

SECTION 5: REPORTS

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“I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

March 23, 2026

Dear siblings in Christ,

As you gather for your synod assembly, I want to express my gratitude for what you are doing — and have been doing — for this church, *our* church.

In the months since I was installed as presiding bishop, I have been focused on connection. Some of you have heard me talk about what it means to be a connected church. This vision of connectedness grows directly out of one of the three priorities we, as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, have named for this season of our life together.

When we lifted up these priorities, we committed ourselves to them not as abstract ideas but as guiding commitments for how we live and serve as church. As I reflected on them, the third priority stood out with particular clarity: to be a connected, sustainable church, raising the bar together.

That priority has been shaping my thinking and my leadership. It asks not just what we do but how we do it — together, across congregations, synods and the churchwide organization. Connectedness is not a program or a slogan; it is a way of being church that recognizes our shared calling and our shared responsibility. This is not my church. It is yours. It is ours, together. The ministries you carry out in your congregations and synods are not just yours — they are ours together.

Over the next several years, you will hear this priority expressed with greater focus and clarity. In 2026, our emphasis is on connection — strengthening relationships, listening deeply and recognizing how much we depend on one another.

In 2027, you will begin to hear me speak more intentionally about sustainability — how we steward our people, our resources and our structures so that our witness remains strong for generations to come. By 2028, connection and sustainability will come together in a shared language of togetherness, as we more fully live into who God is calling us to be as church.

So, when you hear language about being together, it is about living out the ELCA’s vision of a world experiencing the difference God’s grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation. It matters deeply to me that we know who we are, moving forward as one body, trusting God and one another.

I believe this is how connection is built — not by standing alone but by being church together.

With gratitude and hope,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yehiel Curry', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

The Rev. Yehiel Curry
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

“Yo soy la vid y ustedes las ramas. El que permanece en mí, como yo en él, dará mucho fruto; separados de mí no pueden ustedes hacer nada” (Juan 15:5). 850am-1005

23 de marzo de 2026

Estimados hermanos en Cristo:

Ahora que van a reunirse en su asamblea sinodal, quiero expresar mi gratitud por lo que están y han estado haciendo por esta iglesia, *nuestra* iglesia.

En los meses desde que fui instalado como obispo presidente, me he concentrado en la conexión. Algunos de ustedes me han oído hablar sobre lo que significa ser una iglesia conectada. Esta visión de conexión surge directamente de una de las tres prioridades que nosotros, como la Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en América, hemos nombrado para este período de nuestra vida juntos.

Cuando destacamos estas prioridades, nos comprometimos con ellas, no como ideas abstractas, sino como compromisos que nos guían en cómo vivir y servir como iglesia. Al reflexionar sobre aquellas, la tercera prioridad sobresalió con una claridad particular: ser una iglesia conectada y sostenible, elevando el estándar todos juntos.

Esa prioridad ha estado moldeando mi pensamiento y mi liderazgo. No solo pregunta qué hacemos, sino cómo lo hacemos — juntos, en todas las congregaciones, los sínodos y la organización nacional. La conexión no es un programa ni un eslogan; es una forma de ser iglesia que reconoce nuestro llamado y responsabilidad compartidos. Esta no es mi iglesia. Es de ustedes. Es nuestra, juntos. Los ministerios que llevan a cabo en sus congregaciones y sínodos no son solo suyos —son nuestros juntos.

Durante los próximos años van a escuchar esta prioridad expresada con mayor enfoque y claridad. En 2026, nuestro énfasis está en la conexión: fortalecer las relaciones, escuchar profundamente y reconocer cuánto dependemos unos de otros.

En 2027 comenzarán a oírme hablar con más intención sobre la sostenibilidad: cómo cuidamos a nuestra gente, nuestros recursos y nuestras estructuras para que nuestro testimonio siga siendo fuerte para las generaciones venideras. Para 2028, la conexión y la sostenibilidad se unirán en un lenguaje compartido de unidad, mientras vivimos más plenamente lo que Dios nos está llamando a ser como iglesia.

Entonces, cuando escuchen lenguaje sobre estar juntos, este tiene que ver con vivir la visión de la ELCA de un mundo que experimenta la diferencia que la gracia y el amor de Dios en Cristo marcan en todas las personas y la creación. Es sumamente importante para mí que sepamos quiénes somos, avanzando como un solo cuerpo, confiando en Dios y en los demás.

Creo que así es como se forja la conexión: no estando solos, sino siendo iglesia juntos.

Con gratitud y esperanza,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yehiel Curry', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

El Rvdo. Yehiel Curry
Obispo Presidente
Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en América

Bishop Nagler's Report to the Pacifica Synod – 2026

“Wayfinding”

For those who were able to attend one of our Regional Gatherings, you already know about Polynesian navigators called ho'okele wa'a, or “wayfinders.” These ancient mariners studied with their ancestors, learned the stars, and paid careful attention to the wind, waves, clouds, and wildlife to find their way from home islands to the land we now call Hawai'i.

I see these voyagers as guides for us today as we navigate uncharted waters. We too must listen to our ancestors, especially those who persevered through oppression. We must keep our eyes on our North star, Jesus of Nazareth. We are also called to pay close attention to the signs all around us, and we must learn to trust each other.

God's call is specific. God has called us to be the Lutheran witness in this part of the world at this time in history. We are the ones called to venture out from the familiar to the unknown. Good news! The One who called us goes with us and will be with us always, to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:20)

Congregational Support and Cooperative Ministry Communities

The primary function of the synod staff is to support the work of congregational ministry. Congregations are the place where the gospel is preached, the sacraments are shared, and disciples are formed. What has become increasingly clear is that the model of congregational ministry that we have known is struggling. The financial resources do not match the costs. Our leaders are often frustrated, and some are even burning out.

We are exploring other models for congregational ministry that preserve the autonomy and integrity of individual congregations while offering shared staffing for pastoral care. One model that we are launching this year is Cooperative Ministry Communities (CMC). Congregations are invited to share pastors and deacons who will work as a team to address various pastoral care needs. They will identify and train local lay leaders to work with them on preaching, teaching, worship leading, and visitation.

This will require a mindset shift for our membership. No longer would a congregation have one pastor (either full or part time), but they would share a team with other congregations. The team approach would increase the variety of gifts and skills for mission, help avoid burnout, and provide a livable wage for the rostered leaders while lowering the staff costs for each participating congregation.

Synodically Authorized Ministers (SAM)

A critical component to cooperative ministry model is the identification, training, and support of synodically authorized ministers. SAMs are lay people who are trained to do various ministry tasks, authorized by the Bishop, and supervised by local rostered ministers. SAMs could preach sermons, lead worship, preside at the communion table, and visit people in the hospital or who are homebound. Some SAMs might do all of

these things while others would only do one or two of them. It would depend on the calling, interests and skills of the lay leader.

SAMs are already an active part of the ELCA in other synods where there is a lack of rostered leaders to care for congregations. Our goal is to lean into this approach because of the multiplication effect for mission that having more trained leaders provides. Martin Luther called on the church to recognize the “priesthood of all believers”. He claimed that all baptized Christians are ministers. I am convinced that God is calling us to live into this reformation truth today.

More information about the training programs will be made available in the coming year. The bishops of Region 2 are working together to create a program that has both shared elements and features that are specific to each synod. We all agree that this vital model for ministry is needed to support our congregational life.

Welcome Center

These have been especially challenging times for recent immigrants to the United States. Since our synod includes the busiest border crossing in the world, we have seen what our new neighbors have had to endure. Scripture is unequivocal about the calling to welcome the stranger and to provide for the “sojourner” in your land.

Many of us have shared a dream to open a Welcome Center for immigrants where their physical, legal, emotional, and spiritual needs could be met. Therefore, it is with joy and deep gratitude that I announce the inauguration of our new center in San Diego!

Our Savior Lutheran Church will be the host site for a new ministry of the Pacifica Synod. They have called a new pastor, the Rev. Perla Flores to serve them half time. The other half time will be a synod call to launch the Welcome Center. Pr. Flores will work with Pra. Maria Santa Cruz to meet with other non-profits and agencies currently serving the immigrant community to discern how our new venture can best fit into an overall plan to meet the needs of our immigrant neighbors. As they identify what is the highest and best use of our time and resources, we will share it with the synod and ask for your support. We will need volunteers, prayer partners, and financial contributions to make this mission a reality

Long Range Financial Planning

When the ELCA was founded in 1988, the synod operated almost solely on mission support from congregations. This was the financial model of all 65 synods. It mirrored the way in which local congregations funded their mission from the offering plate.

Now we know that congregations need more than the donations of their members to fund their mission. Rental income, investments, and endowments are needed to operate with a balanced budget. The same is true for the synod.

A significant portion of our annual budget comes from investment income derived from various sources, but chiefly from the sale of properties. I am deeply grateful to the finance team that we have in place and for those who have served in this capacity

previously. Their work has made it possible for us to conduct synod business and explore new growing edges like expanded Latino ministries, anti-racism work, and new mission models like the Table in Fullerton.

While we have adapted our financial plan to address this shift from offerings to investments, we know that we need both to survive. The contributions from congregations and individuals are critical to the work that we do together. We have maintained a 51% pass through contribution of our mission support to the churchwide expression of the ELCA. We continue to send another 8% to other ministries beyond the synod portfolio. This means that just over 40% of every dollar we receive in mission support is available for the work of the synod. The rest of our funds come from these other sources.

Our Synod Treasurer, Allen Easley, Terri Robertson, and Adam Palmer have created some simple charts that describe how our synod funds are invested and allocated.

We do not know if there will be more closures or if there are, if those funds will come to the synod. However, we expect that there will be more funds for us to manage. I have asked our financial team to explore models for our future that would offer financial stability for the synod for the next few decades.

Congregation Update

This past year we had one congregation disaffiliate from the ELCA and another congregation begin in the Pacifica Synod.

The Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii had its second disaffiliation vote on February 15th, 2026. The reason for this decision was a fear that future constitutional changes of the ELCA would put their autonomy and property in jeopardy. This is a completely false idea, but one that is being spread by online videos by anti-ELCA groups. We are committed to a Lutheran witness that welcomes all God's children on that island and will eventually start a new ministry.

We celebrate with Bethlehem Arabic Lutheran Church which began services and outreach to the Arabic speaking community of El Cajon. Pastor Adham Alaraj, born in the original Bethlehem in Palestine, is off to an excellent start. He will serve St. John Lutheran Church part time while beginning this new ministry. We are grateful for the people of St. John who have welcomed this new ministry to their campus.

Gratitude

We are blessed with an amazing synod staff team! It is a joy to work with such a faithful and fun group of people. Each of them puts in many more hours than what is on their job descriptions. They do so out of a commitment to the gospel and our common mission.

I am grateful for our synod council ably led by Jeff Cours. This group asks tough questions, explores options, and moves forward boldly. They are not a rubber stamp committee of anyone's ideas. They serve this synod faithfully.

I am grateful for my family and friends who understand and support my crazy travel schedule and time away. They care for me and the work that we do as the Pacifica synod.

Finally, I am grateful for the privilege and honor of serving as your bishop. This call has its joys and sorrows, but it is always deeply meaningful. The learning curve is steep and never stops. For mistakes that I've made, I ask your forgiveness. For your prayers, words of encouragement, and unfailing support I say, "thank you"!

**Pacifica Synod ELCA
Ministers of Word and Sacrament
With Roster Date**

Adachi, Hitoshi 06/26/2010
 Aden, Charles 06/29/1997
 Ajer, Richard 06/07/1985
 Alaraj, Adham 12/13/2025
 Allen, Nathaniel 02/08/2015
 Allen, Terry Tuvey 02/21/1993
 Allert, Beverly 12/01/1974
 Anderson, Mark 01/01/1977
 Anderson, Matthew 03/23/2013
 Anderson, Stephen 03/12/2022
 Awbrey, Steven 08/03/1986
 Baesler, Ronald 04/04/1976
 Barber, David 06/20/1971
 Baynton, Emily 10/07/2023
 Bell, Jake 06/16/2001
 Bengtson, William 04/02/1967
 Benson, Natalie 05/24/2025
 Bentz, Sandra 06/01/2000
 Bieber, Paul 09/23/1990
 Bieghler, Steven 06/07/1987
 Black, Paul 06/08/1975
 Borbon, Manuel 06/13/2020
 Bork, Robert 11/22/2015
 Bowen-Waring, Jaz 12/17/2022
 Boye, Karin 12/14/1986
 Brown, Jenifer 01/25/2025
 Bullock, James 08/11/1963
 Buma, Christine 03/17/1985
 Bunge, John 06/26/1978
 Burke, Dale 08/13/1972
 Cansino, Mark 01/05/1985
 Caudill, Kenneth 06/02/1963
 Chambers, Beulah 06/21/2025
 Chen, Betty 11/22/2009
 Chen, David 12/30/1964
 Chen, Thomas 03/25/1984
 Chin-Cheleden, Keegan 12/14/2025
 Christenson, Kurt 08/13/1989

Corneliusson, Cheryl 06/16/1991
 Crawford, Jerry 06/17/1972
 De La Cruz, Christina 09/04/2021
 Donald, Mark 05/18/2002
 Doolittle, Jonathan 07/16/1994
 Dunsworth, Catherine 05/14/2016
 Duttera, Margaret 06/27/1982
 Edmondson, Timothy 06/10/1990
 Egenes, Jay 02/15/2009
 Egertson, Glen 07/28/2001
 Eichler, Timothy 09/16/1990
 Embree, John 08/25/1974
 Enriquez, Elena 07/15/2023
 Erlenbusch, W. Daniel 06/26/1977
 Espeseth, Gloria 09/20/1984
 Finck, Murray 06/29/1975
 Flohr, Anke 05/15/1988
 Foxworth, Brian 03/21/2010
 Freiberg, Shane 07/26/2008
 Freistedt, Robert 05/15/1960
 Friedrich, James 08/14/1977
 Fry, Richard 09/14/2012
 Garcia, Jennifer 12/18/2021
 Geikow, Ronald 04/28/1979
 Gentile, Christopher 06/18/1989
 Goellrich, Thomas 06/24/1990
 Gray, M. Laurel 05/28/1956
 Grindberg, Kathryn 02/23/2008
 Hailu, Solomon 10/20/1997
 Hale, James 06/03/1973
 Hall, Elwood 06/22/1977
 Halvorson, Karla 12/15/2007
 Hand, Lawrence 06/13/1982
 Harman, William 01/04/1967
 Hendrickson, David 07/16/2016
 Hodgson, David 06/03/1973
 Holmerud, Mark 11/18/1984
 Holtz, Eugene 09/30/1962
 Hong, Hyunho 12/13/2010
 Hormann, Phyllis 07/29/1995
 Jensen, Steven 06/23/1973
 Johnson, Darin 11/22/1997

Johnson, Donald	05/02/1963	Mooney, Robert	10/22/1983
Jones, Cynthia	07/27/2019	Myers, Donovan	05/21/1952
Jorstad, David	01/05/1986	Nagler, David	01/30/1993
Kieffer, David	08/04/1984	Nelson, Jeffrey	08/25/1985
Kleiber, Margrethe	08/22/1993	Nelson, Samuel	02/25/2018
Knudson, John	07/27/1958	Nguyen, Minh-Hanh	08/08/1999
Kozak, Darryl	07/23/2006	Nielsen, Anne-Grethe	11/06/1991
Kraft, H. Ivor	06/11/1972	Norman, William	08/29/1965
Krogstad, Kim	08/12/1984	Olivar, Deogracias	01/23/2011
Kuan-Yang, Michelle	07/21/2024	Olson, Dell	06/19/1966
Kupka, David	06/01/1966	Olson, Frances	11/19/1988
Lackey, Russell	07/29/2001	Olson, Linda	08/09/1997
Laherty, Dennis	06/05/1975	Oltman, Brian	09/30/1990
Lape, Stephanie	04/12/2015	Orris, Glenn	06/14/1997
Larson, Paul	05/21/1958	Parker, Karen	09/10/1978
Lee, Simon	03/08/1981	Parmeter Dyer, Carole	05/26/2013
Licht, Kenneth	06/18/1967	Patten, Julie	05/22/2021
Listug, Cliff	06/19/1966	Patterson, Roger	07/09/1983
Lloyd, Brianna	02/20/2022	Perry, Steven	06/03/1979
Lloyd, Scottie	08/07/1983	Peterson, Ruth	10/06/1991
Lohrmann, Marcus	10/14/2017	Pike, James	06/25/2005
Lohrmann, Rebekkah	02/22/2015	Puccio, Ken	11/13/1977
Lopez, Charles	09/28/1975	Raaen, Daniel	06/26/1994
Lubs, Frederick	06/20/1976	Radatz, William	06/06/1971
Luehr, Catherine	06/06/2009	Radius, Lesley	12/16/2001
Lund, Kinndlee	02/29/2012	Reeder, Rachel	01/07/2024
Lundblad, John	07/27/1969	Refera, Berhanu	06/12/2016
Lunn, John	06/07/1990	Rennegarbe, Ronald	09/09/1979
Marohn, Karen	04/27/2003	Retamoza, Manuel	09/17/2004
Martyn, Richard	06/13/1976	Reynolds, David	05/16/1962
Mason, Timothy	05/25/1991	Rierson, Richard	06/04/1972
Matoush, Joseph	06/06/1974	Riggs, Charles	07/28/1974
Mattson, David	06/26/1987	Roberts, Marda-Ruth	08/23/1992
McGlynn, Amanda	11/21/2021	Roessler, James	01/13/1974
McGlynn, Cole	11/21/2021	Rollefson, Richard	08/01/1980
Meeks, Tomas	07/08/1973	Rufsvold, Victoria	05/23/1999
Mehl, Raymond	06/09/1957	Sabbithi, Jayaprakash	02/08/1988
Menke, Wesley	11/30/2014	Saenz, Alicia	06/10/2023
Miller, David	06/07/1970	Santa Cruz, Maria	01/23/2000
Miller, Gary	05/05/1968	Scheer, Anton	07/30/2000
Miller, Keith	06/23/1996	Schoenrock, James	10/10/1973
Moody, John	04/15/1972	Schowalter, Richard	06/04/1978

Schultz, Jennifer	08/04/1996
Severa, Kenneth	06/01/1987
Seyb-Stockton, Karla	09/04/1988
Sharon, Gerald	10/28/2019
Shaw, Jennifer	01/31/2016
Sheets, Benjamin	01/20/2008
Shonk, Ronald	03/20/1967
Snyder, William	07/10/1977
Stienstra, Bradley	08/31/1975
Sumner-Eisenbraun Sarah	07/01/2007
Sundry, Charles	05/31/1965
Sweetman, Sherry	03/18/1979
Symons, Luther	01/11/1998
Taylor, Andrew	08/10/1986
Tuohino, Kent	03/06/1988
Vadis, Bohdan	06/22/2003
Vevia, Richard	06/26/1981
Vogelgesang, Linda	05/19/2002
Walker-Thode, Andreas	01/26/1996
Waltz, Kathy	07/21/1996
Watland, A. Joris	01/05/1968
Waworuntu, Robert	12/29/1985
Wenger, David	08/11/1963
Winick, Mark	03/12/1978
Witt, Carl	06/26/1977
Wolter, Keith	10/21/1984
Zahnow, Jennifer	02/04/2006
Zarate, Juan Ramon	05/18/2013
Ziehl, Laura	08/30/1997
Zurcher, Kathryn	07/12/2006

**Pacifica Synod ELCA
Ministers of Word and Service
With Roster Date**

Barker, Jennifer	09/14/2024
Baynton, John	08/16/2025
Bugaj, Mindy	07/09/2017
Darrow, Betty	02/13/1966
Decker, Georgia	06/08/1986
Deming, Phillip	06/29/1996
Fisher, Taflin	02/23/2003
Lussier, Brenda	07/12/2025
Martyn, Barbara	12/09/2001
Prechel, Lynne	10/28/2007
Pysz, Daneen	05/05/2024
Schmitt Ajer, Margaret	06/15/1996
Sensmeier, Randall	08/01/1971
Sumner-Eisenbraun, Kevin	06/21/2009
Wall, Roberta	08/23/2015

**Full Communion Partners
Invitation to Serve**

Jasmine Bostock, Episcopal
Maluhia, Waianae, HI
Carlos Correa, Reformed Church
The Welcome Ministry, El Cajon
Kristie Grimaud, United Methodist Church
Spirit of Joy, Ramona
Diana S. Gultom, HKBP
ELCA Batak Lutheran Church, Redlands
Gloria Imamura, United Church of Christ (UCC)
Prince of Peace, Honolulu
Stuart Swann, Episcopal
Spirit of Peace, Big Bear City

CHANGES TO SYNOD ROSTERS SINCE 2025 ASSEMBLY

WORD AND SACRAMENT ROSTER

RECEIVED BY ORDINATION AND CALL: TO:

Natalie Benson	05.24.2025	King of Glory, Fountain Valley
Bea Chambers	06.21.2025	Pastor, Shepherd of the Desert, Joshua Tree
Adham Alaraj	12.13.2025	Pastor, Bethlehem Arabic, El Cajon
Keegan Chin-Cheleden	12.14.2025	Associate Pastor, Christ, San Diego

PASTORS RECEIVED FROM OTHER SYNODS BY CALL: TO:

Tony Scheer	01.16.2026	Pastor, Incarnation, Poway
Hannah Bergstrom de Leon	01.26.2026	Interim Pastor, Carlton Hills, Santee

NEW CALLS WITHIN SYNOD:

TO:

Stephanie Lape	04.07.2025	Term Pastor, Cross & Crown, R. Cucamonga
Russell Lackey	08.17.2025	Pastor, Mission, Laguna Niguel
Jennifer Zahnow	09.08.2025	Pastor, Good Shepherd, Buena Park
Jonathan Doolittle	10.01.2025	Interim Pastor, All Saints, San Diego
Cate Luehr	02.01.2026	Candidacy Coordinator, Pacifica Synod
Sandra Bentz	03.01.2026	Interim, LC of the Master, Corona del Mar
Stephanie Lape	04.07.2026	Pastor, Cross & Crown, Rancho Cucamonga

CURRENTLY ON LEAVE FROM CALL OR DISABILITY

Cynthia Jones	11.16.2025
Andreas Walker-Thode	11.24.2025
Wesley Menke	03.31.2026

Continuing Disability:

Roger Patterson	07.17.2012
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PASTORS WHO RETIRED:

Karin Boye	05.01.2025
Tim Edmondson	07.01.2025
David Jorstad	07.01.2025
Paul Bieber	09.01.2025
Glen Egertson	01.01.2026
Dennis Laherty	01.12.2026
Hitoshi Adachi	03.21.2026

RETIREED PASTORS RECEIVED

FROM:

Peter Pettit	04.16.2026	Southeastern Iowa Synod
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PASTORS TRANSFERRED TO ANOTHER SYNOD: TO:

Laura Schwerin	08.18.2025	Oregon Synod
Moses Barrios	02.01.2026	Metro DC Synod
Michael Schneider	12.18.2025	North Carolina Synod

DECEASED, RESIGNED OR REMOVED FROM THE ROSTER

Bruce Craft	07.02.2025	Deceased
Kenneth Dale	09.09.2025	Deceased
Patrice Nordstrand	11.01.2025	Deceased
Milo Ken Anderson	12.24.2025	Deceased
Carol Worthing	05.04.2026	Deceased

PACIFICA CANDIDATES APPROVED FOR CALL

ASSIGNED

Grace Lee	07.10.2025	Pacifica Synod
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WORD AND SERVICE ROSTER

RECEIVED BY ORDINATION AND CALL:

Brenda Lussier	07.12.2025	Deacon, Trinity, Riverside
John Baynton	08.16.2025	Deacon, Hope, Palm Desert

DEACONS WHO RETIRED:

DECEASED, RESIGNED OR REMOVED FROM THE ROSTER

Mary Stohlman	01.30.2026	Deceased
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PACIFICA CANDIDATES APPROVED FOR CALL

ASSIGNED

FULL COMMUNION PARTNERS

NEW INVITATION TO SERVE

TO:

Kristie Grimaud	09.01.2025	Pastor, Spirit of Joy Ramona (UMC Pastor)
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ELCA Church Council Member Report to Pacifica Synod Assembly April 2026

I am honored to be serving as Pacifica Synod's ELCA Church Council Representative, having been elected for a 6-year term at our 2025 Synod Assembly last May. The ELCA Church Council serves as the ELCA churchwide organization's board of directors and guides the church in faith, justice, and service between meetings of a churchwide assembly (which takes place every 3 years). It is comprised of 4 officers, the chair of the Conference of Bishops and 32– 45 individuals elected by the Churchwide Assembly. There also are nine liaison synod bishops, one from each region, who serve as liaison members and advisory members to the Church Council.

