

Meeting Minutes Pacifica Synod AMMPARO 11-13-2021

Attendees:

Pastor Sarah Sumner-Eisenbraun- St Andrew's LC
Deacon Roberta Wall- Our Savior's LC San Clemente, Pacifica Synod AMMPARO
Jaqueline Hanson- Christ Lutheran, PB
Pastor Karla Halvorson- St. Mark's
Pastor Andreas Walker-Thode- Carlton Hills
Doris Payne- San Marcos LC
Linda Howard- Our Savior's LC
Sue Connors- Shepard of the Valley LC
Kaye Hambleton- Shepard of the Valley LC
Joanne Beets- St. Andrew's LC
Jill Adachi-San Marcos LC
Terri Robertson- First Lutheran, Pacifica Synod staff
Pastor Jim Friedrich- First Lutheran
Winona Garcia- Survivors of Torture
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.

Winona Garcia- Survivors of Torture is a stand-alone treatment center for asylum seekers and refugees. They provide case management and address mental health concerns related to being a survivor of torture. They are offering Thanksgiving meals to their clients and could use help with deliveries in the San Diego area. Their Christmas project involves purchasing gifts for families and the children of clients. If interested in sponsoring a family or giving a gift card to Survivors, they will be happy to do the shopping. If interested in supporting either of these holiday activities, contact Winona at wgarcia@notorture.org

Pastor Sarah- Pastor gave a big THANK YOU to Linda for traveling to Palo Alto to pick up a car for the Agape House family to use. This will make life a little easier for dad to get to work and

provide transportation for their growing family, with a baby due today. As a bonus, there were gifts in the car for the family from Grace Church. One of the other Haitian families has a grant from the Public Consulting Group. They provide 6 mths of rent but are now 18 days away from the end of that benefit. The family including mom, her partner, a 2 yr. old and a baby in NICU, has unsuccessfully searched for more permanent housing. Connections to a sympathetic property manager are needed. Contact Pastor Sarah for any leads. Pastor Bill Raditz in a joint effort with LIRS, is organizing activities around Advent and Epiphany. In addition to making cards for those in detention for the LIRS Hope for the Holidays project, they are writing letters to gov't officials to highlight immigrant challenges. Contact Pastor Bill for more info ratzb@me.com Our Savior's and San Marcos LC also have Hope for the Holidays card making activities planned. Pastor Sarah mentioned a 3-part study being offered on zoom and in person during Advent. This will be led by Pastor Jim Ehrlichman and is an opportunity for congregations to discern their feelings on immigration. An upcoming event on Jan 19th 2022 at Shepard of the Valley and on zoom is an Ecumenical panel presentation involving Catholic, Episcopal and Lutheran churches. Pastor Sarah will be one of the speakers with some of the discussion revolving around the mission at the Convention Center this summer.

Deacon Roberta- Roberta shared that a 589 Form needs to be submitted within 1 year of refugees entering the country. An attorney is not needed to complete the form. Those seeking asylum need to continue to work through that process. Guerline Jozef, President of Haitian Bridge Alliance was awarded the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award. She requested the ceremony be outside the Otay Mesa detention center so that detainees might hear the cheers for her, working for them. The International Rescue Committee and Safe Harbors are trying to find long term housing solutions in San Diego. The Haitian Bridge Alliance is establishing and offering ESL and cultural awareness programs, TPS clinics and Asylum 101 classes. Roberta reported that JFS was seeing 83 people a day in Sept. Most were from Russia, Ukraine and Armenia. Their covid positivity rate was 6.28% dispelling the myth that refugees are bringing covid to the US at alarming rates. She is in need of an attorney to help with her Alerte family's asylum proceedings.

Jackie Hanson- Christ Lutheran has had their Eritrean family for more than 3 yrs. During that time, she has been looking for housing for the family of 5 since the 20-year-old had severed ties with the family many months ago. Jackie finally found a place, with a move in date set for next week but now the 20 yr old is back and the land lord declined to rent it to a family of 6. Their cultural values dictate the family can't be separated. They will continue to live at Christ Lutheran. The quest for housing and prayers for that family continue.

Donna Johnson- San Marcos LC has a member with a connection to an Afghani woman, Fatema, who is asking for help to find a sponsor for her 4 siblings. Fatema's priority is to get her

15- and 19-year-old brother and sister out of Afghanistan but ultimately wants to get the 24 and 29 yr. old to safety in the US as well. They do have an attorney to help with the process but that process can't start until they have designated sponsors. The commitment for sponsorship is for a year. The young adults would be essentially cared for and treated as part of the welcoming family. Please share with your congregations and reach out to family and friends to help save these children. Roberta shared the name of an organization that might be able to help, www.homeforrefugeeusa.org. This group searches to find congregations that might consider housing refugees.

Deacon Roberta- Roberta mentioned that she still has some of the \$4000 grant money that needs to be dispersed by May 2022. She and Pastor Sarah will work together to determine what expenses her congregation had settling St. Andrew's Haitian families for which they may be reimbursed.

Doris Payne- Doris shared an informative article in the Union Tribune about 500 Afghan refugees arriving in San Diego. Muslims are helping Afghans acclimate to life in the US. http://enewspaper.sandiegouniontribune.com/infinity/article_share.aspx?guid=8daf69a6-bbad-45e6-8900-1d783f61d98a

Pastor Karla- Efforts are being made to reopen Friendship Park. Pastor offered St. Marks as a gathering place for border crossing.

Pastor Sarah closed the meeting with prayer and appreciation to the group with a reminder that joint partnerships are important to the work we are all trying to do.

Next Meeting Date: TBD

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Johnson