

WHAT'S NEWS

Women^{of the} ELCA 

Southwest California Synodical Women's Organization • Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2019



"Sharing God's Love through Gratitude"

by Dixie Hanson, SoCal SWO president

Saturday, October 12 and Sunday, October 13 are the dates for our Autumn Renewal gathering at California Lutheran University under the theme "Sharing God's Love through Gratitude." We will explore the theme verse in 2 Corinthians 4:15: *Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.* How does living a life of gratitude impact who we are and how we relate to the world around us? What if we incorporated into our lives the daily practice of gratitude? What would that look like? Join us as Keia Morris leads us in Bible Study, Pastor Tracy Williams and Pastor Marta Salazar lead us in worship and Dona Kintzi and friends with Sharon Heck lead us in song.

We have created opportunities in the schedule for personal renewal time with choices of a labyrinth walk, a prayer walk in nature or chair yoga. Other activities include beading, Sit and Knit or rock painting.

Our offering will be divided between the Churchwide Women of the ELCA and sponsoring an El Salvadoran woman to the 2020 Churchwide Gathering in Phoenix, AZ. In-kind gifts will go to the California Lutheran University Food Pantry.

We especially want to welcome our Latina sisters and plan to support them with Spanish speaking leaders and a sensitivity to their needs. We celebrate our diversity and thank God for the gifts that we all bring.

Early bird registration for the Autumn Renewal begins today until September 1. **Register now** to get the price break and assure your place at this Autumn Renewal!

A Message from Dixie Hanson, SoCal SWO President

As a gift at the Conference of Presidents in February, each of us presidents was given a gratitude journal. My journal is sitting on the table next to my bed unopened. Perhaps that is why I suggested the theme for our Autumn Renewal this year to be about gratitude. It is my desire to make gratitude a daily part of my life, but I need your help to explore how to do that.

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, James 1:17. If that is true, what does it mean to live our lives with the awareness of the gifts we receive every day? We want to explore that question at our Southwest Women of the ELCA Autumn Renewal gathering at California Lutheran University on Saturday, October 12 to Sunday, October 13, 2019, under the theme “Sharing God’s Love through Gratitude.” Cicero said “Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others.” Meister Eckhart, an early mystic, said, “If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is thank you, it will be enough.” As we take time to renew ourselves during a weekend set apart from the pressures and distractions of our daily lives, we can ponder how to daily incorporate into our busy lives the virtue of gratitude. Through Bible study using our theme verse *Yes everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God, 2 Corinthians 4:15*, through sharing gratitude moments and through incorporating Thank Offering and gratitude journals into daily practice, we will explore what it means in our lives to live gratefully. Mark your calendars, fill out the registration form



found in this newsletter and join us on this weekend in October.

The Southwest California Women of the ELCA Synod Board is also helping to prepare for the Triennial Gathering in Phoenix, Arizona in July of 2020 under the theme “Just Love,” by voting to pay for one of our delegates to attend the Triennial Convention. (The other two delegates are paid for by the Churchwide organization.) We also voted to sponsor a woman from El Salvador to come to the Triennial Gathering in Phoenix as an international guest. We have committed half our offering for the Autumn Renewal to go to this cause as well as up to \$2000 of our synod funds. For the rest of the funds (\$2000 more needed by Dec. 1, 2019), we are requesting donations from churches in the synod who are sister congregations with

El Salvador as well as donations from others in the synod who wish to support the Triennial guest project. The impact of attending a Triennial Gathering was evidenced by Leymah Gbowee, the Liberian recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 for her work leading a women’s peace movement to stop the Liberian Civil War in 2003. She had been a guest at a Women of the ELCA Triennial Gathering and had felt emboldened to return to her country with renewed vigor and resolve to bring peace to Liberia. If you would like to contribute to the Triennial guest fund, send your donations to Karil Drake, our treasurer, at 1329 Western Avenue, Glendale, CA 91201. Thank you for your partnership! “We are drawn together by nature—because what we can be together far exceeds what any of us can apart,” Chris Michaels in *Your Soul’s Assignment*.