In addition to attending Church Council meetings at least 4 times per year (both in-person and online) to address social issues, governance, and ministry in the ELCA, I feel an important part of my role is to help connect those in our synod with the important work and vision of the ELCA. We are a connected community – congregations, synods, and the Churchwide expression of our church.

Church Council members also serve on various other committees and teams. I also serve on the Christian Community & Leadership (CCL) Committee, which focus on evangelism, diversity, youth engagement, and leadership development. I am also serving as a member of the ELCA Audit Committee.

Since last Fall, we've had three Church Council meetings (one in-person in October that was followed by the installation of Presiding Bishop Curry, and two online in November and April). In addition, we gathered for a Church Council retreat near Chicago in March. This retreat provided connection, leadership development, worship, learning, team building, and time for prayer and creativity. I found that this group of leaders in our church to be welcoming, friendly, wise, and a gift to be in community with. Our Church Council is made up of a wide variety of very gifted, faithful, and passionate leaders from across the ELCA. I am encouraged by and hopeful in the diversity of those I'm serving with and inspired by what we share in this community.

This is an exciting time for the ELCA, especially with the election of Presiding Bishop Curry and Secretary Mills at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. New perspectives help us evaluate our current practices and envision our ministry together. Bishop Curry has shared that our priority area over the next three years is "A Connected, Sustainable Church: Raising the Bar Together" and we are focusing on three focal points that will guide our work through the next churchwide assembly in summer 2028. These are:

2026 – Connection

2027 – Sustainability

2028 - Together

I'm still getting my feet wet in this role and appreciate your prayers. Please also pray for our ELCA staff and leaders, as we all follow the Spirit's lead in the work we do on behalf of this church in our communities and beyond. I will continue to share updates with our Synod Council and Synod Assembly. I invite you to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

In Christ,

Terri Robertson

terri.robertson@elca.org

A Few Observations and Thoughts from DEM Tom Goellrich ...

In the name of Jesus, grace and mercy and peace to all!

As I travel around our incredible synod, I am asked (on occasion), what are the characteristics of missional churches. There are many thoughts and opinions and long lists describing missional churches. I prefer to break it down to four points:

- ❖ Context – Understanding to be present and real where we live.
- ❖ Communal – Sharing with others a common story and continuing to take part in that story.
- ❖ Innovation – Embody in new ways that which travels to positive change.
- ❖ Vision – Pulls people toward the future that God is bringing to fruition.

Missional churches make a major shift from being **attractional** (drawing people to the church building) to going into the community to meet people where they are.

A call to all congregation leaders! If you feel trapped as a congregation. You know, that feeling that you find yourself in the proverbial rock and a hard place. I encourage you to get your hands on a book titled: *The Adept Church* (F. Douglas Powe, Jr.). Yes... it is available on Amazon. ☺

When I return from sabbatical and some vaca time in mid-September, I will be leading conversations around the themes of this book and working with ministries in developing action plans. We will move from theory to practical action! Watch for upcoming details.

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A few examples of Missional activity in our synod .....

- ❖ **The Border Church/La Iglesia Fronteriza** – Every Sunday – Check with P. Manuel and P. Sarah (St. Andrew, San Diego) and P. Maria (Synod Office)!
- ❖ **Bethlehem Arabic Lutheran Church** – Check with P. Adham as they are welcoming new people almost weekly!
- ❖ **St. John Lutheran Church** – Check with P. Adham as they are experiencing new energy on their campus!
- ❖ **River of Hope LC** – Check with P. Steve (Interim) as they look towards energy that comes with probable relocation and transitioning with new pastoral leadership! All while new people are joining the ministry.
- ❖ **Our Saviour's, St Luke's, and Our Redeemer** – Check with Pastor Luther and Pastor Hyunho as they they start with our first Co-op (This Pentecost Sunday)!
- ❖ **And so much more .....**

**On a personal note ...** A shout out to my spouse, Susan! She is retiring from teaching at the end of May. She has taught in Simi Valley, CA; Columbus, OH; and for the last 28 years in La Habra, CA. A total of 42 years in the profession where she advocated for students, particularly the students and families on the margins. Through the years she filled roles as a classroom teacher, reading specialist, coach, assistant principal, principal and back into the classroom (her first love) to teach in the same grade level with our youngest daughter. I am grateful to the Pacifica Synod Council for granting me a sabbatical time this summer wrapped with some vacation time. I will be retuning to the office in mid-September, eager to hit the ground running. I include a shout out to my synod staff colleagues who will be supporting me during these days!

To all members of the synod:

With great respect, I write to inform you of my activities during the year 2025.

I feel very blessed to have the opportunity to work with a great team. This team is made up of the Bishop and all the staff. The unconditional support of each one is a great blessing to me. I have learned from all the experiences I have had. At times I have felt a great weight due to the great responsibility I feel in my position. It is not easy, but it is not impossible either. Being able to represent such a vulnerable community in these times requires a great deal of commitment and dedication. Giving Latino ministries the confidence to participate in different events causes great stress, as some have had bad experiences due to the way they have been treated.

In the month of August 2025, we had the first meeting at the synod office with pastors who are serving in Latino ministries. After that, we had 4 more meetings with lay leaders and Latino pastors in different locations. These meetings were held to inform the leaders about events that would take place in the future, and at the same time, to listen to their concerns, doubts, and ideas. Also, to explain to them the importance of their participation in the events.

In November, we had the first coaching workshop at the synod offices with the participation of 4 congregations from our synod, one for southwest synod and 3 people from the quaker church. We have one Latina lay leader who's in charge of organizing people before and after coaching workshops. We also started Voz Latina, a newsletter to inform about all events that happens in our different Latino Ministries in our Synod. One Latina Pastor oversees this effort.

We had another event with last February in San Diego, this was a great event. The rector of PLTS was present as well as 33 lay leaders and 4 Latino pastors. We heard their concerns. After this event, we realize that its more work to do. I'm very thankful for Pastor Ruben Duran who work with me organizing each event. Rev. Ruben Duran is a retired pastor who has a contract from our Synod to work specifically with me to equip lay leaders.

We have plans to continue giving tools and resources to pastors and their leaders. During this time, I have had different experiences, each with its own importance. I'm part of a team with the Episcopal Dioceses who have a shelter for woman and children's in Tijuana, Mexico.

I also attended to a various meetings including going to Tucson, AZ to visit the border of Mexico. This committee calls: Sembrando (planting)in the Margins. The idea is to see the different challenges in each border of USA.

I also go to preach at Border Church, on the USA side as well as on the Mexico side. I also continue preaching in different congregations when I get an invitation. I participated in different protest to speak in favor of those who are detained by ICE.

We formed our Latino Strategy Team with two lay leaders and two pastors.

I have more dreams and ideas to do. Pastor Ruben Duran and I continue meeting to plan more events soon. I'll continue praying that God keeps guiding me to keep running the race.

***Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Philippians 3:12.***

Blessings to all,  
Pastora Maria Santa Cruz  
ATTB for Latino Ministries

## Assembly Report from Pr. Cate Luehr- Candidacy Coordinator

Currently, there are seventeen individuals in the Pacifica Synod actively engaged in the candidacy process. This group spans a wide range, from those just beginning to discern their calling to serve as Deacons or Pastors, to those who have completed their studies and are now awaiting their first call. The diversity within this group is a beautiful reflection of the Body of Christ in all its richness.

These candidates are entering a season of transition, as the church, in its traditional form, undergoes significant change. They do so with the deep understanding that whatever their future path in Rostered Ministry holds, it will evolve. I continue to be deeply impressed by their courage and faith as they embrace this uncertain future, walking boldly with Christ into the ministry to which they have been called.

Similarly, the ELCA Candidacy process is in a time of transition as well. This multi-year Process is now in the test phase with several Pilot Synods. I look forward to what the wisdom of my colleagues in other synods provide in the every-changing landscape of ELCA Candidacy and Faith Formation.

Since last Synod Assembly, I am proud to announce that five people have been moved from Candidate to Rostered Leader.

Pr. Natalie Benson

Pr. Bea Chambers

Dcn. Brenda Lussier

Pr. Adham Alaraj

Pr. Keegan Chin-Cheleden

Also at the Time of writing this article Pacifica Synod has 2 candidates who are Approved Candidates for Word and Sacrament Ministry in the ELCA and are awaiting Ordination, Perla Flores and Grace Lee.

Thank you also to Pr. Cyndi Jones who finished her tenure on the Candidacy Committee in January. Pr. Jones has been an integral part of the Candidacy Committee for many years and I thank her for her commitment to our Candidates. I would like to again thank Carol Youngman, the Pacifica Synod Executive Assistant for Candidacy, Mobility and Roster Management who knows all there is to know about the logistics of this important work.

Lastly, if you or anyone in your congregation is discerning Rostered Ministry, or just wants to know more about the process, please reach out to me. This is HANDS DOWN my favorite part of this job; having conversations with people who feel a call or an inkling that this might be the ministry to which God is calling them.

Respectfully Submitted

-Pr. Cate Luehr

Pacifica Synod Candidacy Coordinator

[cateluehr@pacificasynod.org](mailto:cateluehr@pacificasynod.org)

## **PACIFICA SYNOD CANDIDATES**

### **PACIFICA CANDIDATES ORDAINED SINCE SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2025**

|                           |                                       |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Rev. Adham Alaraj         | St. John's/Bethlehem Arabic, El Cajon |
| Dn. John Baynton          | Hope, Palm Desert                     |
| Rev. Natalie Benson       | King of Glory, Fountain Valley        |
| Rev. Bea Chambers         | LC of the Desert, Joshua Tree         |
| Rev. Keegan Chin-Cheleden | Christ, San Diego                     |
| Rev. Perla Flores         | Our Savior's, San Diego               |
| Dn. Brenda Lussier        | Trinity, Riverside                    |

|                          |                        |                               |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>APPROVED for CALL</b> | <u>ROSTER/SEMINARY</u> | <u>CALLED STATUS if known</u> |
| Grace Lee                | WSAC/Fuller PLTS       | To be Ordained 6.13.2026      |

|                          |                        |                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Active In Process</i> | <u>ROSTER/SEMINARY</u> | <u>Home Congregation</u> | <u>Internship Site</u> |
|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|

### **ENDORSED**

|                 |             |                                |                    |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Nick Orth       | WSAC/Luther | Hope, Palm Desert              | Hope, Palm Desert  |
| Amanda Pulos    | WSAC/PLTS   | King of Glory, Fountain Valley | Emmanuel, La Habra |
| Feronika Raming | WSAC/PLTS   | HKBP California, Claremont     | HKBP, Claremont    |

### **ENTRANCED**

|                    |                |                                |
|--------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Blake Danser       | WSAC/PLTS      | Trinity, Victorville           |
| Stephanie Dykes    | WSAC/PLTS      | River of Hope, Palm Springs    |
| Kathy Hartl        | WSAC/Wartburg  | Chris, San Clemente            |
| Chelsey Hinrichsen | WSAC/Luther    | Christ, San Diego              |
| Michelle Palmer    | WSAC/Wartburg  | Resurrection, Huntington Beach |
| Josefina Ramirez   | WSAC/PLTS-TEEM | First, Ontario/Upland          |
| Roderick Sinclair  | WSVC/PLTS      | Faith, Menifee                 |
| Esmeralda Vences   | WSAC/PLTS-TEEM | Our Savior's, San Diego        |
| Wen-Tzao Yang      | WSAC/PLTS-TEEM | Lamb of God, Anaheim           |

### **APPLIED**

|          |                |                    |
|----------|----------------|--------------------|
| Andy Lin | WSAC/PLTS-TEEM | Glory, Chula Vista |
|----------|----------------|--------------------|

An additional 2 people are in the Discernment Process.

*Rosters = Word and Sacrament (WSAC); Word and Service (WSVC)  
TEEM = Theological Education for Emerging Ministries*

# PACIFICA SYNOD

## Anti-Racism Coordination Report

*Desta Goehner (she/her), Assistant to the Bishop for Anti-Racism Coordination  
December 2025 – April 2026*

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It is an honor to serve in this role. This is a 20-hour-per-week position, and I am grateful to be in this work with you and to follow Antoine Cummins in this role. His labor, vision, and faithfulness set the tone and laid the groundwork for everything that follows. I hold deep gratitude for this Synod's commitment to becoming an anti-racist synod, and for the leaders across our communities who have been and still are doing this work long before this position existed. These days, having the courage to name and move toward becoming an anti-racist synod means a great deal. I trust that together we will see the necessary change our communities deserve.

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### Relationship Building

- Met one-on-one with almost all Synod staff to build trust and establish shared vision.
- Met with Sarah Tees and Rev. Rick Fry, co-chairs of the Synod Anti-Racism Team (ART), to begin collaborative discernment.
- Met with Jim Tyler, representing The People's Roundtable (TPR), and Synod VP Jeff Cours to build institutional relationships.
- Attended a Dean's Meeting and am in the process of visiting all Synod conferences.
- Met with Pastor Manuel Retamoza to build a land acknowledgment rooted in the Indigenous nations of our territory.
- Gratitude for Pastora Maria Santa Cruz, Pastor Manuel Retamoza, Jim Tyler, and so many others across this Synod who have been leading this work already. This role exists to support and amplify what is already happening among us.

### Forming the Anti-Racism Team

- Worked to reconvene and build the Synod Anti-Racism Team (ART) as a grounded, accountable body. First meeting in May.
- Relationship and trust-building with ART and TPR are foundational and ongoing.

### Synod Presence

- Attended the Day of Theological Reflection and Chrism Mass, honoring the sacredness of gathering and formation as part of this shared vocation.
- Attended the three mainland Regional Gatherings.

### Growing Edges

- Trust-building with ART and TPR is still forming. Sustainable accountability requires genuine relationships built over time.
- Identify our interests in this work through education, training, and formation.

### Building Structures That Last

Much of this work is about creating and revisiting policies and procedures so that our anti-racism commitments outlast any specific person or role. The 2016 Synod Assembly resolution calling for anti-racism training for all rostered leaders is one example: the desire for change was named, but pathways to carry it forward were not built. This role is working to change that.

- **Baseline Congregational Assessment:** A survey to understand where our congregations are in their anti-racism journeys. Your congregation's voice shapes what comes next for training, formation, and community.
- **Anti-Racism Training for Rostered Leaders:** Creating tracking systems and accessible pathways to fulfill the 2016 resolution. No more gaps between commitment and follow-through.
- **Reporting and Response Process:** Building a transparent, accessible process for reporting and responding to racist incidents within Synod life.
- **Land Acknowledgment:** In partnership with Pastor Manuel Retamoza and other leaders, developed a living, geographically grounded acknowledgment.
- **Compensation for Community Consultants:** Policy to pay people of the global majority for support with anti-racism, repair, and harm.
- **Anti-Racism Webpage:** Updating the Synod anti-racism webpage to serve as a living resource hub for congregations, rostered leaders, and lay leaders.

### An Invitation

This work belongs to all of us. Our baptismal vocation calls us together to strive for justice and peace in all the earth. Here is how you can join right now:

- Complete the Baseline Congregational Assessment. Your congregation's honest voice matters deeply.
- Stay tuned for upcoming trainings and workshops. There is more coming, and we want you there.
- Reach out directly to connect, share a concern, or explore how this work is alive in your context.

**Desta Goehner (she/her) • [Desta@PacificaSynod.org](mailto:Desta@PacificaSynod.org)**

**Pastor Darryl W. Kozak – Regional Assistant to the Bishop for Mobility in the Inland Region and overseeing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Belonging (DEIJB)**

Greetings, members of the Pacifica Synod Assembly!

As I present this report, I do so with deep gratitude for the opportunity to serve our Synod in this role. It continues to be a privilege to walk alongside both rostered and lay leaders throughout the Inland Region, which includes the Big Bear and Raincross Conferences spanning Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, with a small portion extending into Los Angeles County. This region is home to countless expressions of faithful ministry, resilience, and hope.

In my work with mobility, I continue to accompany congregations in times of transition. These are often seasons of both uncertainty and possibility. The call process invites communities into discernment that requires patience, honesty, and trust in the movement of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, we are navigating a changing landscape in which traditional models of ministry are shifting, and new patterns such as part-time calls and collaborative approaches are becoming more common. Through it all, it remains a sacred privilege to walk with congregations and leaders as they listen for where God is leading them next. I am also grateful for the collaborative spirit among our Regional Assistants to the Bishop, as we continue to support one another in this shared work.

In my area of oversight, I am grateful to share an important development in the life of our Synod. Over the past year, I have begun expanding our work from Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Belonging (DEIJB). This expansion gives fuller expression to what we are already called to embody as the church. “Justice” names our commitment to right relationship, advocacy, and the repair of harm, particularly for those who have been marginalized. “Belonging” speaks to a deeper spiritual reality. People are not simply welcomed into our communities, but are invited to know that they matter. They are seen, valued, and an essential part of the Body of Christ. Together, DEIJB offers a more complete and faithful framework for our shared life and ministry.

As part of this next step, I am planning to offer a Synod-wide online formation series titled **“Becoming a Community of Belonging: A Six-Month DEIJB Formation Series for Congregational Leaders.”** This twelve-session series, offered by Zoom, will focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and belonging in the life of the church. Designed for rostered and lay leaders, the series will offer formation, conversation, and practical tools to help congregations more fully live into these commitments. Grounded in Lutheran theology and responsive to the needs of our communities, this offering will invite participants to consider how our congregations can become places where all people are not only welcomed, but seen, valued, and known as essential members of the Body of Christ.

This past year has also included opportunities to engage with congregations, leaders, and emerging ministries that reflect these values in lived and tangible ways. I remain encouraged by the desire across our Synod to grow in faithfulness, deepen relationships, and create communities that reflect the wideness of God's love.

In all of this, I am continually reminded that our work is not simply organizational, but deeply spiritual. We are listening for the voice of God, seeking to follow where Christ leads, and trusting that the Holy Spirit continues to guide and transform the church for the sake of the world.

Thank you again for the privilege of serving in this role and for the many ways you continue to live out the gospel in your own contexts.

Peace and Joy,

Rev. Darryl W. Kozak

Regional Assistant to the Bishop for the Inland Region and DELJB

## **Report for the Synod Assembly- 2026 from Rev. Dr. JP Sabbithi**

It is with joy and gratitude that I submit this report to the Synod Assembly 2026  
My responsibilities: 1. First Call Accompaniment Program. 2. Mobility and Transition in Hawaii region.

### **First Call Accompaniment (FCA):**

We started the year with 8 pastors and 2 deacons. Currently we have 11 pastors and 3 deacons in the program. Three of them completed the program by the Spring of this year.

In addition to our periodic Zoom gatherings, we have two in-person gatherings each year. During the Spring we meet as a region. During the Fall, we meet as a synod for our retreat. We met at Luther Glen November 11-13, 2025 for our Fall Retreat. Nine out of ten rostered leaders were able to gather for the retreat. Our retreat leader, Prof. Thom Johnson presented sessions on the theme, “Reformation and Resistance for today: Inspiration from the Reformers and Bonhoeffer.” Prof. Johnson helped us to understand how we could be relevant not only as Christians but also as theologians during the present context of our political scenario. In the context of our ministry, we learned how to minister to all parties yet stand for justice and truth. Prof. Johnson and Bishop Dave provided the leadership for the retreat.

