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Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

THOUGHTS ALONG THE WAY...

Every God-breathed writing is also useful for teaching, for reproach, for correction and restoration, and for instruction in righteousness and justice so that the person of God may be completely equipped for every good work. – 2 Timothy 3:16, (my translation)

"I have my own Bible and I can read it myself," said the man, a little heatedly. "I don't need anybody to tell me what it says." Much as I wanted to respond, I knew it wasn't the right moment. That discussion would have to wait for a calmer time. Besides, I knew exactly how he felt. I remember feeling that way, too.

When I first went to seminary I thought I was pretty darn well prepared, at least in the important qualification of Knowing My Bible. In 1980 I had worked as a line producer on the team that recorded and produced Zondervan's NIV translation of The Bible for distribution on cassette. We would start recording the narrator at 6:00 a.m. Mid-day I would edit the tapes, cutting out mistakes and outtakes. In mid-afternoon we often recorded actors from the South Coast Repertory Theater voicing different characters in the text. I did some of the voice work, too. In the evening, more editing, then mixing with sound effects and music. Often we worked until midnight. Many nights I simply slept at the studio so I could start the cycle all over again at 6 the next morning. For nine months I was utterly immersed in the Bible. Genesis through Revelation. So when I entered seminary in the fall of 1992, I Knew My Bible.

I knew my Bible. Well, I knew *that* Bible, the NIV—and that was what set me up for my first shock in my first class on my first day at seminary. We were *required* to use a *different translation!* We were required to use the NRSV as our primary Bible, but also to use it in reference to other selected translations, commentaries and lexical materials. Not only that, but, at least in Dr. Victor Gold's Old Testament class, the NIV was specifically NOT allowed. This did not sit well with me. When I asked why, he stated that there were several reasons and that he hoped that by the time I complete his class I would be able to answer that question for myself. Then he picked up my copy of the NIV from my desk, thumbed through a few pages and read from the forward, "One of the goals of this translation team was to adhere as strictly as possible to the traditional interpretation of the text." The traditional interpretation of the text. "That's code," he said, "for the King James Version, and the King James, for all its poetic grandeur, is in many respects a very poor translation of the original texts."

I thought I knew my Bible. I thought I could read it myself and didn't really need anyone to tell me what it said. I was just beginning to learn how little I really knew. It was more than uncomfortable. Sometimes I felt something akin to anger as this thing I loved so much, this hard-won familiarity with the text in which I had taken so much pride and in which I had found some necessary self-assurance as I embarked on this adventure in seminary education was dismantled piece by piece to reveal a chasm of ignorance.

Continued on page 2

Thoughts Along the Way Continues....

Thank God for my professors, my teachers, who managed to humble me without humiliating me so that they could spark a hunger for a deeper knowledge and more complex and meaningful relationship with the Bible and, more importantly, the God we encounter in its pages. Thank God for Bob Smith and Everett Kalin who taught us to read and translate the ancient Koine Greek of the New Testament and opened our eyes to myriad translation choices that must be made in doing so. Thank God, even, for curmudgeonly Victor Gold who set a very high bar for exegesis of the Old Testament, demanding that we understand the cultural context in which the texts were written, requiring us to compare translations and textual variants, and requiring us to compare the Hebrew stories to analogous stories from the ancient writings of the other neighboring ancient cultures. Thank God for Martha Ellen Stortz who boggled our minds in Church History with an overview of the astonishing diversity of beliefs that fell under the label of "Christian" in its first four centuries before Orthodoxy was officially established by imperial edict. Thank God for all of them for teaching us that The Bible, as such, didn't even exist until Constantine ordered Eusebius to arrange production of 50 copies, and that, even then, the question of which books were in and which were out would not be "officially" closed for another 12 centuries and is, in fact, still an open question when different denominations and traditions discuss the matter. Thank God for Timothy Lull, that giant of a Luther scholar who helped us put all these pieces together in the context of Martin Luther's writings, theology and interpretive paradigms. Thank God for Ted Peters, the systematic theologian, who opened our eyes to the ways that these sacred texts have created divergent theological rivers through history and are still branching new streams today because different people in different places living in different circumstances will hear the same text in very different ways—and God is speaking through all of them. Thank God for Gary Pence, the thoughtfully good-natured classics scholar/theologian/psychologist who helped keep our heads from exploding and steered our angst into what would eventually become deep pastoral channels. Thank God for all of them for reminding us, repeatedly, that this book we cherish and carry with us, this book which has quite literally shaped our world—this book is not a book at all, but a library, an aggregation of ancient pieces written at diverse times over a period of 3000 years by more than 40 authors in at least 3 languages—a collection of history, folk tales, poetry, laws and prophetic oracles that portray how these ancient peoples experienced God so that we can have some context for our own experience of God.

