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Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

THOUGHTS ALONG THE WAY...

It's hard to believe that it has been 10 years this month since Dr. Bob died. Robert H. Smith was a theologian, Biblical scholar of the highest order, exceptional instructor and guide into the mysteries of ancient Koine Greek, the language of the New Testament, a Professor in every good sense of the word. You can read a brief bio on Wikipedia that will give you the highlights of his career but it won't tell you how much he was loved by his students or how in his Christlike way he managed to include so many of us into his circle of friends and yet make each feel uniquely appreciated and held dear. That Wiki bio also won't tell you about what it was like to be in class, reading and translating our way through a text with him—a text you know he had been through hundreds of times before—when suddenly he would pause, cock his head a bit, then share some “small” theological insight that would rock your world and forever change the way you perceive things.

I vividly remember just such a moment from 20 years ago, my last semester of seminary. We were comparing the different gospel accounts of the Resurrection and discussing why they were so different from each other. Naturally, everyone had a firm opinion on which gospel account was her or his favorite. We were seminary students. We had firm opinions about everything in those heady days before real life in the parish softened some of our edges and sharpened others. Dr. Bob listened thoughtfully as we debated the merits or drawbacks of each account until, inevitably, someone piped up and asked, “Dr. Smith, which is your favorite account?” After a moment's thought he said, “The one that haunts me most is the original ending of the Gospel of Mark.”

In the oldest manuscripts Mark ends in the middle of verse 8 in chapter 16. Most scholars concur that everything that comes after that was added by a later hand, a person or persons who were just plain uncomfortable with the unresolved feeling of the original ending. In that original ending the women find the tomb empty. A “young man dressed in a white robe” tells them that Jesus has been raised and has gone ahead of them to Galilee and that they will see him there. But the women flee from the tomb “for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.”

“Why is that your favorite Resurrection account?” we asked Dr. Bob. “I like it for what's not there. I can just picture those women, trembling and frightened as they stare into the empty tomb. There's a young man dressed in white—and who is he? They don't know, but he's not Jesus—a young man dressed in white tells them Jesus is raised and that he has gone ahead of them to Galilee and they will see him there. But that's how it ends, with trembling and fear and a promise. No emotional reunion. Just trembling and fear and a promise. In the end that's all any of us have in the face of death—trembling, fear, maybe half a hope, and a promise. You either trust that promise or you don't. I like this version because the empty tomb leaves a hole in all assumptions.”

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COUNCIL UPDATE

Council met on March 7, with all members present. Our assigned congregation statement to consider and rate between poor and very well was "There is a clear sense of Mission here". Each member gave their response and the consensus was between "somewhat" and "very well".

Pastor Steve gave an update on members of concern. He will also led the Bible Study for the "Holy Ground" group recently. Tuesday adult education will continue with Genesis and the Sunday morning adult education will study Galatians.

Bob Siemer presented the computer policy and the motion to approve carried. A kitchen committee/contractor meeting update was given. The bid was approximately \$10,000 higher than our resources and the committee will seek other bids and possibly consider individual sub-contractor bids.

Frank Stanley's letter of resignation to Council was reviewed and Stephanie Siemer has accepted our nomination to fill the vacancy until nominations are solicited in May.

Marilyn Bittle reported that our own Pastor Steve will be the *Guest Speaker* at the upcoming Annual Assembly of the South Coast Interfaith Council.

Phil Como covered the next steps to be taken with regard to "RIC" and Mike Lynch announced that more "Mission Moments" will be coming. Our front message sign is not as prominent as we would like and Pastor Steve and Danny Bach will work on improvements.

Synod reports that "Gifts to ELCA World Hunger" help support 78 water-related projects in 36 countries, including the United States.

For the residents of Porterville, CA, the five-year drought affected all aspects of their lives. Gifts to ELCA World Hunger helped support the installation of a local water system. This meant that residents no longer had to worry about cooking, showering and flushing and has made a huge improvement in their daily living. The ELCA fund will now be turning to the Flint, Michigan problem.

