

# CY2023 & 2024 Program Years @ A Glance

Chapter Report from

## AFRICAN DESCENT LUTHERAN ASSOCIATION (ADLA)

*Los Angeles Chapter News*

To the Southwest California Synod



### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The ADLA Los Angeles Chapter is 1 of 9 such chapters across the country. The Association serves as a collective “voice” for African Americans and those of African descent in the Caribbean who are Lutheran.

*LOCAL MISSION: The Los Angeles Chapter seeks to improve our communities with direct assistance programs, promote the qualities of higher education through scholarships and support the Southwest California Synod and the ELCA with its special agency appeals.*

### MISSION IN ACTION

The 2024 program year began by coordinating and co-hosting with the Southwest California Synod, the 44th tribute to The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This year’s Commemoration and Celebration Worship Service was held on the campus of California Lutheran University (CLU), an affiliate of ADLA!

The Rev. Dr. Wyvetta Bullock, Associate to the Bishop Metro Chicago Synod (and former Executive for Administration, ELCA) served as the keynote speaker – The Preacher of the Hour! This is the 9th consecutive year in which ADLA – Los Angeles has facilitated this synod-wide worship event, which remains the 2nd highest attended synod annual event (whether in-person or virtual). The theme for this year was derived from John 18: 37-38: “What is Truth?”

A gift of \$1,600 was presented to ELCA Fund for Leaders – Federal Chaplaincy Ministries from offerings received. This offering supports ministerial care directed by those who serve this nation through military service. Our Synod and ADLA have received Medallion Donor status as a consequence. Last year, Federal Chaplaincy representatives acknowledged ADLA for its contributions during the 2023 Synod Assembly in Thousand Oaks. Since 2015, ADLA – LA has directed proceeds from the MLK celebration on behalf of the Synod to the following notable programs:

- ✂ First Call Theological Education (2015)
- ✂ Ebola Relief (2015)
- ✂ Synod’s Unaccompanied Minors Initiative (2015)
- ✂ Showers of Blessings (2016)
- ✂ Guardian Angels (2016)

- ✚ TruEvolution – Aids Intervention Services (2016)
- ✚ Guardian Angels (2017)
- ✚ Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Service-IRIS (2017)
- ✚ ELCA Disaster Response (2018)
- ✚ ELCA Disaster Response (2019)
- ✚ ELCA Disaster Response (2020)
- ✚ Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Service (2021)
- ✚ Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Service (2022)
- ✚ ELCA Fund for Leaders - Federal Chaplaincy (2023)
- ✚ ELCA Fund for Leaders – Federal Chaplaincy (2024)

Total distributed offerings to all recipients amounted to **\$20,294.09**.

The month of February triggered ADLA – LA’s involvement once again as co-host with CLU in coordinating its preaching series and musical accompaniment for its 5-week Black History Month celebration. These worship services have been growing week by week with students who are finding joy and togetherness in the “Beloved Community”.

The Beloved Community can also be found as part of our Synod Chapel services. The Chapel is named and dedicated in honor of The Rev. Dr. Nelson W. Trout (former ALC South Pacific District Bishop). ADLA-LA continues to raise funds with a goal of \$25,000 in support of an endowment created to aid seminarians wishing to work in the inner city, like Dr. Trout. Contributions received to date approximate \$9,000. Many of these seminarians are likely to be trained at PLTS.

CLU and The Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (PLTS) are valued agency affiliates of ADLA whose assistance helps further ADLA’s vision!

## **SPECIAL THANKS**

A special thanks goes out to our affiliate churches and university that help form the basis for ADLA Los Angeles’s outreach and service to the community:

- ✚ Another Level Ministries – Los Angeles
- ✚ Ascension Lutheran – Los Angeles
- ✚ California Lutheran University – Thousand Oaks
- ✚ Central – Van Nuys
- ✚ Chapel of Peace Lutheran – Inglewood
- ✚ Christ the Shepherd - Altadena
- ✚ Community Lutheran – Los Angeles
- ✚ First Lutheran – Carson
- ✚ Holy Redeemer - Bellflower
- ✚ Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran – Inglewood
- ✚ Messiah Lutheran – Los Angeles
- ✚ Olivet Lutheran – Hawthorne
- ✚ Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary - Berkeley
- ✚ St. Mark’s Lutheran – Los Angeles

Member congregations came together by ADLA’s invitation for the 2nd ‘End of Summer Gathering’ in August 2023, bringing in worship members from 15 congregations (including 3 Hispanic ministries) in celebration of the summer’s closing and the beginning of the new school year in Christ. The worship and fellowship time was expanded to 5 hours, providing for adequate space and time to get to know each other more fully and to help formulate lasting relations. ADLA has as one of its annual goals to replicate this engagement with the “End of Summer Gathering #3! Many thanks to the Southwest California Synod for its unwavering support of this initiative, its presence in numbers during the service and its financial assistance!

**Necrology – “We Remember...”**

**“Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my end be like His!” Numbers 23:10**

In remembrance of those ADLA Los Angeles Members who have transitioned from God’s Creation to God’s Heavenly Dominion, we lift in name:

- ✚ William Raymond Williams, Another Level Ministries, Los Angeles
- ✚ William (Bill) Beal, Holy Trinity, Inglewood
- ✚ Ruth Hines, Messiah, Los Angeles
- ✚ Lorraine Ingram, Olivet, Hawthorne
- ✚ Darlene Love, Olivet, Hawthorne
- ✚ Simeon Simmons, Messiah, Los Angeles
- ✚ Oscar Willie, Olivet, Hawthorne
- ✚ Betty Wimberley, Holy Trinity, Inglewood
- ✚ Mary Beal, Holy Trinity, Inglewood
- ✚ Estelle G. Beard, Ascension, Los Angeles
- ✚ June Sorrells, Community, Los Angeles
- ✚ Doris Lewis, Ascension, Los Angeles

These members have joined the Church Triumphant, the House with many rooms!

