



Reverend Steven Beckham, Pastor  
5872 Naples Plaza Long Beach, California 90803-5044  
Website: [www.gdlclb.org](http://www.gdlclb.org) Telephone: 562.438.0929

## Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

### THOUGHTS ALONG THE WAY...

*"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us."*

— 2 Corinthians 5:17-19

Over the past several months you've been reading more and hearing more about the possibility of Gloria Dei becoming a Reconciling in Christ congregation. Phil Como has written some very good articles about Reconciling Works, the umbrella organization of Reconciling congregations, and about what it would mean if we were to become a Reconciling congregation. Our Council has passed a resolution to recommend to the congregation that we take this step, and the language of that resolution appeared in one of Phil's earlier articles.

As people have begun to discuss this, naturally some questions have arisen. I want to address some of those questions, but first I want to share with you the actual statement that Council has endorsed and is proposing we adopt at our January meeting. Here it is:

**At Gloria Dei Lutheran Church we welcome all who are seeking God's love and grace. We welcome all because God welcomes all, regardless of race or culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, or relationship status. We welcome all without regard to the social, cultural or economic circumstances that too often divide us. Our unity is in Christ in whom we are all made new.**

There. That's it. That would be our official Reconciling in Christ statement. It would be posted with our listing on the Reconciling Works website. It would be added to our bylaws. It would be posted on our premises. And, of course, since we're all Lutherans you're asking, **"What does this mean?"**

Well, it means that we are not merely going to *welcome* "all, regardless of race or culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, or relationship status," it means we are actually taking steps to *invite* them. There's a big difference between "well sure, if you show up we won't give you the cold shoulder" and "Hey, all y'all, we'd really like you to come!"

Now some people have asked, **"Well why do we have to make a specific statement to these people? If all are welcome, doesn't that automatically include them?"** Well yes, it does. But consider this. We are reaching out to a group that has, historically, been made to feel particularly *unwelcome* at an awful lot of Christian churches—so much so that the predominant perception among LGBT persons is that they are not wanted or welcomed at most churches.

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### Thoughts Along the Way Continues....

They won't know that we want them to join us unless we make a point of telling them. Becoming a Reconciling congregation and being listed on the Reconciling Works website is, in fact, an active *invitation* to the LGBT community. It says, "Please come. We want you here. We believe that you have God-given gifts that you could share with us and we believe that we have an abundance of God's grace and love to share with you. We believe God is calling you here just as God has called us here."

Some people have asked, **"Does that mean we would have same-sex weddings here at Gloria Dei?"** Well, it just might. Our bishops have encouraged us as pastors to have congregational conversations about that matter before we simply go ahead with it. Under our

practice and polity in the ELCA, deciding whether or not to perform a wedding is entirely up to the pastor. A congregation may establish policies about how and when weddings may occur—matters of scheduling, fees, décor and decorum, etc., but the congregation may not dictate to the pastor who he may or may not unite in marriage. Having said that, I think our bishops have made a wise suggestion, so that's a matter we'll want to discuss together.

I know there are a lot of other questions, too, including some important questions about what the Bible has to say about these matters, and we'll want to discuss that, too, at our October forum.

Meri's colleague at CSUF, Dr. John Hoffman, who happens to belong to one of our sister congregations in Whittier, wrote something particularly apropos recently. He was writing about a different issue, but since what he wrote applies to us all, I want to quote him here:

"As a Lutheran, I believe in the idea of 'original sin,' meaning that this world is broken, that all people are imperfect, and that we all face situations in our lives where every option for moving forward is flawed--sinful... Leadership in this context is not about finding the 'right' answers, because there aren't many--that's the idea of original sin. Instead, leadership is about engaging in difficult dialogues and decisions, and it is about creating communities of care and support. It is about extending grace in the context of brokenness."

This is the central idea behind Reconciling in Christ. That's what it means, in the end, to be a family of faith. It is about "creating communities of care and support" and "extending grace in the context of brokenness." And let's face it, we've all got some brokenness.

The last part of our proposed statement says that we will welcome all regardless of relationship status. Well how many of us at Gloria Dei have already experienced that particular embrace of grace? Our proposed statement says that we will welcome all regardless of race or culture. I think everyone here would like to figure out ways to make this a more colorful place in every sense of the word. So, if we're honest, the part that some folks are still wrestling with is the "sexual orientation and gender identity" part of the equation. That's understandable. And that's why we plan to have a congregational forum in October so that we can come together as a congregation to listen to each other but also to listen to some people who have experienced the cold shoulder of the church yet persevered until they found a place of welcome because Christ was calling them to find a community of care and support where grace was extended in the context of brokenness.

