African Descent Lutheran Association (ADLA)
General Session Meeting #3 – June 27, 2026 @ 9A
Meeting Minutes

Present: Jeanne Armstrong, Kimberley Crosby, Marguita Curry, Carolyn Foster, Randall Foster, Willa Glover, Beverly Hamiter, Dawn Horton, Gwendolyn Jackson, Gilbert Jernigan, Patricia Jernigan, Phoebus Lee, Rita Lee, Kenisa McKee, Thomas McKee, Mary Shipp, Rev. Kimberly Scott, Rev. Albert Starr, Judith-Tutt Starr, Ronald Wortham, Rev. Tracy Williams, NVP Keith Youngblood

Excused: Rev. Scott Adams, Desta Goehner, Rev. MaryAnn Harrison, Andrea Johnson, Haundre Johnson, Pr. Charlene Limenih, Enid McGraw, Dr. Regina Biddings-Muro, Edmundo Muro, Jr., Carolyn Pate and Dale Washington

Meeting Summary

1. *Call to Order* - The meeting was called to order at 9:10A by President Foster, greeting those in attendance.
2. *Devotions* were offered by Marquita Curry, emanating from Ecclesiastics Chapter 3:1-8, – "to everything there is a season…!' We thank God for all seasons of our times with prayer and supplication. Jeanne Armstrong and family were lifted up in prayer at the loss of her Aunt.
3. *Self-introductions and statements of welcome* were provided and extended. Jeanne welcomed everyone to HTELC.
4. *Approval of the Agenda* – MSC
5. *Approval of the Meeting Minutes*, April 28th – MSC
   Meeting minutes were annotated to reflect the presence of Pr. Tracy Williams and Kimberley Crosby. It was reiterated that one must sign-in for each meeting.
6. *Treasurer's Report* – Period: April 22 – June 25, 2026 report was MSC, as received. The beginning balance was $7,169.5 7 with an ending balance of $9,863.75 derived from accumulated deposits of $4,737.24 and total operating expenses of $1,043.06 and a $1,000 deposit to Galaxy Park for The End of Summer Gathering. The Treasurer, Thomas McKee pointed out that the Credit Union summary differed as to the ending balance due to matters of report timing.
7. *Region 2 Representative Report* – Gwen Jackson indicated that she has attempted to secure the most recent developments and updated information from ADLA National and has left several messages. No Report was provided. National VP Keith Youngblood indicated that the Executive Committee met in April and that he would seek to find out why Ms. Jackson wasn't notified of the impending meetings. He also indicated that ADLA National has been working on the particulars associated with the national biennial assembly slated for 2028.
8. *President's Report* – The Synod presented ADLA – LA with the Volunteer of the Year Award for its due diligence and resourcefulness in handling and addressing the work of Assembly Registration, Election Coordination and

other tasks as requested by the Bishop. This is the 9th year that ADLA – LA has provided these services. The received plague has the names of the 2026 ADLA volunteers with space for 2027. Each year an evaluation is prepared and sent to the Synod with a SWOT analysis of the event. This year's survey has been submitted. ADLA – LA has been asked to serve in the same capacity for 2027 already. For those volunteers who stayed overnight, please be sure to submit your housing reimbursement to the Synod (albeit the deadline as passed). Overall thanks were extended to all who participated.

Additionally, the President indicated that packets in support of the upcoming celebration for the life and ministry of The Rev. Dr. Nelson W. Trout (e.g., litany for congregational use, bible study on Liberation Theology, brochures governing the life of Dr. Trout and a temple talk to be shared during worship) were distributed to the synod assembly voting delegations. Of the 107, some 20 required US postage as they were not picked up. In addition, packets were mailed to Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry, Rev. Larry Clark (author of the bible study), and Trinity Lutheran Seminary (where the Trout Lectures are held). Trout's daughter has equally been apprised of the upcoming celebration and has vowed to inform other family members with hopes of their attendance on September 20th at Ascension Lutheran Church, Los Angeles.

9. *Open Comments on the Synod Assembly* – Congrats to the following ADLA – LA members who were successfully elected/appointed to the various roles and responsibilities at the Synod level: Pat Jernigan and Jeanee Armstrong – Discipline Committee, Enid McGraw – Consultation Committee, Kimberley Crosby, Ronald Wortham, Judith Tutt-Starr - Endowment Committee, and Rev. Kenneth Davis – Synod Council. As an aside, it was strongly suggested that every congregation should receive the e-news, Synews Newsletter. Please take the necessary steps to stay informed.
10. *Membership Drive, 2026-27* – New members included Regina Banks, Lutheran Public Policy Sacramento, and Bishop David Nagler, Pacifica Synod. Pacific is investigating ways to entice through engagement its congregations, especially those of color to join ADLA – LA. It is expected that ADLA – LA may well have to conduct a campaign of interest in our neighboring synod.
11. *Project Updates*
    - The Juvenile Justice Center received 2 additional cases of dedicated bibles from ADLA, totaling 10 cases in all.
    - The eyeglass retrieval and submission project remains ongoing. Glasses are being deposited each month with the Lions Club for repurposing and reissuing.
    - The Ronald McDonald House, Long Beach is the recipient of another 4 pounds of pull tabs, bringing the aggregate total to 131 pounds at (approximately 1,280 per pound).
    - *The ELCA Trout Endowment* has received $14,865.17 with a goal of $25,000 before disbursements can be made. Many of the ADLA – LA

