

In Memoriam



The Rev. Raymond LeBlanc
April 20, 1928 - July 24, 2018

Pastor LeBlanc received his B.A. from Texas Southern University in Houston in 1972, and his M.Div from Evangelical Lutheran Theological Seminary in Columbus, OH in 1978. He was called in May of 1978 to establish a Gospel-centered new mission in Carson, California with a "handful of people gathering to worship...a church, not just for themselves, but a church for the whole neighborhood." He also served as president of the Carson branch of the NAACP and on California Lutheran University' Board of Regents. In 2002 he was called to serve by the Division for Congregational Ministries of the ELCA on a "blue ribbon" task force to develop a comprehensive strategy on evangelism.

Pastor LeBlanc retired from First, Carson in 2009, and subsequently worked in church redevelopment in the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod of the ELCA. He is survived by his wife, Karen, and two daughters, Rae and Karissa.



Dr. Fran Burnford, Associate in Ministry
April 20, 1928 - July 25, 2018

Dr. Frances Elise Voruz Burnford was born in Newburg Oregon, on April 20, 1928. She was the twelfth child born to Elodie and Lloyd Northrup. Her mother Elodie died shortly after Fran's birth, and Fran grew up with foster parents Herbert and Della Voruz and her foster brother, Herbert Voruz, Jr.

Throughout her life, Fran considered the Church to be a primary source of strength, guidance, nurturing, instruction, love, and empowerment. She believed that her baptism called her to a ministry of education, and it was in this field that she received a B.A. in 1949 (as well as a B.A. in Music). She completed her M.A. in Educational Psychology at CSU, Northridge in 1966, and her Ph.D in Education with an emphasis in Adult Education in 1976 at California Coast University in Santa Ana. She conducted postdoctoral studies in Human Services Administration at UCLA and USC, and became an Associate in Ministry in 1989.

In November 1988 Fran became a member of the Immaculate Heart Community, a Christian lay community of women and men committed to furthering God's mission of peace and justice. In 2008, she was elected as Co-Director that organization, and served in this role over six years. Fran was active in Lutheran/Roman Catholic dialogues, developing much of the material used in the ecumenical

process in Los Angeles. She served for several years on the Governing Board of the National Council of Churches in Christ.

Fran taught in public schools in Oregon and California, and was a Demonstration Teacher at UCLA's Experimental Laboratory School. She was a Human Services Consultant to the US Secretary of Defense, as well as Director of the Human Services Center at USC. Earlier in her professional life, Fran served as Director for the Institute of Changing Ministry at USC, and prior to that National Substance Abuse Training and Treatment Center at UCLA. She was the recipient of numerous awards, included the California Hospital Association's Public Service Award in the Field of Drug Prevention, the Rush Gold Medal Award from the American Psychiatric Association, and an honorary Doctorate of Theology from California Lutheran University.

Fran served as Assistant to the Bishop of the former South Pacific District of the American Lutheran Church, and on the ALC's National Council studying the possibility of ordaining women. She served the ELCA Churchwide body as Associate Executive Director of the Church in Society. She was the Director of Congregational Ministries for the Southwest California Synod and, following her retirement, served in volunteer assignments both at the synod and in her congregation. She was active in Stephens Ministry, and planning and developing ELM ministries (Equipping Leaders for Mission). She was active at synod assemblies and at the synod mid-week Eucharist service, preparing for communion and worship and playing the piano.

A favorite Bible Verse of Fran's was Romans 8:37-39 - "I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor heights, nor death nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Of all her blessings from a gracious and loving God, Fran considered the greatest to be her children, grandchildren and great grandson. They filled her life with joy, love and grace.

