

African Descent Lutheran Association (ADLA) – Los Angeles
General Session Meeting – October 28, 2023
Meeting Summary

Approved – February 24, 2024

Present: President Carolyn Foster, Jeanne Armstrong, Pastor Donald Cook II, Randall Foster, Haundre and Andrea Johnson, Dn Gwendolyn Jackson, Thomas and Kenisa McKee, Mary Shipp, Judith Tutt-Starr, and Minister Keith Youngblood

Excused: Dn Tempie Beaman, Renee and Jeffrey Brandt, Constance (Connie) Chaney, Rev. Chryl Crews, Enid McGraw. Members of HTELC were also attending the Vision and eye-screening event at their congregation. Chapel of Peace members were preparing for the annual NCP dinner at 1st, Torrance.

- I. **Call to Order** – The in-person meeting was called to order at 9:07A with a presidential greeting and an opportunity for those present to acknowledgement themselves and their congregations.
- II. **Prayer for the Day** – Mrs. Kenisa McKee offered the opening prayer and devotions centering on Jeremiah 29:11-13, “I know the plans I have for you... they are intended to build-up and edify!” God’s Plans are eternal, strengthening us in our endeavors and exploits. Seek you 1st the Kingdom of God! God’s plan is better than our plans!
- III. **Agenda** – the agenda was approved as presented: MSC
- IV. **Meeting Minutes – June 24, 2023** were approved with two corrections (Kenisha to Kenisa) and noting Z for Zoom: MSC
- V. **Treasurer’s Report** – written. While the last quarter warranted that significant expenses be incurred, most were attributable to: 1) End of Summer Gathering and 2) Viejas Trip. The beginning balance for the period June 18 – October 20, 2023 was \$7,693.74 and the ending balance was \$3,460.30. Report was rec’d. Tom McKee and Randall Foster consented to meet afterwards to construct a report that would catalogue expenses by event going forward.
- VI. **Regional Representative’s Report** – There were no issues raised by ADLA National that may impact the local Chapter’s as reported by Gwen Jackson. The National Goals remain the same for now and a decision for the location of the next biennial assembly (2025) has yet to be determined. It was mentioned that a ‘formal transition’ between the departing officers and the incoming officers has not yet taken place. The new officers have met and began outlining their respective responsibilities. National VP Minister Keith Youngblood asked Los Angeles whether it was obliged to consider hosting the national assembly in 2025. It was moved but not approved, primarily due to the absence of any budget information from National regarding the obligation and its costs. A request was made to secure the last two biennial assembly’s financial statements to determine the projected costs a chapter might incur.
- VII. **Synod Report** – Rev. Chryl Crews provided her written report highlighting the status of synod authorized worshipping communities (SAWC) and their

progress towards full congregational status. Randall Foster presented her report with commentary (verbalized without permission). ADLA was particularly interested in those congregations that are part of its network, i.e., Another Level. Current SAWCs includes: Iglesia Luterana Santa Cruz, Latinx Paz Lutheran Music and Worship Community, Redimidos, Iglesia Luterana Fe y Esperanza, ADORELA, Another Level, Trinity Lutheran, Fruit of the Spirit, Pueblo de Dios, St. John's Lutheran Church, Central Lutheran Church, and Sharing Hands Deaf Ministry. Those sites listed as "Churches" are starting over again as SAWCs either due to leadership changes or strategic ministry redesign. Discussion ensued concerning the differences in a SAWC and a licensed congregation. The payments of benevolence, filing of SI100, property taxes are an indication of congregational stability or instability (absence thereof). Further discussion included concerns for those sites that remain as SAWC for protracted periods of time without any measurable path forward towards congregational status. Lastly, the discussion ventured into the aging of our congregations, noting that in many places the average age is 80+! The question (while unanswered) was just how long can these Houses of Worship continue with a true 'transformation'?

VIII. **Synod Update** – Youth Coordination - tabled

IX. **ADSPT Report** – written. Jeanne Armstrong provided added observations and comments regarding the 5 cohorts featured in the report 1) 18 years or less, 2) 18-21 years, 3) 22-39 years, 4) 40-64 years and 5) those 65+ years. The latter group just completed its annual trip to San Diego to Viejas Casino and Spa where some 42 participants enjoyed the excitement of 'chance'. Part of the proceeds (\$250) was sent to Hope Lutheran Church, Hollywood to purchase Recovery Bibles for inmates. This is the 9th year being part of this ministry with Hope Lutheran. The 22-39 year old group attended a dinner at Jeanne's house in Inglewood. The group shared their 'Christian walks' and struggles. They authored a list of issues that congregational leaders were asked to address. They asked for a 'safe space' and the ability to fully be members of their congregations with increased responsibilities and engagement. They have a 'mixer' coming up on November 19th inviting all those within their age to attend. The mixer will be held at Simply Wholesome, Inglewood at 1P.