The Spring Retreat was held April 13-16, 2026 at the St. Francis Renewal Center, in Phoenix, Arizona. 63 rostered leaders from region 2 which includes Pacifica, Sierra Pacific, Southwest California, Rocky Mountain, and Grand Canyon synods participated in the retreat. The theme for the retreat was: *Liturgy to Raise the Dead: How Liturgy Transforms Us and the Communities we Serve*. The retreat leaders were Fr. Paul Fromberg and Sara Miles from St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church, San Francisco. The retreat provided an opportunity for pastors and deacons to have individual time with their own bishops. A session on seeing the human side of bishops gave permission to the newly rostered leaders to be vulnerable and be gracious to themselves. The retreat was also a time for making new connections of rostered leaders from other synods and a time for personal renewal

### **Mobility & Transitions:**

1. Lutheran Church of Honolulu: I am grateful to Pastor Lesley Radius for her ministry as an Interim pastor at LCH. As of now (April) they are in the process of calling their new pastor. Pastor Lesley will conclude her ministry at LCH by the end of May.

2. Kihei Lutheran Church: Pastor Ron announced that he will serve as their interim pastor till the end of May. Pastor Lesley has accepted to serve as an interim at KLC from June to December. We are hoping that the KLC call committee will be able to call their pastor by the end of this year.

3. Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity: The Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity in Kona has voted to disaffiliate from ELCA. They joined NALC.

4. Calvary by the Sea: Pastor Moses Barrios concluded his ministry at Calvary By the Sea in February this year. Pastor Margrethe Kleiber has graciously accepted to serve as their interim pastor.

**Hukilau Clergy Retreat:** We had our annual Hukilau Clergy Retreat with our Bishop from April 19-21, 2026 at Kilauea Military Camp, Hilo. It was a time to reflect, reconnect and renew our bodies, minds and spirits. Thanks to our dean for organizing the meaningful retreat.

I request your prayers for the newly rostered leaders that they will continue to be nurtured by God's grace in the context of their ministry. I request your prayers for the congregations in transition that they be guided by the Holy Spirit in their ministry of calling their new pastor.

I am grateful for your support.  
Your Servant in Christ,

Rev. Dr. JP Sabbithi,  
Regional Assistant to the Bishop

## **Regional Assistant to the Bishop (RAB) Report for 2026 Synod Assembly Pastor Jennifer Schultz, Orange County RAB**

Greetings to all who are reading this report. My name is Jennifer Schultz and I serve as Pastor at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Los Alamitos. In addition, as one of the four RABs, I work with congregations in Orange County who are in the midst of transition of rostered leaders and the other area I relate to is Youth Ministry.

There are several congregations in Orange County who are in different stages of the transition and call process; including transition teams, interim rostered leaders, and call committees.

Since the 2025 Synod Assembly, two congregations in Orange County have called new rostered leaders; Mission Lutheran, Laguna Niguel and Good Shepherd Lutheran, Buena Park.

I have enjoyed working with congregations in these processes and am grateful for their faithful dedication and patience, as these transitions take time. A wide variety of emotions and feelings are expressed in the transition process and I seek to bring a listening ear as well as a familiar face, as I represent Pacifica Synod and the Office of the Bishop in these settings.

I am grateful to the Synod Staff for their support and dedication, for the collegiality and trust we share. I am grateful for the congregations and people of Pacifica Synod, for the ways I've been welcomed into moments that can be stressful and uncertain. I am grateful for the openness to being creative and adaptive in some of the ways in which we approach the landscape of ministry in these times. Thank you for your trust and partnership in this ministry.

The following are some youth-related opportunities and events on the horizon for students and adult leaders of Pacifica Synod:

**Western States Youth Gathering (WSYG):** This event for high school students will be at California Lutheran University this summer, June 28 – July 1. The theme is “A Faith Odyssey” and registration is \$495 (includes programming, housing, meals). Check out [www.westernstatesyg.org](http://www.westernstatesyg.org) to see if registrations are still being accepted.

**Middle School Youth Gathering (MSYG):** A collaborative event with SW CA Synod, this event will be held in Orange County on Friday, November 6 – Sunday, November 8 with the theme “Choose Your Own Faith Adventure.” The planning team is working hard on finalizing details on location & registration and will be announced soon.

**Lutheran Retreats Camps & Conferences (LRCC):** El Camino Pines and Luther Glen have programming year round for different age groups, with a variety of offerings. Each

site offers their own unique experiences in beautiful settings. Check out [www.lrcchome.com](http://www.lrcchome.com) for more information.

Summer 2027: Every 3 years, several thousand young people and their adult leaders come together for amazing faith formation and leadership experiences in Minneapolis, MN in summer 2027, please check out [www.elca.org/gathering](http://www.elca.org/gathering) for more specific information. Registration for these events opens fall 2026:

Multicultural Youth Leadership Event (MYLE): June 26-28, 2027. MYLE gathers young people of color or whose primary language is other than English to explore their identities in the context of God's story. Centered on leadership development, cultural pride and faith formation, MYLE creates a vibrant space for joy, justice and belonging. Participants leave empowered to return home as leaders in their congregations, their communities and the wider church.

The tAble: June 26-28, 2027. The tAble is a pre-event of the ELCA Youth Gathering that celebrates and empowers young people living with physical, cognitive and emotional disabilities. Through worship, small groups and accessible activities, the tAble offers a space where every gift is recognized and every story matters. It's more than an event — it's a community that affirms God's love for all.

Young Adult Gathering: June 28 – July 2, 2027. In partnership with ELCA Young Adult Ministry, we're excited to host the second Young Adult Gathering alongside the 2027 Gathering in Minneapolis! Individuals who will be 18 to 35 at the time of the Gathering are invited to attend. We recognize that 18-35 is a wide age range and anticipate that most of our programming will be geared toward those 18 to 25 years old. All young-adult participants will be part of an age-based small group with whom they can connect throughout the Young Adult Gathering.

ELCA Youth Gathering: June 28 – July 2, 2027. Every three years, thousands of high schoolers and their adult leaders from across the ELCA come together for the ELCA Youth Gathering. It's not just an event but a movement in which faith ignites and community comes alive. Through inspiring speakers, experiential learning and transformative connections, young people experience the church in bold, unforgettable ways. Each night, participants share a unique faith experience through high-energy worship and powerful storytelling. The Gathering is an opportunity to ask big questions, grow in faith and be part of something bigger than yourself.

ELCA Youth Ministry Network/Extravaganza: This annual event is designed for people (staff and/or volunteers) who are involved in Children, Youth, and Family Ministry. The next Extravaganza will be Minneapolis, MN from January 22-25, 2027, with optional pre-event intensive courses. Check out [www.elcaymnet.org/ext27](http://www.elcaymnet.org/ext27) for more information, registration opens later this summer.

**Pastor Laura Ziehl**  
**Regional Assistant to the Bishop**  
**Mobility in the San Diego Area and Regional Gatherings and Azoombly Coordinator**

Dear people of the Pacifica Synod, it is my honor to serve this synod and to partner with you in living out this Gospel of love and hope in these challenging and compelling times. 2026 has only confirmed the necessity of the work we share. Together, we raise our collective hope. Together, we speak with courage and stand in the places where justice is being denied. We gather regularly in worship and welcome. In Hawaii and Southern California, we serve our vulnerable neighbors and proclaim a Gospel of radical love.

I serve in mobility and transition for congregations in the San Diego area. In the past year, I have worked with seven congregations, transition teams, call committees and councils. Transition is a tender, grace filled time for any congregation. There is uncertainty to be sure, but also an openness to the work of the Spirit and the fertile ground God is using to do a new thing in our midst. In the midst of a nationwide clergy shortage, it is now taking longer to find pastors and deacons to serve congregations. The congregations I work with have been such generous and faithful partners in this process. I would share the story of Our Savior's, San Diego. We are currently finalizing a call for a pastor to serve Our Savior's half time. In addition, that same pastor will serve half time in the development of the Pacifica Synod Welcome Center. The Welcome Center will serve the needs of those who are new residents in this country. This is one of many examples of the exciting and creative work we are doing together, to serve the needs of congregations, as well as the communities around us. Additionally, I find that my experience with constitutions is helpful to the synod. I have met with several congregations struggling through constitutional matters, as well as leading one of the first call events addressing best practices for constitutional changes and annual meeting requirements.

My secondary role in the synod is as coordinator for this year's Regional Gatherings and Azoombly. Coordinator is the correct title, because the work of the synod assemblies requires the talents, gifts and expertise of many dedicated individuals. This year we gather under the theme "Called to Serve." The Regional Gatherings allow us to worship together, engage in small groups conversation about our unique ministry areas, share stories, hear from Bishop Dave about the ministry of the wider church, and break bread together. We were honored to hold our first gathering in Hawai'i this year. The warm welcome and deep aloha of our time together was such a gift. We began our regional gatherings centered on the work of the Spirit and the abiding kuleana (calling) God has placed in us all. My deep thanks to the people, pastors and deacons of Lutheran Church of Honolulu, Trinity Lutheran in Riverside, Bethlehem Lutheran in Los Alamitos, and Clairemont Lutheran in San Diego, for the countless hours of preparation and the welcome you have extended. The Azoombly will gather all our voting members together for devotions, reports from synod staff and from our bishop, budget, constitution revisions, grant recipients, and the ongoing work of the whole synod. My abiding thanks to Carol Youngman, Terri Robertson and Adam Palmer for their tireless dedication to the details and organization this work demands.

Lastly, I want to express my gratitude to Bishop Dave Nagler, to the synod staff and to the people of the Pacifica Synod. I am very honored to be a part of a synod that works so tirelessly: to care for our immigrant neighbors; to speak boldly of love for all people at all times; and to do so with compassion and joy in our shared community. We are many hands spread across this synod, and every kindness and light we bear, spreads more widely this Gospel of hope and grace.

In gratitude,  
Pastor Laura Ziehl, RAB

## PACIFICA SYNOD COUNCIL 2025-2026

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Rev. Dave Nagler  
Bishop (2028)

Mr. Jeff Cours  
St. Peter's by the Sea, San Diego  
Vice President (2028)

Ms. Kathy Hartl  
Christ, San Clemente  
Secretary (2026)

Mr. Allen Easley  
Good Shepherd, Claremont  
Treasurer (2027)

Ms. Dana Westphalen\*  
Rev. Marcus Lohrmann\*  
Mr. Jim Lovell\*

\* see below for details

### COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ms. Kathi Anderson  
Shepherd of the Valley, La Mesa  
San Diego Area Rep (2028)

Rev. Steve Anderson  
Spirit of Our Savior, San Bernardino  
Inland Empire Rep (2027)

Mr. Larry Dodson  
Trinity, Riverside  
Inland Empire Area Rep (2028)

Rev. Jay Egenes  
Messiah, Yorba Linda  
Orange County Area Rep (2027)

Mr. Mark Farrin  
Hope, Palm Desert  
Young Adult Rep (2027)

Ms. Kay Fielder  
Mt Calvary, Cypress  
Orange County Area Rep (2026)

Rev. Diana Simanjuntak Gultom  
HKBP, Redlands  
POC/ESL (2026)

Rev. Marcus Lohrmann  
Shepherd of the Valley, La Mesa  
San Diego Area Rep (2027)

Mr. Jim Lovell  
First, San Diego  
San Diego Area Rep (2027)

Ms. Shawn Lowell  
Trinity, Riverside  
Inland Empire Area Rep (2028)

Rev. Amanda McGlynn  
King of Kings, Oceanside  
San Diego Area Rep (2027)

Rev. Juli Patten  
Maluhia, Waianae  
Hawaii Area Rep (2028)

Mr. Tyler Robinson  
Lamb of God, Anaheim  
Orange County Area Rep (2027)

Rev. Jennifer Shaw  
St. John's, Palm Desert  
Inland Empire Area Rep (2026)

Mr. Curt Spiller  
King of Kings, Oceanside  
San Diego Area Rep (2028)

Ms. Dana Westphalen  
Joy of Christ, Pearl City  
Hawaii Area Rep (2026)

Ms. Sarah Tees  
St. Paul, Fullerton  
Orange County Rep (2028)

Rev. Jennifer Zahnow  
Good Shepherd, Buena Park  
Orange County Area Rep (2026)

Mr. Landon Tweet  
St. Andrew's, San Diego  
Youth Rep (2027)

# Vice President's Report

Dear Pacifica Synod, thank you for coming to the 2026 Pacifica Synod Assembly!

Thank you also for lifting up the tremendously dedicated people you have elected to the Synod Council. In addition to our four regular meetings, council members came together for three special meetings this year to address matters that could not wait, including one in July even before new member orientation. Council members who also serve on the Executive Committee held another three special meetings in addition to that body's four regular meetings. Council members have also turned out for installations and ordinations and created a toolkit regarding immigration enforcement.

Immigration enforcement continues to be an important focus. Both statistics and anecdotal evidence show that detentions continue in our synod just as they did in Minnesota, only more quietly. We have had members detained and deported. We have seen church attendance decline sharply due to fear of raids. Authorities have detained workers on church property. Border Church previously had to move from Friendship Park to a place along the border fence; now it is no longer allowed to meet there, either, but must instead meet on a road some distance from the fence.

Your synod is responding in many ways. The new Immigrant Welcome Center is moving forward. AMMPARO has been quite active. The synod's Committee on Immigration Enforcement Best Practices has created a toolkit for congregations to prepare for possible enforcement actions in and around their property. You can find it at the synod's website, [PacificaSynod.org](https://PacificaSynod.org), on the Anti-Racism page. Members of the synod attend vigils at the Otay Mesa and Adelanto Detention Centers and the Federal Building on Front Street where immigrants are being held in the basement. There are many ways to get involved if you hear the Spirit calling.

The LGBTQIA+ community is also facing pressure, especially our trans siblings. Please join in supporting them. There was a large ELCA turnout in 2025 to march with Lutherans for Love in the Hillcrest Pride Parade--and Lutherans for Love won second place in the category of Best Faith-Based Contingent. (Game on in 2026, Methodists!) Let's show up for our siblings in Christ!

I regularly get to join congregations during pastoral transitions. There is one group I would especially like to recognize in this report: our interim and bridge pastors. Stepping into congregations in transition requires real dedication, especially if the congregation has been through a difficult transition. Our interim and bridge pastors provide a tremendous service, all the while knowing they will only be with a congregation for a limited time.

I will also let you in on a little secret: I have a coach. A coach is someone you can talk through challenges with, who can help you bring your best to whatever your calling may be. I would not tackle this role without one. The synod's coaching ministry exists to help people excel in their ministries, callings, and other roles. I would love to see what would happen if more people around our synod used them.

Finally, thank you. Thank you for being willing to spend your time on a Zoom call doing this important work. Thank you for coming to the Regional Gatherings. Thank you for serving in ministries, supporting each other, and being the body of Christ. A synod is a group of people journeying together. You are the synod. And together we will find our way.

Peace,  
Jeff Cours  
Pacifica Synod Vice President

**ACTIONS OF THE PACIFICA SYNOD COUNCIL**  
**May 2025 – March 2026**

**MAY 2025**

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**SC25.05.1 VOTED** to approve Roster Changes and amended Congregation Constitution:

RETIREMENT ROSTER

|               |            |
|---------------|------------|
| Karin Boye    | 03.01.2025 |
| Tim Edmondson | 07.01.2025 |

CONSTITUTION

First Lutheran Church, Fullerton

**SC25.05.2 VOTED** to approve appointment of members to the Task Force to Consider the Use of Mission Funds for Youth Gathering in 2027

**SC25.05.3 VOTED** to approve the Synod Ministries Fundraising Policy

**SC25.05.4 VOTED** to approve a SAWC pastor's 12-week parental leave request and to amend Synod Policy and the Policy Handbook to reflect the 12-week parental leave policy

**SC25.05.5 VOTED** to send investment request from Agape House to Finance Committee and to Executive Committee to report back to council

**SC25.05.6 VOTED** to receive Trinity Lutheran Church, Hemet into Synodical Administration

**JULY 2025**

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**SC25.07.1 VOTED** to approve the shared ministry agreement between Ramona United Methodist Church and Spirit of Joy Lutheran Church

**SC25.07.2 VOTED** to approve contract with Sheraton Garden Grove Anaheim Resort for Middle School Youth Gathering

**SC25.07.3 VOTED** to approve the Rev. Laurie Line Scholarship awards as presented

## SEPTEMBER 2025

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**SC25.09.1 VOTED** to approve the Roster Changes

SYNOD CALL

|                 |                                       |            |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Beulah Chambers | Pastor, LC of the Desert, Joshua Tree | 06.21.2025 |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|------------|

INVITATION TO SERVE

|                 |                               |            |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|------------|
| Kristie Grimaud | Pastor, Spirit of Joy, Ramona | 07.01.2025 |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|------------|

RETIREMENT ROSTER

|               |            |
|---------------|------------|
| David Jorstad | 07.01.2025 |
|---------------|------------|

|             |            |
|-------------|------------|
| Paul Bieber | 09.01.2025 |
|-------------|------------|

**SC25.09.2 VOTED** authorize the Paid Family Leave Request from a SAWC pastor and amend the Synod Staff handbook to reflect the Synod's recommended policy of up to 12 weeks of Paid Family Leave for both rostered and lay staff

**SC25.09.3 VOTED** to approve the cover letter from Synod Council for Mission Support thank-you

**SC25.09.4 VOTED** to ratify the election of Sarah Tees to Nominating Committee that occurred in December 2024

**SC25.09.5 VOTED** to appoint Nancy Marlin to the Discipline Committee

**SC25.09.6 VOTED** to adopt the Executive Committee's recommendation for Portico selection

**SC25.09.7 VOTED** to create a task force to address best practices regarding visits from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

**SC25.09.8 VOTED** to authorize credit cards issued through the ELCA Federal Credit Union with a total credit limit of \$30,000 for Rev. Tom Goellrich, Rev. Maria Santa Cruz, Carol Youngman, Adam Palmer and Terri Robertson

**SC25.09.9 VOTED** to approve the Constitution of Our Redeemer, Garden Grove, with the recommended change from the Constitution Committee to section C13.05.

## OCTOBER 2025

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**SC25.10.1 VOTED** to have the Pacifica Synod Council enter into an agreement with KB Home for the purchase of property at 621 S. Sunkist St, Anaheim, CA 92806

**SC25.10.2 VOTED** to authorize Dave Nagler, Jeff Cours, Allen Easley and Tom Goellrich as signers for sale of property at 621 S. Sunkist St, Anaheim, CA 92806

**SC25.10.3 VOTED** to place Lemon Grove Lutheran Church into Synodical Administration

## DECEMBER 2025

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**SC25.12.1 VOTED** to approve the Roster Changes, Congregation Relocation, and Additional Voting Members for 2026 Synod Assembly (as presented)

### SYNOD CALL

|                          |                                       |            |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Adham Alaraj             | Mission Developer, Pacifica Synod     |            |
| Jonathan Doolittle       | Interim Pastor, All Saints, San Diego | 10.01.2025 |
| Hannah Bergstrom de Leon | Interim, Carlton Hills, Santee        | 01.26.2026 |
| Cate Luehr               | Candidacy Coordinator, Pacifica Synod | 02.01.2026 |

### ON LEAVE

|                      |                         |            |
|----------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Michael Schneider    | Year Three, Retroactive | 07.02.2023 |
| Andreas Walker-Thode | Year One                | 11.24.2025 |

### RETIREMENT ROSTER

|               |            |
|---------------|------------|
| Glen Egertson | 01.01.2026 |
|---------------|------------|

### CONGREGATION RELOCATION

Glory Lutheran Church, Chula Vista

**SC25.12.2 VOTED** to authorize the establishment of a SAOM (Synod Authorized Outreach Ministry) to be known as the Welcome Center, to be located at Our Savior Lutheran Church in San Diego

**SC25.12.3 VOTED** to appoint Sarah Tees to fill open seat on Nominating Committee (one year of term remaining)

**SC25.12.4 VOTED** to reelect Marcus Lohrman to Executive Committee for another 2-year term

**SC25.12.5 VOTED** to stop further action on the Memorial “Caring for Our Immigrant Neighbors” due to similar memorials already adopted by Churchwide Assembly

**SC25.12.6 VOTED** to approve a Synod Council policy on Reimbursement for Missed Work

**SC25.12.7 VOTED** to approve \$2,000 to go to a scholarship for Western States Youth Gathering in 2026

**SC25.12.8 VOTED** to appoint Jennifer Zahnow to fill the open position of Orange County Area Rep on Synod Council

## **MARCH 2026**

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**SC26.03.1 VOTED** to approve Roster Changes and amended Congregation Constitution:

### SYNOD CALL

Sandra Bentz      Interim Pastor, LC of the Master, Corona del Mar      03.01.2026

### ON LEAVE

Cyndi Jones      Year One      11.16.2025

### RETIREMENT ROSTER

Hitoshi Adachi      03.21.2026

Dennis Laherty      01.12.2026

### CONSTITUTION

San Marcos Lutheran Church, San Marcos

# PACIFICA SYNOD CHURCHES & MINISTRIES BY CONFERENCE

## HAWAII

### **#10 Hukilau Conference**

*Dean: The Rev. Margrethe Kleiber*

Calvary by the Sea, Honolulu  
Lutheran Church of Honolulu, Honolulu  
Prince of Peace, Honolulu  
St. John, Kailua  
Kihei, Kihei

Lihue, Lihue  
Christ, Mililani  
Joy of Christ, Pearl City  
Maluhia, Waianae

## ORANGE COUNTY AREA

### **#7 Saddleback Conference**

*Dean: The Rev. David Mattson*

Lutheran Church of the Master, Corona del Mar  
Gloria Dei, Dana Point  
Mission, Laguna Niguel  
Newport Harbor, Newport Beach

