Islamic Center in San Diego, pending acceptance and support of the Table Review in Chicago.*

**SC.21.03.06 VOTED** to approve the motion. (m/s/c)

## PACIFICA SYNOD COUNCIL, 2020 - 2021

### Officers

Term of Office – 4 Years

NAME	POSITION	EXPIRES
Bishop Andrew Taylor 1801 C Parkcourt Place Santa Ana CA 92701 (714) 692-2791 andytaylor@pacificasynod.org Bishop	Bishop, First Term	2022 (6 year term)
Ms Lori Herman 1919 Falmouth Dr El Cajon CA 92020 (619) 992-0995 C lehermannew@gmail.com Vice President	Vice President, First Term	2020
Ms Angela Jackson 5711 Roswell St San Diego CA 92114 (858) 740-7609 angelagangstad@hotmail.com Secretary	Secretary, First Term	2020
Mr Tom Pankow 837 Rodeo Road Fullerton CA 92835 714-447-0369 H TomPankow@SBCGLOBAL.net Treasurer	Treasurer, Remainder of Term	2021

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Bishop Andrew Taylor	2-yr Terms:
Ms. Lori Herman	The Rev. Jennifer Shaw, First, 2021
Ms. Angela Jackson	The Rev. Brian Taylor, First, 2020
Mr. Tom Pankow	Becky Draper, First, 2020

## PACIFICA SYNOD COUNCIL, 2020 - 2021

Ms Maura Beland  
10113 Holborn Street  
Santee, CA 92071  
(619) 379-7212 C  
MauraBeland@gmail.com  
San Diego Area Rep, First Term, 2021

The Rev. Linda Brown  
4725 Brockton Avenue  
Riverside, CA 92506  
(951) 684-3336  
edenpastorlinda@gmail.com  
Inland Empire Rep, First Term, 2021

Mr Jeff Cours  
417 Santa Dominga  
Solana Beach CA 92075  
(858) 245-7727 C  
jtcours@gmail.com  
San Diego Area Rep, First Term, 2022

The Rev Pongtep "Golf" Chutimapongrat  
15215 Janine Drive  
Whittier CA 90605  
(626) 497-2008  
Gibson\_ku@yahoo.com  
Orange County Area Rep, First Term, 2021

Ms Becky Draper  
20845 Viento Valle  
Escondido, CA 92025  
(858) 382-8719 C  
beckdraper@yahoo.com  
San Diego Area Rep, Second Term, 2022

Mr Anthony Eder  
39136 Harris Road  
Yucaipa, CA 92399  
(262) 812-7711 C  
anthony@lrcchome.com  
Inland Empire Area Rep, First Term, 2022

Mr Mark Fornwall  
45 Laukona Street, #2203  
Wialuku, HI 96793  
(808) 280-5878  
mdfmkf@yahoo.com  
Hawaii Area Rep, First Term, 2020

Ms Greta Goellrich  
1330 Ditwood Place  
La Habra CA 90631  
(714) 390-5762 C  
greta.goellrich@gmail.com  
Orange County Rep, Second Term, 2022

Ms. Freya Hendrickson  
428 S Center Street  
Redlands, CA 92373  
(909) 747-2261 C  
faye.raye22@gmail.com  
Youth Rep, First Term, 2021

The Rev Jeff Lilley  
1730 Punahou Street  
Honolulu, HI 96822  
(808) 941-2566 W  
(808) 271-9926 C  
pr.jeff@lchwelcome.org  
Hawaii Area Rep, First Term, 2022

Mr Gerry Marecek  
10498 Sioux River Circle  
Fountain Valley CA 92708  
(310) 977-8486  
gerry.marecek@gmail.com  
Orange County Area Rep, First Term, 2021

Ms Daneen Pysz  
33172 Desoto Way  
Dana Point CA 92629  
(949) 290-0381 H  
daneen.pysz@gmail.com  
Orange County Area Rep, First Term, 2020

**PACIFICA SYNOD COUNCIL, 2020 - 2021**

Ms. Nicolette Rohr  
4725 Brockton Avenue  
Riverside CA 92506  
(951) 204-9206  
nicolette.rohr@charter.net  
Inland Empire Area Rep, First Term, 2022

The Rev. Maria Santa Cruz  
4011 Ohio Street  
San Diego CA 92104  
(619) 283-5936  
prmaria@sbcglobal.net  
San Diego Area Rep, First Term, 2021

The Rev Jennifer Shaw  
42695 Washington Street  
Palm Desert CA 92211  
(760) 345-2122 W  
pastor@stjohnslutheran.church  
Inland Empire Area Rep,  
*Remainder of Term, 2020*

The Rev Brian Taylor  
12301 Magnolia  
Garden Grove, CA 92841  
(909) 973-2405  
revbst@aim.com  
Orange County Area Rep, First Term, 2021

## EAST AND WEST SAN DIEGO CONFERENCES REPORT

The rostered leaders of the East and West San Diego Conferences continued to meet weekly via Zoom. Average attendance was 14 with the occasional synod staff member dropping by.

Dean Dave Nagler and I asked each of our 21 congregations to submit a brief report of 2-3 lines regarding these four areas.

- a) Congregational highlight (other than worship) in 2020;
- b) Congregational challenge in 2020;
- c) how you have gathered for worship in 2020;
- d) and where is Christ leading you in 2021.

19 responded and their responses clearly revealed that while our buildings may have been closed, the Church was not closed.

In Christ,

Pastor Richard W. Vevia, Jr.	Dean - East San Diego Conference
Pastor David Nagler	Dean - West San Diego Conference

**Agape House - Pastor Darin Johnson has submitted a separate report for the Assembly Notebook**

**Ascension Lutheran Church, San Diego - submitted by Pastor Rick Fry**

- a) A congregational highlight is that we became a 'super-pantry' site, operating a 3 day a week drive through food pantry, with a large grant from the San Diego Food Bank. Our preschool also remained open through much of 2020 and has grown with the addition of our afterschool program.
- b/c) We have faced challenges in feeling connected as we have worshiped online since mid-March of 2020.
- d) In 2021 we hope to continue to meet the needs of the food insecure in our communities, as well as continue to expand our preschool, and be a strong witness against systemic racism as we continue to share God's love and merciful justice in our community.

**Atonement Lutheran Church, San Diego - submitted by Pastor Cyndi Jones**

On Sunday, January 5th, 2020, members of Atonement Lutheran Church were greeted with the passing of Lora, a beloved, energetic, 85 year old member. Although we had had several deaths in 2019, this one really hit hard.

Atonement's attendance prior to the pandemic was 12-18 and, oddly enough, when we went online we grew to 26. People joined us from distances further than they would be able to drive. We had a GoToMeeting telephone connection and the people loved hearing from one another. One household, having both a baritone and a soprano, became our choir every week. We had a "responder" to read the congregational parts and I did virtual communion. The community gathered joyfully!

On June 28th, having not been together since March 8th, Atonement held a service of Holy Closure in thanksgiving for all the ministry that had taken place from the Sacred Ground. We still hope to gather, when it is safe, for a final meal together.

**Calvary Lutheran Church, El Cajon - submitted by Pastor Richard Vevia, Jr.**

- a) We were able to keep our food pantry, The Cupboard on 54<sup>th</sup>, open and provided food for about 400 households. We are grateful to St. Andrew's, La Mesa for their continued and generous support.
- b) Staffing The Cupboard was a challenge since many of our senior volunteers sheltered at home. The Closet, our clothing ministry, was completely closed due to sanitizing concerns.
- c) Together with St. John's, El Cajon we recorded services and posted them on our Facebook page. In 2021 we have started to livestream.
- d) Pastors Berhanu & Richard will be working to reestablish our outreach to the Pan-African community.

**Carlton Hills Lutheran Church, Santee - submitted by Pastor Andreas Walker-Thode**

- a) Celebration of the congregation's 60th Anniversary and Installation of Rev. Andreas Walker-Thode as the new pastor.
- b) To meet the needs of our community in the midst of the COVID pandemic, including hosting the increased hours of operation for the Santee Food Bank on our campus.
- c) Primarily, we have gathered via Facebook and YouTube online services, which have gradually improved over the course of the year. In addition we host a weekly coffee hour via Zoom, and some socially distanced small group ministry as conditions have allowed.
- d) To continue in faithful service with concern for the neighbors whose lives we share.

**Christ Lutheran Church, Pacific Beach - submitted by Deacon Taffin Fisher**

- a) The way the congregation has come together to care for each other.
- b) Many of our folks are older, and are afraid to come out to outdoor worship (understandably).
- c) Only a few times, outdoors and very distanced. We have held online services every week.
- d) Christ is leading me to spread hope, love and joy. And to wait on the will of God.

**Clairemont Lutheran Church, San Diego - submitted by Pastor Jonathan Doolittle**

- a) Calling pastor Cyndi Jones as associate pastor.
- b) Keeping the congregational connections in place.
- c) Online, "watch party" on the patio, Drive-thru communion.
- d) Finally beginning construction project for fellowship hall and apartment building

**First Lutheran Church, San Diego - submitted by Pastor Kurt Christianson**

- a/b) Our highlights are set in struggle. Aside from the pandemic, we are still feeling the grief over the deaths of Organist Jared Jacobson and former Pastors Jack Lindquist and Noel Estergren. I would dare to add, that still the loss of Pr. Wilk, the death of Pr. Larry Koger and the loss of members during the interim period hang over our life together. Additionally, during this COVID year, more members, long time members, have left, not just drifted away but left. Our challenge in 2021 will be to reclaim our sense of God's holy and Beloved Community.
- c) For most of the COVID year, First has been using recorded worship elements from different homes and citywide locations, edited together, and uploaded to YouTube for Worship. Once we are able to return to the sanctuary, we will continue to broadcast live Worship and upload it to YouTube for the foreseeable future. During Lent, we will experiment with midweek Zoom from the sanctuary.

d) Besides dealing with our collective grief, in 2021, we will be looking to how we might reroot for mission in downtown San Diego. A whole new small city, nearly 40,000 new residents, have moved within a half-mile of us who we can reach for the sake of the Kingdom.

#### **Gethsemane Lutheran Church, San Diego - submitted by Pastor Karla Seyb-Stockton**

The year 2020 showed us at Gethsemane how adaptable we can be. Turns out Old Lutherans Can Learn New Things! Once COVID hit, we gathered for worship via Facebook Live, and some of us gathered for worship around the replay. Some of us sang our beloved hymns in the safety of our own homes and some of us were content to listen, but all of us know we are in the presence of God wherever we are. Who knows what 2021 will bring, but we are certain we are led to reach out to the community and let our light shine.

#### **International Evangelical Lutheran Church of San Diego, San Diego - submitted by Pastor Jogy Olivar**

- a) After the closure of Hope congregation in 2018, the Filipino group continues to gather the following year 2019 bearing the new name: "International Evangelical Lutheran Church." With God's blessing and guidance, with my leadership, the Lord added 9 children baptized and 1 baptism in May of 2020 in the middle of pandemic. I consider this the highlight of this worshipping group and the sense of family love and concern and serving like "my brother's keeper" at the surge of COVID19 that we almost call or text or through social media as Facebook and messenger and always check each other and pray for one another.
- b) Aside from the fear of this deadly virus, our number one concern is how to face uncertainties, such as: What will happen if the church property will be sold, where shall we go next?
- c) Some of the members who are senior citizens have limited access to advance technology such as Zoom or Google so I tried all low key social media to reach them out. I connected with them through Phone, Text messages, Facebook and Messenger. I always send inspirational messages every day and every Sunday. Oftentimes I send them recorded video messages for that particular Sunday. I send greetings and prayer request for the group to be aware and ask them to include in their individual prayers. It works best for them.
- d) The latest information is that the church property is now sold! The biggest challenge and concern now for this Filipino ministry is: Where shall we go from here? I just want to thank Pastor Richard Vevia with his leadership and being my colleague and friend for always around checking for me. I just went through gallbladder surgery 3 weeks ago and I just had a foretaste of this COVID19 isolation in the hospital. I'm feeling better now and back to work as hospice chaplain. I spoke with Pastor Tom, our Synod Mission Director and Assistant to the Bishop last week and felt a little hope as to the direction of this small Filipino Ministry. Please pray for me and this worshipping group.

#### **Lemon Grove Lutheran Church, Lemon Grove - submitted by Pastor Chuck Sundry**

- a) That in spite of shutting down in person worship in mid-March, the congregation hung together by regularly contacting one another by phone. And the financial support continued. We ended the year with a slight surplus.
- b) How to keep the congregation connected and feeling supported without in-person contact.
- c) We did not have in-person worship after mid-March. I sent out a video homily with keyboard music by our pianist by email every week. To those who do not have email or internet connection I weekly sent out a hard copy of my homily. There were eight weekly hard copy mailings.

- d) It takes someone with a better connection than I have to answer this one. I think we will be easing into in-person worship in the coming months, but I don't think it will be like 2019 any time soon. That means that I think I will be continuing to email out my message for some time, if not indefinitely.

**Our Savior's Lutheran Church, San Diego - submitted by Pastor Maria Santa Cruz**

- a) At Our Savior's, 2020 brought many ups and downs. Many losses and conflicts, however, a highlight we can all agree was a true blessing was Prayer. Our members have never been this devoted to prayer and fidelity to God and for each other. From random virtual calls to pray for a need, to scheduled live streams. Prayer was not the only thing they became great at, as we all know prayer and action go hand in hand. Our members implemented this. When they found out a sister or brother was in need they prayed and came together to support them in any way they could: emotionally, financially, and with acts of kindness like taking groceries to their door steps. Yes, we were apart for the majority of 2020, but in a way we were much closer.
- b) Loss. Loss of companionship, loss of a loved one, loss of identity, and for some unfortunately, loss of faith. It was difficult to remind members that we have an all powerful who will be there even after all seems lost. Many members lost parents and loved ones, and some who could not say goodbye to. Many members did not feel comfortable with the virtual worships, thus disconnecting from Our Savior's.
- c) The majority of the year in 2020 was held virtually, according to guidelines issued by the State, and when allowed, we met outdoors. As soon as we began to see cases starting back up we closed down. Sure enough, two weeks later, the State reissued quarantine orders.
- d) In 2021 we plan on expanding our platforms, and sharing the Good News, in every way we can. Additionally, we plan on continuing and growing our prayer groups and Bible Studies. If anything 2020 has prepared us to become a better Congregation. One that is accessible to everyone, even those who are far away.

**Resurrection Lutheran Church, Coronado - submitted by Pastor Brian Oltman**

- a) Developing an active prayer list with members calling members to check in and pray for one another during this difficult time.
- b) The congregational challenge for Resurrection Lutheran Church in 2020 was as it was for this country; being the church in the middle of a pandemic. This little congregation averages 25-30 people attending worship, most of whom are older than 65 years of age. Some of these elderly folks are technologically challenged, some of whom don't even have email addresses. Keeping in touch with one another has been a struggle.
- c) A Digital bulletin created for those at home – Zoom Service of the Word – Gathering in our courtyard for Sunday and Christmas Eve under the Stars – Livestream on Facebook on Christmas.
- d) Once the pandemic has been contained Resurrection Lutheran Church will reevaluate our mission and purpose. Reaching out to the military presence has been a long-standing ministry commitment. The difficulty has been when people move on to their next assignment. We also have a strong presence of visitors each Sunday, adding 5 or more people to worship, except for 2020.

