

Meeting Minutes Pacifica Synod AMMPARO 4.24.2021

Attendees:

Pastor Karla Halvorson, Pastor St. Mark's Lutheran Church
Deacon Roberta Wall, Pacifica Synod
Bruce Potocki, Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church
Donna Johnson, San Marcos Lutheran Church
Susan Connors, Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church
Susan Osborn, Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church
Terri Robertson, Pacifica Synod
Doris Payne, San Marcos Lutheran Church
Mary Glauch, St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Clint Carney, Survivors of Torture
Pastor Jim Ehrlichman

Opening Prayer by Pastor Karla

Deacon Roberta shared housekeeping notes for the meeting.

Mission Statement:

Pacifica Synod AMMPARO provides advocacy and support services for asylees, refugees, and migrants seeking asylum regardless of country of origin. We seek to work with ELCA congregations and with local and national agencies to assist migrant families in accessing services they may need during and after the hearing process, to conduct fundraisers to assist families during transition, to provide emotional based support such as writing letters to migrants in detention centers, to provide advocacy work with local and national organizations, and to support migrant shelters facilities in the United States and Mexico.

Deacon Roberta shared updates regarding the \$4000.00 ELCA Grant money that was received. Those funds may be used to support individual asylum-seeking families, make visits across the border and to provide scholarships to children who want to go to Lutheran camp. The Matthew 25 Grant money has been used to provide direct services to the Alerte's, our family from Haiti that we are supporting. Members from St Andrews have formed a Support Team. However, many have full time employment and are having difficulty carving out time to dedicate to help the family assimilate. Another challenge is having a Creole language interpreter to help with communication. Roberta mentioned arrangements to get the family vaccinated and enrolled in school have been successful. Anyone interested in helping this family, should contact Roberta.

Bruce Potocki reminded us that at our April meeting, there was a request for us to ask our congregations to consider donating money to support the teacher salary at Madre de Asunta shelter. Several churches followed through with that request. We have subsequently learned

that though we can ask that money be designated for a specific purpose at the shelter, ultimately, they make the decision on how funds will be used to support their shelter based on their priorities.

Deacon Roberta proposed to the group that we will ask the shelter to use donated money primarily for education purposes but they have the option to use it as needed. The group unanimously agreed to that proposal. Pastor Karla suggested that Mary Galvan be invited to AMMPARO meetings so that she could give regular updates on the shelter.

Terri Robertson reported in funds available for AMMPARO. As of March 2021, there has been approx. \$25,600 donated, with \$9000 earmarked for teacher's salary.

Deacon Roberta and **Clint Carney** reported on Lutheran Lobby Day, 5/19/21. The Lutheran Office of Public Policy is a great way to stay updated weekly on business in the legislature and bills on the agenda. During Lobby Day, participants were invited to attend meetings with their legislators to discuss bills in various stages of the legislative process. The bills involved food insecurity, earned income tax credit to include the undocumented, and health care for all.

Clint Carney gave report from SOTI, Survivors of Torture International. They are attending weekly meetings at the Office of Public Policy. There are over 2000 immigrants at the San Ysidro encampment waiting to cross to the US. Shelters are full, so many are on the streets. SOTI is active in psych evaluations on both sides of the border. They have assisted at the Convention Center where more than 1200 children have been reunited with families. The organizations supporting the Center helped keep the children safe, physically and spiritually nourished and provided some structured time with activities.

Deacon Roberta briefly discussed Title 42, the program that allows Border Patrol and US Customs to prohibit people from entering the country who might pose a health risk i.e., covid. This law remains in place. No one is allowed to cross unless there is a fragile medical situation. There needs to be pressure on officials to eliminate Title 42. She also mentioned that Linda Howard from San Clemente started a collection for new clothing and shoes to be given to the Alerte family and the Madre de Asunta shelter. Deacon Roberta shared pilaglobal.org is a group that provides education for children and families impacted by displacement. They are in need of volunteers to tutor. Review their website for detailed information. A trip to TJ is being planned for the week of July 4th to help with refugee tutoring.

Lastly, there is a plea from Pastor Karla and Roberta to consider joining the steering committee as their plates are very full and they could use your help. Jeff has had to leave the steering group to focus on other important immigration issues. Next meeting date Saturday, 7/10/21 at 10:00 am.

A message to all, it is very easy for our congregations to become an AMMPARO Welcoming Congregation. Talk within your community to make it happen.

Closing Prayer by Clint Carney

Helpful Links:

ELCA AMMPARO:

<https://www.elca.org/Resources/AMMPARO#ForSynodsAndCongregations>

Pacifica Synod AMMPARO:

<https://www.pacificasynod.org/about/ministry-teams/pacifica-synod-ammparo-network/>

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services

<https://www.lirs.org/>

Survivors of Torture, International

<https://notorture.org/>

California Lifeline (Phone/Internet Discounts)

Website Link: <https://www.californialifeline.com/en> and

Phone: 1-866-272-0349 (English), 1-866-272-0350 (Spanish), 1-866-272-0356 (Mandarin/Cantonese)

Svc area: California

Eligibility: Must qualify for public assistance programs or be below 135% of federal poverty guidelines (provide copy of paystub or tax return) More information, visit:

<https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/General.aspx?id=2752#qualify>

Description: Financial Help towards cell-phone, home phone, and internet service for low-income persons. Apply online at the site below. If you have questions about your application, or would like an application mailed to you, please email LifelineSupport@usac.org

How to Apply (flyer):

<https://www.lifelinesupport.org/wp-content/uploads/lifeline/documents/How-to-Apply.pdf>