Community, Rancho Santa Margarita  
Christ, San Clemente  
Our Savior's, San Clemente

### **#8 Son & Surf Conference**

*Dean: The Rev. James Pike*

Mt. Calvary, Cypress  
King of Glory, Fountain Valley  
Our Redeemer, Garden Grove  
St. Olaf, Garden Grove  
Resurrection, Huntington Beach

Bethlehem, Los Alamitos  
Christ, Orange  
Our Saviour's, Orange  
St. Peter/San Pedro, Santa Ana  
Redeemer, Seal Beach

### **#9 Rejoice Conference**

*Dean: The Rev. Anne-Grethe Nielsen*

Faith, Anaheim  
Grace, Anaheim  
Lamb of God, Anaheim  
Church of Dream Builders, Anaheim \*  
Good Shepherd, Buena Park  
First, Fullerton  
St. Luke's, Fullerton,  
St. Paul, Fullerton

The Table, Fullerton \*  
Emanuel, La Habra  
St. Andrew, Whittier  
Shepherd of Life, Whittier  
Salem, Whittier  
Emanuel Danish, Yorba Linda  
Messiah, Yorba Linda

## INLAND EMPIRE AREA

### **#4 Raincross Conference**

*Dean: The Rev. Kent Tuohino*

Good Shepherd, Claremont  
 HKBP California Batak, Claremont \*  
 Peace, Corona  
 Spirit of Joy, Hemet  
 Shepherd of Life, Lake Elsinore  
 Faith, Menifee  
 Lord of Life, Moreno Valley

Bethany, Norco  
 First, Ontario/Upland  
 Eden, Riverside  
 Getsemani Indonesian, Riverside \*  
 Trinity, Riverside  
 Grace, Upland

### **#5 Big Bear Conference**

*Dean: The Rev. David Kieffer*

Our Savior's, Banning  
 Shepherd of the Desert, Barstow  
 Spirit of Peace, Big Bear Lake  
 Gloria Dei, Fontana  
 Lutheran Church of the Desert, Joshua Tree  
 Hope, Palm Desert  
 St. John, Palm Desert  
 River of Hope, Palm Springs

Cross and Crown, Rancho Cucamonga  
 First, Redlands  
 ELCA Batak, Redlands \*  
 Lutheran Church of the Cross, Rialto  
 HKBP Nommensen, San Bernardino \*  
 Spirit of Our Savior, San Bernardino  
 Trinity, Victorville  
 Faith, Yucaipa

## SAN DIEGO AREA

### **#1 East San Diego Conference**

*Dean: The Rev. Rick Fry*

Glory, Chula Vista  
 St. Mark's, Chula Vista  
 Bethlehem Arabic, El Cajon \*  
 St. John's, El Cajon  
 Welcome Ministry, El Cajon †  
 Shepherd of the Valley, La Mesa

Lemon Grove, Lemon Grove  
 Ascension, San Diego  
 Calvary, San Diego  
 St. Andrew's, San Diego  
 Tierrasanta, San Diego  
 Carlton Hills, Santee

### **#2 West San Diego Conference**

*Dean: The Rev. Bekki Lohrmann*

Resurrection, Coronado  
 All Saints, San Diego  
 Christ, San Diego  
 Clairemont/Iglesia Luterana, San Diego

First, San Diego  
 Gethsemane, San Diego  
 Our Savior/Nuestro Salvador, San Diego  
 St. Peter's by the Sea, San Diego

### **#3 Harvest Conference**

*Dean: The Rev. Amanda McGlynn*

Bethlehem, Encinitas  
 House of Prayer, Escondido  
 King of Kings, Oceanside  
 Incarnation, Poway  
 Spirit of Joy, Ramona

Taiwanese, San Diego  
 San Marcos, San Marcos  
 Calvary, Solana Beach  
 Hope, Temecula  
 First/Primera Iglesia, Vista

## East/West San Diego Conference Report

Our two conferences function like one conference. Our rostered leaders gather weekly each Wednesday for Text Study on zoom and once a month we gather in-person for worship and discussion. We are pleased to have welcomed Pr. Keegan Chin-Cheledon at Christ Lutheran Church and Pr. Hannah DeLeon as interim pastor at Carlton Hills Lutheran Church. We gave thanks for the service of Pr. Andreas Walker-Thode, who left Carlton Hills Lutheran Church after several faithful years of service. We also gave thanks for Pr. Karin Boye who most recently completed an interim pastorate at Lemon Grove Lutheran Church.

Here are reports of our congregations:

### **San Diego West Conference**

**All Saints Lutheran Church** continues its mission to honor the historic liturgy in its worship. This small faithful group continues to be connected to the ancient and future church with this important tradition. They are seeking new pastoral leadership after the retirement of pastor Bieber. The preschool continues to provide connections to the community and area families.

**Christ Lutheran Church** in Pacific Beach San Diego had a lot of transitions on our leadership team in 2025. Our Deacon of 15 years, Taflin Fisher, retired. Our Media Director, Chelsey Henrichsen, moved to Minnesota. And a couple other smaller staffing roles saw change. But after the losses, we found great gain when in October we called our new Associate Pastor, Keegan Chin-Cheleden for a 1 year term call. Pastor Chin-Cheleden is focusing on pastoral care needs and expanding our offerings to young adults, LGBTQ+ folks and youth/young families. We also worked on building relationships with the community around us by starting a joint PB Youth Group with other progressive PB churches and by welcoming several new groups to have space on our campus including the PB Town Council, the PB Women's Club, and the PB Arts Center as well as new weekly fitness, meditation and pilates classes. Additionally, the newer nonprofit on our campus, IncludEd, who offers services to special needs families, pursued a license to operate as a preschool, which they obtained this past February. In the midst of all this change, we began refocusing on our mission and exploring a process of setting new goals and objectives, including a large campus renovation, which we continue to seek discernment around in 2026. In 2026 we look forward to a new partnership with Shoreline Community Services called "Compass Commons", which will be 6 sleeping cabins built on our campus serving as the first such transitional housing program in the SD coastal area assisting the SCS Community Care Crew in their journey out of homelessness and into permanent housing. We feel blessed to be serving in PB and the San Diego area alongside so many wonderful churches and non profit partners.

**Clairemont Lutheran Church** finally concluded the construction process of our new Fellowship Hall. During this last year, we focused on restructuring congregational committees (Worship, Hospitality, Trustees), and the relaunch of ministry initiatives. We also started working on diversifying our worship experience and strengthening our congregational identity through the creation of a new Mission and Vision statement.

As our congregation looks ahead to next year, we are excited to deepen our spiritual growth through additional Bible study opportunities and prayer initiatives. Additionally, we aim

to strengthen community connections with outreach programs and family events while enhancing our worship experience to embrace diverse styles that resonate with all members.

In 2025, **First Lutheran Church, San Diego** completed a major capital appeal to reroof the church, add a solar panel array, paint the entire exterior with vibrant new colors, and continue improving our capacity to broadcast worship with high-quality visuals and sound. We also ended up needing to conduct major plumbing repairs and chase off rodents. No surprise then that this year we're focused on an improved sense of community, ministry, and adding a second worship service.

**Gethsemane San Diego** has focused this past year has been "How do we live out our calling as the body of Christ, living and resurrected, so we carry the love of God through Christ to us, and through us to each other and to the world beyond our campus?" We expect to sustain this focus in the coming year.

**Our Savior's Lutheran Church** - Our Saviors Lutheran Church has been focused on building leadership and offering different activities to members that bring the, close to God. Women, men, youth groups are more active than ever, we also have a contemporary prayer session and labyrinth prayer session various times a month.

Our Saviors looks forward to hiring a new pastor soon in order to continue serving our community with the leadership and guidance of an ordained minister.

**Resurrection Lutheran Church, Coronado** Resurrection Lutheran Church strives daily to proclaim Jesus Christ crucified and risen from the dead. A proclamation of reaching, loving, and caring in the community.

**St. Peter's By The Sea Lutheran Church** concentrated our efforts this past year on excellence in worship, stewarding the beginning phases of a sanctuary remodel, examining and improving internal systems, as well as honing our focus on serving the unhoused and under-resourced members of our city and community through hosting Interfaith Shelter Network's rotational shelter and investing deeply in our partnership with our local food pantry. A huge focus this past year has been fostering ecumenical partnerships in Ocean Beach/Point Loma which is working to launch a drop-in resource center for unhoused folks in Ocean Beach. We also continue to share God's love with our littlest community members who come through the doors of our preschool, which continues to be a thriving asset to the wider community.

## **San Diego East Conference**

### **St. Andrew's**

St. Andrew's San Diego has focused on expanding community engagement and reengaging volunteers, while maintaining its long-standing commitment to local and global outreach.

The Border Church (La Iglesia Fronteriza) has maintained a focus on sacramental solidarity, the ministry of presence at Whiskey 8 and El Foro (Friendship Park, Tijuana), and humanitarian aid for asylum seekers and immigrants who have been deported from the US to Tijuana.

### **Carlton Hills Lutheran Church**

Throughout 2025 Carlton Hills Lutheran Church was able to continue to engage in deep relationships with both the Santee Food Pantry and You Did It 4 Me ministries housed on site. We did have to say goodbye to Pr. Andreas Walker-Thode at the end of November and welcomed interim Pastor Hannah Bergstrom de Leon in late January. 2026 will be a year of transition as we discern God's call for our faith community in the coming years.

### **Tierrasanta Lutheran Church**

Continue to be focused on Worship and Bible Study, Preschool expansion this coming year.

### **St Mark's Lutheran Chula Vista**

Publicly funded day care opened to better serve the community.

5 LSS ministries now housed at St Mark's.

Strategic planning process begun.

Bi-cultural, Bilingual ministry continues.

### **Calvary Lutheran Church**

In 2025, we continued to reach out to our neighbors with clothing & food. We shared our campus with three other congregations: Addis Kidan Ethiopian Christian Church (Amharic speaking), Calvary Pentecostal Church (Congolese & Swahili speaking), and Remnant Church of San Diego (English & Spanish speaking), Lutheran Border Concerns Ministry has their office here.

In 2026, we are working with YIGBY (Yes In God's Backyard) and Southern Cross Property Consultants to develop affordable housing on our campus.

We will be celebrating our 75th anniversary later this year.

Respectfully submitted, the Rev. Dr. Richard W. Vevia, Jr. & the Rev. Berhanu Refera

### **Shepherd of the Valley**

In 2025 SVLC's Church Council began piloting a new model for our council structure. This structure has breathed new life into our congregation, allowing us to focus attention on long-term vision of this community and helping us to embody stewardship and evangelism together in every facet of ministry. The Spirit continues to draw us into the rich life of God. We joyfully receive God's gifts, and pour them back into our community as best as we can. From music/worship ministries to continued property upgrades and investments, from our involvement in SD Lutherans for Love to packing LWR school kits on GWOH Sunday, SVLC members put in (a conservative estimate of) over 4,000 volunteer hours together in 2025 serving neighbors in our community.

### **St. John's Lutheran**

Over the past year, our ministry remained resilient through a season of transition, focusing on maintaining our core community and local outreach while we prepared for new leadership. We are thrilled to have recently welcomed our new pastor, which has brought a renewed sense of stability and vision to our congregation. Looking ahead, we are eager to reengage actively with the San Deigo East Conference and grow our impact under this new guidance.

### **Ascension Lutheran Church**

At Ascension we continue to offer our super pantry food distribution every Tuesday and Saturday, and our outdoor food pantry 'the food church' available 24/7 to food insecure families. God's love and the hospitality of Christ have inspired us to begin a ministry of hosting monthly suppers to support families with fellowship and connection. This coming year we are continuing to explore the possibility of building affordable housing on our church campus.

## **Harvest Conference Report 2026**

Harvest Conference continues to be a community of support, collaboration, and shared wisdom, and joy as we navigate the many transitions each of our congregations is working through. Over the last five years, nine of the ten congregations in our conference have called new rostered ministers or entered the call process. Most recently, we are pleased to welcome Pastor Kristie Grimaud to Spirit of Joy in Ramona, and Pastor Tony Scheer to Incarnation in Poway. We look forward to continuing forward with the good, hard, faithful ministry God is leading us into together.

### **Calvary, Solana Beach**

The big news for Calvary this year was the addition of a fulltime Director of Faith Formation position. This was something we couldn't afford to do and at the same time couldn't afford not to do, so a quick spring 2025 campaign raised roughly 10 years of salary and benefit support and allowed us to move forward. In October Cole Doolittle joined our ranks. He spends roughly 30 or so hours/week in the Children, Youth and Family arena and the other 10 enhancing small group ministry and creating a new Young Adult group. This summer he'll lead Confirmation/Jr High groups to El Camino Pines and a Sr High group to Christikon Lutheran Camp in south-central Montana.

### **Bethlehem, Encinitas**

Bethlehem is finding deep joy and ministry, as we live into our calling to proclaim a gospel of radical love, expansive welcome, and deep compassion in these challenging times. In the past year we have deepened our partnerships with more than a dozen community organizations working to support our immigrant neighbors. We are faithful partners with Somos Tias, Encinitas for Equity, The Samaritans, Justice Allies, AMMPARO, Alianza Comunitaria, FAITH, Border Church, Encinitas Safe, and more. We work closely with our neighborhood elementary school where over 100 families are new to this nation, and in need of supportive resources. We continue to live every day into our core identity as an RIC, and all are welcome church. Joyous worship and warm community are the foundations of our lives together. At a time when so many are struggling, we remind ourselves that hope is inextricably bound to the life of faith. We commit ourselves to live out that hope in love.

### **Taiwanese Lutheran, San Diego**

At the Taiwanese Lutheran Church of San Diego (TLC), we are a warm, welcoming and diverse community where Taiwanese, Mandarin, and English speakers worship together as one family in Christ. Our older generation shares the heart and heritage of the Taiwanese language, the younger generation connects through Mandarin, and our children and youth grow in faith through English. We have three congregations — each with its own style and ministry — yet we share resources, support one another, and grow together in love and service. Here in the U.S., our English congregation especially extends a warm invitation to local friends and neighbors to worship with us, build community, and join in God's mission to the world. We gather every Sunday for services in Taiwanese, Mandarin, and English, with monthly bilingual and trilingual services as well. We are in the midst of an interim period with our

pastoral leadership, but are in good hands with our ministry team as God leads us through this time of transition.

### **First Lutheran, Vista**

This year, we began to see the fruit of so many seeds planted over time as our church continues to grow, especially with young families with children. It all starts with the simple effort of welcoming and serving our community, and this is turning into something beautiful and full of life. There's a renewed energy in the church—a sense that God is doing something fresh, something new. We've even found ourselves laughing on Sunday mornings when we send three or four kids to Sunday school time and a dozen show up back! It truly feels like we are living in a season of resurrection, where new life is springing up all around us, and we are grateful to be part of what God is doing in our church and in our community.

### **King of Kings, Oceanside**

King of Kings continues to lean into our calling to love and serve God and our neighbors here in Oceanside and North County San Diego. In 2025, we have been especially grateful for the strong lay and staff leadership, and abundance of gifts within our people. We have worked to build a culture of genuine welcome towards newcomers, and encouragement of active participation in what each member is truly interested in or passionate about so that the work is spread across many, burnout is minimized, and everyone knows how much they matter in the collective work that the Holy Spirit is doing. This year also brought changes that shifted us away from how things have always been, but led us to new possibilities that have been healthier for the congregation we are here and now. Our WELCA disbanded, though our women's ministry has continued in ways that are most lifegiving and energized. Our Music Ministry has expanded to include more pop-up groups, new voices, and different instrumentalists each week, enriching our worship life with vibraphone, bass, harp, trumpet, flute, sax, harmonica, a percussion choir, a guitar choir, quartets, octets, and more. Another great change has been that our committees and ministries have prioritized better communication and coordination instead of operating in isolation - for example, now our Endowment gifts are supporting organizations that our Social Action Committee organizes volunteer opportunities with, while Adult Ed opportunities are organized and guest speakers invited around those same topics. We're not the same church we were a few years or decades ago, but we see that as a healthy and faithful step towards the future God is paving with us. We go forth with faith and good courage into the seasons ahead as we follow the Spirit's lead, nurture our faith, serve our neighbors, live out our vocations, and open our hearts and our doors to all those God has called us to love.

### **San Marcos Lutheran, San Marcos**

2025 was a year of restoration and generosity here at SMLC. The women of the congregation went on their first annual retreat since before the pandemic, enjoying a weekend at Luther Glen filled with peace, quiet, and farm animals. SMLC welcomed five new beloved children of God into our community via the sacrament of baptism, and installed 11 new members of the congregation, including all those newly-baptized! We continued supporting the hundreds of people in our community who visit our campus for twelve-step meetings on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. We continued engaging in

support and outreach to our community led by the Social Action committee and in partnership with valuable local organizations like Interfaith Community Services and the All Saints' Food Pantry—including the distribution of hundreds of Blessing Bags, hygiene kits, and sack lunches throughout the year. An air-conditioning disaster disrupted our summer, but the congregation stepped in to contribute to its replacement (and the enormous SDG&E bill). All in all, we are blessed to be a blessing to the people of San Marcos!

### **Hope, Temecula**

Hope Lutheran Church is a community of faith that is Christ-centered and welcomes people of all faiths and no faith. Hope is committed to helping others know God's unconditional love, grace and mercy which transforms our lives and leads us to love, accept and serve others in Jesus' name. Visitors are welcome and encouraged to be part of our active children's and youth ministries as well as local and regional servant projects, women's and men's ministries, and regular involvement with Project T.O.U.C.H. (Together Our Unity Conquers Homelessness). Our transition committee and call committee have been hard at work as we continue to await and discern who God is calling to be our new pastor.

### **Spirit of Joy, Ramona**

Spirit of Joy LC and Ramona United Methodist Church are continuing to come together in shared ministry. In 2025, the congregation unanimously voted to invite Rev. Kristie Grimaud to pastor Spirit of Joy in addition to Ramona UMC. The two congregations are still sharing other staff positions and resources including space, technology, music, social ministry, and children's ministry, while maintaining their unique congregational identities. One of the most significant developments was the series of Visioning Suppers held in October, where members gathered around tables, shared stories, and began shaping a shared vision rooted in mutual hope and discernment. These conversations helped move both congregations from parallel paths toward a more unified sense of purpose for ministry. The shared vision is to be an inclusive faith community where every person belongs, every voice is valued, and every heart is nurtured to grow in faith. Our shared mission is "Rooted in Christ's love and empowered by the Spirit, we strive to be an inclusive faith community marked by joyful connection, intentional spiritual growth, and compassionate service, where God's transforming grace nurtures belonging for all."

### **House of Prayer, Escondido**

Two years ago, our leadership team developed the Strategic Direction: "We will strive to be a relevant presence in the local community by building authentic relationships with all our neighbors and celebrating our diverse gifts." Throughout 2025, we continued to work toward this goal. To that end, we developed ministry emphases for 2025 in the areas of Senior ministries, Children's Ministries, Outreach, and Ministries in Spanish. Each of these areas have experienced their own levels of success and challenge. Our Senior group has begun meeting monthly and have engaged with a few local organizations. We baptized three children last year, had four children receive first communion, and had four babies born in the congregation. In the area of Outreach, we have strengthened our relationship with local churches and organizations. We are seeing the fruits of those efforts in collaboration projects, such as resource fairs and community presentations. During Lent, we hosted different nonprofits each

week to present about their programs. Our ministries in Spanish also continue to expand. Last year, we held once a month bilingual serves and developed a Spanish-language choir. Throughout the year, we continued to increase our intercultural fellowship events such as: Three Kings Day, The Day of the Dead Altar, and our Annual Fiesta. In the Spring, we held a bilingual Pentecost service followed by an International potluck. In December, we hosted our first Posada, which was very well attended. At this point, we continue to explore ways to be 1) More Welcoming, 2) Community Oriented, and 3) Rooted in the Gospel.

## **Incarnation, Poway**

ILC spent 2025 completing many accomplishments with our Intentional Interim Pastor Sandy Bentz; our Council President, Joan Bohnstedt; our new Office Administrator/Youth Leader, Lauren Sleeper; and our council, call committee, finance and property teams before more staff and council transitions in preparation for calling our new senior pastor Reverend Anton Scheer (Pastor Tony) who started in January. We updated our Employee Handbook and policies, the CORI Management and Use Policy, Facility Use Policy and Financial Policies. We reinstated our Personnel Committee and ensured our staff and volunteers updated training, documentation and background checks. We modified our campus and changed property insurance companies due to fire liability. Our organist moved in July and we hired a new music director/ organist who started February 2026. ILC serves through our 4 Faces of Mission:

Our Global Mission completed our 23rd and 24th Mexico House Builds with Project Mercy and St. Bart's Episcopal Church; and our Piecemakers made personalized quilts for both families as well as over 100 quilts for Lutheran World Relief and for our Cameroon ministry where we support a social worker and a school. Our Domestic Mission donated to Pacifica Synod Benevolence, ELCA Lutheran Disaster Relief, ELCA World Hunger, Interfaith Community Services (ICS) and Third Avenue Charitable Organization (TACO). Our Local Mission made sack lunches, had weekly food collections, held a Lenten toiletry drive making 60 hygiene kits, and a winter coat and blanket drive for both TACO and ICS. We now host Cabrillo Chamber Orchestra concerts and their musicians played at our annual Trunk-or-Treat and Christmas Eve worship. Easter Sunday saw 25 children participate in our egg hunt thanks to advertising in our local papers, website and social media.