**Pro Gloria Dei, Pastor Steve**

# GLORIA DEI COUNCIL UPDATE

Greetings and Blessings to all who worship at Gloria Dei. Your Council met on Sept. 14<sup>th</sup> and the meeting was well attended.

Pastor opened the meeting with prayer. His report to us was of members with health concerns and need for our prayers. He has also had some problems with vertigo and some discomfort not uncommon to prior problems. While he deals with these, one would never know it. His sermons are so thoughtfully prepared, scriptural yet current and the gifts of his knowledge and preparation are ever present each Sunday. We also hosted a Collegium of Pastors from our local Synod this month.

Bible Studies begin on Sept. 27 each Sunday at 9:00 a.m. We will be re-learning 1st and 2nd Corinthians. Tuesday studies are both morning and evening at 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. The study will be "Reclaiming Revelations". Those who attend will be rewarded ten-fold.

Mike Lynch, our Mission Committee Chair, presented his plan to have "Mission Moments" each month during worship. It will be a brief presentation to re-acquaint us with the Missions we support and hopefully presented by a representative of the Mission.

On this subject, it is sad to tell you

that Father Sean Lanigan will be leaving "Holy Ground" on November 1st. Gary and Peggy Bockman have served on the Advisory Board of what was formerly called "Beach Progressive" and later "Holy Ground" since its inception. The effort was intended to serve Long Beach State college students with a place to worship, in an environment of comfort and convenience in their lives. Both Lutheran and Episcopal Churches in the Long Beach area have strived to support the effort. Funding was not met as planned. Several of us went to the Sunday eve services at *Our Saviours Chapel*. We met the young adults and witnessed their participation in Father Sean's effort. I remember the wonderful Holy Communion with fresh baked bread. The music was beautiful and performed by talented young adults and there was always a table of specially prepared "treats". We all wish Father Sean a "Call" that will welcome his gifts and we Bless him on his way forward in his service to our Lord.

Christ Lutheran Church is hosting a Conference gathering especially for lay persons to meet Bishop Guy Erwin, have Bible Study with him and hear more about things that are happening at the Synod level. The date is set for Thursday October 15, at 6:00 p.m. There will be a light supper so we will need an RSVP

from you if you plan to attend. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet our Bishop, along with members of churches in our Synod. It is a casual gathering so please feel comfortable to join in if you can.

It was moved and seconded to seek a contractor opinion of the possibility to complete *Phase One* of the kitchen improvement plan; within the \$30,000 amount we have been provided.

The Parsonage Committee has had several meetings and is preparing their report for Council's October meeting. After review, we will send their findings to you by mail, in ample time for your review for our January Congregation Meeting.

With regard to Reconciling in Christ (RIC), there will be a forum scheduled in October. The date and time will be forthcoming.

Many thanks to Peggy and Gary Bockman for their efforts in making our Annual Picnic the great event that it was. The venue was shady and perfect. We had great attendance. The food was terrific and everyone had a good time. They both have responsible full time work and yet find the time to make our time together special.

**May your Blessings Abound and have a Glorious Dei.**

**Barbara White, Council President**





## FAREWELL, DAD



Andy Sorensen was born and grew up in a Scandinavian neighborhood in Chicago, Illinois on October 15, 1926. He lived in Chicago until WWII when he enlisted in the Coast Guard at the age of 16 and served for 3 years. For two of those years he served aboard USCG cutters as convoy escort on north Atlantic sea-lanes where the German Navy submarines ("Wolf Pack") were sinking many allied cargo ships.

In 1945 he was trained as a "hard-hat" deep-sea diver and assigned to the USS Cor Coroli at Wilmington, CA. A friend invited him to attend a party where he met his future wife, Mary. He married in 1946 and has one daughter, and two granddaughters. Following his discharge from the Coast Guard in 1946, he decided to make radio broadcasting his career. He entered Speare's School of Broadcasting and studied speech and broadcast engineering. The engineering portion of the program qualified him to operate radio station broadcast equipment.

After graduation, he was hired by a local radio station KNOB and KFOX. To progress in the business required moving between stations for promotions and he worked in Long Beach, Las Vegas, and Ukiah. At some stations he was broadcaster and engineer.

Because of the frequent moves and insecurity in radio broadcasting, he returned to college at California State University, Long Beach to pursue a business degree. He enjoyed being at the university and in the business program. He did well and was selected *Marketing Student of the Year* and was in "Who's Who in American Universities and Colleges." He graduated from Cal State with a BS degree in Business and was hired as a stockbroker with Dean Witter. He retired from Dean Witter after 20 years.

A year later he was invited by the New York Stock Exchange and the National Association of Securities Dealers to be a Securities Industry arbitrator. For fifteen years he settled disputes in the securities industry. He enjoyed this work, and would still be there, but chose to leave in 2005 because he developed a hearing problem.

