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Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

THOUGHTS ALONG THE WAY...

What would you say is the one thing that being a Christian is all about?

Questions like that can be useful in helping us refine our focus, but they can also be dangerous. “One thing” questions and answers encourage a kind of reductionism which, if we’re not careful, can lead us to see our complex faith in overly simplistic ways.

You could say that love is the “one thing,” and if I was really pressed on the matter I think that I *would* say that love is the “one thing,” the most central tenet of our faith, but love takes many forms and plays out in myriad ways. “What’s the greatest commandment?” the scribe asked Jesus. “Love the Lord your God with all you heart, mind, soul and strength,” he replied, then quickly added “and love your neighbor as yourself.” So the “one thing” is three things: love God, love your neighbor, love yourself. They’re inextricably linked, of course—you can’t love God very well if you’re having a difficult time loving your neighbor and it will be difficult to love your neighbor in a healthy way if you’re having a hard time liking yourself, but even though they’re linked, they are also clearly distinct.

Maybe you would say that Jesus is the “one thing.” Certainly there would be no Christianity without Jesus. But when we say that Jesus is the “one thing” do we mean Jesus the rabbi or Jesus the political/religious activist and prophet or Jesus the miracle worker or Jesus the preacher or Jesus the storyteller or Jesus the Son of God or Jesus the Savior? Even when we acknowledge that Jesus is all these things we also have to admit that different expressions of Christianity have often focused on one of these identities above the others and given the others short shrift. How many people talk about Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior but rarely, if ever, talk about Jesus saving the whole world? How many talk about the Gospel of Jesus Christ as if the whole point of his life was a supernaturally cosmic quest to overcome sin yet they never touch on the fact that Jesus, himself, said that his mission was to announce and instigate the arrival of God’s reign? On the other hand, how many talk about Jesus as if he was always and only about social justice?

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Thoughts Along the Way Continues....

Some might say that the “one thing” is about spiritual growth. But is that personal spiritual growth or the spiritual growth of the community or the spiritual growth of the world? There is a tension in our faith between the personal experience of God and the corporate experience of God. There is a tension between the call to deepen your own spiritual experience and understanding of God's presence and God's love and the call to bring God's presence and love to a world that is starving for that very thing. On the one hand, God loves you individually more than you can fathom, more than words can say. Christ died for you, personally, and it's well worth your time to wrestle with what that means for you, personally. God wants a deep, personal and unique relationship with you. On the other hand, God wants you to live out that deep, personal, unique relationship in a community of others with whom God also has deep, personal and unique relationships. God knows you will experience your most profound and healthiest spiritual growth when you do that growing in a community of faith. And God wants to use all of us in the community of faith to bring healing to the world. Immediately after his baptism, Jesus went out into the desert to put his own spirituality to the test. The moment he came back he put together a community of 12 who would become the foundation for his mission to the world. Peter, Paul and all the other apostles went out into the world not merely to introduce individuals to Christ but to establish communities of faith who could work effectively in their surroundings to show the love of God in tangible ways.

Faith, hope, and love abide. They live together because they sustain and nurture each other. Faith, Hope and Love need each other and each grows deeper and more powerful because it is inextricably woven together with the others. It's the same with us. So as we approach Advent and a new year, may we abide and grow individually in Faith, Hope and Love so that we abide grow in our work together.

Pro Gloria Dei, Pastor Steve

***“The Lord will guide you continually,
and satisfy your needs in parched places,
and make your bones strong.”***

~ Isaiah 58:11



BLESSINGS ABOUND — COUNCIL UPDATE

My favorite Holiday is coming soon. Family, friends and food, what could be better! Thanksgiving is a wonderful occasion that reminds us of blessings that we take so much for granted. I have included a small prayer;

HELP ME by Samuel F. Pugh

O God, when I have food,
 help me to remember the hungry;
 When I have work,
 help me to remember the jobless;
 When I have a home,
 help me to remember those who have no home at all;
 When I am without pain,
 help me to remember those who suffer,
 And remembering,
 help me to destroy my complacency;
 bestir my compassion,
 and be concerned enough to help;
 By word and deed,
 those who cry out for what we take for granted.
 Amen.