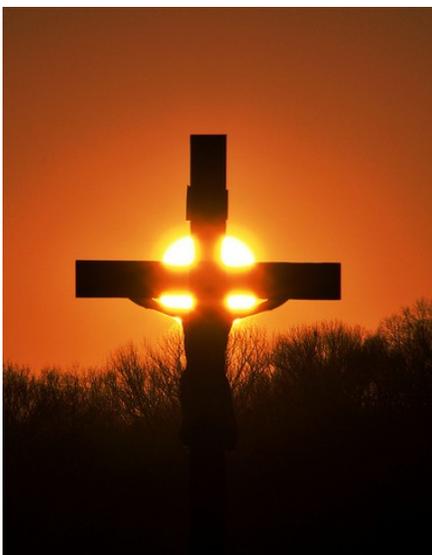
Blessings to you and have a Glorious Dei.

Barbara White, Council President Email: bjways@verizon.net



“So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.”

~ John 8:36



WHY I BELIEVE AND TRUST IN THE TRIUNE GOD — DON MELIN

It is now 2:20 a.m. on March 6th and I have not gone to sleep yet, but I must let people know of my experience between the hours of 10:00 p.m. on March 5th until 1:30 a.m. on March 6th. The most painful 3 and 1 half hours that I can remember.

At 9:30 p.m. on March 5th I got myself ready for the night. I said my prayers and by 10:00 p.m. I was ready to turn out the lights and fall asleep. I have arthritis and I have to change the position of my body to a position that will relieve the pain that grows in that position. I know that the storm that this going to be with us and arthritis do not get along and bring on much of the pain. My continual moving did not work out to [sic] well because the pains continued to grow. I had pain in the back of my neck, in both shoulders [sic] and all the way down to the tip of both hands. The pain continued to get worse, and then I got a pain in my chest, it seemed as though all of my pains of my body came together and settle [sic] in my chest kept getting worse. It was so bad that the covers laying on my chest gave me pain.

I didn't know what to do, what came mind was to call my daughter who has been my faithful care giver. I moved myself into the living room where I have a recliner chair and though that sitting there would relieve some of the pain. As I began to dial the number I heard a voice say to me – what are you doing? I stopped dialing and listened I answered Him saying I need help and she is the only one that talks to me on the phone so I can hear, as I am hard of hearing more so on the phone.

The first bible verse that came to me is found in Psalm 121:2 **“My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth.”** The voice continued and said “What help can they give you that I can't.” I hung up the phone and laid back down and said “Here I am Lord, if it is my time for you to take me home, I'm ready, thy will be done.” He said to me not now, I just wanted to remind you of the verse Psalm 46:10 that says **“Be still and know that I am God.”** The bible verse that comes to me later is found in Proverbs 3:5-6 **“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding in all my ways I will acknowledged Him and He will direct my paths.”** The Lord said I'm not through with you at this time continue to follow me. I said I will continue to do what He commands as long as I trust Him to help me. In the book of Philippians the words of Paul are clear “I can do all things through Christ who gives me the strength to continue on this journey of life.”

SAVE THE DATE On **April 17, Vicar Erin Armstrong** will lead our Sunday adult education class and deliver the sermon. Included will be her sharing of experiences last summer in Palestine and Israel as part of an initiative of the ELCA Young Adult Ministry and the Peace Not Walls Campaign.

Vicar Erin Armstrong grew up as a member of Trinity Lutheran in Riverside, CA and is currently a pastoral intern at First Lutheran Church in Torrance. Meet and hear this bright, enthusiastic, young seminarian from Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, a mission partner of Gloria Dei.