events for 2026 are geared toward the net proceeds elevating this balance towards its stated goal. Correspondingly, the Trout Lectures in Ohio has received ADLA – LA's gift of $1,000. The Seminary is conducting a capital campaign to help substantiate and sustain the lecture series. In the past 10 years, the Trout lectures – hoping to garner increased participation – were moved to selected sites. Trinity Seminary has become the 'home' of the lecture series going forward. The lectures are a series of 'preaching sessions' promoting the gifts of Black ministry experience.

- *The Trout Celebration* – Scheduled for September 20th will be held at Ascension Lutheran, Los Angeles at 3P. A grant from the Synod in the amount of $3,500 and an ELCA grant in the amount of $3,500 have been secured in recognition of this synod-wide celebration involving all 107 congregations. A program evaluation (probably an electronic summary like Survey Monkey) will be used to test the temperament of the celebration, its materials and ADLA-LA's involvement in making this tribute happen. The following are outcomes from the discussion:
    I. Pastors Kimberly, Tracy and James Boline will help with the coordination and worship prep.
    II. Young adults from the various congregations will be sought to assist with the worship, serving in designated capacities. This conclusion was derived from a lengthy conversation on the approaches needed to elicit and secure the involvement of those ages 16 to 35 years. The discussion provided the opportunity to share with those present the three outings coordinated/hosted by ADLA – LA that were directly geared towards this cohort, the last outing was designed and facilitated by the target group at Simply Wholesome, Inglewood.
    III. Tim Williams, First Carson, will be contacted for assistance in securing choir services.
    IV. Offerings received will be directed to the Trout Endowment.
    V. Services shall be live-streamed through Ascension and ADLA – LA websites.

- *Grown Women, Real Talk* slated for an afternoon session at CLU shall look to invite ladies 16+ for an insightful conversation with Arizona Bishop La'Tresa Jester. Transportation is being considered for those persons in the inner-city to Thousand Oaks.
- *End of Summer Gathering* – The deadline for fees paid is July 16th. A grant was prepared, submitted but not funded, however, the event is proceeding as planned. A short meeting with the planning team is requested following the conclusion of this general session.
- *Dodgers' Night* – Scheduled for September 3rd. Flyers have been distributed, including an array of documents highlighting the event were shared with the Synod Assembly in May. St. Marks - LA, Trinity - Manhattan Beach have secured their tickets to date. The ticket deadline

is July 15th which is a FIRM date per the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, the game's co-sponsor.

- *Viejas Trip* – Scheduled for September 12th departs from Olivet Lutheran – Hawthorne at 8A sharp. A $1,200 deposit was required this year with its return predicated on having a minimum of 40 persons on the bus. Failure to secure 40 guest forfeits the deposit. Proceeds are to support the Trout Endowment.
- *ADLA – LA Biennial Gala* (last one was 2018. The 2020 was cancelled due to the pandemic). Deposit has been made with the Doubletree Hotel, Torrance utilizing the penthouse suite. This event is AD-driven, resulting in the need to secure as many full-page ads was possible. Contact your local vendors and merchants and get their participation in the event by buying an ad. Ten (10) rooms have been set aside for reservation and occupancy. They will be released if not used. This is also an awards ceremony. Criteria for each category is on file. Nominees are to come from ADLA congregations. Ads are due by October 2nd along with individual gala ticket purchases.
- FYI – the August ADLA – LA meeting may be cancelled in lieu of The End of Summer Gathering. Those in attendance concurred.