Parish Mission – Bishop Dave presided our RIC Sunday and our Love Committee and youth decorated the Lutherans for Love float and marched in the San Diego Pride Parade, winning 2nd place for faith-based groups. Monthly Family Fellowship events included service projects, themed meals, church picnic, interior spring cleaning and exterior fall cleanup. We share our campus with Disciple Korean Church, Finnish Church & School, quilting and gardening groups, Girl Scouts and Scouts of America and AA, NA and Alanon groups. The Mobeen Community has found their own permanent location. We now live-stream BOTH our 9am contemporary and 11am traditional services and combined for our children & youth spring musical and Christmas programs. We have a praise band; adult choir with organ and piano, who performed “The Weeping Tree” on Good Friday and Lessons & Carols in December with our youth choir and handbell choir. Our new youth leader started a ukulele ensemble and youth praise band and has grown the ministry to see 14 youth go to Sea World and over 35 different youth participate in service

projects and outings including decorating ICS for Christmas. She encouraged intergenerational “Summer Life Skills” for members to share their trades and started “Donuts & Devotion” Bible study on Sunday mornings. Adult bible studies, Kids Music & Praise for younger children, men’s and women’s Bible studies, Stephen Ministry and our campus library remain available. Three youth were confirmed in June, and classes are on hold until Pastor Tony starts a new fall class. Our Piecemakers make prayer quilts as needed and made personalized quilts for our seven high school graduates. God is working in us, among us and through us as we work to fulfill our mission of “Serving God in the Service of All God’s People.”

Submitted by Lauren Sleeper, Office Administrator & Youth Leader

## **Raincross Conference Congregational Reports for the 2026 Pacifica Synod Assembly**

### **Bethany, Norco** – submitted by Pastor Darryl Kozak

- We applied for six grants this year. We did receive the Pacifica Synod's Matthew 25 grant and purchased \$1,000 in toiletries. This was used for the Chino Women's Prison Gift Bag program called "Gallons of Love". We were also involved throughout 2025 and collected hygiene items. This was a joint effort with Peace Lutheran in Corona. As in previous years, two members of our congregation took the items to First Lutheran Church in Anaheim and joined other Lutherans to assemble the bags.
- Our Quilting Ministry made about 25 quilts this year. Part of the proceeds were donated to the Lutheran Disaster Response and the other quilts were donated to the AMMPARO project.
- We collected clothing, food and toiletries throughout the entire year. We donated to the following organizations:
  - + Trinity Lutheran Church Shower Program
  - + Settlement House in Corona
  - + Norco College Basic Needs program
  - + Corona-Norco Unified School District Parent Center
- On October 5, 2025, we partnered with Amazing Grace Lutheran Church of Corona and prepared and delivered 50 meals for the Sunday night meal for the Central City Lutheran Mission in San Bernardino.

### **Eden, Riverside** – submitted by Vice President Harvey Clark

In March of 2025, our pastor, Stephanie Lape accepted another call. We then updated our Mission Site Profile (MSP) and submitted it to the Pacifica Synod office. This was approved by Synod by the end of the year. With the bridge pastor services of Pastor Kim Krogstad through the rest of the year, we continued to celebrate worship in person and via Zoom, communion, baptisms, special prayers, Santa Lucia, etc. Our attendance continued to do well. The Eden Lutheran Preschool has also continued to do well despite the decline in enrollment and closing impact that state-sponsored preschools have had on other private preschools. We have also continued our organ concerts, blessing of the animals, Taizé worship, Doors Open Riverside participation, God's Work, Our Hands Sunday, and more.

### **Faith, Menifee** – submitted by Rev. Ken Puccio

Even though Faith remains without a permanent pastor, there has been no vacancy in ministry or enthusiasm. With strong and talented lay leadership, the ministry at Faith remains strong and vibrant.

- Call Committee: In June of 2025 the Transition Committee handed off the approved profile which was posted to the national ELCA database of pastoral openings. The committee received very positive feedback from the synod on their work and were cleared in the fall of 2025 as ready for candidates.
- Cheer/Eucharistic Ministry: We have fifteen homebound members who are unable to attend worship regularly. We visit ten members by reading devotions, bringing communion, taking

them to their doctor's appointments or running errands with them or for them. Five members do not live in our area, so we call them monthly.

- Faith has a strong commitment to Christian Education. The WELCA Bible study circle, using the "Gather" Lutheran magazine, meets monthly. In an evening Bible study, a congregation member who is a retired ELCA pastor leads a semi-monthly Zoom study. We continue to have Sunday School Bible lessons during worship on Sunday mornings.
- The Endowment Board serves as a critical entity in the management and stewardship of gifts, memorials and bequests. Its primary purpose is to ensure that all contributions are received and administered in a manner that aligns with the goals and bylaws of our congregation.
- Property: Small projects within and outside of the Church were tended to when notified, such as working on sprinklers, door latches, replacing/adding lighting, and helping with the new sound system when needed.
- Stewardship: The Team purchased the 2025 SALT Stewardship Package. The theme was "All Creatures Great and Small". Four members presented a short Temple Talk sharing their reasons for pledging, encouraging members to give gratefully, faithfully, increasingly and regularly. Online giving was instituted and set up.
- The Fellowship Committee promotes and provides activities and opportunities where we gather to socialize and support each other in Christian friendship, outside of traditional church worship service times. We are also bringing new potential members into our church who come to our events.
- Worship & Music: Average attendance rose to about 45-55 most Sundays, despite not having a permanent pastor. Supply pastors led us in worship. Licenses were procured to allow live streaming of Sunday Worship. Additional sound and live-stream techs helped improve our technology.
- Outreach is the call of Christ that makes us a church community. The Outreach Committee provides many opportunities to give and volunteer in sharing the love of Christ with our Menifee community.
- WELCA: All women who attend Faith are considered a part of WELCA, which sponsors many events at Faith throughout the year, including Bible studies, quarterly events, Snip 'N Stitch (a quilting group), Thank offering Sunday, decorations for the fellowship hall, coffee hour, and assisting families and serving luncheons after funerals.
- Finance: Thanks to the hard work done by two members of the congregation, escrow closed on the sale of property behind the church to the city of Menifee to build a park where seniors can go for walks. The budget contains expenses for a half-time pastor for the entire year.

**First, Ontario** – submitted by Vicar Josefina Ramirez

The year 2025 was a time of great challenges and change for our congregation. During this period, we faced the closure of the building of First Lutheran Church, in which the last service was held on November 23, 2025, after a closing service officiated by Bishop Dave Nagler on October 12.

Despite difficulties, including personal health challenges and my husband in hospice, the ministry continued faithfully. The congregation remained united, with 35 members moving forward in faith. During this time, 5 baptisms and 2 First Communion services were held.

Thanks to the support of Pastor Wes Menke, Pastor Mike Jobst, and faithful members like Diane Rivord and Sandy Marquez, services and activities continued. In addition, collaboration with Grace Lutheran Church, Upland, was strengthened through VBS, Bible studies, vespers, feeding the homeless, and preaching.

The food ministry also continued, serving approximately 22 people and has now increased to 40 people twice a month, now in James R. Bryant Park. Although we faced a difficult transition, God has shown His faithfulness, leading us to new opportunities for service and growth.

### **Getsemani Indonesian, Riverside** – submitted by Pastor Robert Waworuntu

- In addition to our regular services at Eden Lutheran Church on Sundays at 12:30 pm, on Good Friday and Thanksgiving we also worshipped, for the first time, on Ascension Day, Thursday, May 29, 2025, at 7:00 pm. In Indonesia, we usually have a service at the church on that day.
- We joined with Eden Lutheran Church to celebrate the ELCA “God’s Work, Our Hands” Sunday and other activities. We also worked together with HKBP Claremont and other Indonesian churches in Southern California for various activities.
- For the first time, we had a vigil service in front of the Adelanto Detention Center on October 11, 2025, in regard to one of our church members, Evi Sihombing, who was detained in that place. (ICE listed her as Evi Sihomping). Thank you to all who participated in this event, especially to Bishop Dave Nagler.
- We are so grateful for our partnership with Eden, Riverside, and for them sharing their facilities with us.

### **Good Shepherd, Claremont** – submitted by Pastor Jenifer Brown

At Good Shepherd, our call is to love God, family, and neighbor through prayer, teaching, and action. This year, we welcomed an average of 35 people at our in-person worship offerings, including Lent, Holy Week, and Christmas Eve services. Another 30 joined us online. We held three services with our sister congregation, HKBP Batak Indonesian Church.

We welcomed five new members and celebrated one baptism. We joined with three area churches in educating our first-year confirmation students and began a first-ever elementary catechism class for our families. We received three grants: Cathryn White, GEM, and Matthew 25, to sustain our education ministry, global partnerships, and outreach.

Our outreach activities included participating in Pomona’s Unity Walk for Harriet Tubman Day, Pomona’s Pride Festival, Claremont’s 4th of July parade, and hosting interfaith events on our campus. Our facility was made available to CLASP after-school tutoring, Chinmaya Indian Cultural School, and the Red Cross. The number of Vacation Bible Experience participants increased from four families to six, bringing in more children and volunteers from the surrounding community. We also continued our service in the community by raising money and collecting food for Inland Valley Hope Partners, packing bags for Gallons of Love Prison ministry, gathering books for Claremont Prison Project, adopting an Angel Tree family,

collecting school supplies and backpacks for students in Claremont School district, and stocking the Claremont Colleges' Queer Resource Center with snacks during finals week.

We celebrated anniversaries together, and joyfully honored the lives and ministries of two members who died during the year. We went camping together and enjoyed music and Oktoberfest at the home of one of our members.

**Grace, Upland** – submitted by Council President Jerry Uhler

- We conducted a very successful Vacation Bible School attended by over 100 children both from within and external to our church community.
- We support a program providing meals to the homeless at a local park on a bi-monthly basis.
- We dedicated one of our Sunday services to a Blessing of the Animals program, through which we were able to contribute a sizable donation to Working Dogs for Warriors, an amazing organization that trains and provides adopted dogs to assist our physically and mentally disabled veterans.
- Due to a plumbing mishap, we have undergone and are almost finished with a complete renovation of our preschool classroom.
- Renovation of our Fellowship Hall, used both by our congregation and outside community groups, such as a Women's AA program and Spanish language classes program.
- Provided worship space for First Lutheran, Ontario, who were in a situation in which they had to sell their church property. In conjunction with this, we have assisted their pastor, Vicar Josefina Ramirez, in completing her seminary training, and she in turn has provided worship services and ministry to us during our recent difficulties that led to the resignation of our former pastor.

**HKBP CA Batak Lutheran, Claremont** – submitted by Pastor Feronika Raming

- Sunday worship is at 1:00 pm; we typically follow our service with a communal fellowship meal, as well as choir practice whenever we are preparing for special events, such as Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, our church anniversary, Thanksgiving, or Christmas.
- We also continue to hold joint worship services with Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Claremont for occasions such as Easter, the Hanging of the Greens, and Christmas Eve.
- From May through October, we hold outdoor worship services on the second Sunday of the month in parks, at the beach, or in open natural settings, to foster a deeper appreciation for God's creation.
- Looking ahead to 2026, we are currently training our congregants to serve as church ministers and leaders, preparing them to become ministers of the word and service, to take on various ministry roles — such as leading worship — while also training our youth to teach Sunday School.

**Lord of Life, Moreno Valley** – submitted by Council President Denise Slaton

Lord of Life Lutheran Church affectionately known as “The Miracle on Nason Street” is a welcoming community rooted in faith, fellowship, and service. We love opening our doors to

neighbors and visitors alike, and we work to make sure everyone feels seen, valued, and at home. We're grateful to support our community in a variety of ways, including:

- Souper Bowl of Caring (supporting Bread of Life Grocery): Each year during Super Bowl weekend, we invite our congregation and friends to help us collect food for families in need in our community.
- Clothing and necessities for the Bread of Life Clothing Shop: We gratefully receive donated items at the church, offering an easy drop-off location to help support local families.
- Support for our neighboring elementary school: We're happy to help provide school supplies for students whose families may not be able to purchase them.
- ELCA Disaster Relief: This past year, we collected donations for ELCA Disaster Relief, including funds designated to assist those impacted by the Los Angeles wildfires.
- Thanksgiving food: Each year, Lord of Life supports several local families by providing \$50 gift certificates to help make Thanksgiving dinner possible.
- We also support Boy Scout Troop 520 and Cub Scout Pack 100.

Above all, we're grateful for the opportunity to serve and to share God's love in practical ways – walking alongside our neighbors and helping to strengthen our community.

**Peace, Corona** – submitted by Pastor Darryl Kozak

- Last year, we were blessed to work with our sisters and brothers from Bethany Norco, and our local LC-MS congregation, to prepare meals for the Community Wellness Center (formerly CCLM). It was a blessing to come together as three congregations to bless the men of the mission with meals to share the love of Christ.
- We continued our long-tine relationship with Angels over Cliffs to gather items (food and appliances) for ongoing needs. Angels over Cliffs is a local nonprofit in Corona working with and advocating for the unhoused.
- We're blessed to have celebrated three years of welcoming the Corona-Norco YMCA Preschool to our campus. The preschool's students come from financially-challenged households and by partnering with the Y, we provide necessary space for their school.
- This was also our second year of working with Bethany Lutheran Church in Norco to help with their collection of items for prisoners for the Gallons of Love ministry. The big joy is joining several other churches in Fullerton each December to assemble these gift packages for the prisoners.

**Shepherd of Life, Lake Elsinore** – submitted by Leadership Chair Kristine Anderson-Johnson  
We have continued to hold our worship at 5:00 pm on Saturday evenings. We are blessed to have 4 dedicated pastors serving us. Pastors Chris Gentile, Brian Foxsworth, Shane Freiberg and Tom Goellrich have rotated their leadership and have been committed to lead us in the word and sacrament. We are truly thankful to them along with the synod for their pledge to work with us.

This year our outreach into the community consisted of a sock project that provided kids' socks to the Lake Elsinore Pregnancy Center, peanut butter & jelly for Helping Our People in

Elsinore, a used clothing drive for the area's homeless, and our annual Angel Tree gifts for SAFER benefiting our local school.

We had Advent and Lent Bible studies with a light meal. Our Advent study was led by Pastor Gentile, while our Lent studies were lay led. It was great way to fellowship with our members as we discussed issues and got to know each other.

God has his hand on the worship and outreach at Shepherd of Life. He knows what the plans are for our small church. And we will be His hands and feet spreading the love of Christ in our communities.

*Jesus Christ is the Shepherd of Life: Know Him, Love Him, Share Him.*

**Spirit of Joy, Hemet** – submitted by Pastor Brian Foxworth

For Spirit of Joy, 2025 was a year of profound transformation and change. We have journeyed through the loss of several long-time members and have stood together in the hopefulness of Resurrection. Many of these members were active in leadership and have for many years longed to see certain milestones achieved. One of those milestones was to pay off the mortgage on SOJ's building. Through the generous giving of our membership and most recently a gift from Trinity Lutheran Church, Hemet, we were able to pay off our mortgage and become debt-free as a congregation. I trust the faithful who are no longer with us are celebrating in spirit what this means for the congregation and our ability to do ministry in our community. One of the first actions taken was to start monthly giving to the Bread Basket food bank, with whom we have been very connected over the years. It is exciting to seek a vision for how we can help do more in the community now that the mortgage is gone!

Due to the closing of Trinity in October 2025 and the sale of their property, we have been blessed with new sisters and brothers in Christ, many of whom are longtime friends coming to join us and start a new path together. With them we grieve Trinity being no more as a congregation, but also celebrate new relationships and the promise that the Church is not buildings or constitutions, but rather people working together to love others. There is a lot of gratitude at Spirit of Joy for our new sisters and brothers and the gifts they join with ours for the work of the Kingdom.

Another moment to be celebrated this past year was the receiving of an RTA 12 passenger van. One of its first outings was to a Storm baseball game, where members of all ages enjoyed fellowship and fun. The hope is to use it more for transporting people to church and other fun outings in the future. This next year promises to be one of new discovery as we get to know new members, establish friendships, and further explore what the future holds for ministry in the San Jacinto Valley. There is a lot of excitement in the congregation when it comes to discerning how God is calling us to serve together!

**Trinity, Riverside** – submitted by Pastor Kent Tuohino

God blessed us in many ways in 2025! Here are some highlights:

- One of our members, Brenda S. Lussier, completed her seminary studies and was called to be a deacon for our congregation. Deacon Brenda's ordination service was held at our church on July 12, 2025, with Bishop Dave Nagler presiding.

- Our food pantry distributed food to more than 100 households every Wednesday. Luther Glen Farm provided fresh eggs and vegetables several times during the year. LRCC also provided new children's clothes that we shared with our pantry guests.
- Our "Banquets at Trinity" meal program served our unhoused neighbors dinner every Monday, breakfast on Saturdays, and lunch on Thursdays, along with providing showers, clean clothing, and personal hygiene items on Thursdays.
- A new theatrical lighting system was installed in our sanctuary to enhance worship services and concerts at our church.
- We raised over \$50,000 to make a professional recording of the musical "Dietrich & Maria." The musical tells the story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, with music composed by our Director of Music Ministries, Dr. Glenn Pickett.
- Under the leadership of Dr. Pickett, our church choir presented special community concerts accompanied by a chamber orchestra – two Christmas concerts in December and one on Pentecost Sunday.
- We continued to provide rehearsal space for the RiverSong Threshold Choir and the Riverside Resistance Revival Chorus.
- Trinity served as the halfway point of the annual CROP Hunger Walk in March. In 2025 "Team Trinity" raised \$3,161 and the total raised by all of the participating groups was \$24,591.
- We took turns hosting a monthly Taizé service in cooperation with several other churches in Riverside, including Eden Lutheran Church.
- Camp staff from LRCC led a great day camp week at our church in July.
- Our Quilting Bee made 164 quilts that were donated to Lutheran World Relief.

## **Big Bear Conference Reports For Pacifica Synod Assembly 2026**

### **Cross and Crown, Rancho Cucamonga**

We at Cross and Crown are grateful to God for all we have been given. After selling the old building and moving to the new, we are feeling settled, happy and at home in this space. Pastor Stephanie Lape has been with us for a full year now (after serving from 2018-2023). We meet for traditional and contemporary style worship with our wonderful cantor and praise band. We engage in Bible studies, classes (Reformation, Enneagram, and book studies), and fellowship events (potlucks, ball games, movies, etc). We are happy to contribute to the First Baptist Church food pantry, San Bernardino Community Wellness Center, Etiwanda School District Christmas Toy Drive, and ELCA World Hunger. We appreciate how very good God is, and we seek to know the revealed God in Christ more and more deeply, and love God, our neighbors, and ourselves more and more fully.

### **First Lutheran Church, Redlands 2026**

- Continued our relationships and community outreach with local organizations including Central City Lutheran Mission (CCLM), Lutheran Retreats, Camps, and Conferences (LRCC), Redlands Family Service, and Youth Hope.
- Continued bi-weekly lay ministry at Brookside Rehabilitation Center
- Held two combined services with ELCA Batak (HKBP) - Pentecost and Reformation Sunday
- Hosted a Ministry in Context student from PLTS
- Introduced worship assistant program
- Introduced monthly contemporary worship with professional musicians
- Reinvigorated our usher program

### **Gloria Dei, Fontana**

Another year has drawn to a close, we give thanks for what has been and look forward with anticipation and hope. As we look at the events and occurrences which took place here at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, we continue to find a family of faith and commitment.

Looking back at 2025, we thank God for his blessings, we must continue to be forward thinking as well. There are many challenges awaiting the congregation. We must reach out to the neighborhood and surrounding community to bring in new and active members to our home. How we will perform this ministry is the challenge before us, but it is necessary for the renewal of faith and continued vitality of the congregation. We must look at outreach to our members as well, we will have to minister to our members so each of us can keep and renew the faith.

Gloria Dei continues to maintain its facility and grounds.

Our ministries continue to help the congregation get through Lent season, Easter Sunday, God's Work, Our Hands, and the Advent season. Several activities were focused on our community of Fontana. Bag lunches were handed out to the homeless.

We bid farewell to Cross and Crown, as they moved to their new facility. We enjoyed joint services and ministries.

May the Spirit open our hearts and minds to all the ways God continues to invite us to participate in God's good work in the world. We now have seven churches worshipping at Gloria Dei.

Warmly,  
John Burton, Council President

### **Our Savior's, Banning**

Our Saviors Lutheran, Banning has worked hard to expand our outreach to God's children in our neighborhood and beyond in 2025.

Our members put together several different support kits and shipped them to Lutheran Global Mission. They included personal care kits and kits to support a kitchen and laundry for those moving into new housing.

We have continued to make lunches and provide clothing for "Faith in Action," a group that supports people who are struggling with housing in our community.

We had been actively involved with Opportunity Village, tiny homes for homeless people, in Banning until January 2026. We had provided weekly lunches to the residents on Sunday and hats, gloves, and jackets when the weather was cold. When the Village closed, we invited the residents, providing transportation for those who needed it, to a Christmas gathering with foods and treats for them and our community neighbors. We put together backpacks for the Village residents with items to help them transition for the first few days to their new homes/apartments or other housing arrangements.

We look forward to 2026, asking God to guide us in service to our community. We will continue supporting Faith in Action with 60 lunches per week while looking for other ways to serve our community as God's helping hands.

### **Shepherd of the Desert, Barstow**

We are a small congregation in the upper desert with extremely talented members who share their talents and many hours of their time. We have a joined congregation of 10 members of Episcopalians and 18 Lutheran members. We have been without a pastor for approximately a year and a half but have managed to keep the doors open with morning prayer and a supply pastor when available. Our ministries include: Ladies of Faith, Men's Tuesday Nights, Laundry Love, Shrove Tuesday, Maundy Thursday, Easter sunrise service, Christmas caroling to the homebound, brown bags for the hungry, coffee hour with light lunch for anyone who might need a meal, ELCA, Episcopal Relief Development, New Hope Village, pregnancy center, a weekly gospel study, and four (4) NA weekly meetings in the fellowship hall. Activities for the church include: animal lover's fair, bingo or bunco dinners, Pentecost party, trunk or treat, junk in the trunk, coats-coffee-cookies, and Earth Day projects. We have been blessed with an amazing group of people who have become a "church family".