**St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, La Mesa - submitted by Pastor Sarah Sumner-Eisenbraun**

- a) We have been able to keep our mission focus through our Welcoming Initiative going during the pandemic. We have had different emphases, including welcoming people living with disabilities,

welcoming refugees, dialogues on race, and the beginnings of the Reconciled in Christ (RIC) process. It has been clunky and slow but still happening through the providing of the Holy Spirit.

- b) Our biggest challenge has been keeping people connected and feeling cared for when we can't be physically present.
- c) We have been almost entirely live-streaming worship through Facebook, then posting on YouTube as well.
- d) We feel Christ is leading us to lean into the RIC process and continue our live-stream option for worship.

**St. John's Lutheran Church, El Cajon - submitted by Pastor Richard Vevia, Jr.**

- a) We began the year with concerns about our finances even before the quarantine because of a drop in preschool enrollment. But God is good and through continued faithful giving and several grants diligently sought by lay leaders and staff, the challenge was met.
- b) Our biggest challenge was maintaining contact with older members without technology. We had varying degrees of success.
- c) Together with Calvary, San Diego we recorded services and posted them on our Facebook page and our website. In 2021 we have started to livestream.
- d) We are hiring new staff, elected a new member to our Congregation Council, and will be making plans for Stewardship Education and Outreach.

**St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Chula Vista - submitted by Pastor Karla Halvorson**

St. Mark's has come through great transition and challenge and has experienced again the faithfulness of God. Just as Interim Pastor Karin Boye finished her time at St. Mark's, COVID-9 began. With the help of Bridge Pastor Dan Cole and dedicated council and lay leaders, St. Mark's completed the call process, began on-line worship (FB live and YouTube), and faced huge roofing and drainage challenges. At the end of 2020, the roof was repaired and paid for, the Call Committee and transition team completed their tasks and called Pastor Karla Halvorson and a new bi-lingual office manager. With the sale of the cell tower, the PPP, and further generosity, St. Mark's ended the year in the black.

We are excited to follow Christ by listening to the community, live our mission statement (Celebrating God's love and forgiveness, we serve others) and be who we are- two languages, one congregation. We are researching the best ways to open our campus to ministries that meet the greatest needs of our community and strengthen the legacy of St. Mark's Lutheran, now in its 67th year.

**St. Peter's By the Sea, Ocean Beach - submitted by Pastor Rick Schowalter**

The best new ministry for 2020 was a Zoom Fellowship with 20-30 participants each week. We had a topical question and everyone who attended answered the question. The challenge for 2020 was a once-a-month parking lot worship trying to balance safety with the desire to meet in person. We had two Zoom Memorial services that were well received. We look forward to a new pastor for 2021.

**Shepherd of the Valley, La Mesa - submitted by Pastor Marcus C. Lohrmann**

- a) SVLC has formed a Social Justice Committee with a threefold focus of congregational education, advocacy, and activism around issues of social justice (racism, immigration, LGBTQIA+ welcome, etc.), which is thriving.

- b) Maintaining our ministry to children and families through our pre-school during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- c) We continue to gather for worship on Zoom, which is streamed live on Facebook and available to watch later. We also have occasionally held in-person communion distribution services, where Eucharistic ministers come, worship, then deliver communion to the rest of the congregation.
- d) Christ is leading this congregation deeper into our relationship with our neighbors of color by

**Tierrasanta Lutheran, San Diego - submitted by Pastor Bohdan Vadis**

- a) We finished our two year capital campaign to bring in over \$470,000 to fix parking lot, new seating in the sanctuary, upgrade bathrooms, and kitchen.
- b) The pandemic has been the big challenge.
- c) We have gathered in person, in person outside, drive-in theater style worship in the parking lot with a FM transmitter, online through Facebook Live and Zoom.
- d) I wish I knew where Christ was leading us in 2021!!!!!! One day at a time.

**Welcome Ministry of El Cajon (Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community)- submitted by Father David Madsen**

- a) Our biggest challenge, and I'm sure this has been a challenge for everyone, is the constrictions that Covid-19 put on our scheduling. It affected every area of our ministry. It affected our Welcome Church meetings in Wells Park, and for many months we were not allowed to meet in the park, and even when we handed out lunches, which we did all through 2020, we had to be careful with masks and distances. Not everyone in the park wanted to abide by those rules, so it made it more difficult. We noticed more people, new people on the street, and families with children. We changed our sack lunches to protein lunches, and did away with a lot of the starch and sugar. Our packaged lunch included shelf life milk cartons, canned meats and soups, and boxes...All with easy openings that do not require a can opener. We especially felt the protein food bags were more appropriate, especially for families. We continued to look for Welcome Church people, but it was difficult to locate them. We did find several that are now housed and we brought those folks lunches, prayed and talked with them and encouraged to contact us by phone. Many of the people we work with do not have email. Loads of Love Laundry ministry continued to operate every Tuesday morning, and several in that group have been housed. We do have a succession in leadership. One of the formerly homeless persons is now taking the leadership of Loads of Love, which was passed on by Marie, who is now in hospice care. The succession has worked out well. No-one will replace Marie, but the ministry will go on under a different leader who is doing a good job so far.
- b) The Refugee Food pantry on every other Tuesday has continued without a break since January of 2020. Circle Community Garden is considered essential since it is agricultural, and that has not changed, but the interaction of the group has been remarkable. People caring for people and checking up on each other. That's new this year. Table talk (conversational English gatherings) shut down and the leadership thought it was all over. Then they begin to form small groups through Google Duo, Face time and then onto ZOOM. It was a difficult hurdle, because most of these folks had never done any of this before. There are over 20 women involved in this group and the small groups have emerged from this, people praying for each other and calling each other one-on-one. It has worked out remarkably well.
- c) The only way we have been able to worship with Welcome Church with people on the street is by visiting folks one on one or one on a few with lunch, asking for prayer requests, praying together

and encouraging people to stay safe the best way they can. Facebook, snail mail and phone calls have helped, but it has been really hard. We plan to meet again in Plaza Park soon, but we do want to be ready for this with appropriate safety. For all of last year we were asked not to meet, and we follow the medical advice and the orders from our State.

The Bilingual English/Arabic Holy Communion service started again in the last quarter of 2020, outside and via zoom to Facebook and now to the Welcome Ministry website.

- d) For Welcome Church, we plan to start having meetings in Plaza Park on the Promenade in downtown El Cajon. We are announcing it as we hand out lunches and hope to be starting as soon as we have a green lite that it is safe. We will have two meetings a month and we plan to have a second site by the end of 2021 and a third site in 2022. We plan to continue to develop our relationship with the county, Chamber of Commerce in East County the East County Homeless and Housing Task Force, which we are members of. We will continue to feed and care and pray for those that are suffering from homelessness as we work together with others to find suitable lodging for everyone.

We plan to develop our Arabic/ English speaking congregation that meets twice a month right now, and we are continuing to develop Arabic speaking leaders to take on responsibilities in the service, pastoral care and elsewhere.

#### **And from our Retired Pastors:**

**Carol Worthing** - Two 2020 highlights for me at St. Paul's – 1. Preaching at the last full Eucharistic service at St. Paul's Cathedral on March 8th – 2nd Sunday in Lent – the next Sunday we were on full lockdown and have been ever since! 2. Invited to preach on Reformation Sunday, Oct. 25th, via Zoom (prerecorded from home), which was a challenge, and an opportunity not to be missed

Also – I had to learn how to lead book studies on Zoom, during 2020 – Post-Easter, on Spiritual Formation; Fall into Advent, on Discernment. (Two books on Nouwen). And, I'm gearing up at the moment to lead a Lenten book study on Phyllis Tickle's Emergence Christianity. In the beginning I wasn't confident that this technology would work well, in the end I am confident that "the LORD is doing a new thing" through the immediacy of this available technology!

I feel called toward the current and ongoing reformation that forced itself upon us full throttle, through the Covid-19 crisis that befell us in 2020 – 2021 and beyond we're on warp speed "to infinity and beyond!"

**Laurel Gray** - The biggest challenge is the continual decline in worship & attendance among us. It's a big challenge because most congregations refuse to address the possibility of radical change--change in the way we worship, the way we interpret Scripture. Why are most millennials missing in our worship? And what about advocacy in the community of those who are lost & needy?

## **HARVEST CONFERENCE REPORT**

It has been a year of loss and light. A year of grief and of hope. Like all conferences, the Harvest Conference has reenvisioned and reinvented most, if not all, of our ministries. We have helped members of our congregations in grief and loss, responded to the resurgent cry of systemic racism, and endeavored to care for the neighbor in need. We have depended mightily on one another, and done so with creativity and renewing hope.

### **Hope Lutheran, Temecula**

Like everyone else, 2020 started out pretty much like every other year – Then the pandemic hit halfway through Lent and everything changed! Time to pivot! Never were the words of that childhood song “The Church is Not a Building” so true and they came to life amid this pandemic. But we found ways to celebrate those special days and those ordinary days. Here are just a few: We moved worship online and put it on YouTube reaching people all over the country, We decorated our homes with butterflies at Easter sharing the Easter message with our neighbors, We celebrated Pastor Sandy’s 20th Ordination Anniversary with a car parade and said Good-bye to her on a Zoom Farewell when she resigned; Bible Studies, Sunday School, Youth Groups, Ministry Teams met on Zoom; we had an online-at home VBS and had kids from Hawaii to Ohio and even Russia!; we had drive-thru collections of food and school supplies for those in need; In the fall our preschool and kindergarten opened with CDC guidelines and is going strong; along with Hope Children’s Center, we provided Christmas gifts for 100 children at Central City Lutheran Mission; and in March 2021 we welcomed Pastor Doug Moffat as our interim pastor. No, Hope was not closed. Hope was deployed! The Church is NOT a building!

### **Bethlehem, Encinitas**

It has been a year of resilient hope, of loss and of light. Bethlehem, like every congregation, has reinvented nearly all of our ministries and reenvisioned Christian community. Our deepest emotion is gratitude, combined with joyous creativity and exhaustion. Countless volunteers have worked to create prerecorded, live-stream and zoom worship and learning opportunities. In August, after months of planning, we opened for socially distanced, masks required, careful protocol outdoor worship. We delivered care packages to families with children and prayer shawls to our elder saints. Virtual VBS, Zoom Sunday School, Confirmation and youth group included interfaith guests. Our music program created amazing videos. Zoom adult education has taught us much and given us opportunity to deepen community. We have supported local feeding ministries and helped immigrant families in our neighborhood school. We have held one another up in grief and loss, helped our neighbors in need, and worked to further our work in antiracism. All of this has taught us that we are more resilient and determined than we realized. It has reminded us that the church’s persistent voice of hope and faith is the greatest gift we have to offer the world.

### **Incarnation, Poway**

No doubt about it; God has been kind to us. After a year fraught with challenges and unknowns, it may be that we at Incarnation Lutheran have learned something about faith. In

the face of considerable uncertainty and the concomitant fear, we have survived. We are still viable, and in fact, have added to our membership rolls. Clearly, God has been kind to us, as we seek to serve God in the service of **ALL** God's people. We have found a way to continue to worship as a community, through the development of an online presence that we've successfully grown into, in ways that surprise us! We have found a way to remain committed to the mission projects in which we're involved: locally, in Mexico, India and Cameroon. We have found out that we are still church! God has been kind to us!

### **King of Kings, Oceanside**

We started the year with a newly elected Congregation Council on retreat with Bishop Taylor. Patti Rand was hired as Office Manager/Bookkeeper and she has worked alone in the office since COVID-19 sent us all to our homes. The Transition Team finishing the Mission Site Profile and a call committee was elected and the work of calling a settled pastor continues. Zoom has been our platform of choice for all worship gatherings, meetings, choir, etc. We did hold small mid-week gatherings with Holy Communion in the Courtyard during the fall, but all Sunday worship is on-line. The King's Players produced a reader's theater version of John's Passion of the Christ that we viewed together on Good Friday. We held several drive-by events in 2020 including Blessing of the Animals, Advent-in-a-Box pick up with drop off donations, Festival of Lights with Christmas music and a gift from St. Nicholas, and drive-by bye-bye for members who were moving out of state. We held several zoom memorials, graveside funerals, a small outdoor wedding, and reception of 4 new members. A Talent show was great fun during the summer with another one planned.

### **San Marcos, San Marcos**

The people of San Marcos Lutheran proved their resilience this last year as they faced changes to most aspects of ministry. At the beginning of the pandemic worship services went on line. Later, in addition to virtual worship we began services out doors, observing Covid-19 safety protocol. Bible Studies, small groups, Confirmation and Sunday School all met via Zoom. A virtual VBS was held that included more than 50 participants, many who had never attended VBS before. The Nativity Story video, put together by our young people, was shared and watched by people in six continents. Outreach to our neighbors in need continued around the corner and around the world. San Marcos Lutheran was never "closed" during the pandemic. The people of San Marcos Lutheran were the Church every day of the week as they shared the unconditional love of Christ with others.

### **Spirit of Joy, Ramona**

Spirit of Joy continued ministry and outreach in the midst of a year of pandemic in 2020. For the first several months, worship was live-streamed, along with special music worship on Tuesday and Thursday each week. Our Lenten Services were recorded, and daily devotionals were also recorded to keep the connection to each other and our life together. In July we began in person worship on the building site property. We provided worship for those who chose to remain in vehicles, those who sat outside, and those who were at home with continued live-stream. We also provided a transmitted radio station for each Sunday. Christmas Worship was a beautiful experience with tent, luminaries, special music,

instruments, and the creation of a safe place. We continued outreach with Open Door Meals of Ramona, and Project Mercy (house build in collaboration with Lutheran Church of the Incarnation). We provided several Drive-In Movie experiences for the community on the property. Zoom Home Groups, youth ministry, children's ministry continued. We are thankful for our Lord who has led us through these difficult times, and we pray for continued guidance and direction in our journey as God's people.

**The other congregations of the Harvest conference**, though not in this report, have worked tirelessly and with abiding faith in this challenging and blessed year.

## RAINCROSS CONFERENCE REPORT

Some highlights of what **Faith Lutheran Church, Sun City**, has done this year are:

- ❖ Together, we raised over \$2000 for our youth to attend a Youth Gathering event in the future.
- ❖ For the health and safety of our beloved siblings in Christ, we bravely made the difficult decision to postpone much of our in-person activities midway through March due to the outbreak of the pandemic.
- 12
- ❖ We adapted our worship style to continue worshipping virtually, allowing me to visit with you each week in your own living rooms. And now, continuing to look for creative ways to connect our congregation, we have begun safely worshipping in-person in our parking lot.
- ❖ We resumed many ministries and Bible studies virtually.
- ❖ We welcomed our new Office Administrator, Lynn and we said “until-next time” to our music staff, David and Jimmie.
- ❖ We expanded our Cheer ministry with phone calls to the whole congregation every 2 weeks, as well as inspirational mailings.
- ❖ We have worshiped and celebrated holidays in new ways, including Blessings of the Quilts, Backpacks, and Animals, Holy Week and Easter, All Saints Day, Stewardship Sunday, and Christmas.