12. Congregational Updates

- *Christ The Shepherd* – the congregation continues to work in collaboration with neighboring Houses of Worship in the restoration of Altadena through service programs, individual aid and fundraising.
- *First Carson* – held a Fathers' Day recognition and has returned Catechism to the congregation (given the presence of youngsters). The Chaplain of the Rams host a youth program and is looking at First Carson as a possible location for it to be housed. Discussions are taking place between the leadership at First and Chaplain Kevin Nickleson. There is an existing school on campus 3 days a week.
- *Olivet* – held a Fathers' Day recognition with a social gathering after church. Pr. Ken Davis is on sabbatical and Deacon Tempie Beaman is providing worship coverage. Summer services are being held on the patio to attract passer-byes. The WELCA group is also hosting line dancing events as another community invitation.
- *HTELC* – On July 11th, the pre-school and congregation will be hosting a backpack giveaway. On August 23rd a picnic on the parking lot will be held helping to celebrate Holy Trinity's 85 years of community service and sharing of the gospel message. A more formal event in celebration shall be held in November. Thoughtful words of life were extended to James (Jim) Mondy, a long-time member, who passed one day after his 103rd Birthday. He left a videotape espousing 'how great God is'!
- *Trinity, Long Beach* – while a small congregation with limited energy, the congregations has committed itself to being the best steward of the facilities in relationship to the surrounding community. Four organizations use the facility during the week. In-person bible study has increased from

the participation of community residents. Once a quarter there is a fellowship session sparked by delving into a single topic of conversation over coffee, as per Pr. Al.

- *Chapel of Peace* – sponsors through lease agreement Crystal Stairs Head Start, which is facing a shift in federal funding. Not sure how that will impact its future occupancy. Keeping a close eye on the developments.
- *Community/Holy Redeemer* – small but mighty worshipping communities served by Pr. Tracy. Additionally, she serves *Mt. Olive in Santa Monica* which is currently in the Call Process. As part of the Synod staff, but she and Deacon Travick-Jackson are part of the Synod's 'workforce reduction', effective February 2027. Later in conversation, it was noted that Community has experienced a deepening relationship with its two ministry partners in that not only are they offering services to the community that Community doesn't have the bandwidth to do any longer, but they participate fully in the upkeep of the facilities and campus, having invested $8K in the HVAC system, $5K in the kitchen remodel and another $7.5K in the interior/exterior painting. Both have also accepted increases in rent based on COLA changes.
- *Ascension* – the facility has been retrofitted with new bathrooms, window, exterior painting, planter boxes, lighting and shrubs. Negotiations are continuing with regard to the sidewalks around the facility that are the property of the City of Los Angeles but are damaged due to tree growth. The contractor was considering replacing the concrete and billing the City once finished.
- *Messiah* – views this period as a 'season of survivability'. It marks the 1st year that Pr. Kimberly has been the shepherd. She, too, indicated that the worship community is small but faithful. The Council President is young with three children, and they are the nucleus of the congregation's revitalization; "suffer not the children to come unto me'. The congregation has plans for a new school year backpack drive and BBQ in the coming months.

13. Open Discussion and Issues of Impact

Youth and Young Adult Engagement - Generational shifts within congregations are beginning to materialize with a maturated level of those who've grown in the hallowed space taking their rightful place in leadership. It was stated that 'the older group needs to be present in support but get out of the way when it comes to facilitating and orchestrating the life of the congregation'. Those of that age should be thankful that God has guided this younger generation to be facilitators and should they sage advice be needed, certainly they should avail themselves to that level of commentary and advice. Maya Angelou once said: 'People may not remember what you've said but they will remember how you made them feel.' There was a consensus that in each congregation, we should be intentional about evolving with the times and helping to make worship, fellowship and friendship building 'relevant'. It

was also acknowledged that we, too, receive our self-worth and value through the tenets of worship and in its contribution. We grow together in Christ. It was concluded that the End of Summer Gathering – while its components are still being formulated – could serve as a prime opportunity to elicit support from this age group in meaningful ways. Gil Jernigan agreed to head-up this aspect of the planning by contacting and seeking their involvement by congregation. A listing of emails and names will be made available for this purpose.

Furthering this idea was a suggesting to host *An Intergenerational Dialogue* or symposium that would be designed to promote conversational exchange among each church facet by major age grouping. Topics would be pre-selected perhaps with a moderator.

God's Work, Our Hands - Lastly, the group entertain conversation on the interagency relationship between ADLA-LA and its outreach partners during God's Work, Our Hands (each September). This year those present agreed to prepare and distribute hygiene kits to the 1,500 or so students through California State University Dominguez Hills (CSUDH). Kits generally cost $15-20 each. A grant may well be available to aid in this purpose if submitted to Thrivent Lutheran. Matching monies can be secured. Gil Jernigan asked for a letter from ADLA specifying what the project is, the resources derived in support of the project (cash and donations), and he will submit the request for the offset.

The meeting concluded at 11A with departing blessings to all!

Next meeting is scheduled for October 24th at First, Carson. The August meeting has been supplanted by the End of Summer Gathering, August 8th, beginning at 1:30P.

Respectfully Submitted,

Randall (Randy) Foster
Recording and Corresponding Secretary