Peace and blessings – 2026

### **Spirit of Our Savior, San Bernardino**

*Pastor Steve Anderson*

- With the return to two Sunday services just prior to the start of 2025, worship attendance is up nearly 25% overall. This includes nearly a dozen young adults (under age 30) worshipping consistently, and taking active rolls in our congregation's leadership. Member giving is also up very slightly overall.
- We renewed our license agreement to continue sharing ministry with HKBP Nommensen California, a SAWC, here on our campus. They are a VERY welcome presence among us, and we are blessed have them.
- We continue to take meaningful, lasting steps to improve and protect our aging campus for its continued use in both ministry and mission for many years to come – with several large projects coming to fruition in 2025, and even more to come in 2026.
- We continue making our campus available for use as a gathering location, at no charge, to numerous non-profits and/or civic oriented organizations.
- We continue our commitment to send forth 12% of our offerings to benevolence and mission support for numerous ministries including: LRCC, CWC San Bernardino, Mary's Mercy Center, and more.

**Spirit of Peace, Big Bear**

Spirit of Peace continues in ministry with St. Columba's Episcopal Church in Big Bear. On 4/12/26, we celebrated five years together, blessed by a new, debt-free, sanctuary constructed during the Covid era. The shared congregations are known locally as St. Columba's Spirit of Peace Church. In the past year, the congregations continue to remain stable while dealing with the loss of some members through death and some through moves off the mountain. As part of our outreach, we host 18 recovery groups, sponsor food and holiday meals outreaches, and provide supplies for the local women's shelter. Members participate in Bible studies, and most everyone participates in some facet of ministry with worship and facilities maintenance. Our council is comprised of six members – three Episcopalians, three Lutherans. The part-time vicar/pastor, The Reverend Stuart Swann has been with the congregation of St. Columba's for twelve years and also works as a full-time social worker. He expects to retire within another year or two. With much joy and thanksgiving, we continue this shared journey of faith.

Submitted by: The Reverend Stuart Swann

**St. John's, Palm Desert**

***Senior Pastor Jennifer Shaw and Associate Pastor Emily Baynton***

*Greetings from St. John's! A few highlights from this past year...*

- Updated **Sunday Worship Service times to 9:15 am and 11:15 am**
- Dedicated new **NRSVue Pew Bibles** (*New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition*), fully funded by donations from our members
- Continued **Community Outreach** through our FIND food distribution, Life Stream Blood Drive, and ongoing support of the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission (CVRM), the Galilee Center, the Salvation Army, Olive Crest, and more
- Participated in **Community Events** like the Tour de Palm Springs & CV Giving Day
- Continued to offer **Spiritual Formation** opportunities for all ages – including "Camp Glow" Day Camps, VBS, Sunday School & Youth Bible Study, Confirmation, seasonal Adult

Education classes, weekly Zoom Bible Study, and monthly Women's Bible Study,

- Continued to offer meaningful **Worship Services** – including the excellent work of our Worship & Music Teams, A/V Team, “Hands on High” Puppet Ministry, “Devotion in Motion,” and “Celebration Singers” Choir
- Offered several community-wide **Musical Concerts** through our “Festival Singers” Community Choir and “Festival Ringers” Bell Choir
- Hosted several special events, **led by our Hospitality Team** – including our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Chili Cook-off, Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner, Thanksgiving Pie Social, Christmas Bazaar, and Karaoke & Game Nights
- Provided **Pastoral Care** through the Prayer Team Ministry, Visitation Team, Grief Book Ministry, and Card Ministry – and personal visitations, phone calls, texts, and emails from Pastor Emily and Pastor Jen

### **Trinity, Victorville**

Grace and peace to all,

There are many needs in the neighborhood surrounding the church building, and we give thanks to God for our leadership in prioritizing serving the people living near the church building with the gifts we have been given.

Here is what we did this past year:

- Weekly Bible Study, mainly focusing on the upcoming Gospel for Sunday worship.
- Dorcas - Quilters. The Dorcas group created 25 quilts this year and they were donated to LWR. Up to this year, the quilts were always shipped overseas, but this year, for the first time, they were shipped to people in the Carolinas where there was much need from natural disasters. I am particularly happy that there are even people where not members of TSC participating. The goal for this next year is to create 30 quilts
- Trinity LC Food give away - Every Second Saturday of every month we give out “fresh” food until the food is gone. This isn't just a one day event, the preparation begins on Friday when we must purchase the food, haul it back to the church where a small army of volunteers separate the different food stuffs, pack the food into bags, and then the area is organized for Saturday. We always need volunteers for this special Friday!
- Almost everyday (no kidding) someone or a group of people, will come to front door of the church asking for food and water. We prepare bags for people “With a Kitchen,” or “Without a Kitchen,” and hand them out accordingly. We have a small food pantry off our conference room where we store canned and dry food as well as hygiene products. When the weather gets cold, more and more homeless people are asking for blankets, sometimes we get blankets, but it would be nice if more blankets were donated to our food-pantry. If we have them, we give them out. Every now and then people will drop off new toys in the pantry to give the children. We also give away gloves, caps, can openers and other things that are

necessary. This year we received SIX BOXES of food from the Pacifica Synod WELCA group!!! If any church would like to donate canned or dry food to this ministry, your gifts would be very welcome. Don't forget our motto, "Going to Church? Bring a Can!"

- Sunday School: We have a good mix of children now, so we use the dedicated Sunday School room as well as conference room for Sunday School. I am most excited about all of our teachers and their dedication to the children.
- Game Days: Once a month adults will gather to play games. Card games, board games silly games! Our leader is very creative, inviting and enthusiastic!
- "Superb Owl of Caring" - a play on "Super Bowl Sunday." This is a fund raiser held every year on Super Bowl Sunday. People bring all sorts of beautiful art to bid on for a good cause.
- Backpacks for Youth: Early in the fall we make up a list of the essential utensils elementary age kids need for study. Everyone purchases backpacks that are similar size, for elementary age kids. After we have gathered all the utensils, we have a "packing party" where everyone works together to fill the backpacks. It is a fun and inspiring evening because this year we piled all the 154 filled backpacks in the nave, and they formed a colorful mountain. On Sunday we have a special blessing for the backpacks before they are delivered to the previously vetted schools.
- Interfaith Council of the High Desert. This a group made up of the different faiths we see Victorville, Hesperia and Apple Valley. We will be sponsoring the National Day of Prayer on May 7 with a service followed by refreshments and Resource Fair.  
*Prayer & Presence: Called to Be the World's Love & Light.*  
*Service: Through Healing, Health, Happiness and Hope.*
- Trunk or Treat a very fun outreach to our neighborhood on Halloween. We have all kinds of car trunks featuring ghoulish themes, Of course there is food, music and candy. The purpose of the event is to provide a SAFE place for kids to come and trick or treat... or even make a craft!
- In the Spring we have our Worship in the Park, service out in a nearby park. After worship we begin to create "hygiene kits." Again, everyone is involved, there is music, BBQ and every now and then someone "living in the park" will ask to join us in making hygiene kits! Everyone is welcome.
- Before Winter hits, we have a winter coat drive collecting enough coats for children in two schools.
- One movie matinee every year.
- Our youth attend our synodical camps

- In the Fall we create fabulous Thanksgiving Baskets to give to those in need. This year we handed out about 152 Thanksgiving Baskets.
- Craffle (the name was coined by Pastor Matt Anderson aka Craft+Raffle.) We all make useful, colorful, silly or really impressive crafts to sell so that we can purchase all the necessary stuff for Thanksgiving Baskets.
- I know I missed out on other activities we do, and I apologize.

As you can see, Trinity Victorville is a very busy place, but I think our direction of service is focusing on serving those living near the church. I greatly appreciate the term coined by Dr. Harry Wendt, the creator of Crossways Bible study that states, our God can be seen as a “Servant King.”

Thank you all,  
Pastor Tim

## SADDLEBACK CONFERENCE REPORT FOR SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2026

### **Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Dana Point**

Some of the highlights of this past year included:

- The 60th anniversary - We had quite a party and were able to send a large gift to a church impacted by the wildfires.
- Financial House - We were able to meet our budget and were able to give more beyond ourselves. We received a major gift from a member that cut our mortgage significantly.
- Church Family Life - 2025 was full of baptisms, weddings, confirmations, first Communions, fellowship events, and more.
- Worship - Art & Music Minister Michelle Lum continues to beautify and expand our art and music offerings and lead those groups and other staff members connected to worship.
- Ministries - Deacon Daneen led many caring and outreach ministries, including prayer vigils, Eucharistic visitation, Laundry Love, and more. The Preschool was again full with a long waiting list. Other important ministries included: Serra's Pantry, Los Angelitos Orphanage, Youth Groups, Choirs, Bible studies, Fellowship Events, South Coast Literacy Council, and so many more... And space is used by many outside groups: Ukrainian School of OC, 15 Twelve Step groups (about 19,500 people attending/year), community groups, and more.
- Learning - We increased Bible studies including: Women's Weekly Study, Heart Lifters, G.I.F.T. Groups, Psalms and Hebrew, summer study, Men's Breakfast, and Kerygma (weekly overview) to our offerings.
- Call Committee: Our goal is to call a new pastor in the new year.

Our tagline is "Grace changes everything!" Our goal is always to share the unconditional love of God through our actions and words.

Submitted by Pastor David Mattson

### **Christ Lutheran Church, San Clemente**

This has been a year of discernment for the community of Christ Lutheran as they work to seek clarity as to what God is calling them. The first step has been to identify current mission priorities, which have been articulated as continuing Beach Church, strengthening the relationship between congregation and preschool, and serving those who are hungry and unhoused. In each of these areas, the goal is to proclaim God's love and grace for all. As we move forward, we are exploring two main areas of possible future ministry. One is to consider some form of shared ministry with ELCA and/or ecumenical partners. Secondly, we are looking at how we might better use the resource of our property to further God's work. In the midst of all this, we remain faithful in worship, pastoral care, community life, and various forms of outreach. Recent months have seen a growing number of new members and visitors. There is a sense of openness to what the future holds, trusting in God's leading.

Christ Lutheran is being served part-time by Pr. Rich Ajer and Dn. Margy Schmitt Ajer through this time of discernment.

Submitted by Dn. Margy Schmitt Ajer, March 16, 2026.

### **Lutheran Church of the Master, Corona del Mar**

Lutheran Church of the Master (LCM), Corona del Mar CA, on March 1 welcomed Intentional Interim Pastor Sandy Bentz. Together, we have begun a year-long process involving the whole

congregation that will be prayerfully answering three questions as we prepare to call the new full-time pastor God desires for us: **Who are we?** (identity), **Who is our neighbor?** (connections) and **What is God calling us to do and to be?** (purpose). Along with this transition work, we continue to offer vibrant worship and fellowship at 10am on Sundays and a Wednesday night Bible study, as well as hosting The Swedish Church from San Pedro for 5 pm worship and fellowship on the third Saturday of the month. We are delighted to have recently welcomed several new members, celebrated baptisms, and continue with a multitude of impactful campus improvements that will help us better serve Christ and our neighbor!  
Submitted by Pastor Sandy Bentz

### **Our Savior's Lutheran Church, San Clemente**

This year, we welcomed a new Music Director who has been leading the music ministry at Our Savior's, which has been a delight. Our youth ministry continues to provide a fun and safe place for congregational youth and their friends. Our Preschool/Infant Care ministry continues to grow, and we are currently engaged in a plumbing project to build more bathrooms to increase enrollment. Life by the beach is good.  
Submitted by Pastor Cole McGlynn

### **Newport Harbor Lutheran Church, Newport Beach**

Newport Harbor has had a year filled with ministry, fellowship, and continued growth in worship and music. Throughout the year we have had small groups meeting for dinner for building up our sense of family and community. Each month we have a potluck following worship, once again to bring our church family together. We continue our study of "The Chosen", plans for an Adult Retreat centered on spiritual gifts, and growing our children's program with an emphasis on youth and their involvement at church. We have had Lenten Wednesday Soup Suppers and devotionals, Back Bay BBQ events, Drive-in Movie Nights, Friendship Sunday, Pre School Family Sundays throughout the year, and now the Newport Harbor Farmers Market every Saturday. This has been an incredible time for the church to engage the community on the campus of the church. God's Spirit continues to move among us at Newport Harbor.  
Submitted by Pastor William Erlenbusch

### **Mission Lutheran Church, Laguna Niguel**

Mission Lutheran Church is thankful to be approaching 50 years of ministry in the coming year and gives thanks for the many ways God has blessed this congregation over the decades. We are especially grateful for our preschool, which continues to serve many children and families and remains a trusted presence in the community. Mission Go! outreach supports both local and global needs, while our church also serves the community through AA, Grief Share, Caregiver support group, a partnership with the Gray Academy, and strong engagement with the City of Laguna Niguel. Like many churches, we continue to face the challenge of engaging the world around us, yet we are encouraged by the many opportunities God provides for service and connection.  
Submitted by Pastor Russ Lackey

### **Community Lutheran Church in Rancho Santa Margarita**

2025 was characterized by an ever-increasing staff-lay partnership in ministry. Following the departure of long-time Youth Director Josiah Canto in late 2024, numerous volunteers have stepped forward to lead facets of youth and family ministry along with Pastor Matt Anderson.

GriefShare is a new lay-led ministry that has made a big impact in the last two years, along with an Angel Gown program that provides beautiful burial garments to children's hospitals for bereaved families. Quilting and a lay-led Men's Bible Study are other ministries with great leadership and participation. This is also true of CLC's Worship ministry, with new voices leading the congregation in song, and the occasional lay preacher. Outreach and fellowship activities continue with strong leadership, and a couple members have taken ownership of the never-ending task of caring for the church and preschool property.

For 2026, a new volunteer Treasurer has stepped forward to work with a new bookkeeper to organize the congregation's finances for increased transparency and faithful stewardship. The church's preschool, Saddleback Children's Center, has weathered the changes in enrollment trends brought about by the state TK program, and is opening a new 2-2.5 year-old classroom in the Fall. The Holy Spirit is moving in this active congregation!

Submitted by Pastor Matt Anderson

## **Son & Surf Conference Report**

### **King of Glory—Fountain Valley**

The congregation continues into their third year of having a blended traditional and contemporary worship style for weekly Sunday worship. We have entered the process of discernment for becoming a Reconciled in Christ (RIC) congregation and we are discerning the possibility of opening a food pantry on our campus. We have made several property improvements this year, including repainting, renovation of the church offices, and renovation of our fellowship hall kitchen. Our preschool has catered towards younger ages in response to many families of older children taking advantage of T-K in public schools.

### **Bethlehem—Los Alamitos**

The congregation just recently celebrated their 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Bishop Dave Nagler preached at the worship service and Synod VP Jeff Cours was also in attendance. We had a wonderful worship service, musical entertainment, catered lunch, and program. It was a beautiful event celebrating the history, present, and future of this congregation. We continue have meaningful worship services, generously support a variety of ministries and organizations with time, talent, and treasures, provide various Bible study opportunities, fellowship events, and the Paper Rollers group continue to meet on a weekly basis.

One of the exciting things that Bethlehem has been involved in the past couple of years are some shared collaborative events with other local Lutheran congregations. We've shared worship services, sermon series (recorded and in-person), women's retreats, and confirmation classes. We've participated in enough of these events now that folks are starting to remember one another and make connections. It's been a wonderful way to share in ministry and gather together as communities of faith.

### **Resurrection—Huntington Beach**

The congregation continues its work in Huntington Beach and beyond, with a strong focus on outreach to our neighbors. In 2025, we donated over \$100,000 in direct community support to neighbors needing help with rent, car repairs, new cars, recuperative care, hotel stays and other gap-filling measures.

Our mission to Japan (Akune Mission) continues to grow with its three emphases of renewal through culture, education and service. We have locations in Hiroshima, Kumamoto, Yamaguchi and Kyoto, along with recovery work in Noto. We'll be taking a student exchange group this summer and an adult trip in October.

With housing remaining a barrier to so many, Resurrection purchased a parsonage last year to make sure we can provide for healthy leaders for many years to come.

Our faith community continues to be an attempt at essential Lutheranism as an accessible version of Christianity.

### **Mount Calvary—Cypress**

This past year has been of meaningful and spirit-filled worship services, groups, and ministry to the community.

We have weekly Bible Study, Grief and Loss Support, and our Hands of Love Quilting group that makes quilts for Lutheran World Relief and local groups.

We are engaged in ministry with our informal Church Lab - Co-Op which is made up of five congregations - we shared worship on Maundy Thursday, had two sermon series (one in person, and one on video), had a women's retreat, and are planning for more ways to collaborate in the future. We have seen and enjoyed the many benefits of sharing ideas, resources and community!

We have a new ministry partner sharing our campus and have had two potluck events with them that were well attended and received. We hosted Woven Image for two concerts and raised money for the Ministry Center at Our Redeemer and Global Refuge. After painting the outside of all the buildings we are looking forward to new, water-wise and environmentally beneficial landscaping, which will be a major project for the next few months. We continue to partner with Judy's Kitchen, Summer Harvest, The Ministry Center, and other social justice organizations including AAMPARO and Border Church.

Pastor Carole Parmeter Dyer

### **Our Redeemer Lutheran Church—Garden Grove**

*“Loving Like Jesus—Beyond Ourselves, in Service to All”*

ORLC has been in a few years of transition. And as is the case for all, transitions bring anxiety. It began with the pandemic, followed by the departure of a long serving pastor, then a long vacancy, and then acclimating to a new pastor. And then came the retirement of Music Director of 45 years. In 2024 we were dropped by our property insurer, (because of the construction of the house that has now become the parsonage after a fire destroyed the original building), and the only replacement we could find was approximately 500% more expensive. Then in 2025, because of a flood in our main parish hall, we were dropped another insurance company... So we have weathered some storms. But through them all, the congregation has shown resilience and indeed, determination. We have engaged in positive movement in mission on a variety of fronts. We make distinctions between what we do in the parish, locally, domestically and globally. Parish mission are those things that we do on campus, always with a view to the proclamation of the gospel: worship, bible study, ecumenical activities, etc.

Local mission activities are those things we do in our neighborhood to proclaim the gospel to our neighbors. We initiated a “ministry center” in the spring of 2025 after a time of considerable preparation. This center provides a “free store” for those who are experiencing food insufficiency, including the unhoused. Additionally, we have a well-stocked clothing store for people to choose from each week. And by the end of this year, we will have constructed showers for a shower ministry for those who turn to us for such help. The center operates one day a week with a good corps of faithful volunteers at the helm. This is in addition to a food pantry that has operated at ORLC for years.

Domestic mission is how we are church together in the broader expressions of the ELCA. We have engaged regularly with other ELCA congregations in our area, informally organized as the “Clergy Collab”, sharing sermon series, Maundy Thursday services together, worship in the park, and with our various women’s groups sharing retreat and activities together. All of these activities have been warmly received and continue with enthusiasm. Additionally, for some months now, ORLC has participated in the ongoing conversation with the synod and other congregations regarding the possibility of creating a “ministry cooperative” which would envision a number of congregations working together, sharing pastors, sharing some resources and generally, seeking to learn how to be church in the world today in ways that are relevant and promote congregational thriving, beyond just surviving. And that effort is picking up steam in later days.

Global mission sees us stepping out of our comfort zone into the world to proclaim the gospel in and through service to God’s people. In January of 2025 we took a mission trip to the Foyer de l’Esperance (a Roman Catholic mission) in Yaoundé, Cameroun. In that trip we developed some relationships with some of the children resident in this home for girls who have been victims of human trafficking. We hope to have another mission trip planned for later this year.

So....we have had some challenges, but know ourselves to be abundantly blessed by our God! And, for the most part, we’re having fun! God is good!

### **Redeemer Lutheran and St. Theodore of Canterbury Episcopal Church—Seal Beach**

While officially being two congregations, one within the Pacifica Synod-ELCA and one within the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, the congregation functions as one expression of the Body of Christ. Located within the security gates of Leisure World, a 55 and older community of nearly 10,000 people, we gather for worship together at a 10:30 a.m. Eucharistic service on Sunday morning, where we follow the common lectionary and a more traditional order of worship that reflects both our Lutheran and Episcopal identities. A small choir sings well-chosen music each Sunday. Elected members of the Church Council come from both denominations. The congregation is slowly growing in worship attendance, membership, and stewardship. We were blessed with three new member receptions in the last year. The midweek, midday Bible Study normally brings together between 20-25 participants each Wednesday. After the previous pastor had to leave due to long term medical complications following COVID-19, the congregation has been on “interim” status” since September of 2023.

This congregation has experienced several wonderful blessings in the year past. Because of a no longer functioning furnace, the elderly congregation’s comfort was greatly challenged during the cold winter months of 2023 and 2024. This past year, after conducting a very successful fundraising appeal, we surpassed our ambitious goal and were able to pay in full for a completely

new HVAC system in the sanctuary, fellowship hall, meeting rooms, and offices. A tithe of the contributions received was given to a fund within Leisure World that assists those whose livelihood is threatened by any one of a number of setbacks. With the additional funds that were received, other overdue maintenance and needed repairs have been made to our campus. In the fall of 2025, the congregation welcomed and agreed to share its facilities with the Sa Rang Church, a Korean speaking community of faith, whose Presbyterian pastor's ministry has been greatly influenced by the writing of Martin Luther. This new relationship has been a mutual gift for them and for us. One of the most recent highlights of the congregation was a delightful afternoon of worship and conversation, and then an early evening meal with Bishop John Taylor of the Episcopal Diocese and Bishop David Nagler of the Pacifica Synod. Their wisdom, storytelling, and grace-filled words were inspiring and uplifting!