I have my own Bible. I can read it for myself. But oh, how much richer I am because I have learned to read it with others. And I still need others to help me discern more fully what it is saying. Thank God for those who have read with me, who taught me to read more deeply, who teach me still.

Each will be like a hiding place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, like streams of water in a dry place, like the shade of a great rock in a weary land. Then the eyes of those who have sight will not be closed, and the ears of those who have hearing will listen. --Isaiah 32.2-3

So...with whom are you reading your Bible?

Pro Gloria Dei, Pastor Steve

— COUNCIL UPDATE —

Greetings to members and friends of Gloria Dei. The Council met on April 11, 2016.

Pastor Steve gave us updates of members of concern, his scheduled vacation in June and upcoming local Synod and Synod Assembly events. Vicar Erin Armstrong was our guest speaker at adult Bible Studies on April 17 and shared her experiences during her visit to the Holy Land. She also delivered the sermon message that Sunday. Pastor continues to deal with some hearing issues and seeks the best medical advice and care. While it is not evident in his work for Christ and for us, remember him too in your prayers.

Our devotional study was to consider the next statement on the Synod report - *There is excitement about the future here*. Pastor discussed regional and national trends in church membership and attitudes toward religion in general, and what such trends might mean for a congregation like ours. Members noted the word "excitement" and discussed that. The consensus was to rate our fold between "Somewhat and Very Well".

Margie Brown offered to be one of our members to attend the Synod Assembly on June 3rd and 4th, which will be held near LAX. There is one more opening for another member. Ask anyone who has previously attended, Sandy Irvine, Marilyn Bittle, Danny Bach, Bob Siemer, myself and they will tell you it was time well rewarded. Please call the church office know if you are interested.

Bob Siemer, our Vice President gave a complete report of our church employee evaluations. Each year Pastor, Sandy and Richard are asked to complete an evaluation of their duties and responsibilities and then two members are asked to review the evaluations and provide their comments. **ALL IS WELL!**

The Easter Vigil was an enjoyable event and a pleasure to host Pastors and members from our local Synod churches. Special thanks to Marilyn Bittle and her Invitation Committee and others for providing the beautiful fruit array and pastries.

Our Annual Congregation Meeting is scheduled for May 15, immediately following worship. We have one opening for a Council nominee, a Constitution item to vote on and a special presentation that has been planned for you. As always, lunch will be provided. Please attend. This will not be a long meeting.

Blessings to you and have a Glorious Dei

Barbara White, Council President

**"GOD MEETS DAILY NEEDS DAILY.
NOT WEEKLY OR ANNUALLY. HE
WILL GIVE WHAT YOU NEED WHEN
IT IS NEEDED."**

~ Author MAX LUCADO



**GOD is
so GOOD!**

**GROWING IN FAITH
LIFTED BY HOPE
GUIDED BY LOVE**



Not everyone can volunteer...
But, with your gift, YOU can help turn
despair into hope for many in our
Long Beach community.
www.lsscommunitycare.org



EMBRACE. EQUIP. EMPOWER.