Dad had many special interests including sailing, fishing, Norwegian woodcarving, and traveling. He was an enthusiastic fisherman and belonged to the Southern California Tuna Club where he regularly fished Alaskan and Mexican waters. He and mom enjoyed traveling and took many cruises including visiting his parents' homeland of Norway several times. Besides the Tuna Club, he currently had membership in the Long Beach Motor Patrol, The Owls and the International Footprint Association. He was a Commissioner on the County of Los Angeles City of Long Beach Joint Powers Commission for eight years, a member of Sons of Norway, The Norwegian American Chamber of Commerce, the Long Beach Yacht Club and a life member of Pi Sigma Epsilon (Professional Sales and Marketing Fraternity).

My Dad leaves behind his wife of 69 years, Mary; daughter Victoria Gammer; son-in-law Dr. Steven Gammer; granddaughters Meredith Sutton and Sarabeth Wicks (John Wicks); grandchildren Ava and Samuel Wicks. ~ Victoria Gammer



## — BAPTISM —

We welcome into our community of faith, little SAMUEL JAMES WICKS — son of Sarabeth and John Wicks, and grandson of Victoria Gammer, and great grandson to members Mary & Andy Sorensen.



# Reclaiming REVELATION

TUESDAYS beginning September 29, 2015

Fellowship Hall, 7 p.m. (and possibly 10 a.m.)

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Naples, Long Beach



"Four Living Creatures"  
Watercolor on Illustration Board,  
2015  
Artist: Rebecca Craig

## Is this the end?

In this 6-part video series, Biblical scholars discuss and critique modern rapture and end-times interpretations in order to reclaim the prophetic voice Revelation was originally intended to convey. Go on a journey through God's vision of our world—a vision of the past, the present, and the future.

New Testament scholars Dr. Matthew Skinner and Dr. Karoline Lewis from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, weigh in throughout the series, lending insights into the the world out of which Revelation originally emerged and focus on the primary theme of the book itself—the revelation of Jesus Christ.



Special thanks to our annual picnic committee

**Karen & Charles Flieger, Mike Lynch, and Derrick Skonecki**, the cupcake crew **Karen Como, Vicki Gammer, Erika Eidam, Brooke White**, and salad divas **Martie Engle, Barbara White, Stephanie Seimer, Janet Sims and Cathy Schneider**.

Menu featured new Seal Beach vendor **Cosmic Dave's Subs**.



# BEYOND THE WALLS – MISSION OUTREACH

Just before Jesus ascended into heaven, He commissioned his followers to be:

**“My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” Acts 1:8**

Wow! The Lord wants His people to present the facts about Jesus' life, ministry and saving work. This is quite a privilege, and over the millennia, the church has, with dedication and determination, set about to pursue this calling.

The scope of this commission is both local and worldwide, and everywhere in between:

Jerusalem – Our home.

Judea – Our “backyard.”

Samaria – Where we might be uncomfortable, finding people not like us.

Remotest part of the earth – EVERYWHERE, all peoples, all cultures.

When you consider the individual work of the people of Gloria Dei, along with our financial and volunteer support for so many ministry efforts, you can see that our people are having an impact here at home, in our backyard, to other cultures and around the world.

Below is a list of the ministries receiving Missions Support from Gloria Dei. Many of our folks invest a great deal of prayer, work and finances in support of these ministries.

Dorcas Wang (ELCA Global Missionary)  
World Hunger  
Fe y Esperanza (South Gate)  
Lutheran Social Services  
Holy Ground/Beach Progressives  
Pacific Lutheran Seminary

International Disaster  
Centro Shalom  
Lutheran Maritime Ministry  
South Coast Interfaith Council  
Synod Benevolence  
Malaria Campaign

Please keep each of these efforts in your prayers. They are part of our effort to be “His Witnesses.”

## ELCA MALARIA CAMPAIGN: WE DID IT!

SEPTEMBER 2015

[www.ELCA.org/malaria](http://www.ELCA.org/malaria)



We have incredible news! The ELCA Malaria Campaign just reached its fundraising goal of \$15 million! Thank you for being a part of this monumental milestone and helping us protect countless lives from this preventable, treatable disease. We couldn't have done it without you!

Five years ago ELCA members, congregations and synods came together, dreamed big with our Lutheran companion churches and partners, and set out to raise \$15 million for malaria programming. Today we celebrate all that we have accomplished together.

Working with our Lutheran companions and partners in 13 African countries, we have brought about lasting change. But our work is not over. While the ELCA Malaria Campaign will come to an end on Jan. 31, 2016, our commitment to ending deaths from this disease will not. In the coming years, support to our companions and partners to address malaria will come through gifts to ELCA World Hunger, which has a long history of supporting health-related work.