Information about **Peace Not Walls** may be found on their website at <https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Publicly-Engaged-Church/Peace-Not-Walls>

Postings by participants in the **Young Adult Ministry** trip to the Holy Land may be found at <https://peacenotwalls.wordpress.com/category/minneapolis-trip/page/2/>



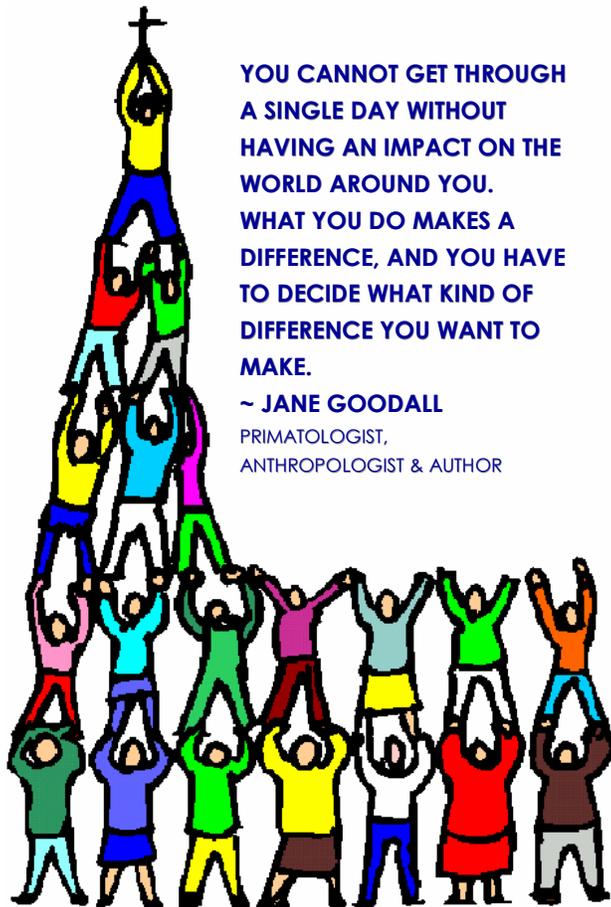
...Thoughts Along the Way Continued

A hole in all assumptions. Those words stuck with me. They have worked in me slowly and gently over the years, wearing down many of my adamant assumptions like water polishing stones in a stream.

A week later I attended Easter worship at a small church in Oakland along with Dr. Smith, his wife, Dr. Donna Duensing, and several others. The pastor, a dear friend of us all, was fairly new to this congregation and was doing her excellent best to turn around a declining, aging membership, but on this particular Easter Sunday it was clear that she had her work cut out for her. The pews were far from full.

This is a dying church I thought. But the hole in all assumptions was already at work in me. Well aren't all churches dying churches? Isn't every pew and seat in every church in the world filled with the dying? And isn't this the day when we stand before the empty tomb, even our own empty tomb, with nothing more than fear, trembling, half a hope, and a promise? Faith equals trust. Look at these people who have come here today. Think of all the friends and loved ones who have filled these pews with them over the years. Think of not just their faith, but the faithfulness and love that brought them here today. Yes, this is a dying church in a dying world. But we have the promise, the Word of Resurrection. Jesus has gone ahead of us. You either trust that promise or you don't.

Continued on Page 5



**YOU CANNOT GET THROUGH
A SINGLE DAY WITHOUT
HAVING AN IMPACT ON THE
WORLD AROUND YOU.
WHAT YOU DO MAKES A
DIFFERENCE, AND YOU HAVE
TO DECIDE WHAT KIND OF
DIFFERENCE YOU WANT TO
MAKE.**

~ JANE GOODALL
PRIMATOLOGIST,
ANTHROPOLOGIST & AUTHOR

PASS IT ON...

**PEOPLE DON'T CARE HOW MUCH YOU KNOW UNTIL
THEY KNOW HOW MUCH YOU CARE.**

~ AMISH PROVERB

**SOME CHANGES LOOK NEGATIVE ON THE SURFACE
BUT YOU WILL SOON REALIZE THAT SPACE IS
BEING CREATED IN YOUR LIFE FOR
SOMETHING NEW TO EMERGE.**

~ECKHART TOLLE

**GOD IS LOOKING FOR PEOPLE TO USE, AND IF YOU
CAN GET USABLE, HE WILL WEAR YOU OUT.**

~ RICK WARREN

THE CONSTANT HAPPINESS IS CURIOSITY.