— CONGREGATION FINANCIALS —

**GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENSES
For the Period January 1, 2016 to March 31, 2016**

	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Revenue			
Contributions	50,500	43,603	(6,897)
Hall Use	625	210	(415)
Interest Income	81	84	3
Rental Income	9,300	9,000	(300)
Total Revenue	<u>60,506</u>	<u>52,897</u>	<u>(7,609)</u>
Expenses			
Missions*	7,625	7,625	(0)
Properties	5,609	6,350	(741)
Worship	30,895	30,483	412
Administration	15,228	14,261	967
Church Programs	1,150	1,309	(159)
Total Expenses	<u>60,506</u>	<u>60,028</u>	<u>478</u>
Revenue less Expenses		(7,131)	

Respectfully submitted by Gary Bockman, Treasurer

* In addition to the budgeted gifts shown above, members of Gloria Dei have given another \$2,163 to LSS, World Hunger, ELCA Disaster Relief and other mission partners.



VISION OF LIGHT AWARD

Gloria Dei member, **Don Johnson** received the 2016 Vision of Light Award from the St. Mary Low Vision Center at their 40th Anniversary Luncheon. Attending from GDLC were Peggy Huggard, Karen Como, Sandy Irvine and Pastor Steve. Approximately 100 people were in attendance to hear from doctors, professionals and keynote speaker Dr. Sophie Deng, Associate Professor of Jules Stein Eye Institute, UCLA.



Most of us do not live with so much fear that we expect to die the next time we open our front door or climb into a car. That degree of fear would paralyze us to the point of incapacitation. Still, there is plenty of fear to go around. "No one seems to have an unkind word about fear these days." That's author Marilynne Robinson's description of our national obsession with being afraid. Fear happens to be a great uniter. It holds people together like other ideologies. Tyrants, demagogues and leaders who thrive on conspiracy theories know this as well as anyone. Every person who is unknown to us or unlike us can easily get treated as a threat rather than an ally.

Jesus takes what may have been the most palpable fear in his day—death by horrific means—and instructs his followers to pick up the fear. Get a grip on it. Face it down. If you don't confront your worst fears, you will lose your life. You will forfeit that life and succumb to living completely scared. How noble is that?

Jesus devoted nearly every waking moment to helping us rid our lives of fear. The gift of faith turns out to be nothing less than the courage to live and act in spite of our fears.

Faithful people get to see the greatest achievement of Easter not as freedom from death but as freedom from our fears. We get our lives back through the resurrected one who looked fear squarely in the eyes...and loved. Only love can conquer fear.

~ Peter W. Marty, Lutheran Pastor
 Publisher of *The Christian Century*
 Premier U.S. journal of Christian news, insight and encouragement

Jesus devoted nearly every waking moment to help us rid our lives of fear



GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS

STRENGTH for Helping Hearts

Reflections for Caregivers

For a FREE copy of Shelly Beach's Guideposts Outreach booklet, Email mneal@gukdepost.org or write to Guideposts Outreach, 39 Old Ridgebury Rd., Suite 2AB, Danbury, CT 06810

GRACIOUS GIVING

Special thanks for the high energy, endless smiles that accompanied — **Erika Eidam** — every effort!

We will miss our **Gloria Dei Shepherd Program** leader as she moves on to continue God's work in Kentucky.

She embodied Martin Luther's words 'we are 'little Christs' to one another; so we are good shepherds, as well' — this was evident in the many kind, generous and thoughtful things Erika did so graciously over the years.

Wow, our little church with a big heart is losing an awesome couple. We wish **Walter and Erika Eidam** God Speed & a Fond Farewell!



Thank you Erika for leading the team of caring individuals who make a difference in the lives of others.

Marilyn Bittle Margie Brown
Peggy Bockman Edie Graber
Karen Como Erika Eidam
Sarah Fuller Vickie Gammer
Dianne Keil Donna Malbon
Meryln Robbins Chris Foster
Stephanie Siemer Janet Sims
Laura Subke Barbara White
Peggy Huggard
Nancy Sansum
Nancy Kahakauwila

Thank You

Jesus!

Love your neighbor as yourself.

~Luke 10:27

The life-giving mutual relation between the good shepherd and the sheep is the very same life-giving mutual relation that exists between Jesus and the Father.

