



LUTHERAN
SOCIAL SERVICES

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

2020

NEWSLETTER



President Greetings

DR. LASHARND A BECKWITH
PRESIDENT AND CEO

Each year, as we enter this season, I always stop and reflect on how blessed life is. This year, I count you as part of my blessings. I have been on board at LSSSC for 8 months, and it seems like just yesterday, I was sitting on Zoom being interviewed by one group after another. That excitement hasn't left at all. I hope you feel as I do.

It has been thrilling to work alongside the staff at LSSSC in ministry. Each day, I have not only the privilege and honor, but also the responsibility of leading the most passionate men and women of God, who serve so selflessly on our front lines. Their love and care for the clients we serve and the services we provide, inspire our mission to live out God's love by embracing, equipping and empowering vulnerable people in Southern California.

I am therefore compelled and committed to ensuring that LSS Southern California is not only a transparent but transformative organization dedicated to living our mission, vision and values.

While employees will always come and go, each of us must collectively hold each other accountable, and we must always act in love as we fulfill the mission of this wonderful organization.

In receiving these plans, in receiving this hope and this bright future, we have to be willing to do our own work. God will always push us in the right direction, but we have to take the steps. In order for the future that we wish to see possible, we must allow ourselves to be the vessels of God's work. We must allow ourselves to be teachable and to be serviceable. We have all, you have and I have, made some decision to



MY LIFE'S SCRIPTURE HAS ALWAYS BEEN JEREMIAH 29:11, WHICH SAYS:

I know the plans I have for you, says God. Plans to prosper you and not harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future.

be of service to our respective communities. But how can we do more? I tell you how, we look at Jesus, Himself.

How do we carry Christ's powerful message today, specifically the message of hope and of a bright future for all in our community? I

think it starts by asking ourselves, Who are we amid a world that has gone wild? Who are we as we stand and lead?

Who are we? I tell you I do not believe we are the ones who sit back and watch.

Christians today face the same choices people faced back when Jesus walked the earth. Jesus said, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men" to Peter and his brother. As they followed Jesus, they were fortunate enough to see Him in action. They saw Him heal the sick, they saw Him feed the thousands, and they saw Him stop and interact with the physically and mentally disabled. He took time and cared for them. He debated with

the religious leaders of that day, but He sat down and had dinner with the sinners. He did what we would call, social justice kinds of things back then.

At LSSSC, we are blessed by your prayers, collaboration and financial support. We pledge to do everything possible to bring the Hope of Jesus Christ to those women, men and children facing a crisis in this season and the next. The people who come through our doors every day; they look to you and to us for help.

Good tidings that the glorious message of peace and love fill your heart and mind this joyous holiday season. ~Dr. B

HIDDEN HERO

Darlene Mees joined the organization February 16, 1999, and served in several roles. She retires as the Senior Director of our San Diego and CCLM mission. The successes of our CCLM mission and our San Diego and Chula Vista programs are clear. It would take pages to list the programs that Darlene stewarded during her tenure with LSS. Without limiting the importance of the various programs she oversaw, we can highlight one to showcase her work and her employment as witnessed to in our highly successful Upward Bound and Talent Search programs. These two projects are part of a cluster of programs administered by the United States Department of Education. The goal of Upward Bound and Talent Search is to offer certain categories of high school students better opportunities for attending college. The categories of greatest concern are those with low income, and/or those with parents



who did not attend college. The programs focus on academic and nonacademic resources and activities, such as tutoring, mentoring, testing, counseling, aptitude assessments, and career exploration workshops. The programs track important metrics, such as student GPA, grade level advancement, high school and post-secondary graduation records, and college entrance. For the last year we reported statistics to the Department of Education, the programs resulted in 100% high school graduation and over 80% postsecondary enrollment. The institutions attended included prestigious universities like Yale, MIT, Stanford and Harvard.

The successes of that program take much work and we couldn't begin to fully appreciate a day in the life of one our Senior Directors like Darlene. So we thank her for her dedicated and thoughtful contributions to our organization. We know she would be the first to thank the dedicated staff who coordinated the programs. They too, deserve credit. We are, of course, a team, but Darlene's individual achievements and consistency over the years deserves special praise. We thank her and wish her nothing but happiness in the years ahead.

CONGRATULATIONS, DARLENE, FOR YOUR YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE. YOU HAVE TOUCHED MANY AND HAVE INSPIRED MANY TO CONTINUE OUR WORK.



Give the Gift of Peace this Holiday Season

2020 VISION AND BEYOND

LSS Southern California Estate Planning Series

PRESENTED BY
Joshua Anderson
Estate Planning Attorney
PARTNER/MCINTIRE ANDERSON

Lisa Higginbotham
Regional Gift Planner
ELCA FOUNDATION



In Advance!
DECEMBER 16th



**Love is Eternal...
Community Property Isn't.**
MARCH 17th



**I've Got the
Power!**
JANUARY 13th



**Wills, Trusts &
Probate...Oh My!**
FEBRUARY 10th



**You're Set...
What's Next?**
APRIL 14th

2020/2021 SERIES SCHEDULE

For seminar details and registration please visit lsssc.org/estate-planning

December 16th - Advanced Healthcare Directives	March 17th - Community Property
January 13th - Powers of Attorney	April 14th - Estate and Legacy Planning (Dual)
February 10th - Wills, Trusts and Probate...Oh My!	