Perhaps our greatest feat has been and remains to be simply surviving through this time of pandemic and its consequences, getting through it in our own ways. Simply existing in the face of crisis and tragedy, all while continuing to praise God - it's a commendable, impressive, and important achievement.

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor John Barton

### **Eden, Riverside**

Here at Eden in 2020 we were able to continue many of our ministries albeit on a distanced basis of course.

- Our quilters have been doing what they can from home to do many pieces and parts of the quilts. It has been going in stages some cut squares, some bat the quilts, and some tie them. It has been a more tedious process yet progress has been made.
- The office of the Pastor has continued to give out \$25 food cards for Stater Bros as well as hygiene packs for those in need. The hygiene packs have also included masks for

those who may be living on the street. We realize that for some the needed masks are not always readily available.

- We have been having weekly zoom worship meetings with recorded music by our organist David Christensen as well as weekly bible studies. Bible studies are something which I have been trying to start here at Eden for quite some time with little success. These online bible studies have worked out quite nicely.
- Most weeks I also have been doing updates and an abbreviated worship service that I upload to our Facebook page in hopes of connecting with as many people as possible.
- We glad to say that our preschool has been able to stay open during this whole year of Covid. We got down to as few as 6 kids, our teachers cut their hours, and a whole lot of cleaning and disinfecting was done but thanks be to God we were able to keep our doors open.
- We had many projects done during this time of Covid. We had the parking lot resurfaced, new technology installed in the sanctuary and fellowship hall, a new website was created, and some new fencing placed around the perimeter of our preschool to keep our children safe as we often have quite a few homeless up here.

I would say our greatest accomplishment has been the fact that our people have stayed strong and resilient during this time. We have not had any of our members die of Covid directly and we have all in all fared rather well considering. Thank you God.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pr. Linda Brown

### **Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Claremont**

2020 has been a year for GSLC to be creative and patient, prayerful and generous. Since the pandemic began in March 2020, we have shifted our worship, fellowship and Bible studies online via zoom, Youtube and Facebook. Though the looks of our ministry has changed in this time, the people of Good Shepherd Lutheran church continue to embody God's purpose for us "To Love God, Family and Neighbor through Prayer, Teaching and Action." Highlights of our ministry this year include:

\*Weekly pre-recorded worship service posted on Youtube and Facebook and a Sunday morning zoom gathering to watch the pre-recorded service together pausing for time of prayer, sharing of peace, communion and fellowship.

\*Weekly Zoom Sunday school for pre-k thru Middle School age children.

\*One week of Virtual Vacation Bible School this summer that included crafts, Bible study, games and science projects for families to do together at home as well as a daily zoom call to connect with other children and families.

\*Our part-time youth and families program director, Jenifer Overy-Brown, stepped down from her paid In July. Jenifer continues to volunteer with our children and family ministry. We are waiting until after pandemic to hire for this position.

\*Monthly Food drives to benefit local food pantries (CCLM and Inland Valley Hope Partners).

\*In the wake of increased racial tension/discord following the murder of George Floyd and other assaults on black bodies this summer, our Social Justice Taskforce prayerfully gathered to consider how God might be calling us to be part of the solution to the racial issues our nation faces. The group studied Ibram X. Kendi's book "How to be an Anti-Racist," which provoked further prayerful reflection about what it means to be truly loving and welcoming to all people no matter their race, creed or sexual orientation. This led to renewed interest in our congregation considering becoming a Reconciling in Christ congregation.

\*Good Shepherd began a Covid 19 relief fund to support five local organizations (Inland Valley Hope Partners, Claremont Canopy, Central City Lutheran Mission, The House of Ruth and Urban Mission Community partners) that assist those most affected by Covid 19 pandemic. This fund, along with previously donated benevolence, gave over \$42,700 to support ministries and organizations in our community and around the world who all have been affected by this year of pandemic.

\*Good Shepherd has become a host sight for regular American Red Cross Blood drives.

### **Spirit of Joy in Hemet:**

In light of the pandemic we have really focused on working together to keep close tabs on church members and regular attendees who lack a lot of social interaction and are subject to feelings of isolation and despair during this time. This has been done via phone trees, regular pastor calls and visits when safe and an overall encouraging of the membership to reach out to one another. Worship and study has been done both virtually and outdoors to the best of our ability keeping in mind those members who do not use technology or who cannot worship outdoors because of the weather. We focused on providing more support to local food pantries and feeding programs and delivered seasonal fun baskets to 30+ kids who normally attend our kids programs in order to lift their spirits and remind them the church still cares. For the holidays we adopted several families raising over a thousand dollars each to help with gifts and needs for the holidays as well as loss of income due to COVID 19. We made it financially by the grace of God due to government programs and kept our staff all employed. Thank God not one member died of COVID but we did lose close friends and family members including my sister in laws mom and the Spanish ministry's Pastor Sergio's dad. Grace abounds and we are still here!

### **Trinity Lutheran Church, Riverside CA**

*Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works  
and give glory to your Father in heaven. – Matthew 5:16*

Back in the middle of March, as things shut down all over the country, most pastors and church leaders worried that churches would not be able to adjust quickly enough to the changing situation. I am happy to report that was not the case with Trinity! I am deeply grateful for the many ways our congregation responded to the changes forced upon us in 2020, and for our members' continued faithfulness in supporting our ministry.

- Like every other congregation, as a result of the public health restrictions that began in March, our worship services and other in-person gatherings had to be suspended or moved online. With help from one of our members, we set up a YouTube channel and began recording our worship services to present online. We learned how to use Zoom to meet together online for fellowship, meetings and Bible studies. It was a huge adjustment for all of us, but I am thankful for how well and how quickly we were able to adapt to this new environment. We have a small team of musicians, audio and video editors who have worked faithfully to produce our online worship services over the past year.
- Our choir members recorded their individual voices to create a "virtual choir" recording of a Christmas cantata that was featured in our worship service on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent.
- After several months of spiritual fasting from communion, in September we began to offer a drive-through option for communion on the first Sunday of the month, and an at-home option using Zoom on the third Sunday of the month.
- After our previous missionaries returned to the U.S., we chose new missionaries to support: Rev. Hitoshi and Satoko Adachi serving in Japan, and another missionary serving in China.
- Pastor Kent continued to lead a weekly Bible study on Thursday nights, using Zoom. Starting in August, he also led an 11-week Bible study on racism in response to the killing of George Floyd and the ensuing protests. In the fall, we experimented with an online movie night and discussion, but found the technical challenges involved were too difficult. An online book club led by one of our members began meeting monthly in October.
- Our weekly hot meal program continued to provide an essential service by feeding homeless and other low-income people in Riverside a Monday dinner and Saturday breakfast. Due to the pandemic, we had to change from serving sit-down meals to serving bagged meals to go.
- Members of our congregation continued to prepare Sunday dinners once a month for the people living at the homeless shelter at Central City Lutheran Mission in San Bernardino. This is a great ministry that we encourage other Inland Empire congregations to support!
- Our Social Concerns Committee organized several successful fundraising projects, along with food and clothing drives to help children, youth and adults who are in need. Our members sewed hundreds of face masks, made 118 quilts for LWR, and knitted prayer shawls.
- After her husband left following her breast cancer surgery, we raised over \$16,000 to help a young mother in our church and her four children move into an affordable rental home and purchase a used minivan.
- The Riverside office of Lutheran Social Services, now located on our church campus, enhances our social ministry efforts by making our church a helpful resource for families and individuals in need of assistance with food, housing and jobs.

- Members of Thrivent Financial received 30 Action Team grants of \$250 each to supplement donations for our various social ministry projects. That's a total of \$7,500 in additional funding last year to help serve our neighbors in need!
- We were able to use reserved funds in savings and from grants to repair and resurface our parking lot, complete major plumbing repairs, and install improved security fences next to the LSS office and an adjacent church building.

We continued to provide support for the Casa Hogar Sonrisa de Angeles (Angels' Smile Children's Home) in Tijuana, in partnership with Redeemer Lutheran Church in Bakersfield.

### **Grace Lutheran Church, Riverside**

Grace Lutheran Church was able to meet the pandemic and continue to worship despite the restrictions of not being able to worship indoors or in person. It's a testament to the power and grace of God that just about every other congregation in the synod will probably be saying the same thing in their annual report. We faced the pandemic but continued worshipping.

Grace was able to conduct a full and robust virtual worship experience. We live-streamed the service on the congregation's Facebook page. We also recorded the lessons, the children's message – "Moments with the Luthers" (complete with Martin and Katie bobble head dolls), and the sermon, then posted those videos on Grace's You Tube page.

We actually grew in the number of people participating in the service. People from all around the country signed in to join us for worship. Many left comments with their positive reactions to the service and its message. While there is no way to know how long someone watched the recorded videos, we observed that there were people from all around the world who watched all or part of the recordings.

We continued to study God's word and conducted mid-week Zoom Bible studies. While not without technological challenges, people were able to meet, discuss, pray, and learn together. As with the worship experience, we had virtual participants who would not have been able to participate had we been meeting at Grace in person.

Finally (in more ways than one), 2020-2021 is a year of significant transition. After forty-three years in ministry and twenty-two years as Grace's our pastor, Pastor Ken Puccio announced his intended retirement, effective Easter Sunday, April 4, 2021. At the same time, though not directly as a result of Pastor's announcement, the Grace membership, after much thoughtful and prayerful deliberation, voted to move toward Holy Closure on Sunday, June 6. Our property will be sold, and the assets distributed so that other ministries in our synod can be funded. We wish to emphasize that this is not a COVID-related situation. Rather, it is part of the life cycle of all congregations and, rather than brooding or feeling forlorn over what is ending, we have chosen to celebrate and give thanks for sixty-three years of serving our Lord in His kingdom. Praise be His name, Amen.

## **Peace Lutheran, Corona**

We began 2020 with our Council coming up with five goals for the year, only to have each of those postponed due to COVID-19 (we've joked that living in Corona, we prefer that name instead of calling it the Coronavirus). Like others, COVID-19 did greatly affect us. First, we had to quickly learn how to transition to having an online presence for our worship and congregational life, and were grateful to other congregations who provided assistance and guidance to make sure we met our online needs. Because of having plenty of outside space, we returned to in-person, outside worship in mid-June, but did suspend in-person worship again in mid-December due to rising COVID cases within our congregation. Although things were pretty much "closed" on our Peace campus, our food pantry remained open with safety measures in place and we were blessed to be able to help others. One event we mourn is permanently closing our Peaceful Beginnings Preschool due to being unable to meet COVID regulations. We pray we can find other ways to use our campus for our community's needs. Finally, our Community Garden continued to thrive as our gardeners were on campus weekly. One gardener recently commented, "Even though the world pretty much stopped the last year, the gardening and growth continued here. I guess God is in charge of creation because it keeps growing."

## **BIG BEAR CONFERENCE REPORT**

### **St. John's, Palm Desert**

St. John's continued to share the good news of Jesus Christ through the challenges of 2020. We're grateful for a dedicated team who adapted thoughtfully and creatively to continue in weekly Worship, Christian education, service to the community, pastoral care, and building personal connections. We: continued our FIND food distribution program and our support of the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission; added a Social Media Coordinator position and expanded our online presence; began work on a Shade Structure for our Outdoor Park; offered Youth and Adult Bible studies via Zoom; and provided pastoral care through our Prayer Team, Stephen Ministry, Grief Book Ministry, and personal emails and phone calls.

God's Mission Lutheran Parish: A two-point parish of  
**Lutheran Church of the Cross, Rialto, CA**  
and **Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Fontana, CA**

God's Mission Lutheran Parish consisting of Gloria Dei Evangelical Lutheran Church, Fontana, and Lutheran Church of the Cross, Rialto shared with its sister congregations, throughout the nation and world, many of the same struggles and challenges. Numerous difficult questions had to be addressed, imagining ways of responding within medical and social constraints, the grief experienced by countless victims, family members and friends of the virus, fears because of isolation, age and pre-existing medical problems, the struggling of how to convey support and love to others in the midst of required isolation, and lastly the trying to imagine what the future has in store. And yet, I am awed by the caring, support, hard work, the faithfulness and vigilant actions of God's People. For this we give thanks! I pray we do not return to past normalcy. Instead I pray God's Spirit will lead and share with us a new normalcy reflecting the newly discovered faith filled priorities and the faithfulness of the One who is constantly breaking in our midst with the signs of His Kingdom coming.

Submitted by Pastor Elwood (Woody) Hall

### **Spirit of Peace, Big Bear**

We thought Spirit of Peace might be forced to close as early as March or April, 2020. A pandemic turned our world upside down. But, God's grace has been ever present in our congregation. We learned how to be church together in new ways. We did Saturday Lunch Club and came to know each other on a deeper level. Parking lot church took us outside to appreciate God's beauty in our valley. Thirty-seven Purses with a Purpose were delivered to Doves, funded completely by donations from members and friends of our congregation. Thinking outside the box, we partnered with Alpine Coffee Shop to be able to continue our Simple Supper Ministry. Then we learned Pastor Dianne had sold her home and would be moving to Sacramento. God provided a warm reception for us when we worshipped with St. Columba's Episcopal Church and blessed us with Pastors Ray Wade and Glen Egertson as our Supply Pastors. In the midst of all the uncertainty, a regular attendee announced she was ready to commit to being a member of Spirit of Peace. God is at work in this congregation. We feel a bond that is calling us to maintain our sense of community no matter what the future brings for Spirit of Peace. The PPP and County Grants have given us financial breathing room while we look into the possibility of partnering with another congregation as we continue to serve the Big Bear Valley.

### **Trinity, Victorville**

Trinity in Victorville has worked to embrace the challenges presented by Covid-19 as opportunities. Online worship has been received very well as we have sought to continually improve our livestream in both quality and participation. Since September we have also offered a "Parking Lot Service" in which attendees have the option of remaining in their cars and listening through the radio or sitting outside. God has consistently granted us great weather as we join creation in worship! We have also held two Parking Lot congregation meetings in which the "holy honks" certainly reminded the neighborhood we are still here!

We have also sought ways to fulfill the other two parts of our mission to "serve God, our community, and one another" during this time through service projects and fellowship opportunities. In the Fall we offered a modified version of our annual Trunk or Treat event, as well as distributing around 100 full Thanksgiving meals to families in our community. A coat drive in December provided jackets for children in need through our local schools. Fellowship has of course proved a bit more challenging, but we have sought to stay connected with one another through online Bible Studies, phone calls, and occasional pick-ups and drop-offs.

As local cases of Covid-19 continue to drop, we are prayerful that we will be able to offer a modified indoor worship service by the time of Assembly.

### **First Lutheran Church, Redlands**

First Lutheran continues to do God's Work with Our hands as we worship, learn, play and as we serve the community of Redlands.

### **Lutheran Church of the Desert, Joshua Tree**

Lutheran Church of the Desert in Joshua Tree, CA has experienced ups and downs in the past year. But we have persevered and are happy to be worshipping in our building once again. We have been blessed to have experienced a very low rate of infection and to have a pastor who was open to exploring new possibilities while we were unable to worship in person. We are looking forward to whatever it is that God has in store for us in 2021, and to proclaiming the Gospel as Christ has called us to do.

