

VOICES OF HOPE



DR. LASHARND A BECKWITH

MISSION

Ignited by faith, we live out God's love by embracing, equipping and empowering vulnerable people in Southern California

VISION

Sharing the love of Christ, we are a community to care and be cared for...

Where the vulnerable are safer and stronger

Where the dependent are self-sustaining

Where the isolated dwell in community

Where the weary will be given hope

VALUES

*Compassion / Advocacy
Collaboration / Respect
Innovation / Stewardship*

Happy Friday!

Growing up, I never celebrated Lent. It was something I knew nothing about until I was an adult. I attended a Catholic university in Miami, Florida for my undergraduate studies, so of course, I learned about it from my Catholic friends. This past week, I listened to a valued staff member, Walker Railey, present an Ash Wednesday devotion. As I listened to his words about this sacred time I laughed at his humor, but mostly I reflected on his comments about Lent. The one thing that stuck with me was how he described some of the random things we say. We will give up candy, Internet/social media, etc., as our way of fasting. As he neared his genuine point, I was reminded that Jesus was our ultimate sacrifice. I have been reflecting on his devotion ever since.

Few people make me stop and listen like Walker. Since coming to LSSSC last year, Walker has always made me feel welcome. He has proven to be one of the most supportive, loyal, and enthusiastically embracing people I have the pleasure of leading.

Anyway, as I thought of Lent this week, I thought about the various spiritual disciplines: prayer, Bible reading, fasting, etc. When I was young, spiritual fasting was as common as prayer and Bible reading in our household. So, as I reflected on the "giving up" that Walker spoke of, I thought about what Jesus gave up. I will happily stop eating or limit my eating to say I love Jesus and appreciate His sacrifice. However, my mind wandered over to Hosea 6:6, which reads:

"For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings." - Hosea 6:6

I could not help but think of what we do at Lutheran Social Services. We embrace the hurting, equip the needy, and empower those ready to take control of their lives. We do not judge; we serve. I am happy that you do so with love in your hearts for others.

As we continue through these weeks leading to Easter, let us celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus. When most people who observe Lent are fasting specific meals and food items, I would like to encourage you to remember to show mercy. Be a source of support and strength to each other and to those you serve.

Blessings,

Dr. LaSharnda Beckwith
President & Chief Executive Officer