* Please note these seminars are only for general information, and do not constitute legal advice or create an attorney-client relationship.



2020 HAS BEEN A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER.

Thankfully because of faithful partners like you, we were able to redefine our programs and tailor our services, just in time for the holidays. Here's a look at just a few of the ways your generosity helped to make a difference.



Health of the community became a pivotal issue this year, and the **Central Neighborhood Health Foundation (CNHF)** was a tremendous ally in helping to expand the preventative health and testing services we offered. To date our Fullerton, North Hollywood, Long Beach, San Bernardino and Riverside

locations have all hosted **free** mobile **COVID-19 Testing Clinics and Flu Vaccinations**, in partnership with CNHF. Visit lsssc.org/events to learn about upcoming events in your area.

IN THE WAKE OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS, THE CRIPPLING EFFECTS OF FOOD INSECURITY, PUBLIC HEALTH, AND UNEMPLOYMENT HAVE CONVERGED.

According to a US Census Bureau survey from August - October, nearly 1 in 4 low-income households with children reported "sometimes or often not" having enough food to eat.



That's why support from partners like **JCPenney in San Bernardino**, which held a two-week-long employee food drive and **Feeding America-Riverside/San Bernardino**, which provided over 120 turkeys to benefit our Central City Lutheran Mission are so important.

Equally essential are the **THRIVENT** action teams which joined with **Hyundai Motor America** to provide gift cards for our **Garden Grove Thanksgiving Dinner Handout**, in cooperation with **St. Peter's Lutheran Church** in Santa Ana. Together with our devoted team members they prepared over 100 blessing bags and meals for those in need.

Continuing the Thanksgiving celebration, our **LSS Long Beach/South Bay office** hosted the **3rd Annual Thanksgiving Community Dinner** and recognition of our amazing volunteers. In partnership with **OC US Vets (Outside the Wire)**, the **Long Beach Rescue Mission**, & **Trinity Lutheran Long Beach**, over 200 participants received a hot Thanksgiving dinner, before joining in a recognition ceremony honoring the tireless dedication of our community partners.



Despite the challenges of the season, our **Avanti Program** for adults with developmental disabilities, hosted a virtual "Make Your Own Caramel Apples" event for all of their program participants. Engagement is one of the cornerstones of the Avanti Program, and we are grateful for the digital capability to offer educational and creative programming. As Christmas approaches, the **CCLM Kinder Tree Gift Drive** will make Christmas a little more special for those children involved in the ASP Homework Center as well as the residents of the men's shelter with its annual **Christmas with the Homeless** dinner and gift exchange. An annual gift from our local faith-based partners and congregations that make these events possible.



HAS IT BEEN A STRANGE YEAR?
ABSOLUTELY. BUT THIS IS WHERE WE
SEE THE BEST IN OUR TEAM MEMBERS,
DONORS AND VOLUNTEERS. THOSE WHO
MAKE THE DECISION EACH DAY TO GO
BEYOND, TO DRIVE CHANGE IN THEIR
COMMUNITIES. THAT CHANGE IS MADE
POSSIBLE BY ALLIES, SUPPORTERS AND
FRIENDS LIKE YOU, AND WE ARE FOREVER
GRATEFUL.

I AM SAD:

SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER AND THE PANDEMIC

Every year, as the days get shorter and the darkness lasts longer, I become depressed and lose motivation. As soon as the sun goes down, I want to crawl into bed, and only get out of bed when the sun comes up. I feel sad and lonely, even in a crowd. I have Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).

Per the American Psychiatric Association, SAD arises from a biochemical imbalance in the brain prompted by lack of sunlight, affecting serotonin levels and causing disruption in life-functioning. Women and younger adults are at a higher risk of experiencing SAD. Other risk factors include a family/personal history of depression, as well as geographic location.

During the COVID pandemic, those affected by SAD face a “double whammy.” We not only have to deal with depression from lack of sunlight, but we must also contend with COVID-related depression. This pandemic has increased social isolation, restrictions on freedom, disruptions of schedules and socio-economic concerns. We experience more stress with less available coping skills, including social support, healthy eating, and daily exercise. To exacerbate the situation, our SADness has now kicked into full gear with the time change, and we are doubly depressed.

So, what can we do? Our behavioral health professionals would like to share their plan to combat SAD, which can also be used to manage pandemic-related depression.