X. **Old Business**

- *ADLA National Goals* – no change. Continue until notified by National of any changes.
- *My Friends House 2 (HTELC)* – New City Parish (NCP) granted MFH#2 \$1,200 for a new refrigerator. HTELC plans to add to this amount and secure a commercial freezer. Family households served have grown from 12 to 62 utilizing the MFH model over the past year. Both sites – MFH#1 and MFH#2 – are gearing up for their respective Thanksgiving turkey giveaways.
- *Western States Gathering at CLU* – tabled
- *End of Summer Gathering* - The event went very well, albeit, we are still experiencing a problem as people commit to coming and fail to

attend. There were 174 registered and 126 in attendance. Food is acquired based on the commitment made by the registrants to attend. Some form of fee structure may have to be used that once one has arrives, the fee is returned. It would be retained if one fails to attend. Further discussion concerning processes to mitigate losses in food purchasing is expected.

- *ADLA National Biennial* – Again, congratulations to Minister Keith for being elected as National VP. His focus on the national level is in the area of membership and the involvement of ELCA African Descent Pastors in ADLA. He is looking for the entire roster of AD Pastors with hopes of reaching out to them. It was suggested that he work with the former membership Chair, Dale Washington, who is a member of the LA Chapter and Rev. Nicolette Penaranda at Churchwide.
- *Dodgers' Night* – This synod event hosted by ADLA obtained 400 pre-purchased tickets for sale. Sixty tickets had to be absorbed, as they were not sold. Each was \$30. The Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles - Bishop John Taylor - has already indicated his desire to repeat this night out with his Lutheran brothers and sisters for 2024. The Episcopal coordinator will be meeting with President Foster in the coming weeks to outline next year's event and ticket sales.
- *God's Work, Our Hands* – backpacks filled with hygiene products, windbreakers, socks, and other needed items for the Fall season were distributed to High Schools and Universities in the vicinity of ADLA congregations. Some 300 were distributed.
- *Viejas Trip* – Good time by all! The HTELC youth will be sponsoring a trip to raise proceeds for their planned trip to New Orleans as part of the 2024 Youth Gathering. While they cannot go to the casino themselves, they are encouraging their parents, friends and relatives to do so (smile).
- *Trout Endowment* – A financial literacy workshop is scheduled for November 4th at Ascension Lutheran by Dr. Jimmie Maggette. Ways in which resources can be acquired during difficult financial times will be discussed along with strategies for doing so. The Trout Endowment presently stands at about \$12K with a goal of \$25K.
- *Eyeglass Collection* – ADLA is working with the Inglewood Lions Club in retrieving new and used eyeglass wear. Collection containers are at each church for ease of collection. Eye exams and eyeglass distribution is taking place today (October 28th) at HTELC. The community is invited. A minimum of 100 eye exams is planned.
- *International Students at CLU* – many international students are remanded to the university during the holidays because they do not have alternative places to go. ADLA members identified the need to bring them into their homes so that they too can enjoy the festivities of the holiday season and be 'blessed by God's people'. It was also stated that upon their arrival in the USA, many often have no one to pick them up from LAX and take them to CLU. Many wait for hours for

an informed guide or University courier. ADLA members were asked to consider helping out in this regard.

- *Update on ADLA's Synod Grant submission* – it was not funded because by co-hosting with CLU it was perceived that the university should have had ample resources to host these three workshops. This was an ADLA event held at CLU and ADLA was responsible for its funding (one half). President Foster raised this matter with Bishop Bos offering clarity. Not sure whether the synod will reconsider its funding decision.

XI. New Business

- *Grown Women/Real Talk* – while postponed due to the synod grant not being funded, it was recommended that when it does occur that it be done so with two sessions in mind; one at CLU and the other among the inner-city congregations, noting transportation as a concern. GWRT was one of three workshops for which the grant was to secure.
- *God's Work, Our Hands* – it was suggested that ADLA consider hosting GWOHs at a different time of the year than the Churchwide timetable. The event may need to take place earlier in the year (August).
- *Viejas Trip 2024* – arrangements for 2024 are being made which may necessitate getting some type of participant count in advance.
- *End of Summer Gathering 2024*– need to work out the fee structure and possibly connect it with Thrivent Action Team grant options (see Judy T-S for details).
- *ADLA Gala* – possibly in 2025
- *Kristal Shipp* – Congratulations to Kristal who is now the WELCA Chair for the Southwest California Synod!
- *My Friends House* – congrats to MFH#1 for receiving the National Nutrition Pantry's Gold (NNP) Award from The Los Angeles Regional Food Bank. This is one of the highest awards a food distributor can receive for personalized service to the community.

Next meeting will be held at Chapel of Peace. Devotion Leader is needed (February 24, 2024). The meeting concluded at 10:55AM

Prepared by
Randy Foster
Randall (Randy) Foster
Recording Secretary