~ ALICE MUNRO, NOBEL PRIZE-WINNING AUTHOR

MEANINGFUL MONDAYS

START YOUR WEEK OFF RIGHT WITH YOUR WEEKLY INSPIRATION, A FREE
E-NEWSLETTER FROM GUIDEPOSTS: GUIDEPOSTS.ORG/NEWSLETTERS

...Thoughts Along the Way Continued



Easter in a Dying Church April 9, 1996

They come because they have
always come...
and on this day of days,
not to pass through the beckoning door,
not to let their careful footsteps drum
old echoes from the wooden floor
would deny the pattern of their ways
and all the times that they have come before.

They sit where they have always sat...
each in the customary pew,
with room enough for all,
even for the visiting few
who do not hear the sweet, unearthly voices
singing Alleluia in memories so loud;
room enough for those who do not recall
the passings, the accidents, the choices
which have thickened the witnessing cloud
and left this sparse, embodied remnant of the hosts
surrounded by their ghosts.

They come to meet where they have always met...
to taste the wine with a beloved friend
who has faded from sight
but still shares the cup in the world without end,
to break bread with the cherished spouse
who, though swallowed by the light,
still prays beside each member of this house,
to meet children, uncles, sisters, mothers,
cousins, aunts, fathers, brothers,
in soul or body distanced from their
common place—
to allow for them a sanctioned space.

They come to be seen with the unseen...
to testify to the most revered of their presumptions:
that before and beyond here and now
the empty tomb
leaves a hole in all assumptions.

Pro Gloria Dei, Pastor Steve

GLORIA DEI MISSIONARY UPDATE

March 26, 2016

**Dear Partner in Mission,
Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!**

Happy and Blessed Easter!

Easter is my most favorite holiday!
"Because He lives, I can face tomorrow."

I am deeply grateful for your loving care
and prayer support! Since I sent my
urgent prayer request for my visa
extension, I have got so many
responses from you to assure me
of your prayers for me on this matter.
Even though I have not got any result
by now, some friends have been
making a great effort to help on
this matter. I am grateful for
our Christian family and community.

We know that our God is in
control! It is He Who has sent me
back to my homeland to serve Him
here through my Home Mission ELCA
and you all, my dear supporters
both in prayer and finances. It is
God's doing. I am the one who
has been so blessed in this work.
I will leave again for another training
trip outside of Beijing next week.
When I get any news for my visa, I will
report to you all! Meanwhile, I know
that you keep praying for me
and this matter!

God's grace and peace,
Dorcas

**Come, let us go up to the
Mountain of the Lord...
He will *teach us His ways,*
So that we may *walk in His paths.*
~ Isaiah 2:3**

TRIBUTE TO H. DONALD BROWN



FAVORITE HYMNS

Joyful, Joyful,
We Adore Thee

God Be With
You Til We
Meet Again

Don was born in Compton California to John Harley and Elvannah Brown.

He attended schools in Bellflower, Long Beach, and San Diego. He graduated from Jordan high school and San Diego State University. He served 3 years in the US Coast Guard, landing on all the islands that John Wayne saved in the movies.

His brother Warren preceded him in death. He is survived by wife of 56 years, Margie E. Brown, daughters Jill Hlavacek (Lubor), Kira Hartwell (Charley), and grandchildren Sydney and Jamie Hlavacek, Jack, Adam and Lily Hartwell, one nephew and family, grand-nieces and nephews. His family was the most important aspect of his life.

Don was a mechanical engineer, working at Convair in San Diego, North American Aviation in Downey and finished his career at TRW in Redondo Beach. Ultimately he was a program and manager. He often told others his name is on Mars and the moon.

