

**African Descent Lutheran Association (ADLA) – Los Angeles**  
**General Session Meeting #4**  
**October 25, 2025 @ 9A**

Approved – February 28, 2026

**Present:** Jeanne Armstrong, Dorothy Cole, Janice DeMar, Carolyn Foster, Randall Foster, Willa Glover, Beverly Hamiter, Rev. MaryAnn Harrison, Dawn Horton, Rev. Maurice Ingram, Andrea Johnson, Huandre Johnson, Mayomey Lawson, Enid McGraw, Carolyn Pate, Mary Shipp, Ronald Wortham, and Keith Youngblood

**Excused:** Marquita Curry, Gavin Curry, Jeff Brandt, Renee Brandt, Gwen Jackson, Pheobus Lee, Rita Lee, Thomas McKee, Kenisa McKee, Rev. Albert Starr

**Guest:** Shawn Howard

***Meeting Summary***

1. **Call to Order** – Meeting was called to order at 9:18A by President Foster (following verification of assembly in quorum). Welcome greetings were extended to everyone, and the agenda was approved as submitted. Individual introductions – name and congregation – were also shared.
2. **Opening Prayer** – The morning prayer and devotions were provided by Ms. Janice DeMar, Olivet, from Isaiah 54:17 – ‘no weapon formed against me shall prosper!’ She stressed that these times dictate – perhaps more than ever – that we are to seek God’s intervention and strength during times of strife and struggle.
3. **Meeting Minutes** – The June 28<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes were approved as written and the biennial assembly ‘unofficial’ meeting notes were received as presented. Both were felt to have offered a comprehensive accounting of the proceedings while providing a composite look at ADLA activities and engagements over the summer months. Further conversation regarding those events were to take place as part of the approved agenda.
4. **Treasurer’s Report** – The Treasurer (in absentia) provided two documents for review, the quarterly Profit/Loss Statement covering the period June 25<sup>th</sup> – October 17<sup>th</sup> and the detailed financial summary governing the “End of Summer Gathering” held at Galaxy Park, Carson in which 124 persons were in attendance representing 14 congregations. The beginning balance for the quarter was \$9,739.25 with an ending balance of \$19,183.43 (an approximate \$12.5K is due

the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles for the Dodgers' tickets procured in August). ADLA is awaiting the required invoicing to release the remittance.

The 'End of Summer Gathering' had a beginning balance of \$10,090 with expenses incurred of \$6,931.86, leaving an ending balance of \$3,158.14 to be used as 'seed funding' for next year's event. Several donations were received to defray the cost of the worship/fellowship gathering.

5. **Region II Report** – Representative DN Gwen Jackson was out-of-town and her report has been tabled.
6. **President's Announcements** – President Foster elected to intersperse her comments along with each of the topics of discussion for the day.
7. **Biennial Assembly** – Nine LA Chapter members attended the ADLA National Biennial Assembly in Arizona, July 25-27<sup>th</sup>. The LA Chapter voted unanimously not to raise ADLA dues at the national level, but, as the meeting notes indicated, a new rate structure was approved, effective with the 2025-26 Membership Campaign. VP Youngblood shared that the National organization needed to raise the fees in light of rising costs, especially travel and lodging. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding National costs, expenses, as well utility and impact on and for each Chapter. Representation and contact throughout the year were questioned. It was stated that the Southeast Synod (Carolinas, Georgia) would provide a 'direct' grant to ADLA National to help defray/address costs but demanded to see a plan that furthered the mission of the agency, especially in its geography. National President Brown conveyed that it was his plan to either travel to and/or make contact with Synod Bishops for financial help in keeping ADLA National visible and vital. VP Youngblood also shared that ADLA National has been meeting rather infrequently and that several internal issues remain 'pending'. (Note: The Virginia Synod raised concerns that ADLA National's website is grossly outdated and that the officers listed are not those guiding the association).

ADLA – LA stressed that it would be submitting correspondence that further attests to these matters with recommended actions that might be taken to mitigate these shortcomings. It was also mentioned by those in attendance that ADLA (All Chapters) should be diligent in professionally presenting themselves, especially given the rise in Churchwide leadership of African descent.

8. **End of Summer Gathering** – The President reported that 14 congregations were present and through exit comments received voiced a desire to return to that venue (Galaxy Park). A closing critique of the planning and facilitation of the End of Summer Gathering was held, and the planning committee offered its

assessment, indicating that the accommodations worked well, the heat made it impossible to play all of the purchased games, yet, overall, it was a grand success. The finances for next year were complemented with a \$1,000 donation. A continuation grant will be sought for 2026.