### **Our Savior's, Banning**

This past year, we started the year with our interim pastor, Rev. Ken Anderson, as we completed our search for a new pastor. In March, as everyone else, we had to reconfigure our outreach to members. We began Zoom Bible studies in May which have continued through the year. We held church on Zoom. We held a drive by "Farewell" for Rev. Anderson in September and welcomed our newly called pastor, Pastor Dave Kieffer in October. We were able to hold in person services for Pastor Dave's first three weeks and then returned to Zoom and Facebook services. Our WELCA groups have also joined the digital realm, holding Bible studies monthly. We held Pastor Dave's installation in church with limited (10) in person attendance and all others attending by Zoom. We had a call out to our congregants for supplies as our community homeless neighborhood burned down in December. We were able to provide essentials requested. Our membership has stayed about the same despite the challenges before us. We have been busy planning for the upcoming year with Capital projects and neighborhood and community outreach. We are eager to share God's love with all our neighbors!

### **Shepherd of the Desert, Barstow**

Like every faith community in the country, our ministries at Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran church were impacted by Covid-19. We, however, sought to find ways in which to continue being the body of Christ even when we were away from one another.

We are grateful for the gift of technology that enabled us to continue worshipping together. We used Facebook livestream and it did serve us well even more than we anticipated as we were joined by members of the congregation who are out of state or country.

While most of our outreach programs were heavily affected (Laundry Love, Pregnancy Centre, and the Barstow Humane Society), we continued our Free Lunch ministry. We did boxes-to go instead of eating together. This way we were able to feed the hungry while ensuring proper safety protocols.

We continued our weekly bible studies, catechism classes, and business meetings on Zoom. We also started a phone call ministry where some members of the congregation call selected members especially the homebound in order to check on them and find out if they have needs like grocery shopping or a ride to see a doctor.

Our only disappointment is that we have members of the congregation who do not have access to internet or technological devices that could allow them to be involved in online services. These have been cut off completely since the lockdown began.

As we look forward to getting back together, we continue to seek to be the representation of Christ in the city and community of Barstow and to live out our mission of being faithful witnesses of the enduring love of God.

### **Cross and Crown, Rancho Cucamonga**

Like all congregations, Cross and Crown Lutheran Church has experienced an extreme overhaul in ministry life since going into Covid-19 lockdown. But thanks to modern technology, we have been able to continue our online worship, Zoom Bible study, and other content through our Youtube channel, as we seek to serve our community in a variety of ways.

### **The ELCA Congregations in San Bernardino – Presently Two Congregations with One Shared Mission:**

As with all our ELCA Churches, due to the virus, our worship life & congregational ministries changed drastically. LCOS-SOH began worshipping on the Courtyard and by Zoom. All our Bible studies, Joint Council, and Ministry meetings moved to Zoom. We will begin worshipping in the Sanctuary, in person & Zoom, with all the CDC requirements, on Palm/Passion Sunday, March 28, 2021.

The Congregations met on December 6, 2020 to finalize the vote for consolidation and continue the process to form a new congregation. The Transition Team was formed in January, 2021 and began meeting, via Zoom in February.

Pastor Rich Ajer completed his term as Interim Pastor in October, 2020, and I began in November. Rev. Milo Ken Anderson, Interim Pastor

### **Central City Lutheran Mission, San Bernardino**

Central City Lutheran Mission continues to do faithful ministry to the community by supporting the needs of the county's most vulnerable residents, even in the midst of the challenges presented by Covid-19. The mission has had to reduce the number of men's shelter residents from 70 to 50 because of social distancing, and has cancelled almost all community classes. Staff still offer life-skills training, job readiness, money management, homeless prevention, communication, and coping skills. Our after-school program is conducted by telephone, and homework packages, supplies, resources and food can be picked up once weekly at the mission gate. Please keep the mission in prayer as we continue to provide these vital services!

### **Hope, Palm Desert**

It has been another wonderful year at Hope Lutheran Church in Palm Desert. We have continued to grow and expand our reach of the Good News of Jesus Christ to the Coachella Valley – and beyond, with a vibrant online ministry that has reached those near and far. One new endeavor is the creation of our Hope Children's Center. This is a before and after school program meant to serve the families of our neighboring Washington Charter School, a TK through 5th grade elementary school in our community. We know that this may not provide our Sunday services with a huge influx of new families (although we hope it will), but it will allow us to provide a ministry opportunity to those families Monday through Friday. We can teach the students about Jesus and provide support to their parents. It's just another way of illustrating that ministry is not a one day of the week, inside the walls of our church event. It's a 24/7 calling to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with the world.

### **Hope, Palm Springs**

For half of their history, the folks of Hope Palm Springs have not been able to meet in person; yet, in spite of that, God's Spirit has created in this new faith community a strong sense of resiliency. God has used these challenging days of pandemic to draw the pioneers of this growing mission start into closer relationship with one another, emerging with an even stronger sense of purpose. This year brings a new name, the process of becoming a "Reconciling in Christ" faith body, and the organizational work of becoming a fully recognized congregation of the ELCA. Seeking to be radically inclusive and diverse, Hope Palm Springs centers its ministry in three words: GATHER, LOVE, SERVE. The people of Hope Palm Springs continue to be grateful for the support of several mission partners. Together, let's shape a church!

### **Faith, Yucaipa**

Faith Lutheran Church continues to live out its call to be the Body of Christ in Yucaipa, California. July of 2019 Faith welcomed Pastor John Bunge as a three year term pastor. Prior to the pandemic, we had young families returning and a confirmation class of eight students and 50 - 70 in worship. We have recently reopened for indoor worship and hope to see these young families and youth return. Restricted by pandemic: We closed our preschool, hosted five NA groups which met outside, while our AA, OA and Alanon groups are on pause until the facility can be safely opened to them.

With the building closed to most all activities, we have focused on enhancing our facility inside and out. The pantry, office area, kitchen, bathrooms, fellowship hall and fireside room have been updated. We assembled four gazebos for outdoor worship with the help of Luther Glen camp staff. As part of a synod grant we purchased an outdoor sound system and had around 15 -20 at services

and others joining us on zoom and our revised website. The yard area is a work in process with the side yards already improved.

Over the years, Faith has had a consistent food bank ministry that serves approximately 40 to 70 families the second and fourth Saturdays of each month. Luther Glen camp staff also helped in this ministry with hands on deck and deliveries of food from their garden. With the camp's help, Faith received a \$2,000 grant which has assisted us in purchasing food from Feeding America. St. Alban's Episcopal church also assists and brings food.

Our music ministry has been under the leadership of Irmengard Jennings for over 20 years.

We host a Christmas concert each year and youth she instructs play during offerings and with the hand bell choir. Finally, Faith's vibrant preschool ministry hopes to open again in the Fall.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Matthew A. Anderson, Dean

## SADDLEBACK CONFERENCE REPORT

### **Community Lutheran** in Rancho Santa Margarita

2020 has been a year marked with suffering in many forms. We grieve with those who have experienced the loss of loved ones, loss of employment, and loss of opportunities which are irreplaceable. At the same time, Christ draws near promising, "I will never leave you or forsake you... do not lose courage or be afraid."

We give thanks for all the ways God has called us to bring a message of hope.

- Gathering in the sanctuary, on the patio, and in our own homes we continued to center our lives on Christ, hearing God's Word and the promises of forgiveness, life, and salvation
  - We are tremendously grateful for our dedicated team of leaders and volunteers who, by keeping the highest standards of public health safety and through technology, made it possible to worship in-person and on-line
- Creatively and faithfully responding to the pandemic by innovating and offering a host of new ways to connect, serve, and grow in the love of Christ.
- Continuing to reach out in service to our neighbors by generously giving of our time and our resources including the creation of special "We Appreciate You" Day of Service gift bags for essential grocery store employees in our community
- We experienced a challenging year for our preschool which included a temporary shut-down, restrictions on enrollment, and short-falls in tuition income. We shared our need and received a generous response. We not only were able to meet all essential commitments but continued to support ministries in our community and beyond.
- We were blessed to see how God engaged people through our Livestream and video-recorded services.
  - We were able to reach several people for the first time through our website and our YouTube channel who are now actively participating in our ministries.
  - We connected with several who started on-line and then were led to participate in our outdoor communion services, desire baptism, and become active members.
  - Ten new members joined CLC this year through these outreach ministries.

### **Newport Harbor Lutheran** in Newport Harbor

Newport Harbor Lutheran strives to be a safe anchor in a world of pandemic storm. In 2020 we worshipped in our sanctuary 24 Sundays, in a parking lot tent for 7 Sundays, and offered prerecorded music, prayer and sermons online every weekend beginning in Lent. We also developed a weekly Pastor's Class on Sundays via zoom. Our preschool was closed 15 weeks but successfully reopened with no illness. Meanwhile, a focus on improved interpersonal relationships among church members improved morale, a sense of love and the feeling of the Spirit's presence. We now are preparing to remodel some of facility in 2021 and to expand our preschool.

## **Our Savior's Lutheran** in San Clemente

Our Savior's Lutheran Church and School in San Clemente continues to live out its vision of being: Inspired to Love, Encouraged to Think, and Sent to Serve.

This past year was a significant one in that much loved Pastor Jeff Frohner accepted a call to serve as Lead Pastor at Lutheran Church of the Resurrection in Marion Iowa. Pastor Jeff had served Our Savior's Lutheran Church (OSLC) faithfully and well for over 18 years. His ministry with OSLC was celebrated in August of 2020 and the congregation. Following Pastor Jeff's departure the church was served by Pastor Dennis Laherty and by Pastor Terry Tuvey Allen in September and October. Intentional Interim Pastor Rich Ajer began his work with OSLC and School November 1st. A transition team has been appointed and the call process will begin in 2021.

As with every church, the new realities of the Covid-19 world have led to an increase in online worship services and improved presentation and technology. Through it all, the Preschool and Early Childhood Education programs have remained strong. Our Savior's is always grateful for the creativity and passion our staff demonstrates, and we know that is the primary reason why the school enrollment continues to be full and the school ministry is so highly regarded in the local community. The newly licensed Infant Center continues to be a successful endeavor.

The outlook of OSLC and School is positive in 2021. There is much energy directed toward reaching out afresh into the neighborhoods we serve. We continue to be a congregation passionate about musically inspiring worship services with a focus on relating the Bible to everyday lives. Our children and youth programs are so well done and meet the needs of families both inside and outside of the church's membership. The programs have adjusted well and remained strong in this past year of the pandemic. We continue to be open to finding new ways in 2021 to let our light shine with the love of Jesus. Finally, we are glad to be in partnership with the Saddleback Conference, the Pacifica Synod and the ELCA!

Other congregations in our conference:

**Christ Lutheran** in San Clemente served by newly called Pastor Juli Patten

**Gloria Dei Lutheran Church** in Dana Point served by Pastor David Mattson

**Lutheran Church of the Master** in Corona Del Mar served by Pastor Mark Anderson

**Mission Lutheran** in Laguna Niguel served by Pastor Bill Synder

Respectfully submitted, and serving as dean of the Saddleback Conference

Pastor Marty Jacobson

# **SON & SURF CONFERENCE REPORT 2020/2021**

*Submitted by Pastor Jennifer Schultz, Dean*

The Son & Surf Conference comprises of 11 congregations/worshipping communities in Orange County. With the pandemic, we moved our conference meetings from once a month in-person at the Synod Office to Zoom, meeting twice a month for several months, as a time to check in and share updates and information, as well as fostering collegiality. We are currently meeting once a month on Zoom and will continue with this format until we are able to meet again in-person. The congregations/ministries have been creative in how they meet and trying new and different things, as they have continued to adapt to meeting county and health guidelines, as well as following the recommendations from the Synod office. While we have adapted as best as we can, we are all looking forward to being able to worship and meet in-person again.

## **Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Garden Grove**

As with many congregations, the coronavirus pushed us into new forms of ministry. We have begun online worship, and we plan to continue this once we are able to resume indoor worship again. In the coming year we plan to explore ways to expand our Children's Sunday Morning online worship, develop a blog with the "cantering cleric" to explore how to reach unchurched people, explore how to both minister to and receive support through our online ministry, and learn from others how to best develop this new ministry. We are mindful of St. Paul when he wrote: "All things work together for good for those who love God." There has been a silver lining to the pain and devastation of the pandemic.

Pastor Brian Taylor will be retiring soon, and the congregation is laying the foundation for the next pastor to start what has begun and expand it.

This past year over a dozen members contracted the coronavirus, several were hospitalized and two died with complications from the virus. What makes that even more difficult is that we have been unable to have personal contact, conduct in person funeral services, and ministry has been limited to phone calls and facetime.

Financially, the church members have proven to be faithful and generous. We received 100% of pledged income in 2020, we were able to obtain a PPP loan for the church and preschool, and are excited about the future.

Finally, we have enjoyed back to back years of having interns at the congregation.

They have been a blessing to the congregation, they challenge the pastor and congregation to think in new ways, and we would encourage other congregations to consider this ministry if possible.

## **Christ Lutheran, Orange**

The congregation discontinued in-person worship at the end of February 2020. We took 2 weeks to learn, as a congregation, how to operate and maneuver Zoom Worship Meetings. We have been worshiping since on Sunday mornings on-line. In June of 2020 we closed our Preschool and Childcare due to the ever-worsening pandemic and lost one of our three church partners deciding to discontinue in-person worship all together.

We are now in a position to re-open our Preschool and Childcare aiming for June 1st as are date to reopen. We are in talks with a new Spanish-speaking worship group to join us on the property with a streaming feature attached to their worship plan. We are hanging on by God's grace and consider our struggle to do His will in our community as we try to keep our eyes wide open for ministry opportunities to initiate. Our latest social action accomplishments have been putting together 'blessing bags' for those in need and distribution by COA and the OC Food Bank. Also, we did our annual collection of Soup cans during the Souper Bowl to be donated to the aforementioned charitable organizations.

### **SAINT PETER LUTHERAN CHURCH, SANTA ANA**

*“ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope” Romans 5:4.*

This past year our ministry was challenged like never before. Despite the many losses, challenges, and physical distancing, God gave us the ability to communicate, to continue to share the gospel, and to serve the neighbor.

This year we developed an electronic newsletter, set up zoom meetings with council members. Homebound and those who struggled with technology, weekly bulletin and sermons were mailed to them. The gospel continued to be proclaimed by using technology, our Sunday Services were available to a broader audience in the Social Media, and children of the H.I.V.E after school program continued weekly to hear the gospel message through Zoom.

We continued to serve the neighbor in love by distributing school supplies on God's Work Our Hand Sunday, Food Baskets on Thanksgiving, Blankets to children at Christmas, Meals to Seniors early in the year, and offered our courtyard for small group learning for the H.I.V.E program. Property was kept well, new floors were installed in the basement, a beautiful tree and new colorful flowers were planted.

There is no doubt that God in Christ gave us the endurance, the character, and ultimately the hope this year. To God be the glory, forever and ever! Amen

Pastor Misael

### **King of Glory, Fountain Valley**

Most of 2020 was focused on responding to the COVID-19 crisis. KOG staff, Council, and members worked tirelessly to maintain congregational connections, allow for meaningful worship and study, deal with financial challenges, and continue to love and serve our neighbors.