He retired from TRW after 27 years.

He loved sailing and encouraged Margie to learn. Together they sailed out of Seal Beach and Alamitos Bay Yacht clubs. They cruised to Catalina Island as members of Blue Water sailing club. As his daughters participated in swimming, he learned how to manage a meet and was frequently seen timing events. He served as Seal Beach Swim Club president for several years. Camping became a big part of their lives as well.

Don served as Commodore of Seal Beach YC and Southern California Yachting Association. In the early 80's he served on the committee that would eventually run the 1984 Olympic Sailing games in Long Beach. He was chair of that committee; and he and Margie met people from all over the world. Some of those have become lifelong friends.

Don and Margie have been members of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church for over 40 years. Spending holidays in Big Bear was another special time for 25 years. As his health diminished, the cabin and the sailboat were sold, and they became cruisers on much larger vessels. Visiting foreign ports were nice, but he really loved just being on the ocean.

The Neptune Society is handling final arrangements. In lieu of flowers please send contributions to Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Long Beach, or the US Sailing Center in Long Beach.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, April 2nd, at 2 pm at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, in Naples.

THE SEAMAN'S PSALM

The Lord is my Pilot; I shall not drift.

He liteth me across the dark waters;

He steereth me in deep channels; he keepeth my log.

He guardeth me by the star of holiness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I sail mid the thunders and tempest of life

I will dread no danger, for thou art near me.

The love and thy care they shelter me.

Thou prepares a harbor before me in the homeland of Eternity.

Thou anointest the waves with oil; my ship rideth calmly.

Surely sunlight and starlight shall favor me on the voyage I take,

And I will rest in the port of my God forever. ~ James Rogers



CALENDAR OF EVENTS — APRIL 2016

1 — Friday

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

2 — Saturday

DON BROWN MEMORIAL @ 2 PM

3 — SUNDAY

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

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

Happy Birthday Peggy Bockman

4 — Monday

CHURCH COUNCIL MTG
@ 7 PM

5 — Tuesday

ADULT EDUCATION @
10 AM & 7:00 PM

6 — Wednesday

JOIN THE CHOIR... @ 7:15 PM

7 — Thursday

Roger & Judy Powell Anniversary

8 — Friday

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

Happy Birthday Lanae Caldwell

9 — Saturday

10 — SUNDAY

ADULT EDUCATION @ 9 AM
WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM
HOLY COMMUNION
 Hunger Offering
 Prayers for Healing

Happy Birthday
Giselle Berg

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

11 — Monday

GARDEN CLUB @ 1 PM

12 — Tuesday

VOTING POLL SITE

13 — Wednesday

JOIN THE CHOIR... @ 7:15 PM

Happy Birthday Bev Pandora

14 — Thursday

15 — Friday

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

16 — Saturday

LSS WORK PARTY
 10AM-NOON
 (9:30 CARPOOL)
 1611 PINE STREET

17 — SUNDAY

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

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

Happy Birthday Donna Malbon

Newsletter Deadline

18 — Monday

19 — Tuesday

ADULT EDUCATION @
10 AM & 7:00 PM

20 — Wednesday

JOIN THE CHOIR... @ 7:15 PM

Happy Birthday Don Melin

21 — Thursday

ELCW LUNCH @ 10:30 AM



22 — Friday

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

23 — Saturday

Happy Birthday David Fuller

24 — SUNDAY

ADULT EDUCATION @ 9 AM
WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM
HOLY COMMUNION
 ELCA Malaria Special Offering

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

25 — Monday

26 — Tuesday

ADULT EDUCATION @
10 AM & 7:00 PM

27 — Wednesday

JOIN THE CHOIR... @ 7:15 PM

28 — Thursday

Happy Birthday Brooke White

29 — Friday

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

30 — Saturday



GLORIA DEI EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

**5872 Naples Plaza
Long Beach, California 90803**



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