8 WAYS TO REDUCE SADNESS

1. **Lay a Groundwork** for healthy functioning: Good nutrition, exercise options, sleep schedules, etc.
2. **Develop Mindfulness:** Intentionally focus attention on what is going on in this moment. What is really happening versus what my brain is telling me is happening.
3. **Know My Triggers:** What contributes to my depression? Maybe it's too much TV, social media, fast food, etc., and then make positive changes in those areas.



4. **Stay Connected:** Human connection is essential to mental health. Make weekly (or more often) calls to loved ones. Set up “Zoom” parties. Find online communities that enjoy the same things you do.
5. **Use Natural Light or SAD Lamps:** While exposure to natural sunlight for at least 30 minutes per day is ideal, there are alternative devices that provide similar benefits. Research indicates that exposure to “natural” light from supplemental sources like SAD Lamps, for at least 20 minutes per day, significantly improves your mental health and attitude. You can also put natural light bulbs in your lamps or lighting fixtures for similar results (bonus: Your plants will love it!).

6. **Engage in Enjoyable Activities:** Pursue your hobbies and interests, such as music, reading, puzzles, hobbies, games, and hikes.

7. **Reach Out for Professional Help:** If depression begins to affect your ability to function, it's time to talk to a mental health professional. One positive effect of the pandemic is that there are many mental health services online that are easily accessible. Resources include:

- [betterhelp.com](https://www.betterhelp.com)
- [psychologytoday.com/us/psychiatrists/online-counseling/california](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/psychiatrists/online-counseling/california)
- [top10.com/online-therapy/nearme](https://www.top10.com/online-therapy/nearme)

8. **Maintain Your Spiritual Connection:** Prayer and connection to one's spirituality is extremely important in this difficult time. My faith in Jesus Christ has pulled me through many difficult circumstances in life. Daily prayer, scripture reading, and connections to fellow Christians are vital to my mental health and well-being.

This year is undoubtedly challenging, and support is essential to making it through this challenging season. If your friends or family members are exhibiting SAD or pandemic-related depression, connect with them (either virtually or socially distanced) so they know they are loved and supported. Help them create and follow through with a mental health plan, like the one above. Pray with them and above all else, watch for signs indicating they may need professional help, and assist them in finding it.

The often-used phrase “we are all in this together” is true. Together, we can weather this season through to a mentally healthy spring.

MAY GOD RICHLY BLESS YOU THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!

This the Season For Giving

There is no better feeling than to give. It's what makes our work here at Lutheran Social Services so rewarding. We invite you to harness the power of your networks through the following FUNdraisers and Legacy Gift Options:



FACEBOOK If you appreciate the value of our mission, you can create a birthday fundraiser through Facebook, raising awareness for our cause and collecting contributions for something you care about. Our dear friend and supporter, Reverend Pamela Challis of Christ Lutheran Church in Long Beach, was able to raise \$610, with a goal of \$500, just by sharing her experience with LSSSC and showing her peers our purpose.



AMAZON SMILES When you shop through Amazon, 0.5% of your purchase will be donated back to LSS Southern California. Simply log in through smile.amazon.com and select Lutheran Social Services Southern California as your nonprofit of choice.



DONATE VEHICLES You can also donate old or unusable vehicles to LSSSC. Whether it is a car, motorcycle, boat, or even an RV, you can call 844-530-GIVE, or visit lsssc.org/other-ways-to-give/ and schedule a convenient pick-up, free of charge. You also receive a tax deduction for the value of the vehicle.



LEGACY GIVING When preparing your estate, you can create a gift plan that will allow your legacy to give long after you have passed. Visit lsssc.org/estate-planning/ and sign up for our free estate planning series.



Double your Gift this Holiday Season

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In Memoriam



Marianne Nelson, wife of former ELCA Southwest California Synod **Bishop Dean Nelson**, joined the church eternal on Saturday, November 7, 2020. Only days before her death she was diagnosed with a rare blood disorder related to the autoimmune disease she had lived with for decades, and in spite of aggressive treatment, she did not survive.

Marianne and Dean were married on August 19, 1967. While Dean was in seminary, Marianne taught fourth grade in St. Paul, MN Public Schools and when the Nelsons moved to Torrance, CA in 1995, she began teaching fourth grade again at First Lutheran School. She continued teaching there until she retired in 2014. In her 32 years of education, she touched the lives of thousands of students and their parents.

Marianne was an avid reader and life-long learner. She was an active member of First Lutheran Church in Torrance, where she served in numerous capacities. She loved to laugh, dance, travel, visit art museums, listen to jazz, watch Hallmark movies, walk in the surf at the beach, and enjoy her daily scoop of vanilla ice cream. **She was a woman of faith, an advocate for justice, and a gracious human being.**

A Memorial Service proclaiming the Easter gospel and celebrating her life will take place next year. Her ashes will be scattered in the ocean she so dearly loved.

We are so grateful for the dedicated leadership and unwavering support of Bishop Dean and Marianne throughout the years, joining friends the world over in celebrating her legacy.



*Eternal Rest grant her,
O Lord, and may Light
Perpetual shine upon her.*