The diligence, commitment, and faithfulness of the Redeemer/St. Theodore people fill every gathering with joy, energy, enthusiasm, generosity, and hope. They wait patiently for their next called and more permanent pastor to shepherd them and walk beside them into the future God is giving them and to which God is calling them.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Murray D. Finck, Bishop Emeritus of the Pacifica Synod-ELCA

## **REJOICE CONFERENCE CONGREGATIONAL REPORT, 2025.**

North Orange County: Anaheim, Buena Park, Fullerton, La Habra, Whittier & Yorba Linda. *Dean: Pastor Anne-Grethe Krogh Nielsen, The Danish Lutheran Church.*

### **THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD, BUENA PARK.**

*Pastor Jennifer Zahnow.*

The congregation participated in the call process throughout most of 2025. In August 2025, following the bishop's approval, the congregation voted to call Pastor Jennifer as the settled pastor, with her installation in November 2025. Several campus improvements and repairs have been completed. The women of the congregation assemble hygiene kits for individuals experiencing homelessness each month. Additionally, the congregation continues to actively pursue initiatives to support the wider community.

### **FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH, FULLERTON.**

*Pastor Jennifer Garcia.*

In 2025, our church council updated our mission statement: "Called to be the heart of Christ caring for our neighbors through service, compassion, and inclusion." Informally, we continue to be "the church that feeds people body and soul." We certainly fed many people through our Caring Hands hot meal and food pantry. Our pantry numbers increased from a usual 130-140 households a week in 2024 to 150-160 in 2025. We give thanks to our partner congregations and community organizations, especially since Second Harvest Food Bank has been facing hardships of their own this year. Our other biggest challenges were having to re-pipe our entire building over the summer and continuing to seek additional renters for our church house building.

We had a number of educational opportunities in 2025: we offered an Ask, Thank, Tell stewardship study, hosted a Good Faith Conversation with Pride at the Pier, our annual women's retreat was on living in polarized times, we did a study on the creeds for the 1700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed, we continued our Social Justice Discussion Group, and had several museum field trips.

We also collaborated with four other congregations for a Blue Christmas service at St. Paul Lutheran in Fullerton. We hope to foster more collaboration in 2026, including adding Saturday Caring Hands distribution and partnering for Holy Week and other special services.

### **ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH, FULLERTON.**

*Pastor Nate Allen.*

St. Paul Lutheran Church has focused on expanding our evangelism efforts over the last year and a half. We recently had our largest group of new members over the past decade. This has been pushed mainly through our youth and family planning, as well as our women's small groups. Our youth choir has been active and involved more consistently over the last few months. Our adult education has focused on equipping members with a deeper understanding of the Biblical text, how it came to be, and why it is historically accurate and reliable. We continued our regular fellowship activities including our annual Posada and Fall Family Festival. This year we are excited to continue our VBS/ Music Camp week during Summer that allows kids to stay from 9:00-3:00 each day and participate in both camps. We are attending a mission trip with Friends of Lantern Hill this Summer outside of Ensenada, Mexico. We are still looking to hire a part-time Youth and Family Coordinator to help us grow our capacity for youth and family ministry.

**THE TABLE OC, FULLERTON.**

*Pastor Jaz Waring.*

We hosted our first art show, Autonomy & Desire, gathered for QWM First Fridays, showed up at Pride, and celebrated with a joyful Drag Brunch. We deepened holy conversations through The People’s Tribunal and attended national leadership spaces, bringing insight back to our community.

Together, we gave \$1,445 in mutual aid, cared for one another, and even weathered a desert storm in Joshua Tree. During my leave for surgery and the birth of our child, Arie Snow, our community led with strength and grace. We're looking forward to another year building Beloved Community.

**ST. LUKE LUTHERAN CHURCH, FULLERTON AND DREAM BUILDERS’ MINISTRY, ANAHEIM.**

*Pastor Hyunho Hong.*

2026 two churches are very excited to join Co-Op ministry, which three churches share ordained ministers and do ministry together as three organic team up churches. It is not merging churches or any kind.

We need as many prayers as we can get for this beginning. Please for this coop ministry, church members, pastors, and synod staff who are helping this ministry including Bishop Dave and Dem pr. Tom.

**LAMB OF GOD LUTHERAN CHURCH, ANAHEIM.**

*Pastor Michelle Kuan*

This past year has been a season of both challenge and faithful perseverance for our congregation. Though small in number and aging in demographic, our members continue to gather for worship, prayer, and fellowship with steadfast devotion. As their pastor, I have witnessed God’s sustaining grace in the midst of transition, loss, and unexpected demands on our ministry. And we are still seeking God’s grace and mercy all the time.

Our long-running ministry serving homeless neighbors, Tabitha’s Ministry, was first paused and then permanently closed last year. The closure was due to: Insufficient manpower to continue safely. Remaining resources (food, clothing, supplies) were distributed to other churches to ensure they continued to serve those in need. We continue to provide lunch boxes for people to take home after Chinese Bible Study. The individual offering monthly to support the ministry. This ministry remains a simple but meaningful expression of hospitality and care.

Despite the challenges, God continues to work among us. We remain committed to proclaiming Christ, nurturing disciples, and serving our neighbors as we are able. This year has stretched us, but it has also deepened our reliance on God’s grace. We give thanks for the prayers and support of the Rejoice Conference and the Synod. May God continue to guide us with wisdom, courage, and hope.

**EMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH, LA HABRA.**

*Pastoral Intern Amanda Pulos.*

Over the past year, Emanuel Lutheran Church in La Habra began a season of transition and growth, as we celebrated Pastor Dennis Laherty’s retirement and welcomed Amanda Pulos as Pastoral Intern.

The congregation remained active in outreach through HAHO (Hearts and Hands Outreach), supporting the Caring Hands Ministry at First Lutheran Church in Fullerton by collecting food items, hosting two annual American Red Cross blood drives, organizing an Angel Tree to provide holiday gifts for families, and gathering clothing, backpacks, and shoes for St. Jude's Hospital Closet. Children's ministry continued to flourish, with youth participating in worship and community life, Sunday school following services, Confirmation classes, and plans to launch a high school group as youth now have their own dedicated space on campus. Study Buddies offered free after-school tutoring twice weekly, along with a community VBS and Egg Hunt, preschool students gathered in the sanctuary weekly for chapel. Bible discussions, Bible studies, and fellowship groups met weekly and monthly, while Emanuel continued to share its campus with House of Faith, various Bible study groups, and community support programs including AA, NA, and Al-Anon. The congregation continues to show deep love and passion for Emanuel and the surrounding community, and they are excited to see where the Spirit leads them in the future.

**SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH, WHITTIER.**

*Pastor Maggie Goodwin ended her time by the end of the year.*

**ST. ANDREW CHURCH, WHITTIER.**

*Pastor Jeffrey Nelson.*

St. Andrew Lutheran continues to gather to worship our LORD faithfully in a hybrid service and to stream it online for those unable to attend. Bible study takes place in person on Sundays and online on Wednesdays. We have active groups for women, men, and youth each month, as well as a choir and a praise band.

We support our community and the world by regularly donating to and volunteering with agencies such as the Interfaith Food Center, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Habitat for Humanity, Lutheran Disaster Response, Lutheran World Relief, and other organizations. Our facilities are used throughout the week by both the congregation and various other groups, including the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, recovery groups, educational organizations, and others. Our campus hosts the Little Learners Exploration Academy daycare on weekdays.

This year, St. Andrew will enter a new chapter of pastoral leadership following Pastor Jeffrey Nelson's retirement in May.

**MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH, YORBA LINDA.**

*Pastor Bob Mooney & Jay Egenes.*

Over the past year, Messiah Lutheran Church in Yorba Linda has continued to move forward with faith, courage, and hope, while also celebrating a remarkable milestone, 40 years of shared ministry with Pastor Bob Mooney. One of the most significant highlights of this year has been the sale of two acres of church property, a step that both helps the City of Yorba Linda meet its state-mandated affordable housing requirements through congregational overlay and allows Messiah to eliminate its mortgage debt. We are deeply grateful that this decision not only serves the wider community in a meaningful way but also frees our congregation to focus more fully on our mission

in the community and the world. At the same time, Messiah is relocating its iconic “Love One Another” cross from Yorba Linda Blvd onto the heart of the campus to create the new Plaza of the Cross, a beautiful space for gathering, prayer, and reflection that will bless not only the congregation but the entire community. Messiah also remains deeply engaged in mission beyond its campus through strong partnerships with Hope 4 Kids International, especially its life-giving work in Uganda, as well as local ministry partnerships with HIS OC, now located on Messiah’s property, and with Caring Hands Food Pantry in Fullerton at First Lutheran Church. In these joyful and challenging times, Messiah continues to live into its mission with clarity and purpose: to love God and love one another.

### **THE DANISH LUTHERAN CHURCH, YORBA LINDA.**

*Pastor Anne-Grethe Krogh Nielsen, Dean of Rejoice Conference.*

The Danish Lutheran Church continues to be a church that calls a widespread congregation from all of Southern California, from San Diego, Los Angeles and Riverside Counties and beyond – we truly are a commuter church.

At the same time, we have successfully transitioned to also be a local Lutheran Church in our community with outreach, services and events. Weekly we host an AA group and a local Scout Troop. Throughout the year we host affordable health Screenings for the Community and act like a local Voting Center. We have supported Tabitha’s Room and HIS House OC. We plan to partner with First Lutheran Church in 2026 in the Caring Hands Ministry.

Besides our weekly Worship services and events, we offer confirmation classes, Danish Summer Camp, Books & Breakfast lectures, Hyggefest, Art Exhibits and Scandinavian Christmas Fair.

The Church Council and the Congregation at large has been engaged in continued committed conversations and reflections, as we prayerfully walk through this time of change. We embrace the years ahead with continued hope and willingness to explore how we are called to be church and serve our neighbors. The Danish Lutheran Church is indeed a committed, compassionate and gracious congregation.

*We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before God your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thess. 1:2-3*

### **REPORT OF THE HUKILAU CONFERENCE TO THE PACIFICA SYNOD**

Covering the period June 2025 to April 2026

This has been a year of rebuilding. Pre-COVID, the Hukilau conference met twice a year for fellowship and encouragement. We are on track to revive this tradition. Hukilau clergy have met monthly, either in person or via ZOOM. And, thanks to the faithful and unwavering commitment of Donna Calarruda (Maluhia Lutheran Church), the OYEA (Oahu Youth Education and Activities) board meets monthly to support youth ministry among the churches of the Hukilau.

#### **Leadership Changes**

- Andrea and Kathy Jans of Christ Lutheran Church, who until February served as our Hukilau Vice President and Secretary, have moved to the mainland. Andrea was supposed to serve as our webmaster, so her departure paused work on our website. However, we hope to restart this project later this year. We are thankful for Andrea and Kathy’s service.

- The Hukilau leadership team appointed Jack Ashby of Calvary by the Sea Lutheran Church as our interim secretary.
- We continue to seek an interim Vice President.

### Congregational Transitions

- In February of this year, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Kona voted to leave the ELCA. This is a source of sorrow for our conference.
- Kihei Lutheran Church remains in transition. Pastor Ron Rucker, who has served as interim for the past three years, will return to Alaska at the end of May.
- The Lutheran Church of Honolulu is interviewing candidates.
- Pastor Moses Barrios took a call to the Metro D.C. Synod in February 2026. Calvary by the Sea has appointed a transition team and has begun the work of discernment.

### Hukilau Priorities

In October and November, we took an informal survey of Hukilau conference clergy and lay leaders about their missional priorities. The two activities that received the most votes were **training on welcoming new, younger, and more diverse people** and **anti-racism training/social justice practice**. There is a link between welcoming younger and more diverse people and practicing anti-racism/social justice. To build on these results, I have invited Desta Ronning Goehner, the Assistant to the Bishop for Anti-Racism Coordination, to join us for the October 24, 2026, Hukilau Conference at Joy of Christ Lutheran Church.

I want to express my gratitude to my colleagues on the Hukilau leadership team. I've already mentioned Andrea and Kathy Jans, who have departed the island, but I would be remiss if I did not thank Jack Ashby, our interim secretary; Sharon Moore, our treasurer; and Dana Westphalen and Pastor Juli Paten, who serve on both the synod council and our Hukilau leadership team. Last but not least, mahalo to our synod staff, especially Bishop Dave Nagler and Pastor JP Sabbithi, who serves as our regional assistant to the bishop. The two of you keep us connected to the work of the wider church. *Mahalo palena 'ole.*

Respectfully submitted,  
 Pastor Margrethe S. C. Kleiber  
 Dean, Hukilau Conference

## 2025 Parochial Reports Submitted

**We thank ALL our congregations for your partnership in ministry this year!**

Your congregation's annual report is instrumental to the synod and churchwide offices in helping to better serve your ministry needs and contributes to our representation at Churchwide Assembly. *If your congregation is not listed below, it is not too late! Please contact Carol Youngman in the synod office for assistance in filing your report with the ELCA. Thank you!*

### EAST SAN DIEGO:

**Ascension** San Diego  
**Calvary**, San Diego  
**Carlton Hills** Santee  
**Shepherd of the Valley**  
La Mesa  
**St. Andrew's** San Diego  
**St. John's** El Cajon  
**St. Mark** Chula Vista  
**Welcome Ministry**  
El Cajon (SAOM)  
**Tierrasanta** San Diego

### WEST SAN DIEGO:

**All Saint's** San Diego  
**Christ** San Diego  
**Clairemont** San Diego  
**First** San Diego  
**Gethsemane** San Diego  
**Our Savior's** San Diego  
**Resurrection** Coronado  
**St. Peter's by the Sea**  
San Diego

### HARVEST:

**Bethlehem** Encinitas  
**Calvary** Solana Beach  
**First** Vista  
**House of Prayer** Escondido  
**Incarnation** Poway  
**King of Kings** Oceanside  
**San Marcos** San Marcos  
**Spirit of Joy** Ramona  
**Taiwanese** San Diego

### RAINCROSS:

**Bethany** Norco  
**Eden** Riverside  
**Faith** Menifee  
**First** Ontario/Upland  
**Getsemani Indonesian**  
Riverside (SAWC)  
**Grace** Upland  
**Good Shepherd** Claremont  
**HKBP CA BATAK** Claremont  
(SAWC)  
**Lord of Life** Moreno Valley  
**Peace** Corona  
**Spirit of Joy** Hemet  
**Trinity** Hemet  
**Trinity** Riverside

### BIG BEAR:

**ELCA Batak** Redlands (SAWC)  
**Faith** Yucaipa  
**First** Redlands  
**Gloria Dei** Fontana  
**HKBP Nommensen**  
San Bernardino (SAWC)  
**LC of the Cross** Rialto  
**LC of the Desert** Joshua Tree  
**Our Savior's** Banning  
**Shepherd of the Desert**  
Barstow  
**Spirit of Our Savior**  
San Bernardino  
**St. John's** Palm Desert  
**Trinity** Victorville

### SADDLEBACK:

**Christ** San Clemente  
**Community**  
Rancho Santa Margarita  
**Gloria Dei** Dana Point

**Mission** Laguna Niguel  
**Newport Harbor**  
Newport Beach  
**Our Savior's** San Clemente

### SON & SURE:

**Bethlehem** Los Alamitos  
**King of Glory** Fountain Valley  
**Mt. Calvary** Cypress  
**Our Redeemer** Garden Grove  
**Our Saviour's** Orange  
**Redeemer** Seal Beach  
**Resurrection** Huntington Bch  
**St. Olaf** Garden Grove

### REJOICE:

**Church of Dream Builders**  
Anaheim (SAWC)  
**Emanuel Danish** Yorba Linda  
**Emanuel** La Habra  
**First** Fullerton  
**Good Shepherd** Buena Park  
**Grace** Anaheim  
**Lamb of God** Anaheim  
**Messiah** Yorba Linda  
**Salem** Whittier  
**St. Andrew** Whittier  
**St. Paul** Fullerton  
**The Table** Fullerton (SAWC)

### HUKILAU:

**Calvary by the Sea** Honolulu  
**Christ** Mililani  
**Joy of Christ** Pearl City  
**Kihei** Kihei Maui  
**LC of Honolulu** Honolulu  
**Maluhia** Waianae  
**Prince of Peace** Honolulu  
**St. John** Kailua

## AMMPARO

(Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation & Opportunities)

The Lutheran organization of AMMPARO was initiated when desperate immigrants began sending their children across the border unescorted to seek better lives for themselves. Many had family members in the US who were able to transport them to safe locations, but many more arrived alone and were seized by the border patrol. Accompanying the minors meant finding legal representation for them, advocating for humane conditions for them in custody and supporting immigrant families and individuals with housing, food and job opportunities. AMMPARO was here to assist Lutheran congregations across the country with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in their communities.

Our organization and specifically the AMMPARO ministry in the Pacifica Synod has adapted and changed as the situation at our local border and the immigration system across the country have changed. We have established relationships with and continue to seek out local groups and institutions whose efforts we can augment and who have knowledge of physical and spiritual needs that we can fulfill. Many are doing good work around us and we bring our hearts, hands and voices in the name of Christ Jesus to assist wherever we are able. This assistance has included feeding and clothing those passing through the border and on their ways to other parts of the country; worshiping and sharing communion with those in outdoor detention at the border; being present at the courthouse to document immigration hearings; standing in solidarity with our neighbors in protests and prayer vigils; and prayerfully accompanying immigrants in stressful courthouse situations.

Our latest focus is on the local detention center at Otay Mesa. We are about to launch a challenge to the synod congregations to collect under garments and items needed by many people being released from detention facilities. With grant money, we were able to assist a congregation member in detention, before she was deported and we are prepared to assist other individuals as they are referred to us. The goal is to be flexible enough to respond when changing circumstances arise and to obey God's commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves.

## Meet Your Coaches



**Isabel Cazares**

An ELCA Trained Coach, Isabel is currently serving as our Hispanic Coaching Coordinator. She also serves as Parish Administrator at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Fullerton. Whether working one-on-one or in group settings, Isabel offers a sensitive approach.

[coachisa05@gmail.com](mailto:coachisa05@gmail.com)



**Rev. Tony Scheer**

Tony is an ordained Pastor currently serving a call in Pacifica Synod. He is a Segment 2 Coach in Mission Development and has been coaching since 2009. He has a bachelor's degree in Organizational Management and Human Resources. Tony is a compassionate coach who listens carefully and authentically cares for each client.

[revscheer2000@gmail.com](mailto:revscheer2000@gmail.com)

## About us.

We are a team of professionally trained coaches; ready to walk alongside you as you navigate mission and ministry in your community.



## Request more info

[Pacificacoachinggroup@gmail.com](mailto:Pacificacoachinggroup@gmail.com)

## Visit Our Website

[www.pacificacoachinggroup.com](http://www.pacificacoachinggroup.com)



We Serve Pacifica Synod and the ELCA



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Coaching is a unique partnership focused on you. We are a sounding board, an accountability partner and a group facilitator - grounded in the word.

No matter the need...



**Carol J. Schultz**

A Leadership Coach who is an Enhanced Practitioner in Narrative Coaching, a credentialed grief/loss coach, and a trained team coach. Her professional experience in law practice, dispute mediation, and nonprofit leadership informs her coaching as she works with individuals and teams who want to make positive changes.

[cjschultz@icloud.com](mailto:cjschultz@icloud.com)



**Deenna Eley**

A pantry director, and Love My Kids nonprofit organization leader. She graduated from Vanguard University with a degree in psychology. Deenna specializes in inspiring people! Her passion is to partner with individuals to evoke awareness needed to achieve their goals. She loves to encourage and equip others to take a leap of faith!

[deenna@deennaeley.com](mailto:deenna@deennaeley.com)



**Rev. Darryl Kozak**

The Pastor of Peace Lutheran Church in Corona and Bethany Lutheran Church in Norco, as well as Regional Assistant to the Bishop of Pacifica Synod. He has been serving as an ICF - Professional Certified Coach since 2012. He is a Segment 2 Coach, a Care for Creation LabCoach, Leadership Coach, Team Coach, End of Life and Grief Coach.

[RevKozak@gmail.com](mailto:RevKozak@gmail.com)



**Renee Christensen**

A Leadership Coach, Teams Coach, Life and Grief and Loss coaching. Her professional experience with over 4900 hours in post-traumatic disorder, holistic healing, and short-term counseling empowers her coaching whether working with individuals or teams seeking positive change and new outcomes.

[drreeneinc@gmail.com](mailto:drreeneinc@gmail.com)



**Sarah Tees**

A Lay Leader, Sarah is a Segment 2 ELCA Coach, and has trained in the specialties of Stewardship, Congregational Mission and Vitality, Grief and Loss, End of Life as well as Team Coaching.

In addition Sarah serves as Director of Synod Coaching.

[sarahtees@hotmail.com](mailto:sarahtees@hotmail.com)



## Tapestry Ministries

### Pacifica Synod

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*Tapestry is a Ministry of the Pacifica Synod of the ELCA. The aim of this organization is to create safe and welcoming spaces for queer members of faith communities, as well as to create a safe trauma-informed environment for LGBTQIA+ people seeking to return to faith communities. We facilitate these objectives through annual, and sometimes biannual retreats with a focus on building community, as well as offering training and assistance to existing Churches to help them move from accepting to truly affirming.*

At last year's Synod Assembly, we sponsored a booth to share the Tapestry Ministry and had the opportunity to connect with people from across the Synod. In the year since, we have been busy. We held our second Tapestry retreat weekend with a new lay leader, Sandy Rodriguez, who led a successful retreat from September 19–21, 2026. We welcomed 18 participants, including staff. Over the course of the weekend, participants engaged in talks focused on grace, faith, spirituality, and belonging, as well as four meditations centered on Gospel stories. Community was formed through shared meals, board games, music, group reflections, and meaningful conversations. The retreat was spiritually enriching and a lot of fun.

The Tapestry committee also hosted a Holigay event in the Inland Empire at Trinity Lutheran Church. Led by Sandy Rodriguez and Mackenzie Lussier, the event included good food, festive Holigay decorations, and a welcoming atmosphere. We had a wonderful time meeting new people and sharing information about Tapestry. Our guests included individuals from other faith communities in Riverside. From this event, we were invited to participate in a storytelling gathering for the LGBTQIA+ community at First Congregational Church.