In 2020, King of Glory welcomed a new Preschool Director, and Pastor Kinndlee Lund welcomed a new baby. Members stepped out to continue our bi-weekly King's Kitchen feeding program, collect and deliver food each week for Lutheran Social Services,

connect with members monthly through a large phone tree, and lead numerous Zoom Bible studies. A Task Force spent hours developing COVID related protocols for worship and campus groups. The preschool closed for a period and is slowly returning to its pre-COVID enrollment levels. A small and incredibly dedicated volunteer audiovisual team developed quality live-stream weekly services. Worship, community groups and ministries which have met by Zoom for most of the year are slowly returning to the campus. King of Glory received a PPP loan and a grant from Orange County to assist the preschool.

2021 will be a year to reconnect and prepare for a new visioning process as King of Glory seeks to renew its mission and explore new ministry opportunities for sharing Christ's love.

### **Our Saviour's, Orange**

Over the past year Our Saviour's in Orange began and we immediately began worshipping online through our Facebook page. We continued to provide food and toys to the Friendly Center. The Friendly Center was able to use our parking lot for there Annual Gala. We were able to donate many socks to Mary's Kitchen. We were able to continue to support ELCA World Hunger and the ministry of the Pacifica Synod. Our tradition of serving has not stopped, it just looks different. Our Saviour's Children's Center had a change in leadership. The director retired and the former assistant director became the new director. The staff and parents were excited about this change. The Children's Center continues to bring in new families as this ministry grows. We are looking at new ways of doing ministry now and in the future.

### **Bethlehem, Los Alamitos**

As the world shifted to closing many things down, we held our last regular in-person worship service on March 15, 2020. We were fortunate to be able to immediately shift to recording worship services and sharing them online via YouTube, church website, and church Facebook page...we had the existing equipment to produce high quality recordings and the volunteers to make this happen. We shifted all of our in-person meetings to Zoom, cancelled many fellowship events, and did not have outside groups meet on our campus. It is amazing looking back on all of this, how quickly we were able to adjust and we continue to look forward to resuming in-person worship and fellowship events, as well as hosting outside groups. When Orange County moved into the red tier in the fall of 2020, we held 3 weeks of inside in-person worship but then had to move to recording only, as the county moved back into the purple tier.

We continue to support LSS with donations of food items, clothing, and financial gifts and it seems that the donations have increased. We also have provided our regularly scheduled meals through Judy's Kitchen, that provides hot lunches for anyone who comes in...they moved to "to go" meals only. While we certainly miss many of these service and fellowship opportunities, we are grateful for the ways we can still connect with one another and be of service to others.

### **Resurrection, Huntington Beach**

During Covid-19 LCR provided over 11,000 meals to vulnerable seniors. We also created a collaborative project with the Huntington Beach Police Department to create community with homeless seniors. We also embarked on a parking lot ministry of wound washing for our unhoused neighbors. We are working closely with the city to find new ways to bring the body of Christ together for the sake of the common good.

Our preschool launched a new partnership with the Lutheran Church in Hiroshima, Japan—we are making a peace project for families in both churches and schools to participate in. We are also working with some music educators to launch a children's chorus this fall as a ministry of the church for the whole city.

### **Immanuel Indonesian, Los Alamitos**

In 2020, we had two Sunday worship sites. One in Los Alamitos, starts at 11.30 and the other is in Rancho Cucamonga that usually starts at 5.00 pm. In the early 2020, we worshipped as usual until the pandemic started. The average of the attendance on the first site was 10 while on the second site was 5.

On pandemic season, we worship through Facebook live, every Sunday. Since May, we started the Wednesday Bible Study at 8 pm through zoom, and the average screen was 7. We had holy communion on online services too.

Pr. Robert Waworuntu

### **Redeemer, Leisure World in Seal Beach**

TV announcers used to say: "Our 'regularly scheduled program' has been interrupted to bring you a special report/event." While few would call a viral pandemic "special", our regularly scheduled programming was radically interrupted. Yet our dedication to our Lord Jesus Christ did not stop! Out of an abundance of caution and pre-cautions, and following the recommendations of doctors, scientists, and community leaders, we were able to continue with our Scriptural commission (*Acts 2:42*) "*They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*":

— Distribute communion and worship packets so that we followed the early disciples' examples of "breaking bread and saying prayers" in our homes. This was helped by a \$500.00 grant from the Synod, although that was quickly exhausted.

— Worship together outside in small, socially distanced groups. We even created an umbrella covered side "chapel" and "being out front" of our sanctuary and amidst the newly landscaped garden provided for us by St. Theodore Episcopal Church (whom are sharing space with our congregation), so, though our environment changed, praying and worshipping our Lord never ceased.

— Have small, socially distanced worship inside our restored sanctuary when the virus infection and hospitalization rates allowed community gathering.

Special gifts and packets were distributed to all homes for both Easter and Christmas (with crosses and spiritual writings to carry us through the Easter, Christmas, and Epiphany seasons). Thanks to our dedicated membership, our numbers for packet pick-up, inside, and outside attendance have averaged 60+ We've even added new members along the way(!) and will formally introduce them when we are able to gather in a larger group inside our sanctuary. And our members' dedicated giving is keeping us afloat during these restricted times and continue our pledges and care for the greater community. Working with our Lutheran and Interfaith brothers and sisters, we were able to distribute more than 1500 meals to individuals and families in need within the LW community.

In the meantime, repairs to our sanctuary, roof, and Fellowship Hall from severe rain damage at the end of 2019 were all completed on time and well within budget. (Thanks be to God for sending us angelic, dedicated construction teams.) Limited by physical gathering, a small group of parishioners were able to have a "virtual" book study (Viktor E. Frankl's Man's Search for Meaning) via internet/telephone conference technology.

Pastorally, many telephone calls replaced physical visitations during this pandemic time & prayer-filled calls were frequent between all members. A number of our congregation have gone home to our Lord (but at this writing none were victims of the Corona virus), and their names and legacies were able to be honored at our Sanctuary Worship on All Saint's Day. It is an honor to serve the Lord with such a faithful, resilient community. May 2021 find us resuming our regularly scheduled worship "together again", and know that the Lord holds us in the palm of His hand at all times, in all places and we are united to one another in God's love and grace for us all.

Pastor Lisa Rotchford

## REJOICE CONFERENCE REPORT

Since last year many of us could not safely meet in person, this past year has been one of transition, fear, innovation and exhaustion. Like many of the conferences in Pacifica the Rejoice conference as a whole has felt the weight of our prolonged time apart. At the time of writing this report, many congregations are optimistic about our future as more and more members are able to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, especially the most senior members of our congregation who were at higher risk for the virus.

We acknowledge that this year was not completely full of woe. We realize that sometimes the Holy Spirit works through our stumbling blocks to push those of us who are comfortable in our ways to stretch beyond ourselves. We are thankful for the increase in online worship and gatherings and the advancements in technology that have allowed many of our congregations to reach further than they previously could.

One such way was a collaborative Lenten Worship series that was produced by several churches across the Pacifica Synod including several churches from the Rejoice conference. Emanuel in La Habra, Salem Lutheran/Whittier Presbyterian in Whittier, St. Paul in Fullerton, First Lutheran /The Table in Fullerton all from the Rejoice conference joined leaders from Bethlehem in Los Alamitos and Hope in Palm Springs as we worked together to create weekly worship services around the theme “Created for Community.”

Another collaborative point in our conference comes from the merger of Shepherd of Hills Lutheran Church, Thai Shepherd and Crave Life Church all located in Whittier. The three congregations have shared a space and leadership for a few years before officially reclaiming and renaming themselves as “Shepherd of Life.” While recently Pastor Moses Barrios left Shepherd of Life Lutheran Church to take another call within the Synod at Calvary by the Sea in Honolulu, we continue to lift up Shepherd of Life in their new collaborative ministry.

Additionally, with the retirement of Pastor Lee Rozen from Lutheran Church of the Master in La Habra, they have begun the process with the Synod to discuss Holy Closure. We know that this is a difficult decision for any congregation to make and we pray for God’s guidance over the congregation as they take their next steps. We believe in a God of death and new life, and are confident in the new life that the people of Lutheran Church of the Master will carry with them as they end their chapter as a congregation.

Respectfully Submitted by Pr. Cate Luehr, Emanuel Lutheran Church, La Habra

## HUKILAU CONFERENCE REPORT

The Hukilau Conference typically meets once a month at one of our various ministry sites for worship/meeting/lunch. Once those gatherings were unsafe because of the pandemic in March 2020, we moved to weekly Zoom gatherings until mid summer when we moved to meeting via Zoom every other month. In 2021 we returned to monthly gatherings (but still over Zoom!). The ministers appreciate the checkins and ideas for ministry (especially this past year!)

Along with our ELCA congregations and ministries in the Hawaiian Islands, ELCA Pastors Rev. Diane Martinson and Rev. John Lunn are called to Episcopal congregations. Pastor Diane serves St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Honolulu on O'ahu and Pastor John serves Grace Episcopal Church on Moloka'i. Rev. Steve Jensen serves as chaplain for the Wounded Warriors ministry on the Kaneohe Marine Corps Base in Kailua on O'ahu. A look at his ministry in 2020 can be found at the end of this report.

**Pacific Health Ministry**, led by their Director Rev Anke Flohr, provides spiritual care in 11 hospitals on three islands (Oahu, Kauai, Maui). Our interfaith chaplains support hospitalized persons with COVID19 and their families. We are inside the hospital and are often a "bridge" to the families who are not allowed to enter the hospitals. Among the chaplains are our ELCA pastors Rev John Moody, Rev Phyllis Hormann and Rev David Hendrickson who share the following about his place of ministry. **Pohai Nani**, a retirement community of the Evangelical Lutheran-Good Samaritan Society has been described as a cruise ship docked on the side of the lovely Ko'olau range in Kaneohe, HI. Pacific Health Ministry has provided professional chaplaincy services to Pohai Nani for over 25 years. This past year with the pandemic has offered plenty of calls to discipleship, and opportunities to bear witness to the God's presence and actions in this community. 2020 had posed many challenges, but infinitely more opportunities. Meaning "surrounded by beauty" Pohai Nani continues to reveal to us this truth in creation, the incarnate flesh, the Holy and sometimes groaning Spirit.

From east to west across the islands, here is a look at the 10 ELCA congregations in the state of Hawai'i:

**Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity (LCHT)** in Kailua-Kona on the Big Island of Hawai'i, led by Pastor Brian Keiser adapted to the pandemic first by recording services for broadcast on Sunday from mid March through May. In June, we began in-person services with a number of options including new social distancing measures in the sanctuary, and livestreaming both on property (in the breezeway) and online. LCHT continued its partnership with Kona Bible Church and added a third church - Shorebreak. Services are from 8:30-9:30 (LCHT), 10:15-11:45 (KBC) and 4:00-5:00. (SC). Both our property and facility have enjoyed a number of beautification projects that have upgraded our ability to serve the churches and our community.

**Kihei Lutheran Church** on Maui, led by Pastor Joel Martyn, as all the other churches in the synod, entered 2020 with high hopes, dreams and plans for ministry. The pandemic tragically stopped all of those plans from happening. Having never been through a pandemic it

was quite the learning experience. As pastor it was difficult for me to adjust. As congregation it was difficult to adjust to forced change on an exponential scale. But KLC was able too. The disease of moving from in person worship to digital worship, to outdoor worship, back to digital then to a hybrid indoor/outdoor service was difficult. KLC continues on with ministry despite the strangeness of the past year. We have gotten better at checking in on each other, having hybrid worship and editing a digital copy to send out to those who can't or aren't yet comfortable coming to the hybrid worship service, and finding new ways to continue our ministries to the community around us. It's been quite a year and now we are planning for the future post pandemic world in which we are being led to minister to.

As the pandemic approached, we took tentative steps to be more hygienic, safer. Asking for masks, washing hands, keeping our distance. Adjusting our communion practices – no grape juice, no intinction, finally no common cup.

And then, with a sudden, quick lockdown in mid-March no in-person worship, no communion, no in-person singing. Service of the Word became the liturgy of the day. The chancel changed shape with the table pushed back and the lectern front and center. Sound Cloud came just before the lockdown, then, we Zoomed – we tried. We got better at it. Facebook Livestreaming came along. We sanitized everything in sight. YouTube uploads. The classrooms were zapped and misted. The sanctuary was professionally scrubbed from top to bottom.

Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and Easter Sunday - without anyone but pastor and the IT couple running Zoom and FB Livestream in the sanctuary was a first. It felt surreal.

Then, in July back to limited in-person worship with Service of the Word attending carefully to venue, ventilation, and vocalization. A few persons returned cautiously to the sanctuary with its rolled-back walls, sparse, spaced seating, and hand-sanitizers beside every offering plate. Most still Zoomed, FB'd, YT'd, or SC'd.

In August we resumed in-person communion. At the same time because it appeared that we were in a long, drawn out marathon with the virus and that we weren't fully coming back together in-person anytime soon, we decided to offer communion online to those worshiping from home. Chalices and "real" bread went on hiatus. Wafers and individual, disposable plastic cups made a return appearance.

Because we live joyfully ever after, even, and especially, in the midst of tragedy and sorrow, we decided to belatedly celebrate our Fortieth Anniversary in September. Every former pastor (a first!) and our bishop, Andy Taylor, joined us in person or online to celebrate, pray and give thanks. Twenty-two worshipers (another record!) came in person and many more joined us online. We YouTubed a talk story with earliest of members.

Christmas Eve we had forty in-person and many more online worshipers. We didn't celebrate communion that evening because we didn't want people moving around much. So, we focused on the carols and the candles. Christmas Day we worshiped with carols and communion.

We also worked closely with the Kidney Foundation donation pod, one of the busiest on island, and with the Rainbow Schools. We had to carefully rethink everything in terms of public health and safety for the sake of the staff, the KF donors, the pre-school students and in-person worshipers.

We are most blessed, encouraged, and resurrected by our members ongoing care of each other and commitment to CLC. With Zooming, worshiping, support of IHS, online council meetings, lawn-mowing and upkeep we found our way about.

On the island of O'ahu:

**Calvary By the Sea (CBTS)** saw many transitions during 2020, along with coping with the restrictions of a pandemic.

1. Staff reductions were made in February, along with some staff seeing reduced hours, these decisions were made before the pandemic struck in full force in March.
2. As all churches, CBTS went fully online with worship service, but were restricted somewhat until wireless internet was installed in the sanctuary.
3. Interim Pastor David Barber finished at CBTS and fully retired in September 2020 and moved back to the mainland to be family.
4. Interim Pastor Karla Wildberger on 1 September 2020 (and will finish on 5 March 2021).
5. The Call Committee was very diligent (with the help of the Synod Office) and had a candidate ready to call before the end of 2020.
6. The Rev. Dr. Moses Barrios will start his call on 1 March 2021.
7. CBTS continues to support the ministry of Angel Network Charities which serves over 1,000 households every week. As you can imagine the need has grown over the length of the pandemic.
8. With hope, Calvary By the Sea Lutheran Church looks forward to the ministry that can be done, with God's guidance, in 2021.