9. **Installation of Rev. MaryAnn Harrison** – Highlights from the PLTS graduation of Pr. MaryAnn were shared, complemented by her ordination and installation at the Synod Sanctuary. Congratulations were expressed by all.
10. **Dodgers' Night with the Episcopalians** – A grand time was had by those 301 Lutherans and 600+ Episcopalians who attended to game against the Arizona Diamondbacks. Bishop Brenda will be notified that the Episcopal Diocese has yet to submit its invoice for payment.
11. **Viejas Casino, Spa and Shopping Spree** – 42 persons participated in the bus trip representing 9 congregations. Fees have increased for 2026 requiring \$1,200 for 40 riders, an increase of \$100. The 2026 date (September 12<sup>th</sup>) has been secured with Viejas, already.
12. **Trout Endowment** – The net proceeds from the Viejas trip are to be directed to the Trout Endowment, increasing its current value by approximately \$1,100 to \$1,200.
13. *Eyeglass & Pull-Tab initiatives* – Both projects are continuous with donations being received virtually each month, sometimes, several times per month. Members were encouraged to continue with this expression of generosity.
14. *Grown Women/Real Talk* – Subject to Dr. Jester's availability, it was indicated that a session for students would be hosted at CLU and that the University's 1<sup>st</sup> Lady, Monique Nunes (Mrs. Mo) wanted to help. More to come as the 2026 calendar of events is formulated and distributed.
15. *FIRST's* – There were a number of '1<sup>st</sup>' shared among the attendees: Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry, Bishop, ELCA – the 1<sup>st</sup> Bishop of African descent, The ELCA Secretary, Lucille (CeCee) Mills – the 1<sup>st</sup> Secretary of African descent, and The Rev. Dr. John Nunes, President of California Lutheran University (CLU) – the 1<sup>st</sup> President of 9 who is of African descent. Complementing the aforementioned group was also mentioned The Rev. Scott Hamilton Adams, the newly installed 1<sup>st</sup> UCC Pastor to have served Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church.
16. *God's Work, Our Hands* – This year's initiative promoted and channeled T-shirts in school colors along with goodies/treats to students at 54<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary

School. Donations received were used to help fulfill this ministry directed to those of an impressionable age.

17. *Food Deserts* – Food pantries at CLU are still being stocked with deliveries occurring each month both at the university and at Bishop Conaty High School (Girls' School). The pantry at CLU is being expanded and will be able to house a broader level of commodities. President Foster will be contacting the campus chaplain, Pr. Beth for a schedule denoting the construction timetable. The next delivery may well be coordinated with the grand re-opening.
18. **ADLA Membership, Program Year 2026** – The attendees were directed to the newly revised membership application and 'walked through' the categorical changes by financial class. Once the explanation was thoroughly shared, it was proposed that 'early renewal applications' received will come with a \$5 discount, adjusted from the local fees of \$15. The first 50 renewals will receive this offering. Several members elected to Zelle, pay cash or submit checks, taking advantage of this incentive. The 2026 membership campaign began on October 1<sup>st</sup> and shall conclude on February 28<sup>th</sup>.
19. **MLK Celebration** – The 2026 tribute to The Rev. Dr. MLKing, Jr. will be held at Shepherd of the Valley, West Hills. Confirmation has been received. The service is slated for January 18<sup>th</sup> at 3P. A transportation grant will be sought to help members with their travels to the San Fernando Valley. The first planning meeting is to take place in November 2025. ELCA Secretary, CeCee Mills shall be the "preacher of the hour".
20. *Juvenile Hall Detainees* – A special bible has been requested for inmates housed at the Juvenile Detention Center. Pr. Carr (HTELC Pulpit Supply) provided purchasing information, indicating that a case of 12-bibles cost \$87.24. ADLA members proceeded to pledge the purchase of several cases of bibles (Foster, Hamiter, Harrison, Johnson, McGraw, Starr, and Youngblood). Monies sent by Zelle to (310) 488-0299 were received. Checks were to be made out to ELCA – ADLA.
21. **Bylaw Updates** – Section B.V.1.02.A20 of the ADLA Constitution denotes those congregations that are affiliated as members with ADLA – LA. The approved motion expanded the existing listing by including Shepherd of the Valley, Holy Redeemer and PLTS. An updated bylaws (B.V.1.02.A25) will be prepared in keeping with this action.
22. **Projects for 2026** – The projects below symbolize the intended ADLA activities for the program year 2026.