Without you, none of this would have been possible. Thank you for your prayers, your partnership and your generosity.

**Walk to**  
**Fight Poverty**  
LSS Community Care

**Join us on October 3 at Saint Timothy Lutheran Church**  
**4645 N. Woodruff Ave. Lakewood, CA 90713**

**Help us fight poverty in South Bay / Long Beach**  
**Our goal this year is \$10,000**

Registration: 9:00 am • Start Time: 10:00 am

Contact **Sandy Irvine** at Gloria Dei-562-438-0929 to make a donation for those who are walking from Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, or donate online at [www.lsscommunitycare.org/walkathons/](http://www.lsscommunitycare.org/walkathons/) click on South Bay/L.B. then click “support participant” (Sandy Irvine).

Our Long Beach Community Care Center serves over 14,000 people each month through a comprehensive Emergency Assistance program. We are able to provide basic immediate needs such as food, clothing, hygiene items, and blankets. At the point of client intake we assess their total situation and appropriate programs or services are offered within the agency or by referral to additional resources in the community. Those served are empowered to resolve their problems and develop long-term solutions.

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR OCTOBER 2015



## 1 — Thursday

## 2 — Friday

- A.A. MTG. @ 1:00 PM
- D.A. MTG @ 6:00 PM

## 3 — Saturday

LSS WALKATHON @ 10:00 AM

## 4 — SUNDAY

ADULT EDUCATION @ 9 AM  
WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM  
HOLY COMMUNION

- O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

## 5 — Monday

CHURCH COUNCIL MTG @ 7 PM

## 6 — Tuesday

ADULT EDUCATION @ 10 AM & 7 PM  
RECLAIMING REVELATION

## 7 — Wednesday

JOIN THE CHOIR... @ 7:15 PM

## 8 — Thursday

## 9 — Friday

- A.A. MTG. @ 1:00 PM
- D.A. MTG @ 6:00 PM

## 10 — Saturday

Happy Anniversary Randy  
& Patty Hoffman



## 11 — SUNDAY

ADULT EDUCATION @ 9 AM  
WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM  
HOLY COMMUNION  
PRAYERS OF HEALING

- O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

## 12 — Monday

COLUMBUS DAY HOLIDAY

## 13 — Tuesday

ADULT EDUCATION @ 10 AM & 7 PM  
RECLAIMING REVELATION

## 14 — Wednesday

JOIN THE CHOIR... @ 7:15 PM

## 15 — Thursday

ELC WOMEN @ 10:30 AM  
BRING A SANDWICH TO SHARE & A FRIEND!

## 16 — Friday

- A.A. MTG. @ 1:00 PM
- D.A. MTG @ 6:00 PM

## 17 — Saturday

LSS WORK PARTY 10:00 AM

## 18 — SUNDAY

ADULT EDUCATION @ 9 AM  
WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM  
HOLY COMMUNION  
NOISY OFFERING

- O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

## 19 — Monday

Newsletter Deadline

## 20 — Tuesday

ADULT EDUCATION @ 10 AM & 7 PM  
RECLAIMING REVELATION  
Happy Birthday Jackie Anderson

## 21 — Wednesday

## 22 — Thursday

## 23 — Friday

- A.A. MTG. @ 1:00 PM
- D.A. MTG @ 6:00 PM

## 24 — Saturday

## 25 — SUNDAY

REFORMATION SUNDAY  
ADULT EDUCATION @ 9 AM  
WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM  
HOLY COMMUNION  
OLIVIA ADAMS  
CONFIRMATION

- O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

## 26 — Monday

## 27 — Tuesday

ADULT EDUCATION @ 10 AM & 7 PM



Happy Birthday  
Gary Bockman

## 28 — Wednesday

JOIN THE CHOIR... @ 7:15 PM

Happy Birthday Phil Como

## 29 — Thursday

## 30 — Friday

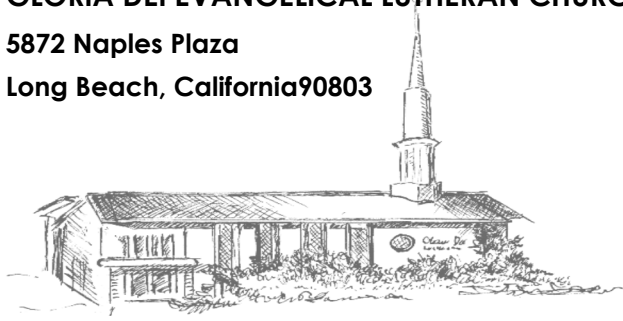
## 31 — Saturday



**GLORIA DEI EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**5872 Naples Plaza**

**Long Beach, California 90803**



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