

Pacifica Synod AMMPARO Meeting Minutes for 10-9-2021

Attendees:

Pastor Sarah Sumner-Eisenbraun- St Andrew's LC
Deacon Roberta Wall- Our Savior's LC San Clemente, Pacifica Synod AMMPARO
Pastor Karla Halvorson- St. Mark's LC
Kathryn La Pointe-SD Church of the Brethren, Oasis
Jaqueline Hanson- Christ Lutheran, PB
Doris Payne- San Marcos LC
Linda Howard- Our Savior LC
Joanne Beets- St. Andrew's LC
Donna Johnson- San Marcos LC

Opening Prayer

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- Updates were shared on the Haitian families that St Andrew's is resettling. All five families have moved into stable housing. Two have apts in Golden Hills. One mom with her new born, recently released from NICU is currently housed at St Andrew's. Another family independently is established with the help of grants from PCG (Public Consulting Group, which provides CalWorks Welfare to Work and Refugee Employment Services for CalWorks families in some San Diego counties). The 5th family is living in the Agape House until early 2022 when the house will be demolished in preparation for construction of affordable housing. A baby shower is planned for the Agape family mom. Anyone interested in sending a gift may do so through her Target baby registry. Pastor Sarah thanked Christ PB for an unexpected check for the families and asked all be kept in their prayers. Jackie asked how the families were so quickly established in apts. Catholic Charities has a point person, Beatrice whose primary job it is to find housing for refugees. She is linked with San Diego Urban Rentals. When asked about other needs, Pastor Sarah shared they have access to a car in Palo Alto but need someone to go pick it up and drive it back to SD. Linda mentioned she might be able to do that. She will connect

with Pastor Sarah for more info. Families are waiting for work permits but have essentially transitioned well.

Kathryn La Pointe- Kathryn is a member of the Church of the Brethren, designated as an Historic Peace Church along with the Mennonites and Quakers. Following the teachings of the New Testament, they think of their faith in terms of living in response to God's grace and include traits such as community, service to others and peace. For a typical Sunday service, there are 10-15 people in attendance. They have a part time pastor and volunteer staff. Kathryn gave a power point presentation on their evolution. During May/ June of 2018 when child separation at the borders was taking place, Pastor Bill Jenkins, leader of Safe Harbors a temporary emergency center, reached out to other churches to help with the overflow of refugees they had. Church of the Brethren responded to that call. Fall of 2018, church volunteers provided housing, food, financial support and the Oasis Center was born. Many of the refugees were Haitian. Since then, they have helped 47 people, including 23 children and 4 newborns. They have provided 7,600 bed nights. In addition to shelter they are advocates for this vulnerable, asylum seeking population and strive to honor the dignity and self-determination of their new friends. The Center is there to welcome them not to save them. For more info: <https://oasiscentersd.org/>

Jackie Hanson- Jackie thanked Kathryn for the work she and Oasis is doing. She commented that Pacifica Synod might consider contracting with someone as knowledgeable and experienced like Jackie to lead and coordinate resettlement efforts.

Roberta Wall- Roberta reminded us that the Haitian Bridge Alliance has a Facebook page with the most up to date information. Currently the biggest need is for connections with anyone who can provide legal services. Deportation flights back to Haiti where there are ongoing political and environmental crises have increased. Roberta also shared that the Matthew 25 grant monies have been distributed to 2 Haitian families she and her support group is working with.

Linda requested that notification for upcoming meetings could be sent 2 weeks ahead of time for better planning purposes. That message will be shared with those in the steering group.

Next Meeting Date TBD based on Pastor Sarah's schedule

Closing Prayer by Deacon Roberta

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Johnson