**YEAR-TO-YEAR MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in ADLA has remained relatively stable over the years, despite the two years of social isolation and restricted access emanating from the pandemic. The success of the past years in membership is noted by the accompanying comparisons.

<b>ADLA Membership by Year</b>	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Chapter Goal
	109	111	114	116	110	Campaign closes on April 2024	150

In 2023, 12 members moved to other states, 7 relocated to Atlanta. In 2022, 2023, and 2024 ADLA – LA obtained interstate members residing in the Metro Chicago and Pennsylvania areas along with one member from Spain! ADLA’s mission field is expanding!

## PLANS ON THE HORIZON

ADLA Los Angeles members continue to serve the larger church with participants serving in its 3-levels:

- ✚ Churchwide, Synod and various congregational councils
- ✚ ELCA Taskforces/Committees emanating from the 2019 ELCA Triennial Assembly
- ✚ ELCA Assembly Committees (Memorials), 2023
- ✚ Synod Assemblies (Registration) and project/ministry committees

We extend our heartfelt thanks to those members for allowing The Spirit of Almighty God to guide their steps in service among the ELCA's 3 expressions!

## ADLA – LOS ANGELES' COMMITMENT TO MINISTRY

### **Outreach to the Community**

- ✚ 9th Year hosting God's Work, Our Hands Sunday – providing hygiene and personal care kits to the un-housed on Skid Row, Los Angeles in partnership with Church of the Nazarene, L.A., along with area mobile home sites. Between 500-600 kits are distributed each year. Each kit cost approximately \$20.00.
- ✚ 8th Year supporting Bibles of Hope – providing recovery bibles for inmates in concert with Hope Lutheran Church. \$2,000. This service has been discontinued and a new outlet is being sought.
- ✚ 9th Year contributing to The Ronald McDonald House, Long Beach – offering aluminum pull-tabs collected to help defray the costs of family support to children with chronic illnesses. 116 pounds of pull-tabs submitted. 1,238 tabs per pound.
- ✚ 6th Year of network support to My Friends House, Inc. (501C3) Food Distribution and Nutritional Center, Los Angeles. 9,360 family units, consisting of 2-4 members served. 1,040 volunteer hours, annually. Adopted California State University, Dominguez Hills and Southwest Community College in support of its food pantry and those students that are without permanent shelter. A monthly provision of staples and requested commodities occurs.
- ✚ 5th School Year Backpack Giveaway for desiring students entering the new school year. Up to 1,300 backpacks with school supplies have been distributed.

### **Sponsored Services and Scholarships**

- ✚ Contributed \$3,600 to the ELCA - Robinson/Conway scholarship for seminarians of color.
- ✚ Contributed \$800 to the ELCA - Daniel Payne Scholarship.
- ✚ Established and contributed to the ELCA – Rev. Dr. Nelson W. Trout Endowment \$9,000.
- ✚ Contributes annually to California Lutheran University and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary at \$100 respectively each year. Total contribution \$400.

Total distributed offerings to all recipients amounted to **\$13,800**.

## **Worship and Praise – Evangelism and Outreach**

- ✚ Planned and managed the annual Synod tribute to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (2015-24).
- ✚ Coordinated and produced the virtual 2022 Lenten Journey, involving the ADLA congregations.
- ✚ Identified and coordinated the preaching series and musical accompaniment for the CLU 4/5-week tribute to Black History (2023 & 2024).
- ✚ Maintained a collection of virtual worship experiences on the ADLA website for continuous review and comment. Up to 1,000+ hits annually.
- ✚ Established cohort (age group) ministries among member congregations. Bringing together - through selected events - members by age category to enhance familiarity and to garner a “brotherhood and sisterhood” among those in attendance. Special emphases have been on those 22-39 years of age!
- ✚ Inter-congregational collaboration in communication and information sharing. Intentional support of other planned events by ADLA members.

## **Ecumenical Relations**

Third year coordinating and joining with the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles in sponsoring a Night at Dodgers Stadium with 400+ Lutheran and 800+ Episcopalians in attendance. This fellowship has also been a way of bringing SWCA Synod congregational across the 9 conferences together as Lutherans! ADLA – LA serves as a partner with the Southwest California Synod in this activity’s coordination.

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Note1 – The ADLA Los Angeles officers elected in 2023 for the term 2023-27 are: Carolyn Foster, President, Andrea Barnes-Johnson, Vice President, Thomas McKee, Treasurer and Randall Foster, Recording Secretary (he also serves as Communications/Corresponding Secretary). DN Gwendolyn Jackson remains the Region II Representative.

Note2 – The General Sessions ADLA meetings are held in February, April, June and October of each year, with meeting minutes submitted to ADLA National for reference and follow-up. Meeting minutes can also be reviewed on the ADLA website: [www.adla-la.org](http://www.adla-la.org)

Note3 – Quarterly e-newsletters and e-bulletins were produced and distributed to ADLA members, associates and chapter partners reporting on activities and programs past and pending. A copy of the most recent release accompanies this report.



***Our Faith, Our Community, Our Purpose***