Your Council met last on October 3, 2016.

The main focus of the meeting was the 2016 budget shortfall and how to reduce the 2017 budget. This discussion will continue at the next meeting with additional input from **Gary Bockman**, treasurer. Please help us in this process by completing and returning your pledge.

The new date to begin the kitchen remodel is December 5th. **Karen Como**, project manager, will be keeping us informed as to the progress on our kitchen. Thank you, Karen for taking on this big job.

Gloria Dei members raised \$1,000.00 at the **LSS Walkathon** on October 1st. Thank you to those who organized the event, donated and/or walked the route in Naples.

Thank you to those who completed the **Congregational Vitality** survey.

Please say thank you to **Twyla Karkut** for the donation of furniture to the Fellowship Hall and a new bulletin board.

Have a Glorious Dei.
 Stephanie Siemer, President

GIVE THANKS FOR YOUR BLESSINGS



Freed & RENEWED in Christ

500 YEARS OF GOD'S
GRACE IN ACTION

2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly key actions
CHICAGO – Voting members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) approved a number of key actions during the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly held in New Orleans August 8-13. The assembly is the highest legislative authority of the church.

The 945 voting members:

- Elected William B. Horne II of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Clearwater, Fla., vice president of the ELCA. Horne was installed during closing worship Aug. 13.
- Accepted the "Declaration on the Way," a unique ecumenical document that marks a path toward greater unity between Catholics and Lutherans. At the heart of the document are 32 "Statements of Agreement" that state where Lutherans and Catholics do not have church-dividing differences on topics about church, ministry and the Eucharist. The document also presents the differences that remain.
- Approved AMMPARO – the ELCA's strategy to Accompany Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities. The ELCA developed this strategy based on commitments to uphold and guarantee the basic human rights and safety of migrant children and their families; to address the root causes of migration in countries from Central America's Northern Triangle and Mexico and the treatment of migrants in transit; to work toward just and humane policies affecting migrants in and outside the U.S.; to engage as a church with all of its companions, affiliates and partners to respond to the migration situation and its causes; and to advocate for migrant children and their families.
- Approved the Ministry of Word and Service roster. Beginning Jan. 1, 2017, ELCA associates in



Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton



William B. Horne II

ministry, deaconesses and diaconal ministers will be a single, unified roster of Ministry of Word and Service. The accompanying constitutional amendments related to the roster were also considered and approved by the assembly.

- Approved the 2017-2019 budget proposal. The budget includes a 2017 current fund spending authorization of \$65,296,005 and a 2017 ELCA World Hunger spending authorization of \$24.8 million; a 2018 current fund income proposal of \$64,057,220 and a 2018 ELCA World Hunger income proposal of \$25 million; a 2019 current fund income proposal of \$64,151,175 and a 2019 ELCA World Hunger income proposal of \$25 million; and authorizes the Church Council to establish a spending authorization after periodic review of revised income estimates.
- Approved various memorials – or proposals – from the ELCA's 65 synods. In addition to memorials considered "en bloc," the assembly separately approved the following: deepening relationships with historic Black churches; toward a responsible energy future; repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery; peace with justice in the Holy Land; justice for the Holy Land through responsible investment; African Descent Lutherans; call to discernment on U.S. foreign and military policy; welcoming refugees; and supporting military personnel, veterans and their families. More information on these approved proposals will be included in future issues of the Glorious Dei Newsletter.
- Elected members to serve on: Church Council, Portico Benefits Services, Mission Investment Fund, Augsburg Fortress, Committee on Appeals, Committee on Discipline and Nominating Committee.
- Adopted amendments to the ELCA Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions. Legislative updates are available .