**Lutheran Church of Honolulu** led by Pastor Jeff Lilley enters its 121st year with many of the same challenges and joys as congregations around the country. As the pandemic began to unfold in March, we adopted technology and purchased equipment that allowed us to continue online worship through livestreaming from the very first Sunday after the shutdown. Working with the Governor and Mayor's offices, we were able to continue limited in church worship leadership with strict personal distancing, plexi-shields, and sanitation protocols. Congregational leadership decided against having in-person worship services, even though allowed under current rules, feeling that bringing people together would compromise the most vulnerable among us. LCH will not hold in-person worship until it is safe to do so, and will expand online worship as opportunity arises.

LCH continues work with Institute for Human Services providing 450 sack lunches every other month, financial and material support for Waikiki Youth Outreach, and financial support for Family Promise and several other social charities.

LCH has an intern pastor this year. Brianna Lloyd joined the staff in September and has been a wonderful addition to the ministry. She is a student at Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, and came to LCH following an extended CPE year with Pohai Nani here on O'ahu. She is organizing a community garden as part of her internship project.

In response to the social isolation of the pandemic, LCH introduced a new evening prayer service over the summer, and added “the “First Mondays Concert Series” to the regular concert offerings. These concerts have been a bit less formal and feature local musical so that local musicians are financially supported during this difficult time. We look forward to an exciting New Year!

On Jan 31-Feb 2, **Prince of Peace**, led by Pastor Yukio Hamada, joined the Waikiki Beach Chaplaincy in celebrating “110 years of ministry in Waikiki,” combining celebrations for Prince of Peace’s 60th anniversary and the Chaplaincy’s 50th. Bob Turnbull, the Chaplaincy’s founder, was the featured speaker. Bob was a member of Prince of Peace and the Young Adult minister. Associated with the event was the scattering of ashes of Millie Christopherson, former parish worker, and the burning of Prince of Peace’s mortgage which was paid off in less than five years. Steve Hammer, founding pastor Norm Hammer’s son, and his family were featured guests at the event. The “110 Years of Ministry” was celebrated with a banquet at the Alana Hilton Hotel.

When the COVID lockdown was imposed, Prince of Peace adapted by using the webpage and Facebook to present online virtual worship for members and friends. Beginning with less than 30 “hits” in the early going, viewership has increased to a high of 170 during the Christmas season. Currently Prince of Peace has an in-person worship attendance of about 20 each week and a virtual viewership of friends and neighbors from Canada and throughout the Mainland US as well as local viewers. The Christmas Eve service was held in the Eaton Square courtyard for in-person worship and online. The worship committee is wrestling with Lent and Ash Wednesday issues (Should we use a six-foot stick to impose ashes...?” - that’s a joke...)

The congregation is in the process of implementing the Strategic Plan which has been endorsed by the parish council. With the announcement of Pr. Hamada’s retirement in December 2021, the implementation of the plan takes on greater importance.

**St John Lutheran** in Kailua, led by Pastor Kathryn Zurcher has been offering emailed worship services each Sunday morning since COVID. For the first several months, those services included written out sermons and links to hymns/children’s times plus prayers. In the summer a volunteer connected with the church stepped up to tape and edit worships, so a small choir sings a hymn and/or special music each week along with our pianist providing music and Pastor Kathryn being “seen” by the congregation in the sanctuary with a sermon and prayers of our community. In the spirit of providing Good New and keeping our congregation connected while physically apart, we started sending weekly emails featuring photos of members celebrating milestones big and small. Additionally, the lack of people using the worship space allowed a small crew of volunteer church members to “get in there” and complete long overdue renovations to the sanctuary and church grounds. Most exciting is that our altar area is now ADA Accessible, which means our whole building is. Our congregation’s continued commitment to giving and serving means we were able to provide more money to local organizations (like those working with the homeless and hungry and Pacific Health Ministries who provides chaplains to our hospitals) than we had planned in our original 2020 budget as well as collecting A LOT of food for our local food bank. In the fall, drive up communion begin being offered

about once a month and has been well received by members. A couple Bible Studies were started during the pandemic over Zoom and those times of reading & studying the scriptures together have been a great joy for those participating (most especially for Pastor Kathryn!). We are grateful for the technology that has kept us connected while we are physically apart.

**Joy of Christ Lutheran Church** in Pearl City, led by Pastor JP Sabbithi, continued in-person and online worship services following the county and state guidelines. During the year we have seen slight growth in the membership. A baptism and a wedding (*maintaining the physical distance*) brought much joy to the community during this time of social isolation. We continued our ministry to the homeless. Instead of serving meals at the shelters, we prepared food at the church and taken to the shelters. Joy of Christ continues to discern and discover her mission in the neighborhood especially during this time of pandemic.

**Maluhia Lutheran Church**, on the Waianae Coast, led by Pastor Jasmine Bostock as of January 1, 2021, faced the challenges of 2020 largely without a settled pastor. From March to July the church was shutdown, without online service options. Juli Patten, a seminarian from our own congregation, was licensed to do services and stepped in, leading the congregation with COVID protocols in place as they worked to call a new pastor.

Maluhia hasn't been able to participate in their usual outreach ministries of Kids Klub and One Pot One Hope, but is looking forward to beginning them again when it is prudent to do so. We look forward to the year ahead as we listen for where God calls us!

**Christ Lutheran Church**, Mililani, led by Pastor Keith Wolter shares his report:

As the pandemic approached, we took tentative steps to be more hygienic, safer. Asking for masks, washing hands, keeping our distance. Adjusting our communion practices – no grape juice, no intinction, finally no common cup.

And then, with a sudden, quick lockdown in mid-March no in-person worship, no communion, no in-person singing. Service of the Word became the liturgy of the day. The chancel changed shape with the table pushed back and the lectern front and center. Sound Cloud came just before the lockdown, then, we Zoomed – we tried. We got better at it. Facebook Livestreaming came along. We sanitized everything in sight. YouTube uploads. The classrooms were zapped and misted. The sanctuary was professionally scrubbed from top to bottom.

Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and Easter Sunday - without anyone but pastor and the IT couple running Zoom and FB Livestream in the sanctuary was a first. It felt surreal.

Then, in July back to limited in-person worship with Service of the Word attending carefully to venue, ventilation, and vocalization. A few persons returned cautiously to the sanctuary with its rolled-back walls, sparse, spaced seating, and hand-sanitizers beside every offering plate. Most still Zoomed, FB'd, YT'd, or SC'd.

In August we resumed in-person communion. At the same time because it appeared that we were in a long, drawn out marathon with the virus and that we weren't fully coming back together in-person anytime soon, we decided to offer communion online to those worshiping from home. Chalices and "real" bread went on hiatus. Wafers and individual, disposable plastic cups made a return appearance.

Because we live joyfully ever after, even, and especially, in the midst of tragedy and sorrow, we decided to belatedly celebrate our Fortieth Anniversary in September. Every former pastor (a first!) and our bishop, Andy Taylor, joined us in person or online to celebrate, pray and give thanks. Twenty-two worshipers (another record!) came in person and many more joined us online. We YouTubed a talk story with earliest of members.

Christmas Eve we had forty in-person and many more online worshipers. We didn't celebrate communion that evening because we didn't want people moving around much. So, we focused on the carols and the candles. Christmas Day we worshiped with carols and communion.

We also worked closely with the Kidney Foundation donation pod, one of the busiest on island, and with the Rainbow Schools. We had to carefully rethink everything in terms of public health and safety for the sake of the staff, the KF donors, the pre-school students and in-person worshipers.

We are most blessed, encouraged, and resurrected by our members ongoing care of each other and commitment to CLC. With Zooming, worshiping, support of IHS, online council meetings, lawn-mowing and upkeep we found our way about.

**Lihue Lutheran Church**, on Kaua'i, led by Pastor JP (Joseph Paxton) shares this report:

The past year has presented a number of opportunities for ministry and faith formation in the wake of COVID. Financially, LLC finished in the black. As a church, we found ways to be the church and ways to do church through collaborative food distributions and mobile munchies - food outreach program. In addition, we have found innovative ways to be in community by launching a gardening ministry and meeting in hybrid spaces with our youth group, college young adults, women's book study, and adult bible study group. Overall, moral is high and we are both hopeful and hope-filled with the upcoming year.

### **WOUNDED WARRIOR MINISTRY 2020**

As with any other program affected by the COVID 19 pandemic, this year required a program realignment at the Wounded Warrior Battalion – West, Detachment Hawai'i. The military staff remains small, yet there was an increase of recovering service members up to 25 at any given time, mainly from Okinawa/mainland Japan and Marine units at Kaneohe Bay.

A good percentage of these 20-something service members are battling various forms of cancer while others are recovering from surgeries or accidents.

The Friends of Windward Wounded Warriors program I manage has had to adapt dramatically, reducing large group activities and meals to “the bubble” of barracks residents and staff or small groups of 5. Atop their interruptions to their careers and health issues, they have been primarily confined to their barracks rooms when not at medical or military appointments and the isolation from fellow Marines and family members has had a noticeable, yet predictable adverse effect.

While I visit them frequently as a group and individually, I have also tried to help them make the most of the time available to them to pursue online education, consider civilian employment options, and/or find ways to be physically active. As has been the case for the past 10 years (Feb 11, 2011) I continue to provide them information and resources while assigned here, but also as they prepare to transition back to civilian life and find unanticipated challenges there. The focus of all support is holistic – focusing on mind, body, spirit, and relationships.

St. John and LCH “Third Thursday” meals at the barracks are on a hiatus until Hawai’i and the military allow larger groups to gather. Recognizing that a large percentage of the troops have compromised immune systems and cannot eat at the dining facility, I have continued to provide a meal out at a safe establishment for small groups, ordered take-out for the entire detachment, and taken individuals shopping at the commissary to keep food in the lounge they can cook daily.

Birthdays, promotions, and departures are still celebrated in the barracks lounge. Thanksgiving was not held at my home for the first time, but catered by Honolulu Country Club and enjoyed in the lounge and courtyard. A small Christmas party was held in the lounge with food a couple of us provided, but with stockings made and filled by St. John members under the leadership of Keala Simoes. Our annual multi-service 12<sup>th</sup> day of Christmas was a drive-through event, hosted by First Presbyterian, Wounded Warrior Ohana and Toys for Tots.

When the numbers at the detachment became too small to properly care for the Osprey memorial at Bellows on a regular basis, members of St. John stepped up and cleaned and decorated it at their own expense. Not only do the families of the 2 who were lost appreciate their efforts, so do all who pass by and stop to pay their respects.

For the first time in my 50 years with the military, there was no Marine Corps Birthday Ball possible this year. Some Marines would not attend another while on active duty, while others had never attended a ball as large and elaborate as that normally presented by Marine Forces Pacific. I was fortunate to receive the support of the Navy Region staff that day with the assignment of a white boat and crew to take us out to the Arizona memorial to begin our day at sunrise, flying the first of 12 flags that will later be presented to medically retiring Wounded Warriors. Flags were then raised at the USS Bowfin, USS Utah, and USS Missouri, with a traditional cake cutting ceremony on the Mighty Mo’s fantail. A concluding lunch was served at Honolulu Navy League headquarters and each Marine was presented with a Wounded Warrior Regiment drinking glass and a framed photo of Tun Tavern. No other Marine unit on the island had as nice a celebration...

With some frequency, mainland families arrive to tend to patients at Tripler – often without thought to housing, transportation, and meals. I have a reserve fund through Friends of Windward Wounded Warriors to assist them, but invite members of St. John to donate any unused gift cards they might have received for Christmas or birthdays. Several were used of late to assist ill and injured local Marine veterans and their families with diapers and gas

cards. We also had a 20-year-old with stage 4 cancer confined to a hotel room with his mother while undergoing 9 months of treatment and surgeries who benefited from those donations.

As Wounded Warriors transition from the military to civilian life, their benefits often take some time to be seen in the form of monthly pensions or medical treatment. Again, occasional small grants or gift cards make a huge difference. We helped prevent two from becoming homeless, assisted in emergency support for two families suffering from significant hurricane damage, and enabled several to purchase food when they had to decide on that or co-pay for treatment for their children.

Unfortunately, quite a number of our 'alumni' on the mainland and in Hawai'i have lost family members during the year, and one of our 26-year-olds was killed in a vehicle accident. I have sent flowers or donations for fuel and travel, and just returned from conducting a funeral in Florida.

Not all transitions go smoothly and quite a number of the 'alumni' and their families find themselves challenged by PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury to be successful in new jobs, school, building friendships or keeping the family intact. A planned fourth reunion at a Scout reservation in Michigan for some 50 warriors had to be cancelled last year, but we hope to resurrect it at the end of this summer. These reunions and the following closed chat pages make a huge difference have been recognized as the most effective such retreat by one of our sponsors. I have already begun planning and fund-raising for this incredibly important resource.

Concerned about the "22-a-day" suicides among active duty military and veterans, I regularly consult with staff of various veteran organizations and remain a voting member of the Institutional Review Board of the VA in the Pacific Islands. New and exciting programs continue to be developed to address the underlying medical and mental health issues and information is then shared among the people I serve. In these 10 years there have been NO suicides by current or former Wounded Warriors attached to the Kaneohe Bay unit, although frequent phone calls in the wee hours from desperate members keep me prayerfully aware that the danger remains.

Our Lutheran community in Hawai'i has been an incredible source of strength, support, and assistance for me and our wounded, ill and injured and their families. When many wonder if God has forgotten them or has become deaf to their prayers, they hear me talk of you or benefit from one of your many kindnesses. Thank you for your faithfulness. You make a huge difference in many lives!

Pastor Steve Jensen



**Agape House is now Agape San Diego!**

As much as we have loved our homey house, it is worn out, and now we embrace the challenge to **provide affordable student housing in a caring community that explores faith and vocations.** This vision promises to serve more students and sustain caring ministry, centered in a large residential community at the hub of an expanding university.

**Standing Up in a Global Crisis**



Since SDSU went online like most schools, many more students are hungry, unemployed, and homeless. **Our food justice ministry more than tripled the number of students we serve** when other campus services shut down for the pandemic, and we have expanded our work to help vulnerable

students make ends meet while also working for change to open up sustainable means to live.

**Showing Up for  
Equity and Inclusion**



The pandemic has made more obvious many systemic inequities of our society, including biased law enforcement, immigration, education, housing, employment, and other forms of discrimination and intergenerational trauma. Many of our students experience this first hand, so we are organizing for structural changes as an anti-oppression



community, including **anti-racist organizing** and being more public with our affirmation of LGBTQIA+ people as a **Reconciling in Christ organization.**

**Growing Up into Leadership**

We just completed the fifth year of our Mentoring Leaders Initiative, funded by the Pacifica Synod Mission Fund, an extension of a Lilly Endowment grant, and partner congregations and other organizations. **Fellows serve area ministries** part-time while discerning God's call to expand mission with community organizing, migrant support, food justice, and other creative work. **New ministry sites may apply now!**

**Expanding Partnerships with the  
Episcopal Diocese of San Diego**

Following the lead of the Pacifica Synod's grant of \$250,000 toward our building project, the EDSD also pledged **\$100,000 toward our building project**, plus funding an **additional 1/2-time campus missioner** to expand our campus outreach!

**Building Up Affordable Student  
Housing & Sustainable Ministry**

Our innovative multi-use design doesn't fit the building ordinance boxes, so city reviews have taken much longer than expected for our transit-based intentional community project, but we expect approvals to build this fall.