- *Black History Month* – subject to conversation with Pr. Beth at CLU (dates, program outline, participants, budget, etc.) a coordinative approach can be established for February. President Nunes did express his desire to see ADLA continue accentuating Black History on campus.
- *End of Summer* – August 22<sup>nd</sup>
- *Dodgers' Night* – August 29<sup>th</sup>
- *Viejas Fundraiser* – September 28<sup>th</sup>
- *Women's History Month with Rev. Bev Wallace*
  1. Need to review contents of the proposed program, determine how congregations are expected to participate, confer with local pastors and council presidents regarding their involvement, etc.
  2. Determine whether Grown Women/Real Talk will be centered within Women's History Month and assess its coordinative requirements with CLU.
- *Trout Sainthood* – Acknowledging The Rev. Nelson W. Trout on September 20<sup>th</sup>, as a 'modern day saint' in accordance with the ELCA's recognition. Find ways for local congregations to offer a 'well deserved' tribute (revival, special invitation to Presiding Bishop Curry, preaching series led by former students, etc.). It was shared that ADLA has already purchased the naming rights to the Synod Chapel, adorned the setting with an African motif, installed a donor plaque, and mounted portrait(s) of Dr. Trout in tribute. This anticipated action would further the level of appreciation of God's servant among us!
  1. It was MSC that a celebration honoring Dr. Trout be held in September 2026.
  2. The committee shall comprise of Enid, Judy, Randy, Ron, & Rev. MaryAnn with Judy chairing.
- *ADLA Gala* – Revising the Gala surfaced as a 'fun' opportunity to celebrate and acknowledge the many who have faithfully served. Discussion ensued on the present costs of banquet hall rentals and related services, including overnight stays. Possible estimates were entertained. The last Gala was held at the Torrance, Doubletree by Hilton in 2020. The event was curtailed due to the pandemic. There was excitement surrounding its possible return. The 2026 Program celebration would likely be entitled: *An Evening of Thanks!*

1. It was MSC that a Gala be planned for 2026.
2. The Committee members consist of: Andrea, Carolyn P., Dawn, & Keith. A committee chair is needed. Information regarding the site, costs, and related requirements shall be needed by February 2026.

### **23. Congregational Roundtable**

- Olivet – Friends and Family Day replaced the annual picnic. Great time was had with many previous members in attendance. Line dancing with 120 participants served as a fundraiser supported by raffles. A Fall Festival is planned for November and Christmas Eve service is in the works.
- Holy Trinity – Sunday marks the installation of Rev. Scott Hamilton Adams, a UCC Pastor and Chaplain for the Athletes at CLU. All are invited. The 84<sup>th</sup> anniversary of HTELC takes place on Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>. Discussed combining worship opportunities with Olivet for Christmas and New Years (Watch Service). Both councils were asked to explore.
- Ascension – Family and Friends Sunday, the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of every month.
- Another Level Ministries – Held its 3-year ELCA review, concluding with a new Plan of Action which is expected to help guide the ministry towards congregational status along with establishing a closer tie with Chapel of Peace (its host site).
- Chapel of Peace – Thanksgiving Food and turkey giveaway is being planned. Expecting at least 100 family units that are in need.
- Christ The Shepherd – Reformation Sunday is this weekend. Hosting Habitat for Humanity, noting donations for housing (fire victims from January) received from the LA Clippers. Emergency assistance or “Go Bags” have been assembled and are being distributed to 150 in need. Christmas Eve service is also being planned.
- My Friends House – an incident involving a patron was shared specifically to make everyone aware of the importance of maintaining adequate insurance coverage and to have ‘risk mitigation’ protocols in place (slips and falls).
- First Carson – Trunk or Treat takes place on Halloween in the parking lot with members and their cars decorated for the festivities. The congregation’s new mission theme is: *Know Jesus... Make Jesus Known! Evangelize, Empower and Encourage.* A Christmas Eve service is also

being formulated, involving both worshipping congregations residing at First.

24. **ADLA Meeting Schedule** – Each host site must provide devotions, prayer, and refreshments.

1. February 28 – Christ The Shepherd, Altadena
2. April 25 – Chapel of Peace, Inglewood
3. June 27 – HTELC, Inglewood
4. August 22 – End of Summer Gathering
5. October 24 – First, Carson

The meeting concluded with consent adjournment, offering traveling blessings to all, at 11:17A.

Respectfully submitted,

*Randall S. Foster*

Randall (Randy) Foster  
Recording and Corresponding Secretary