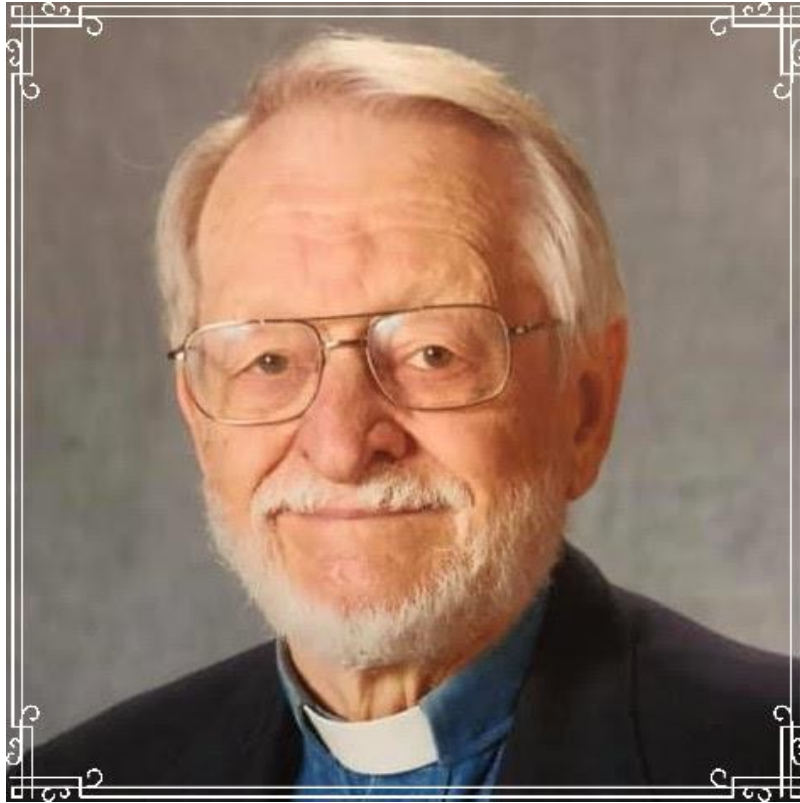


The Rev. Martin R. Hancer
October 27, 1960 - October 3, 2018

Pastor Marty was born and raised in Minneapolis, MN. He completed his undergraduate work at the University of Minnesota and his M.Div at Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul, MN, interning at Cross and Crown Lutheran Church in Rancho Cucamonga. He then served as Associate Pastor of First Lutheran Church, Brainerd, MN, and as Senior Pastor at Trinity Lutheran, Princeton, MN. He served as Senior Pastor at Emmanuel, North Hollywood from September, 2016 to the time of his passing.

Reflecting on the 25th anniversary of his ordination at Mount Olivet in Minneapolis, Pastor Marty said: *I love being a pastor! I get to share with ALL people the good and joyful news that God loves them more than they can possibly imagine. I get to share the good news that God forgives, God accepts and God in Christ is with them in all times and circumstances. No exceptions. And I get to encourage people in their own calling and sense of purpose... in knowing that their story is important. That their story and journey is a part of a larger story - God's story - and the story just wouldn't be the same without them. People need to hear it and I have the privilege to share it every single day. Amazing. God is so good.*

Pastor Marty enjoyed golf, fishing, reading, time with family, sports, music, and theater. He is survived by his wife Laurie, daughters Amanda and Megan, brothers James and Burke, sister Michelle, cousins, and a host of nieces, nephews, in-laws and friends.



The Rev. Edward Eugene Busch
April 11, 1931 - February 9, 2019

Pastor Edward E. Busch was born in San Diego to Leonard and Ester Busch and grew up in La Mesa, CA. He attended St. Johns College in Winfield, Kansas and Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, graduating in 1956. While on his internship in Brooklyn, NY he married Dona Jean (Dobie) Dobelstein.

His first call was to two LCMS mission congregations: Peace in Greencastle, Indiana and Holy Cross in Crawfordsville, Indiana, where he was ordained on July 1, 1956. He then served as assistant pastor at Emmaus in Denver, Colorado and Redeemer, Colorado Springs.

In 1973 he earned his Ph.D in Religion at Claremont Graduate School. In the meantime, he was called to Hope, Glendora, CA (LCMS) in 1971. Rev. Busch left Hope after the 1973 Missouri Synod convention, where as a delegate he spoke in favor of members of the St. Louis faculty, who were being branded as "false teachers."

When members of Hope decided to start a new church in La Verne, they called Rev. Busch as their pastor. He served at Our Savior Lutheran Church (later Rock of the Foothills) from 1975 to 1991 and then served as the Chaplain Pastor at Solheim Lutheran Home and Church.

After retiring in 2001, Edward and Dona Jean Busch joined Salem Lutheran in Glendale. Rev. Busch served as interim at Salem; Emmanuel, North Hollywood; Church of Hope,

Canyon Country; and Holy Shepherd, Chatsworth. He continued to make shut-in calls, teach Bible classes, and be active in the ministry of Salem.

Pastor Edward and Dona Jean, who passed away in 2002, were blessed with a daughter, a son, five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.