**We still need \$250,000 to complete our campaign goal.** If this innovative vision for ministry excites you too, or you would like to learn how you can join Bishop Andy and many others to complete this project for future generations of leaders, contact Pastor Darin Johnson at 619.583.3972 or [darin@agapesandiego.org](mailto:darin@agapesandiego.org)



***Thank you, Pacifica Synod!***

# California Lutheran

---

# UNIVERSITY

## 2021 Annual Report to ELCA Region I and II Synods

California Lutheran University, a member of the Network of Colleges and Universities of the ELCA, equips graduates who are called and empowered to serve the neighbor so that all may flourish.

Amidst the changing landscape of the pandemic, over 4,000 Cal Lutheran students learn virtually or in hybrid classrooms in several different centers in California. We offer 20 undergraduate majors and 29 graduate programs of study. Over 50% of our undergraduate students are from underrepresented populations and one third are the first in their family to attend college. Our students come from over 40 states, 49 countries, and represent a diversity of faiths and cultures. With a network of 30,000 alumni, students from our founding in 1959 until now have discovered their purpose and are transforming their community and the world.



In August of 2020 we welcomed our **8th University President, Dr. Lori Varlotta**. She is the first female president in Cal Lutheran's 61-year history, and she came to the university as an established leader with broad experience in change management and curriculum reform, student success and inclusion, strategic planning and budgeting, and friend-raising and fundraising. Varlotta considers her 35 years working at mission-driven colleges and universities a calling, not a career.



**Pastor Scott Maxwell-Doherty**, who has served as Campus Pastor for 21 years, is retiring from university ministry in May 2021. His service to the university has spanned over two decades. He has seen many changes, accompanied young people, faculty and staff through their journeys, and has preached a lot of sermons. He will be greatly missed by the entire campus community. If you wish to send him a greeting, please do so at [mmmdsjmd@gmail.com](mailto:mmmdsjmd@gmail.com).

More students experienced in-person learning this semester! Our facilities staff worked hard to equip each of our [outdoor classrooms](#) (video) with the technology and safety measures necessary to create a comfortable and engaging learning environment. It doesn't hurt that the Thousand Oaks campus enjoys the beautiful Southern California sun year-round.

[The Office of Campus Ministry](#) has been creative all year with worship online, seeking new ways of connecting through walking worship, social media, online dinner church and highlighting faculty and staff members during our weekly online Chapel hour. All of these have strengthened community in a time when we have been living and learning in multiple locations.

The [Western States Youth Gathering](#) (July 2020) was cancelled due to COVID. WSYG is a large youth gathering for ELCA high school youth from congregations in Regions 1 - 4 held at Cal Lutheran. Our website and social media will share updates as soon as there is a plan to move forward. [www.WSYG.com](http://www.WSYG.com)

[Executive Skills for Church Leaders: Learning from the world of the MBA](#) is offered twice yearly for church leaders and clergy applying concepts from management to the complex arena of ministry today. In January 2021 this event moved online and hosted our first international pastor from Canada, our first interfaith clergy person, and was all interpreted in Spanish! What a gift to have such a dynamic community gathered to learn together. Stay tuned for the ways this event will continue to adapt to support pastors, deacons, and faith leaders in their areas of need. Details here: [www.CalLutheran.edu/ExecSkills](http://www.CalLutheran.edu/ExecSkills)



## THRIVING Leadership Formation

The [Thriving Leadership Formation](#) program brings ELCA leaders together to cultivate skills and networks of trust, support, spiritual practice, and accountability. Fueled with a \$1million grant from Lilly Endowment

Inc., this project helps pastors and church leaders throughout 14 Western States avoid burnout and thrive in their ministries. Our first year is finishing with 12 cohort groups, 80 people, across Regions 1 & 2. If you are interested in joining a small group or leading one find out more here:

[www.ThrivingLeadershipFormation.com](http://www.ThrivingLeadershipFormation.com)

**Fifty and Better (FAB)** — Check out our online courses for those who are 50+. Courses change often (i.e. Architecture and Design in the Reign of 16th-19th Century European Rulers; The Beach Boys in the Studio; The World of Jewish Art and Artists; and more). For details, visit [Cal Lutheran Fifty and Better](#).



*Thank you for praying for and remembering your Lutheran university and telling others about us.*

[www.CalLutheran.edu](http://www.CalLutheran.edu)

## Thank you for being a ministry partner!

Your prayers, direct synod gifts, and encouraging your leaders to go to seminary are all ways you participate with us in the important mission of equipping future pastors, deacons, and non-rostered faith leaders for the work they are called to do in congregations, hospitals, schools, community organizations, and more.

### Center for Climate Justice & Faith:

#### *Linking Ecological Healing to Racial and Economic Justice*

The Center for Climate Justice & Faith (CCJF) empowers leaders to cultivate moral, spiritual, and practical power for the work of climate justice in communities of faith and in collaboration with others. Launched in September 2020, the CCJF is offering/developing the following programs:

#### Current Programs/Achievements:

- Certification as a Green-Justice seminary; PLTS is the eleventh seminary in the USA to complete the process.
- Concentration in Climate Justice and Faith, for Master of Divinity and Master of Arts students.
- Curriculum innovations – Teaching and learning at the nexus of race, class, gender, and Earth.



*Caption: Mural in PLTS' classroom named, La Lucha, meaning "the struggle". Artist: Cristian Munoz*

#### Coming in 2021 – 2022:

- Certificate in Climate Justice and Faith (serving the global Lutheran communion; for non-degree students) in collaboration with Lutheran World Federation, ELCA World Hunger, and Lutherans Restoring Creation.
  - Faith-rooted Community Organizing for Climate Justice course.
- Public programming in collaboration with local, national, and global networks.
- Annual Climate Justice Activist-Scholar in Residence.
- Circle of Affiliated Activist-Scholars and Activist-Artists.

### Master of Arts in Spirituality & Social Change

Coming in Fall 2021!

This new degree program has been approved by the Association of Theological Schools. Students can choose to study between residential and distance learning options.

### Seminary Life during the Pandemic

PLTS moved classes and worship to ZOOM on March 16, 2020. This made it possible for students to continue in their programs and for new students from the United States, Lebanon, and Russia to start their programs in September. It is our prayerful intention to be able to return to campus and offer in-person classes for Fall 2021, though a distance learning option will continue. Graduation in 2020 was postponed to 2021 and an online commencement service is being planned for May 22<sup>nd</sup>.

#### QUICK FACTS ABOUT PLTS

- Total Number of Students: 114
- Master of Divinity (M.Div) Students: 51
- M.Div Students on Internship: 16
- Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) Students: 46
- Tuition (Full-time M.Div): \$22,460
- Total Average Cost of Housing: \$8,640
- Scholarships Awarded: \$644,427 to 100% of need-based qualifying students

*Statistics were compiled in summer 2020.*

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

## Pacifica Coaching: Coaching for All Seasons 2019-2021

*“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.” Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NRSV)*

---

### What is Pacifica Coaching?

- Trained coaches.
- Available to rostered and lay leaders.
- To address the vital concerns of leaders and congregations.

Pacifica Synod has invested in training coaches for credentialing by the ELCA and the International Coaching Federation (ICF). These coaches walk alongside rostered and lay leaders when an individual or congregational issue would benefit from the support of skilled professionals. Coaching is confidential and centers on the goals of the client(s). A coach is a thought partner who focuses the client on clarifying goals and identifying next steps.

Coaches work with clients to answer three essential questions:

- Where am I on this journey?
- Where do I want to be?
- How do I get there?

---

### Pacifica Coaching is there for individual leaders or congregational teams ...

- **...when** a leader is looking for clarity in carrying out his or her calling.
- **...when** a leader is facing a major decision or transition.
- **...when** a leader needs support in managing self-care.
- **...when** something needs to change, but what?
- **...when** a congregation wants to develop a new ministry.
- **...when** a congregational council has major decisions to make.
- **...when** a key rostered or lay leader leaves unexpectedly or dies suddenly.
- **...when** an unexpected event like flooding, fire, or pandemic occurs.

### Pacifica Coaching is growing and reaches beyond Pacifica Synod.

We are excited that our coaches are active in 10 synods, including Pacifica. Individual coaching hours increased by 34% from 2019 to 2020. Team coaching is our new area of work.



### Pacifica Coaching created a monthly forum to address pressing issues.

Inspired by an ELCA churchwide coaching forum, Pacifica Coaching initiated a monthly Zoom series – *Coaching For All Seasons* – in July 2020. This event is open to all rostered and lay leaders. Topics have included:

- Navigating change and transition (William Bridges model);
- Real stories about equity, diversity, and inclusion in the Pacifica Synod;
- Successes and frustrations of young leaders in the ELCA; and
- Ministering to a divided congregation.

---

### If you think coaching might be your missing piece ...



Contact Deenna Eley, Pacifica Synod Coaching Coordinator at: <mailto:pacificacoachinggroup@gmail.com>.

Meet our coaches at: <http://www.pacificasynod.org/about/ministry-teams/coaching-in-the-pacifica-synod>.

## **2021 Assembly Report Children, Youth & Family Ministries**

Our Synod's work in Children, Youth and Family Ministries continued in 2020 and 2021, as it has in our congregations, in different and creative ways due to the pandemic. This synodical work is led by volunteers who serve to support and provide resources for those leading these ministries in our congregations as well as to provide opportunities to develop leadership skills within our young people. We continue to be inspired by and grateful for the dedication, creativity, care, and tireless service of those serving in our congregations.

The highlights of 2020 included:

### Synod Youth Ministry Leader Monthly Zoom Gatherings

In March 2020, we replaced our monthly, in-person network lunches and began meeting all together on Zoom. Youth ministry leaders from across the synod meet to share ideas, questions, resources, joys, and concerns. Occasionally, leaders from Southwest California synod join the gathering. A benefit of meeting this way is that leaders can connect with others who may not serve in their immediate area but serve in ministries like their own. In 2021, we are working to have a speaker or presenter join us every other month. We plan to continue to offer some form of online gathering for our leaders even when it is safe to meet in person again.

### Graduation Service

In June 2020, high school seniors from across our synod worked with adults to plan and lead a virtual Service of Recognition and Celebration for Seniors and Graduates. The service included prayers and liturgy written by the students, along with their personal reflections, a blessing from Bishop Andy and music from Tyra Dennis. The service was live on Facebook and posted on the Synod's YouTube channel.

### Synod Youth Team

In January 2020, our Synod Youth Team started the year as we normally do, with a planning meeting at the Synod office. In February, we assisted LRCC (Lutheran Retreats, Camps and Conferences) with the Elementary Youth Retreat at Luther Glen, unaware that this would be the last time we all met in person. A few of our team members graduated from high school in the spring of 2020. Typically, we work to recruit new members in the fall, but due to the pandemic and the shift in our ability to plan and lead in-person events, recruitment of new members was put on hold.

Our four remaining members – Amelie Barrios (Crave Life, Whittier), Mark Farrin (St. John's, Palm Desert), Emily Roa (Shepherd of the Valley, La Mesa) and A.J. Tarts (Spirit of Hope, San Bernardino), have continued since then to gather via Zoom monthly for devotions and check-in. In November, three of our team members attended the ELCA Youth Leadership Summit, held online over the course of two days. Team members continue to be involved in the #CaliStrong events as their schedules permit. As we look ahead in 2021, we will be using this summer to review and re-evaluate this ministry. Terri Robertson currently serves as the Adult Advisor for our Synod Youth Team.

### #CaliSTRONG

In December, high school youth in our synod were invited to join with youth from both Southwest California and Sierra Pacific Synods in a ministry called #CaliSTRONG. #CaliStrong is a space created for high school youth to engage each other in conversation around social justice issues and hot topics that they are passionate about. This online space, held over Zoom, is peer-led, with adult supervision and a pastoral care presence. Youth are learning leadership skills to engage in dialogue around race, culture, diversity, equity, and inclusion through a biblical lens.

Presently, #CaliSTRONG meets twice monthly, on Saturday evenings from 6:30-8:00 p.m. One gathering a month is devoted to relationship-building, while the other focuses on the "Dialogues on Race" curriculum to guide the conversation. Youth can join at any time. Information about #CaliSTRONG may be found in our synod e-news or posted in our Synod Youth Ministry Leaders Facebook Group.

### Growing Young

In November 2020, we held two online, introductory workshops on the book “Growing Young”. This book, published in 2016, shares the results of research by Fuller Youth Institute into congregations that are involving and retaining young people, breathing life into the WHOLE congregation, and deepening the faith of their young people.

We invited congregation leaders to join us in 2021 as monthly we focus on one of the six Core Commitments exemplified by these congregations. Those conversations began in January 2021 and will continue through June. Each conversation is offered twice during the month, once during the day and once in the evening. We currently have 33 participants in these conversations, but others are invited to join at any time. Our Growing Young Team includes Synod Director for Evangelical Mission, Pastor Tom Goellrich; Deacon Mindy Bugaj (Incarnation, Poway); and Terri Robertson (First/The Table, Fullerton).

### Future Hopes

As we look ahead, we focus on our Synod’s commitment to the faith formation of the young people in our congregations and are encouraged by the adoption of Pacifica’s Strategic Plan by our Synod Council in 2020. We see this commitment identified in Mission Result Area #1 – “Strengthen Support for Congregational Ministry” and specifically, Goal #1 – “Pacifica Synod members will share their ancient faith in a modern world and strengthen our meaning and purpose as disciples of Christ” and look forward to how our future work will be shaped by investment in this commitment and emphasis on children, youth, and families in our synod.

In Christ’s service,  
Terri Robertson

## **Pacifica Synod Latino Area Ministry Team Report**

As a Multi-Cultural Church, we seek harmony by blending our Lutheran and cultural traditions. It is necessary that we boldly proclaim that we are "Saved by Grace" because this is countercultural in many Latino communities. The Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus are core to our understanding that salvation is through Grace by Faith. We are free to proclaim this message (Galatians 5:1) "For freedom Christ has set us free." As a Latino ministry of the ELCA we seek to maintain our principals through Evangelism, the use of diverse liturgies, our universal legacy based in God's Word Jesus Christ, and our Lutheran confessional heritage.

In 2020 there were six active Latino Ministry sites for the Pacifica Synod:

- St. Peter's, Santa Ana – Pastor Misael Fajardo
- First, Vista – Pastor Ramon Zarate
- Crave Life, Wittier – Pastor Moises Barrios
- Clairemont, San Diego– Pastor Jon Doolittle and seminarian Elena Enriquez
- St. Mark's, Chula Vista – Alicia Garcia and Interim
- Our Savior's, San Diego – Pastor Maria Santa Cruz

In 2020 the following grants were made from the funds in the Latino Ministry Trust:

Clairemont Lutheran for TEEM education costs for Elena Enriquez. Grant: \$5,000

First Lutheran Church of Vista request for different scholarship programs, confirmation grant and VBS for the Latino community. Grant: \$10,660

Crave Life worship community requested for Sunday school materials, special retreats and evangelism. Grant: \$6,300.

A new weekly Bible study was begun in Spanish by our Orange County/Inland Empire pastors. Each week they host special guests in a discussion group.