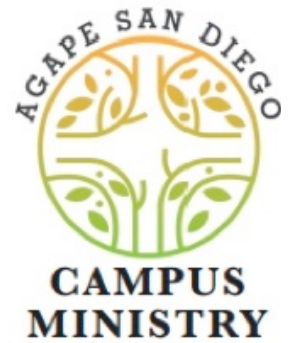
Looking ahead, our next retreat is scheduled for September 25–27, 2026. Each retreat builds on the previous one, inviting past participants to serve as facilitators, speakers, and leaders in hospitality. This expanding circle of connection reflects Tapestry's commitment to equipping and uplifting LGBTQIA+ leaders throughout our Synod. We have selected our next lay leaders, and we encourage you to watch for registration and join us if you are a member of the LGBTQIA+ community or an ally.

Tapestry will continue to show up at advocacy events such as Trans Day of Visibility and Remembrance and will offer fellowship gatherings to strengthen relationships. We will also promote collaboration through initiatives like LGBTQIA+ pastor pulpit exchanges. In addition, we are sponsoring a booth at the Riverside Pride Festival on May 30, 2026. This booth will allow us to share information about the retreats, offer speaking opportunities for partner agencies, and let the LGBTQIA+ community know that Tapestry is a program for them and for their allies.

We continue to curate a list of LGBTQIA+ rostered and lay leaders who can share their gifts by leading adult forums and educational events in congregations and community settings. We are excited about the connections we are building within our communities and with the LGBTQIA+ community throughout Southern California.

# Radical Welcome + Rooted in Faith Growth in Community + Mercy and Justice

These are the Core Values of Agape San Diego that emerged from serving hundreds of students facing housing and food insecurity, on top of all the ordinary vulnerabilities that come with college displacement from family, home, and community. The 40+ year vision to replace our pre-war house finally got urgent when “cozy” felt cramped and “homey” became unsafe. Since we moved our gatherings outside at SDSU and into new space at UCSD, our values and vision continue to be affirmed by students and even two public universities.



## ***“Double the Fun” with the same staff...when Students Lead!***



Now serving a second campus, we have doubled our outreach and our population served from 40,000 to over 100,000. This happened with the same staff because we gather and equip students for ministry, who reach out, organize and lead events, and even teach and lead



Whether de-stressing with Torrey, Pastor Darin’s service and therapy dog, discerning vocation with an in-depth 1-1 conversation about faith and service, or making new friends over a free meal with no strings, we make it easy for students to reconnect with their inner life because we meet them where they are, between class and work, or even in the midst of class, where God connects with every person and every subject under the sun.

From these relationships flow all our other activities: retreats, prayer, sailing, church visits, hikes, dinner outdoors, and more. And we open vocational opportunities with employment at a congregation, nonprofit, camp, and other jobs on or near campus, or around the world.

## ***Only two steps left to build a New Campus Center at SDSU:***

Agape’s project team has a complete, fully-approved design with a builder ready to start this fall! Since last year we had to move from a church lender to a commercial bank with mixed-use development expertise. Conservative underwriting still allows us to charge below market rents for 46+ students, subsidized by commercial tenants and a performing arts and community space.

Now only two challenges remain before we break ground:

- 1) a \$3.4M investment for a fixed return with a buyback plan***
- 2) a guarantor for 18-20 months of our construction loan***

Thanks to faithful, generous support of the Pacifica Synod, Episcopal Diocese of San Diego, dozens of congregations, and hundreds of donors, Agape’s long vision for an accessible and sustainable campus ministry center is nearly realized! If you or your congregation would like to join this vision to sustainably multiply our capacity and impact for generations to come, contact

Pastor Darin Johnson at [darin@agapesandiego.org](mailto:darin@agapesandiego.org) or call 619-631-8608. More details at [agapesandiego.org/building](http://agapesandiego.org/building)

***Thank you, Pacifica Synod,  
for 75 years of campus ministry  
and hope to build for the next 75 years!***



# 10 Things to Know about Augsburg Fortress PUBLISHERS

1. **Lutheran Yes!** is a student-centered confirmation curriculum that invites middle schoolers, leaders, and families into God's ongoing YES through curiosity, creativity, and connection. Made for a new generation, this hands-on curriculum gives students real choices, real agency, and real ways to discover how faith takes shape in their lives. Unit 1 on Lutheran Worship will be available June 1.
2. **For the Sake of the World** is a series focused on providing history, explanation, and analysis of the Social Statements and Messages from the ELCA for contemporary people of faith. Current titles include *Health and Health Care; Faith, Sexism, and Justice; Abortion; Church in Society*; and the newest release: *Peace*.
3. **Serving Through Song** is a webinar series born from the oft-heard requests and pragmatic interests of our cherished church musician customers. Recordings and registration available on the website.
4. **Unbridled Presence:** This new program from Augsburg Fortress offers an array of resources to support the worship and prayer life of kids and families, PLUS resources for ministry leaders and congregation members to welcome kids and their families in worship.
5. **Our New AFP President:** We're thrilled to share that Andrew DeYoung has been named the next President and CEO of Augsburg Fortress Publishers, effective September 1, 2026. Please join us in celebrating Andrew—and in thanking Tim Blevins for more than two decades of faithful leadership. Here's to a new chapter in our publishing journey!
6. **NRSVue Resources:** Many resources are being updated to reflect the transition to NRSVue. Lutheran Study Bible Second Edition NRSVue, NRSVue Pew and Gift Edition Bibles, Lectionary for Worship NRSVue Study Edition Year A are all released, with Year B available this summer. Work on updating our Bible-based curriculum and student Bibles is progressing smoothly.
7. **Together by Grace: Bible Conversations:** With guided conversations and open-ended questions, these studies help readers explore Bible stories, wrestle with tough questions, and build community. Available now: Romans, Matthew, Psalms, and John. Coming July 2026: Mark and Isaiah.
8. **All Creation Sings Fundraising Kit:** Ready to adopt *All Creation Sings* into your worship space? Check out the fundraising kit that provides your congregation with everything you need to host a campaign. Explore all 18 pieces today!
9. **Just Love Story Bible:** A bold and inspiring new illustrated storybook Bible for children invites readers to open their imaginations, take hold of their belovedness, and understand that all people on earth deserve to be loved and to have dignity, equality, and justice.
10. **Summer Events:** Find us at several events this summer! We love meeting the folks who stop by to chat and peruse our highlighted resources in our store! Join us at WELCA Triannual Gathering, Rostered Ministers Gathering, Music Clinics, and more!

**Want to learn more?** Follow us on social media, sign up for our free e-newsletters, and connect with us this summer at events!

[go.augsburgfortress.org/af-synod-assembly-10-things-2026](https://go.augsburgfortress.org/af-synod-assembly-10-things-2026)

**\$25 off a purchase of \$100 or more from the Augsburg Fortress webstore.**

Use promo code **SUMMER2026** at checkout.

Exclusions apply. May not be applied to web or print subscriptions or core worship resources.  
Expires August 31, 2026.

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✠ **Every person deserves a safe, stable, affordable place to call home.** ✠

At California Lutheran Homes (CLH), that simple truth drives everything we do. When people have a home, whole lives change – health improves, children learn and dream, families flourish, and communities grow stronger.

Since 1948, CLH has answered God’s call to care for our neighbors. What began as a network of senior care communities has become a bold, catalytic foundation that turns possibility into reality. We’re not a direct service provider – we’re the spark: partnering, investing, and leading so best-in-class organizations can deliver transformative, lasting impact.

*What we do:*

- 🏠 **Accelerate affordable housing** – In 2024 we expanded our loan program nationally, funding projects from Stockton (rehabilitating housing for transition-age youth) to La Cañada (that city’s first affordable units), and Billings, Montana (housing + services for disadvantaged seniors and hospital outpatients).
- 💖 **Amplify partners** – We invest pre-development capital, provide leadership and advocacy, and link congregations with developers so underused property becomes thriving ministry and revenue.
- 🏡 **Make bold capital moves** – Partnering with the Biddy Mason Charitable Foundation and OC United, we provide low-cost housing and wraparound supports to young women and families who have aged out of foster care – leasing property to partners for just \$10/month.
- 🌐 **Scale impact through networks** – As a member and founding partner of Lutheran Services in America’s Housing Services Collaborative, CLH helps manage the LSA Flexible Housing Fund so LSA members can expand pre-development, renovation, and capital capacity.

Our donors’ generosity, faithful stewardship, and an unwavering board fuel this work. CLH remains committed to imaginative, faith-driven solutions that unlock stable homes and brighter futures. Thanks be to God.

Interested in partnering or learning more? Email us: [info@californialutheranhomes.org](mailto:info@californialutheranhomes.org)

Robert Chillison  
Board Chair

Deacon Nancy J. Ackerman  
President and CEO

Updates from the ELCA Foundation

# Synod Assemblies 2026



We are the ELCA Foundation, a financial ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We walk alongside faithful people and organizations – helping them turn generosity into legacy, and legacy into ministry.

We believe generosity is more than a financial act; it is a testimony of faith, gratitude and hope. With \$1.5 billion in donor-designated gifts and invested assets entrusted to our care, we partner with individuals and organizations to thoughtfully steward these resources and maximize their impact.

We serve as a bridge between individual generosity and the shared mission of the ELCA – from congregations and synods to seminaries, outdoor ministries, and churchwide ministries such as ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response. Every planned gift we steward is an investment in the church's life – now and into the future.

## What we do

We offer guidance that is both spiritually grounded and financially sound, ensuring every gift reflects the heart of the giver and the needs of the church.

- **Gift Planning Services:** Our regional gift planners accompany individuals and families through faithful, personalized planning – helping them create charitable legacies through bequests, trusts, charitable gift annuities, real estate, retirement assets and more.
- **Ministry Growth Fund:** A socially responsible investment option that supports endowments and ministries across the ELCA, balancing fiduciary excellence with faithful stewardship.
- **Resources and Tools:** From our online Planning Library and free Personal Estate Planning Kit to our partnership with Giving Docs, we provide easy, trustworthy ways to start planning today.
- **Ministry Partnership:** We help ELCA ministry leaders grow a culture of generosity without adding more to their workload, offering training, templates and direct support to strengthen local ministry.



### Our vision

is to support and sustain ELCA ministries by enhancing gifting capacity and stewarding resources.

### Our mission

is to be a thriving ministry that develops a culture of intentional generosity and financial stewardship to expand the work of the ELCA.



Dear Partners in welcome,

Grace and peace to you this synod assembly season. **At Global Refuge we remain committed to the work of welcome, no matter the challenges.** For more than 85 years, Global Refuge (formerly known as Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service) has championed the work of welcome by providing support to immigrants and refugees as they rebuild their lives in the United States. Founded by heartbroken Lutherans in the United States who felt called to provide a home for those fleeing violence during the World Wars, Global Refuge has continued this good work welcoming more than 850,000 newcomers since 1939.

Our mission states, "As a witness to God's love for all people, we stand with and advocate for migrants and refugees, transforming communities through ministries of service and justice." With help from Global Refuge, families are welcomed into their new homes with support from our case managers who ensure that adults are enrolled in English language classes, children are enrolled in school, and Global Refuge partners guide newly arrived refugees in using public transportation and accessing community resources.

In early 2025, Global Refuge and the 9 other national resettlement agencies received a **stop-work order** from the U.S. Department of State as it relates to our funding for the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, effectively cutting off vital support to families who have already lawfully resettled in the United States. In the time since then, we have witnessed an incredible increase in the amount of support we receive from faith communities and individuals. This additional financial support and volunteer support has enabled Global Refuge to continue services to our immigrant neighbors that would have otherwise been stopped. We are thrilled to say we continue serving immigrants through nearly all of the programs we had before, albeit at a smaller scale in some cases. Support from faith communities more than doubled in 2025, and new congregations from around the country are responding to the call to welcome. This support has not only enabled us to continue services as mentioned above, but it has also made us less vulnerable to shifts in government funding.

With the support of these new partners and Lutheran communities like yours, in 2025 we were able to...

- Serve **171** people through our new **Post-Arrival Stability and Empowerment (PASE) program** in Baltimore to fill urgent gaps left by stop-work orders and funding freezes.

- Empower and support **55 Clients** and **44 Businesses** through personal and business loans, with a total of **\$1.086 million dollars** funded.
- Serve **3,099** participants through the Camino A Casa program through training, case management, mental health services, and educational opportunities.
- Write and distribute **11,000 Hope for the Holidays cards** that provided messages of welcome and hope to newcomers.
- Mobilize the public to pack and ship **1,000 Neighbor Kits** to our clients, totaling a fair market value of **\$17,500**

In a political season rife with anti-immigrant rhetoric and messages that villainize newcomers, we have a unique opportunity to change this narrative and refocus on all the gifts newcomers bring to community. We invite you to join us in this work! [It is needed now more than ever.](#)

- **Join the Faith Alliance** – Global Refuge is proud to offer a new training for communities of faith who seek to safely welcome and embrace immigrants and refugees. This four-module series allows your faith community to learn together and make a commitment to welcome newcomers in your community <https://www.globalrefuge.org/faith-alliance/>
- **Hold a Vigil** – The new Vigil For the Taken resource offers an opportunity to name, recognize, and remember members of the community that are disappeared, detained, or deported. Whenever we lose precious members of our communities, we must stand together and affirm that every person deserves dignity and our support, and that no one should be forgotten. <https://www.globalrefuge.org/vigil-for-taken/>
- **Sing For Your Neighborhood** – *Here I Stand* is an original song written for the Vigil for the Taken mentioned above. It reads “Here I stand where my neighbor stood, holding peace for my neighborhood.” Written as a Taizé-like offering for the times we’re in, it is meant to equip neighbors with a song to “hold a candle” for those who have been harmed or removed from our communities. [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TeFtjoSQ\\_FWNd7rQu4UHkELeMpY7e66e/view?fbclid=IwY2xjawQ5BU1eHRuA2F1bQixMABicmlkETF4N1Z2Smp6Y2NCRllsS1N6c3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjlyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHljJ3lWmE8EYtDcfE8ozQcoHVvyl5OPYjCxRZSfl4BnKP0vKH7Qk\\_LFCxxa8\\_aem\\_XBFK4jpbwWWU6JnTBkellw](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TeFtjoSQ_FWNd7rQu4UHkELeMpY7e66e/view?fbclid=IwY2xjawQ5BU1eHRuA2F1bQixMABicmlkETF4N1Z2Smp6Y2NCRllsS1N6c3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjlyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHljJ3lWmE8EYtDcfE8ozQcoHVvyl5OPYjCxRZSfl4BnKP0vKH7Qk_LFCxxa8_aem_XBFK4jpbwWWU6JnTBkellw)
- **Support Refugees with a gift** – If you or communities you’re connected with are willing to support financially, please use and share this link: [www.globalrefuge.org/give](http://www.globalrefuge.org/give)
- **Learn more and Advocate** – Explore resources with more information about executive orders and accompanying actions: [www.globalrefuge.org/advocate](http://www.globalrefuge.org/advocate)



# Global Refuge

- **Know Your Rights** - Our partners at AMMPARO have a great resource for communities to read about their rights and those of immigrants in their care. <https://resources.elca.org/ammparo/know-your-rights-2025/>
- **Explore Resources** - Visit our Congregational Resources page to explore all the resources available to you: [www.globalrefuge.org/congregations](http://www.globalrefuge.org/congregations)
- **Sign up for our Monthly E-newsletters** - Get the latest updates for faith leaders by emailing [outreach@globalrefuge.org](mailto:outreach@globalrefuge.org).

Thank you so very much for your support, we look forward to another year of partnership in welcome.

Go in peace. Welcome the stranger.



*Pastor Dan Beirne*

*Director for Mobilization and Faith Relations*  
[outreach@globalrefuge.org](mailto:outreach@globalrefuge.org)



## The Mission Investment Fund: Helping ELCA congregations bring ministry to life



The Mission Investment Fund (MIF), a financial services ministry of the ELCA, has been a **steady and reliable financial partner** for congregations, ministries and individuals for more than 150 years. Through times of growth and uncertainty alike, MIF has remained committed to strengthening ELCA ministries and communities — delivering customer-first support backed by flexible financing solutions.

In 2025, MIF continued to support ministry growth across the ELCA. Your investments helped expand worship spaces, rebuild congregations after fires and natural disasters, provide spaces for people to age with dignity, start green projects and support accessibility remodeling for community spaces. Each project strengthens ELCA ministries, ensuring that they stay vibrant, inclusive and fully prepared to support the communities they serve.

### By the numbers:

- **Total Loans Outstanding:** \$614,967,000
- **Total Assets:** \$779,189,000
- **Total Investment Obligations:** \$551,452,000
- **Net Assets & Capital Ratio:** 27.4%

### What makes MIF unique?

- **Proven stability:** With more than a century and a half of experience, MIF has weathered changing economic and political landscapes, maintaining financial strength for ELCA ministries.
- **Deep expertise in church and ministry financing:** We understand the unique needs of faith communities and have longstanding experience in congregation and ministry building projects.
- **Competitive rates and terms:** Our financial offerings are structured to support ministries of all sizes.
- **A full suite of financial services:** In partnership with the ELCA Federal Credit Union, we provide a range of financial solutions for congregations, ministries and individuals.
- **Faithful stewardship:** Investments in MIF directly support loans that fund hundreds of capital projects across the church.

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MIF continues to enhance our tools and financial services to better support ELCA ministries. And even as we look ahead with fresh vision and innovation, our foundation remains the same: enduring trust, time-tested stability and commitment woven through generations. In every chapter, we journey with ELCA members and ministries, united in faith — a steadfast partner supporting God’s work in the world.

### ***MIF at work in the Pacifica Synod (as of December 31, 2025):***

- 24 Mission Investment Fund loans, with a balance of \$22,480,934
- \$14,583,731 in Mission Investment Fund investment obligations.

**For more information about MIF capabilities, please visit our website, [mif.elca.org](http://mif.elca.org) or contact Deacon Jerry Johnson, Regional Manager: 773-682-5954 [jerry.johnson@elca.org](mailto:jerry.johnson@elca.org)**

# Your Calling + Our Benefits

## Portico Benefit Services' Report to 2026 Synod Assemblies

Your calling is to serve. Ours is to support you. As the ELCA's benefit ministry, Portico provides benefits that nurture holistic health, so you can live out your calling and serve with confidence and grace. Here's a visual recap of what our community of more than 52,000 plan members experienced in 2025.

**52K**  
Members Served by Portico



**2,829**  
Text/Virtual Health Care Visits to 98point6®, with an estimated cost savings of \$263 per visit.



**205**  
Births & Adoptions

**11th**  
Consecutive Year of our Customer Care Center being named a Center of Excellence by Benchmark Portal.



**619**  
Changes of Call\*

**1,702**  
Sword Health Enrollments and nearly 42K total sessions in their Thrive, Move, and Bloom digital physical therapy and mobility programs.

**\$157K**  
Debt Paid Off by members via LSS of Minnesota Financial Counseling, with over \$2.6M paid off since 2008.

**16%**  
of Member Income saved for retirement, on average, by members sponsored in the Traditional Benefits Program, thanks to employer and member contributions.\*

**\$232M**  
Made in Annuity Payments and 533 retirements.

**4,214**  
Members Worked with a Portico Financial Planner, with a cumulative 95.5% satisfaction rate.\*



**32**  
Beginning Disability Benefits

Nearly 10% of Our 10K ELCA Medicare-Primary Plan Members participated in the SilverSneakers fitness program.\*



**1,927**  
Members Made Roth After-tax Contributions to their retirement plans.

We design our benefits to align with the needs of the church, pooling resources through a community benefits plan to deliver stable, sustainable support that enhances everyday life and brings value to those who serve. Follow us on social media @PorticoBenefits.



\*Source: Traditional Benefits Program. All other numbers and percentages are drawn from across Portico's benefit programs.



ELCA Federal Credit Union

## ELCA Federal Credit Union

Faithful financial services for ELCA members and ministries



The ELCA Federal Credit Union (ELCA FCU) provides a full range of financial products and services to members, congregations and ministries of the ELCA. **As the first of the ELCA's financial ministries to offer loans to individuals**, the Credit Union offers savings and checking accounts, CDs, loans and lines of credit, credit cards, home mortgage loans for purchases or refinances, as well as home equity loans and lines of credit.

**The ELCA FCU serves ministries** through federally insured deposit accounts, a flexible corporate credit card program, auto loans and unsecured ministry loans up to \$100,000 to support smaller projects such as building repairs and purchases. In addition, the Workplace Banking program allows ministry organizations and congregations to offer ELCA FCU Credit Union products and services, along with other exclusive perks, to their employees.

A new cohort joined the ELCA's Resourceful Servants program, **designed to improve financial wellness and assist rostered leaders in building emergency savings funds**. Through this matching program, ELCA rostered leaders make ongoing deposits to their Credit Union emergency savings accounts. The Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA matches those deposits up to an established amount. Together, more **than 700 rostered ministers** have been served, collectively depositing more than \$1 million in emergency savings.

A **strong online presence** means members have access to funds with an ELCA Federal Credit Union Mastercard Debit Card at more than 30,000 surcharge-free ATMs. The ELCA FCU also offers account-to-account (A2A) transfers, person-to-person (P2P) payments (similar to Venmo and Zelle), remote deposit, bill pay and more.

### Why choose the ELCA Federal Credit Union?

- **The ELCA Federal Credit Union supports the ELCA's mission of good stewardship.** We provide full services to all ELCA members, congregations and related ministries.
- **As a not-for-profit financial cooperative chartered to serve our church, we offer socially responsible banking solutions often priced more competitively** than traditional banks. We have demonstrated success in providing savings to our members.
- **With the church as our sponsor, we operate in ways that are consistent with the church's values.**

**Membership is open to every ELCA member, synod, congregation and ministry—and their employees.**

**For more information about the products and services of the ELCA Federal Credit Union, please visit our website, [elcafcu.org](http://elcafcu.org) or call us toll-free at 877-715-1111.**

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