Southwest California Synod Women of the ELCA El Salvadoran Guest

The Southwest Synod Board of the Women of the ELCA voted to bring a woman from El Salvador to the Triennial Gathering of the Women of the ELCA in Phoenix, AZ in July 2020. The Triennial

Gathering follows the Triennial Convention which is the highest legislative body of the Women of the ELCA. The Gathering, under the theme “Just Love,” brings together over 3,000 women to be educated, inspired and sent forth to serve. The cost for bringing an international guest is \$4000. The Southwest Synod Women of the ELCA Board has voted to provide \$2000 from our funds to help pay for the project. We would invite other members and churches in our synod to help us raise the other \$2000.

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had been a guest at a Women of the ELCA Triennial Gathering and had felt emboldened to return to her country with renewed vigor and resolve to bring peace to Liberia.

Would you join us in bringing a Salvadoran woman to be our guest in Phoenix, giving us the opportunity to promote mutual understanding and dialogue? We need to have the funds in hand by December 1, 2019 in order for the woman to be chosen and visas applied, etc. You can support this project through your offering to the Autumn Renewal or by sending a contribution to our treasurer, Karil Drake at 1329 Western Ave., Glendale, CA 91201. Mark your contribution for the Women’s Synod El Salvadoran Guest Project.

Thank you for your partnership in Christ!



Wrapped in Love Event at CLU

Wrapped in Love was an event hosted by the Office of Mission and Identity at California Lutheran University that took place over three days early this year, wherein all members of the Cal Lutheran community were welcome to come and pick out a free blanket, quilt, or shawl. With the help of the Southwest California Synod, these gifts were given to the community from over 60 congregations and individuals, including numerous congregations from Region 2, many individuals and congregations from the Midwest and East Coast, and our neighbors in the Episcopal church. The blankets, shawls, quilts, and other

gifts represented the warmth that surrounded this community in light of the twin tragedies that occurred in the area in November 2018. Since the call for these gifts was sent out, over 540 quilts, blankets, and other handmade items have been collected and distributed. The Cal Lutheran community is so grateful to be brought into the warmth and care of our neighbors from across the country.

Salem Lutheran Church’s Prayer Shawl Ministry and Social Outreach Team participated by donating shawls and delivering them.

GET TO KNOW YOUR SO/CAL SWO BOARD

My name is Janet Simmons.

I am a native Californian. The hospital I was born in was in Maywood, but my family lived in Los Angeles. I was baptized in the Catholic faith but I always went to church with my mother and was confirmed at Ascension Lutheran Church in Baldwin Park. Later we moved to West Covina where I attended Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church. I graduated from San Diego State College with a degree in elementary education and began teaching in West Covina. A few years later I taught in the Hueneme School District. When I married and moved to Oxnard I taught at Saint Mary Magdalene Catholic School in Camarillo and was also a substitute teacher. After the death of my husband and, later that same year, of my youngest sister, I moved to Claremont with my new baby son



to be closer to my other younger sister and her family. I returned to college to get a special education credential so I could support myself and my son. I taught developmentally delayed students for the Los Angeles Office of Education until I retired. In retirement I have volunteered for Meals on Wheels and am a docent for the Ontario Museum. I served as secretary to the WELCA group at Rock of the Foothills in La Verne when we had a women's group. I also served

previously on the SoCal Synod WELCA board. Recently, I was given a new challenge: My 15 year-old grand-niece is living with me. She is into "Anime" and her room is full of costumes, make-up, and wigs. I was trying to downsize, so now I have to change my priorities. Please pray for us.

FROM OUR TREASURER

There are new offering documents, forms A & B, that came out last year. It is very important to use the new ones when sending your offerings to Churchwide. Offerings are no longer processed in the Chicago office.

The form B and checks need to be mailed to Merrifield, Virginia (see address below). I can mail or email the new forms to you. Call me at (818) 243-9573 or email: KarilDrake@yahoo.com. Forms can also be downloaded from www.womenoftheelca.org/stewardship-resources-pages-94.php

Form A: (Unit to SWO) Used when sending your regular offerings that are collected at Circle meetings, Bible study sessions, and general meetings. A portion of your regular offering (50% or more is recommended) is sent to the synodical women's organization treasurer (that's me). I then remit 55%

of the regular offering to the Churchwide Women's Organization.

- Your SWO convention offerings are used to finance the SWO convention and Autumn Renewal.
- Your Cluster/Conference offerings are passed onto the Churchwide Women's organization.

Please mail your Form A offerings to:
Karil Drake, 1329 Western Ave., Glendale, CA 91201
Form B: (unit to Churchwide) Used when sending Thank offerings, designated gifts, special offerings and grants.

