

Meeting Minutes Pacifica Synod AMMPARO 7-10-2021

Attendees:

Pastor Karla Halvorson- St. Mark's Lutheran Church
Deacon Roberta Wall- Our Savior's LC San Clemente Pacifica Synod AMMPARO, Haitian Bridge Alliance
Pastor Sarah Sumner-Eisenbraun- St Andrew's LC
Kathi Anderson- St Andrew's, Executive Director of Survivors of Torture, International
Guerline Jozef-President, Haitian Bridge Alliance
Mary Campbell- Program Director ELCA AMMPARO
Jaqueline Hanson- Christ Lutheran, PB
Bruce Potocki- Shepherd of the Valley LC
Donna Johnson- San Marcos LC
Susan Connors- Shepherd of the Valley LC
Susan Osborn- Shepherd of the Valley LC
Terri Robertson- First Lutheran/The Table, Pacifica Synod staff
Doris Payne- San Marcos LC
Jill Adachi- San Marcos LC
Margaret Glauch- St. Paul's LC
Pastor Rick Schowalter- Christ Lutheran PB
Joanne Beets- St Andrew's LC
Mary Agnes Smith- St Andrew's LC
Marianne (Kit) Mickelson- Ascension Lutheran
Rev. Maria Santa Cruz
Pastor Karla Seyb-Stockton- Gethsemane Lutheran
Kaye Hambleton- Shepard of the Valley LC
Pastor Jim Erlichmann- St Andrew's LC
Pastor Jim Friedrich- First LC
Cindy Page- St Andrew's LC
Linda Howard- Our Savior LC
Susan Osborn- Shepard of the Valley LC
Rick Fry

Opening Prayer

Deacon Roberta shared housekeeping notes for the meeting including an announcement that the meeting is being recorded. Please consider joining the planning committee. This is a great opportunity to help shape and direct the course of AMMPARO.

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.

Pastor Sarah shared that St Andrew's is supporting 4 new Haitian families that arrived at her church. Mary Agnes Smith, a member of St Andrew's has taken the lead in organizing a team to support the new arrivals. They have created guidelines and a welcome agreement between the church and families. Through Temple Talks and an Angle Tree, which has needs printed on the leaves that church members can take and fulfill are 2 of the ways the church is sharing the message and getting needs met. One of their priorities is to find affordable housing. They are asking anyone who has connections with property managers or knows an owner of an available rental to contact Pastor Sarah. St Andrew's is willing to co-sign on the lease. They estimate they will need \$20,000 to establish housing and get the families financially independent. In the short time that the families have been with St Andrew's, they have received \$6,000 in personal donations to the Haitian Family Support Fund. Pastor Sarah is planning to make a video that can be shared with other congregations to gain additional support. The church is also making arrangements for a baby shower for the 2 pregnant moms. Pastor Rick requested St Andrew's share with this group a prioritized list of needs after they have had time to assess what those might be.

Guerline Jozef, President of the Haitian Bridge Alliance, briefly highlighted Haitian history. She discussed the internal and external violence in Haiti. For 50 years black slaves fought to win freedom but only after many activists and journalists were murdered. Political unrest in the 70's and 80's followed by a catastrophic earthquake in 2010 led to a wave of immigrant migration. It is a complicated process to seek asylum. The Haitian Bridge Alliance is working to change that.

Mary Campbell reported the situation in Central America is grim. Flow of immigrants will continue until political turmoil is addressed. Mary has 2 requests. First, is to network as welcoming congregations and second, to follow Facebook to stay informed on current news. Becoming an AMMPARO Welcoming Congregation is an easy process. Please talk with your congregation and consider taking this next step.

Jackie Hanson commented that finding housing was a huge challenge when trying to settle the Eritrean family that Christ Lutheran is supporting. She also suggested that when choosing a name for the effort to support the new families, it should be one that is nebulous to make it more difficult for anyone with devious intentions to make the connection back to them.

Linda Howard is accepting donations of children's clothing, in all sizes for their Summer of Love clothing drive for migrant shelters.

Pastor Karla suggested that we focus our efforts on St Andrew's for July and August. In Sept she would like attention to be shifted to SOT for their fundraiser, planned to be held virtually on Sept 14th in 2 sessions at 8:00 and 12:00. More information to follow. She also mentioned that scholarships are available to immigrant children for winter camp. Roberta will send the link to the group.

Deacon Roberta shared that she has a 4-page report on national advocacy, discussing support of migrants in our communities. She will send that along with the minutes. On July 17th at 1100 there is a webinar in Spanish addressing xenophobia around migrants. August 19 at 2:00 a webinar is scheduled to give updates on what is happening at the border. She is encouraging churches to partner with St Andrew's to help them with their sponsorship of their new families.

Kathi Anderson reviewed the role SOT is playing in facilitating healing of torture survivors. They provide case managers, medical and psychological evaluations and therapy to their clients. Their needs frequently change. SOT is monitoring border activity. Those coming from Central American countries, Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua come to the US out of desperation, fleeing political unrest. Most asylum seekers come through TX, FL, or NY. Although the San Diego community is welcoming, it has less friendly judges so people move on quickly.

Next Zoom Planning Meeting: August 10th at 1000

Next Zoom Meeting: August 14th at 1000

Closing Prayer

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>