Call the Church Office to become a SHEPHERD!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS — MAY 2016

1 — SUNDAY

ADULT BIBLE STUDY @ 9 AM
WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM
HOLY COMMUNION
GOD SPEED/FAREWELL TO
MARGARET CHOMIN

— **PACIFIC FLUTE ENSEMBLE @ 4 PM** —

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

2 — Monday

CHURCH COUNCIL MTG
@ 7 PM

3 — Tuesday

ADULT BIBLE STUDY @ 7 PM

4 — Wednesday

JOIN THE CHOIR... @ 7:15 PM

Happy Birthday Everett Parker

5 — Thursday

6 — Friday

- A.A. MTG. @ 1:00 PM
- O.A. MTG. @ 7:30—8:30PM

7 — Saturday

8 — SUNDAY



ADULT BIBLE STUDY @ 9 AM
WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM
HOLY COMMUNION
PRAYERS FOR HEALING

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

Gary & Peggy Bockman Anniversary
Happy Birthday Michael Engle
Happy Birthday Chuck Dean

9 — Monday

GARDEN CLUB @ 1 PM

Happy Birthday Dianne Keil

10 — Tuesday

ADULT BIBLE STUDY @ 7 PM

11 — Wednesday

JOIN THE CHOIR... @ 7:15 PM

Happy Birthday Helen Liesenberg

12 — Thursday

13 — Friday

- A.A. MTG. @ 1:00 PM
- O.A. MTG. @ 7:30—8:30PM

Happy Birthday Jim Ferrero

14 — Saturday

Happy Birthday Jack Berg

15 — SUNDAY

ADULT BIBLE STUDY @ 9 AM
WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM
HOLY COMMUNION
NEW MEMBER WELCOME
& NOISY OFFERING

CONGREGATIONAL
MEETING & LUNCH

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

16 — Monday

17 — Tuesday

ADULT BIBLE STUDY @ 7 PM

Newsletter Deadline

18 — Wednesday

JOIN THE CHOIR... @ 7:15 PM

Happy Birthday Pastor Steve

19 — Thursday

ELCW LUNCH @ 10:30 AM

Mike & Martie Engle Anniversary
P.A. & Brooke White Anniversary

20 — Friday

- A.A. MTG. @ 1:00 PM
- O.A. MTG. @ 7:30—8:30PM

21 — Saturday

LSS WORK PARTY

10 AM — 12 PM

LUNCH & FELLOWSHIP

22 — SUNDAY

ADULT BIBLE STUDY @ 9 AM
WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM
HOLY COMMUNION

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

23 — Monday

Happy Birthday Nancy Sansum
Happy Birthday Jim Mintie

24 — Tuesday

ADULT BIBLE STUDY @ 7 PM

25 — Wednesday

JOIN THE CHOIR... @ 7:15 PM

26 — Thursday

27 — Friday

- A.A. MTG. @ 1:00 PM
- O.A. MTG. @ 7:30—8:30PM

Happy Birthday Richard Hoover

28 — Saturday

29 — SUNDAY

ADULT BIBLE STUDY @ 9 AM
WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM
HOLY COMMUNION

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

30 — Monday

MEMORIAL
DAY



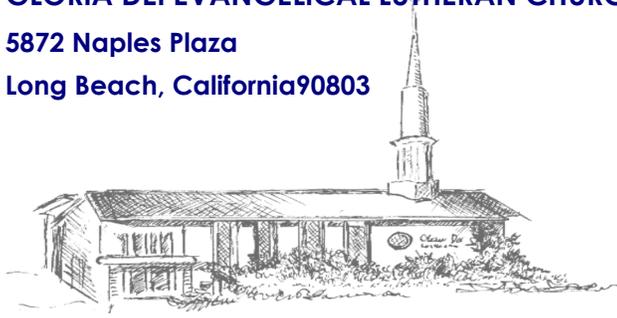
31 — Tuesday

ADULT BIBLE
STUDY @ 7 PM

Happy Birthday Christie Berg

GLORIA DEI EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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



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Gloria Dei Lutheran Church is a Reconciling in Christ Congregation. 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. (2 Cor. 5:17-19)