Send directly to:
Women of the ELCA, ELCA Gift Processing Center
PO Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009

Thanks for your kind attention to these changes!
See you at Autumn Renewal!
Peace, Karil Drake

REGISTER NOW



2019 AUTUMN RENEWAL

Presented by the Southwest California Synodical Women's Organization

Saturday, October 12 thru Sunday, October 13
California Lutheran University Thousand Oaks, CA

Theme Bible verse:

*Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people,
may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. —2 Corinthians 4:15:*

Featuring:

Keia Morris - Bible Study Leader/Chaplain
Sunday Worship Leader, Pastor Tracy Williams and Pastor Marta Salazar
Engaging workshops and refreshing free time

Plan to join us for this personal renewal time apart from the busyness of life.

REGISTRATION FORM



OVERNIGHT PACKAGE

Includes registration, meals and accommodations
at Best Western Posada Royale,
1775 Madera Rd., Simi Valley

Registration fee received by...	9/1	9/2 - 9/14	9/15-10/5
1 person/room	<input type="radio"/> \$190	<input type="radio"/> \$205	<input type="radio"/> \$230
2 persons/room	<input type="radio"/> \$135	<input type="radio"/> \$150	<input type="radio"/> \$175
3 persons/room	<input type="radio"/> \$115	<input type="radio"/> \$130	<input type="radio"/> \$155
4 persons/room	<input type="radio"/> \$105	<input type="radio"/> \$120	<input type="radio"/> \$145

SATURDAY ONLY

Includes registration, Saturday lunch & dinner

Registration fee received by...	9/1	9/2 - 9/14	9/15-10/5
No hotel stay	<input type="radio"/> \$78	<input type="radio"/> \$93	<input type="radio"/> \$118

Roommates' names: (Send separate registration form for each roommate.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Make checks payable to WOMEN OF THE ELCA and mail,
along with this completed form to JULIE JENSEN, registrar,
921 Gill Ave., Port Hueneme CA 93041

Total amount enclosed:

Cost is transferable but not
refundable. **Questions? Call
Julie at 805/486-5762**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Church: _____ Church City: _____

In case of emergency, contact: Name: _____ Tel# _____

Hotel has no elevator - do you need room on first floor? ☐ yes ☐ no Special dietary needs? _____



FACULTY



BIBLE STUDY LEADER AND CHAPLAIN

Keia Morris is a member of Another Level Ministries under the leadership of Pastor Jonathan Hemphill. She has served as a deacon for seven years and is a WELCA SoCal SWO board member. Keia has been taking Thursday night classes at the Los Angeles Bible Training School since 2012. She is not working on any type of theological degree, but

feels this is just a good place for her to gain solid biblical teaching. Keia works for the County of Los Angeles in the Child Support Services Department. She enjoys the work she does because it gives her an opportunity to educate the community we serve with compassion and understanding in a professional manner. God has also opened doors for her to study the bible and pray with her colleagues during their lunch hour.



SUNDAY WORSHIP CO-LEADER

The Rev. Tracy Williams is the pastor of Holy Redeemer Lutheran Church in Bellflower, California. She began her ministry with the Lutheran church in 2015 where she went through the process of becoming ordained. She attended PLTS and Luther Seminary to gain her work in Luther studies. She is a former educator for 18 years for the public and private school system. She was also

a mental health therapist for five years working with children and youth in the system.

Pastor Tracy, as she is affectionately called, started her ministry at Holy Redeemer in October 2016 where she served as a TEEM pastor. Prior to joining the Lutheran Church, she has been in ministry for ten years at Trinity Baptist Church as an associate pastor under Rev. Alvin Tunstill. The TEEM pastor serves a church under the guidance of a mentor and supervisor until they are ordained.

Tracy did her undergraduate work at California State University San Bernardino and Biola University. She holds three master's degrees, in education, CSUSB, psychology at Cal Baptist University and in divinity from Azusa Pacific University at the Haggard Seminary.

Pastor Tracy was official ordained as the pastor on October 21, 2018 at Holy Redeemer with a wonderful celebration with family and friends. She is a blessing to our church and community and is working tirelessly to impact for world for Christ. She is a mother of three adult children and grandmother of two: Deontae, 20, and Keyhlani, 8, who each brings her much joy. Pastor Tracy loves the Lord and her favorite Bible verse is *Psalm 100*. She is very honored to serve at Holy Redeemer as their pastor and looks forward to many blessed years.