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Dr. Jonathan Doolittle



## Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

Greetings siblings in Christ of the PacificaSynod,

It has been a difficult year for all of us. Despite restrictive policy changes and the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, LIRS has remained committed to our biblical mandate to welcome the stranger.

In the last year:

- 2,782 refugees were welcomed through LIRS affiliates in 23 states.
- 440 unaccompanied migrant children were served through our foster care services and placed in loving homes during and after legal proceedings.
- 9,500 asylum seekers received Safe Release and Post Release services at our Southern border.

Even in these darkest of days, thousands of people from across the country partnered with LIRS to express their support for migrants and refugees through our annual programs and advocacy efforts. The compassion of our neighbors gives us hope, and we are proud to report that in the last year:

- 16,000 holiday cards and 500 gifts were sent to migrant children and families in detention through our annual Hope for the Holidays program.
- More than 600 ELCA clergy and lay leaders signed a letter drafted by the ELCA and LIRS urging Congress to work collaboratively to advance comprehensive immigration legislation.
- LIRS' work was featured on national platforms like *NPR*, the *Washington Post*, *Center for American Progress*, *Religion News Service*, *The Christian Century*, and *Sojourners*.

We are especially grateful for the leadership of Bishop Taylor and the congregations of the Pacifica Synod who have continued their generous and prayerful support. We could not do this work without you.

Now, that work is expanding. In the coming year, the U.S. expects to welcome 125,000 refugees to our shores. LIRS is actively looking to congregations and faith leaders to partner with us in ways big and small, including donations, volunteer work, and participation in our annual programming. **Emmaus: Congregational Discernment Network** launches this spring for congregations to discern how they can best walk alongside refugees and migrants in their community, and **Stand Up Speak Up**, coming in Pentecost, is a new interfaith prayer vigil focused on advocacy. We encourage you to stay up to date on opportunities for individual and congregational engagement at the **LIRS Action Center**, found at [www.lirsconnect.org/get\\_involved](http://www.lirsconnect.org/get_involved)

With your support, we will continue to live our mission: witnessing to God's love for all people, standing with and advocating for migrants and refugees, and transforming communities through ministries of service and justice. Thank you for accompanying LIRS and our migrant and refugee siblings through 2021 and beyond. God bless you.

In peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kristin Witte".

Dr. Kristin Witte  
Director for Outreach



## THE ELCA FOUNDATION

It is important to begin this report by thanking our synod bishops, congregations and partners for their incredible leadership during a year of upheaval and challenges. When everything seemed to go wrong, your ability to direct the work of the church was one of the things that was right in 2020. Through it all, this church supported the work of ministering to the world with the love of Jesus Christ.

As of Dec. 31, 2020, the Foundation has crossed a major milestone — \$1 billion in assets managed in gifts and endowments for the ministry of the greater church. This achievement reflects being the church together in ways that equip congregations, organizations and individuals to live out their vocation. This landmark accomplishment was achieved through the work of the ELCA Foundation staff regularly engaging with donors, congregations and organizations along with your trust in the ELCA Foundation to manage gifts and assets for ministry. Throughout the year, despite limited travel and in-person meetings, gift planners engaged with nearly 900 congregations, synods and ELCA-related organizations. They spent time with over 1,500 individuals working on gift plans, logged over 5,500 interactions and continued to maintain partnership relationships with over 150 ELCA-related entities, including 54 synods.

Fund A distributed over \$30 million to ministry in 2020 while also growing the underlying investment to ensure that distribution is there for years to come. Fund A has neither missed nor reduced a distribution amount once it was established – including the volatile year of 2020. We know these distributions are vital to ministry and often used to support service in local communities.

- As of Dec. 31, 2020, the value of participant accounts invested in Fund A was \$904.2 million, compared to \$817.6 million on Dec. 31, 2019. There are 1,155 investing participants in Fund A, including 938 congregations and 54 synods.
- Throughout the year, 53 new endowment accounts were opened, totaling \$7.1 million, and 14 accounts were closed, totaling \$3.0 million. Investments made to new and existing Fund A accounts totaled \$31.1 million; withdrawals totaled \$18.6 million.

In addition, gift levels remained high throughout 2020: Due to the generosity of our members and donors distributions to ministry totaled \$59 million for the year.

- The gift-planning network, including affiliates, posted solid results throughout 2020, with \$118.2 million in total gifts and endowment assets. Of that, \$78.5 million was written in future planned gifts, \$20.3 million in current gifts (including funded trusts, gift annuities and individual endowments) and \$19.4 million in new assets invested in Fund A.
- New gift plans written during the year totaled 249. In addition, gift planners stewarded over \$60.2 million in previously written plans, in some cases increasing the estimated gift to ministry.

The Foundation exists as a separately incorporated ministry, with a network of 23 regional gift planners, working in 21 partnerships, across the United States. Critical to their work and ministry funding outcomes are the Gift Administration and Financial Services (accounting and investment administration) teams. These teams are the bench strength of the deployed gift planners, providing continuous assistance to donors, beneficiaries and Fund A investors — all this despite limited access to the building due to the pandemic.

The Foundation staff continues to work with donors and beneficiaries to create individual gift plans, administer life income and endowment gifts, distribute terminated gifts and facilitate the sale of marketable assets such as land, homes, commodities and other assets.

- Regional gift planners remain available to:
  - Guide individuals in discerning how to be faithful stewards of their estates and invite them to support ministries, congregations and synods through charitable estate gifts.
  - Assist synods, congregations and related entities in investing endowment funds and other assets in the Endowment Fund Pooled Trust — Fund A, which is structured to provide distributions to support ministry today and into the future, utilizing investments that adhere to the ELCA's social purpose guidelines.
  - Advise church leaders in the development of gift acceptance policies for congregations, which often include gifts to synods.

Thank you for your continued work with the ELCA Foundation.

Lisa Marie Higginbotham  
Regional Gift Planner  
[Lisa.higginbotham@elca.org](mailto:Lisa.higginbotham@elca.org)  
805-910-5048

### ELCA Foundation Regional Partners

ELCA Churchwide Organization	Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service	Lutheran Retreats Camps and Conferences
Southwest California Synod	Pacifica Synod	Lutheran Social Services of Southern California

# Lutheran Social Services of Southern California

## Ministry Update

To my Sisters and Brothers in Christ in the Pacifica Synod:

*Last year, when I brought you greetings for the first time since becoming the President & CEO of Lutheran Social Services Southern California, I looked forward to meeting many of you in person. Well, the last twelve months have been anything but normal. I met many of you on zoom for your conference gatherings, and other meetings, but Covid is still threatening us.*

*However, there is one reality that did not change: our service to the marginalized and struggling women, men, and children throughout Southern California.*

*Below you will find an annual update of what LSS has done since last year. We've had to change some hours of operation, methods of service and deployment of staff. But our clients are still receiving help and hope and moving toward a better and more stable existence.*

*We could not accomplish what we do without your prayers, collaboration, and financial support. Thank you so much for partnering with us as we seek to fulfill Christ's command to love those who turn to us in emergencies.*

*LaShanda Beckwith*

### Area Overview

- **CCLM:** 50% of our shelter clients are employed, and 35% have other forms of income. 70% of the residents have housing arranged when they exit the shelter. Our case management services have increased significantly and are conducted on site in a "safe space" where one-on-one sessions take place. Even though the pandemic has decreased the quantity of clients, the quality of services has increased. We provided 18,102 meals total and distributed 1,684 bags of groceries for 7,132 individuals and families. Our after-school tutoring program has gone online in accordance with the local school district, and our tutors assisted families in obtaining computers and hot spots so their children could keep up with the class, as well as ongoing food access weekly. Our Shelter Renovation continues with the installation of the main roof HVAC, social hall updates and exterior painting, new lighting and drywall, updated breaker boxes and the installation of new exterior gutters. The restoration of our additional properties also continues with the completion of interior renovations like new windows, kitchen cabinets, counters and ongoing exterior landscaping. Select units are also now occupied, as we work to complete final repairs this spring.
- **Orange County** has increased services despite the pandemic. The numbers of clients coming for the food pantry and emergency services like rent/mortgage/security deposits have grown. Our Victims Intervention Program (VIP) for those impacted by abusive relationships and trauma is helping many people get back on their feet, and case management support is available for people throughout

Orange County. We help homeless clients obtain HUD vouchers, assist them in locating housing and in maintaining their residences.

- **Rural San Bernardino County** continued telehealth therapeutic services to most clients, though in person counseling is available in critical cases. Our adult and children's mental health, and child abuse survivor therapy, along with a new youth sexual perpetrator prevention and treatment program, assisted 17,595 individuals and families.
- **Riverside County** offers homeless prevention and rapid rehousing assistance to clients in the community. Over the last year 76 households (111 individuals) were housed, our food pantry and emergency services assisted 226 unduplicated households and 407 duplicated households, and 103 children. Ongoing case management was also provided to clients. A new benefit every Thursday, **Showers of Hope**, allows women and men the chance to bathe. This takes place on the campus of Trinity Lutheran Church, Riverside, the new location of our LSS office.
- **San Diego County** has continued the Talent Search/Upward Bound programs that mentor and support secondary and post-secondary students despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, serving a total of 118 students. Project Hand in Chula Vista supports 600 households each month and distributes 1,200 bags of food to 2,400 adults and children monthly. Our Senior Companion program in Clairemont Mesa makes home visits and telephone calls regularly, checking up on our frail older adult clients to provide companionship and help them remain independent at home. The Kathy Hopper Senior Friendship Center remains closed during the pandemic.



## Partnering in faith

**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 provides a range of investments for individuals, congregations and ministries. We put those investments to work to fund building and renovation loans for congregations and ministries.

**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.



**During the year-long pandemic**, MIF provided assistance to investors who needed immediate access to their funds and to borrowers who needed flexibility with their loan payments. We collaborated with our ministry partner, the ELCA Federal Credit Union, to offer expedited loans for congregations, ministries and individuals, as well as Paycheck Protection Program loans for congregations and ministries to keep employees on the payroll and continue operations.

**Our capabilities and capacity have never been stronger.** At year-end 2020, MIF had 883 loans outstanding, totaling \$596.4 million. Investment obligations totaled \$543.1 million. With total assets of \$773.8 million and net assets of \$218.2 million at year-end 2020, MIF maintains a capital ratio of 28.20 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 care for a world in need. We are honored and humbled to walk alongside you as a trusted partner.

**For more information about MIF capabilities, please visit our website, [mif.elca.org](http://mif.elca.org).**



---

### **MIF at work in the Pacifica Synod (as of December 31, 2020):**

- 19 Mission Investment Fund loans, with a balance of \$11,149,958
- \$10,510,953 in Mission Investment Fund investment obligations

**MIF representative** Joel S. Wudel, Regional Manager, Tel: 773-682-1765; email: [joel.wudel@elca.org](mailto:joel.wudel@elca.org)

# Supporting Those Who Serve

## Now More Than Ever

Portico Benefit Services is a holistic benefits ministry serving those who serve — from rostered ministers and their families to staff at social ministry organizations. We strive to help our members grow their overall well-being.

We could not have predicted this pandemic. But the virtual benefits we've introduced before and after its arrival, the benefit adjustments we've made since, our successful navigation of volatile financial markets, and the consistency of our customer service have made a powerful difference.

During this pandemic, ELCA benefits are helping to lower stress levels, create safer access to health care, and increase financial flexibility — all to strengthen the resilience of those who serve and, by extension, the resilience of this church.



**The Rev. Jeff Thiemann**  
President & CEO

### Building Resilience in 2020

**26%**

#### More Calls to Our Financial Planners

During last year's market volatility and our introduction of target date funds.

**559**

#### Took a Penalty-Free Distribution

Thanks to quick modification of our retirement plan rules for 2020.

**49**

#### Sought Student Loan Help

Through no-cost counseling via our partner, LSS of Minnesota Financial Counseling.

**3,230**

#### Medical Visits Via Text

Through 98point6, our new virtual 24/7 primary health care service — with \$0 copay.

**98%**

#### Satisfaction With New Mental Health Option

Our self-directed online program, Learn to Live.

**10%**

#### Of Members Streamed a Course

On topics like resilience, mindfulness, and beating burnout via Being, our new wellness video platform.

**90%**

#### Very Satisfied

With our Customer Care service — delivered by Portico employees working remotely.

**22**

#### Target Date Funds Introduced

To help members maintain an age-appropriate asset mix over time — and better weather volatility.

**3.1%**

#### Annuity Payment Increase

Received, in these difficult times, by ELCA annuitants during 2021.

# Pacifica Women of the ELCA



Zoom has become a way of life this past year!! Last year I showed pictures of our March Event held at Hope Lutheran in Palm Desert. This year it was on Zoom. Fifteen women were in attendance. Our churchwide staff liaison, Valora Starr, was with us from Chicago and gave an opening Bible study. Then it was a conversation sharing how our churches are still finding ways to support social service organizations during this Covid-19 time. Look for a summary of this information in our next newsletter.

Last year in May we hoped we would be “back to normal” for our November convention. That did not happen and all board members’ terms were carried over one more year. Our Women of the ELCA Triennial Gathering was first postponed from July 2020 to August 5-8, 2021 in Phoenix. Now the Gathering has been cancelled until 2023 – still in Phoenix. We will soon have a “convention” meeting of voting members from 2017 Triennial convention in Mpls to pass constitutional changes to allow virtual conventions. Then we will hold a virtual 2021 convention. If you were registered for the 2020 Gathering you can simply allow your registration to carry over to 2023. If you will be unable to attend the new dates, your registration can be transferred to someone else – or gifted to someone else, or donated to Women of the ELCA, or you can request a refund. Go to [www.womenoftheelca.org](http://www.womenoftheelca.org) for more information.

January 23<sup>rd</sup> Pastor Gloria Espeseth shared her passion, “Bible and Women: The Gospel along with Stumbling Blocks and Hidden Treasures.” Again, on Zoom with about twenty women present. She is a gifted Bible study leader and our time with her was very well spent. We had one woman join us from a PA synod and two from the Grand Canyon Synod. One of our women attended the Zoom Event held by the Grand Canyon Synod earlier in the day and

listened to the author of our current study in the Gather magazine. And very early that same day, Pacific Time, I joined women of the NE Synod for the first portion of their Zoom event!

With our November 2020 convention cancelled, we held our first Zoom Event November 7<sup>th</sup>. Around fifty women joined us that day. We had intended to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of women's ordination so planned this event with that in mind. Pastor Jean Bozeman, the first female seminary professor, was the main speaker. A video from Churchwide Assembly featuring Bishop April Larson, our first female Bishop, was shared. And we had a panel of four female pastors who shared their story about being called as pastors and also why they stayed when they confronted obstacles to women in ministry. The recording of that event is posted on our website, [www.pacificawomen.com](http://www.pacificawomen.com) under News & Events. It is well worth watching including opening and closing devotions, music, and a liturgical hula dance.

As of now, we don't know what our November convention will look like this year. Perhaps vaccination numbers will allow us to meet in person. Or with the churchwide constitutional changes enacted, we may hold a virtual convention. Look to our newsletters and website and Facebook and Pacifica News & Notes to keep up to date.

*All Anew!*

*Eunice Hanson, President*