90% of the message they wanted to convey. She also encouraged prayers be said if there was no objection. Written reports were collected from each visit.

This was a terrific advocacy event and one we hope to repeat. Our LOPP Policy Council met on Tuesday evening, ahead of the

Our Lutheran Lobby Day in Sacramento on May 29, 2019 was hugely successful. More than 100 Lutherans gathered at St. John's Lutheran Church early that Wednesday morning. After coffee we joined in joyful worship. The Rev. Amy Reumann, director of ELCA Advocacy in Washington, DC, gave the sermon, and the staff of St. John's provided great music leadership.

After worship Regina Banks, our new director of Lutheran Office of Public Policy-CA (LOPP), prepared the attendees to visit the offices of the elected officials at the Capitol. Three topics have been chosen as priorities by our director and the Policy Council. They include safe and affordable drinking water for all communities in California, Medi-Cal for undocumented adults, and a targeted tax credit to help children in poverty. All were given information on the three topics and divided into small groups. Appointments were made by Regina so people were expected in the various offices. Regina told everyone their appearance at the elected official's office gave

event. All three of the Bishops were in attendance - Southwest California, Pacifica, and Sierra Pacific. We are working very hard to raise funds for LOPP-CA. We are hoping to raise funds from congregations and individuals. Financial support from the three synods has become more difficult with tightened budgets. If you would like to contribute, send your donations to our synod office with a very clear designation for LOPP-CA. The address is:

Southwest California Synod-ELCA
1300 E. Colorado Street
Glendale, CA 91205.

Soon after our Lutheran Lobby Day, there was a vote on one of our priorities, and the ending age for undocumented persons to receive Medi-Cal was raised from 18 to 25. Our voices could have helped make this happen. Continue to pray for this ministry and take ACTION.

2018-2020 ROSTER OF SWO BOARD MEMBERS, OFFICERS AND SUPPORT

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SUBSCRIBE TO WHAT'S NEWS NEWSLETTER

Don't miss an issue of this informative newsletter. You can find contact info for your Women of the ELCA board members, updates on what is happening in your Synodical Women's Organization, as well as upcoming event information. You can receive it for free via email just by sending your email address to Julie Jensen at juliejnsn1@roadrunner.com. Make sure you indicate that you are requesting a sub-

scription to What's News. If you prefer to receive your newsletter via the post office send your name, address and a check for \$8 to Julie Jensen, 921 Gill Avenue, Port Hueneme, CA 93041. If you would like to share What's News with friends just send their information to Julie. If you have questions or are not receiving your subscription give Julie a call at 805-486-5762.

WHAT'S NEWS

Women ^{of the} ELCA 

SWO • SoCal Synod

OUR MISSION & PURPOSE: As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.

Julie Jensen, 921 Gill Avenue
Port Hueneme, CA 93041

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



What Is Gratitude?

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines thankful as “appreciative of benefits received.” It is a way of expressing appreciation with or without an act.

Gratitude is more like having a sense of thankfulness and the feeling is from within.

Grateful is a sense of feeling that happens at a deeper level that comes from within your heart.

The act of gratefulness is memorable

and can live for a long time. When you feel grateful toward someone, you can feel the sense of appreciation to that person even after many years later.

Gratitude is the manifestation of love, commitment, and devotion toward those who are meaningful to you. It encompasses shared experiences, love, and understanding that the universe has conspired to connect us together.

For instance, thankfulness is often the first step. It can grow deeper and becomes gratefulness.

Gratefulness starts from the mind. You have to believe that people and things are helping and doing good to you to feel the appreciation.

When you feel grateful for something, you can express your feelings without using words or any physical sign. It can be from within.

Being grateful can grow beyond the act of thankfulness. You are willing to sacrifice and do something special even without someone requires you to. The feeling is usually stemmed from the willingness from within you.

Gratefulness can come at a random moment. All of a sudden, you can feel your own financial blessings and pay for a stranger's meal. Or maybe it suddenly hits you to remind your loved ones how important they are to you.

The way to live an enriching and fulfilling life is to live with gratefulness. The key is to keep gratitude at the forefront of your life. When you focus your mind on how privileged you are, it makes it easy for you to want to bless other people and express your deep sense of appreciation toward other things.

—*from thewisdompost.com*