Joint Ecumenical Commemoration of the Reformation - October 2016

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Roman Catholic Church will jointly hold an ecumenical commemoration of the Reformation on 31 October 2016, Reformation Sunday, in Lund, Sweden. The service in Lund Cathedral will follow the Common Prayer liturgical guide, which is based on the Lutheran-Catholic dialogue report **From Conflict to Communion** - Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017. Pope Francis, LWF President Bishop Dr. Munib A. Younan (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land) and LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Martin Junge (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile) will lead the common prayer service in cooperation with leaders from Church of Sweden and the Catholic Diocese of Stockholm. The Common Prayer for the Joint Ecumenical Commemoration is available online.

Declaration on the Way, a unique ecumenical document that marks a path toward greater unity between Catholics and Lutherans.

YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under a bushel basket, but on the lampstand and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14-16)

Make a wish—

If you could make one wish, not for yourself, but for the world, what would it be? If you could make one wish for your significant other, your spouse, your kids, your grandkids, all your friends and neighbors and family, for your town, for your state, for your country, for the world—what would it be? What would you wish for?

How many of you would wish for Peace? That's a pretty good wish. I think that's what most people in the world want. Almost everybody wants to live in a world where we don't have to worry about violence erupting around us at any moment. There aren't too many people who actually enjoy conflict, and those who do usually end up getting some kind of professional help or incarceration, whichever comes first—although some seem to go into politics. A good debate is okay. Fighting not so much. Sometimes opposition can help us sharpen and clarify what we're thinking or planning, but opposition can be friendly. It doesn't have to disintegrate into aggression. Competition has its benefits. It can bring out the best in us, it can even be fun when you know it's part of a game. But it's pretty destructive as a lifestyle. Debate, opposition, competition, they all have their place but they can all too easily degenerate into conflict if we don't learn how to rein them in. And we have to rein them in if we're going to have peace.

What does it take to make peace? What does it take to remove the seeds of conflict? If you're going to wish for peace, aren't there other things you need to wish for first?

If you want peace, wouldn't you first have to wish away greed? Wouldn't you have to eliminate coveting? Wouldn't you have to find a way to short-circuit the human tendency to always want more, even if it means that someone else gets less? Wouldn't we have to find a way to fill that endlessly hungry place in the human heart that never feels like it has enough? Wouldn't you have to remove the desire to keep score by means of money and possessions and status symbols? Wouldn't you, in fact, have to eliminate the desire to keep score at all? And wouldn't you need to find a way to take away the fear of running out of money before you run out of life?

You Are the Light Continues....

You are the Light Continues....

And what about Tribalism? Wouldn't we need to wish that away if we're going to have peace? How about our tendency to be fiercely territorial? Wouldn't we have to tone down nationalism? Wouldn't we need to develop a healthier kind of patriotism, pride in our country that's rooted in a deep respect for all that's good and reveres the price that others have paid to create and sustain and maintain that goodness but at the same time a patriotism that isn't blind to our faults and defensive about our shortcomings? And wouldn't we need to open our eyes to what's good and worth celebrating in other countries and cultures, in other histories? Shouldn't we wish for all that if we're going to wish for peace?

For peace to happen, what would we have to do with religion? Wouldn't every religion have to dial back their tendency to insist that they're the only ones—that we're the only ones—who get it right, who understand God, who really get Jesus? Wouldn't we have to learn to find some peace in our own ranks with the idea that our voice is a valuable and important instrument in the symphony, but it's not the only instrument playing the music of heaven? Wouldn't we all, for the love of God in whom we live and move and have our being, for the love of God who is among us and within us and beyond us, for the love of God who transcends all knowing and yet is more intimate with us than our most dearly beloved fellow passengers on this earth—shouldn't we learn, for the love of God, to practice some sincere humility in our God talk? Shouldn't we wish for understanding and cooperation between religions if we're going to wish for peace?

To have peace, wouldn't we have to first get rid of every last vestige of racism so that nobody feels put upon simply because of their color? Wouldn't we have to acknowledge the existence of our own latent or not-so-latent bigotries? Wouldn't we all have to purge ourselves of all those lingering internal voices and habits and conditioning that want to assert that some people are better or even more human than others simply by virtue of the color of their skin? Wouldn't we have to acknowledge that some of us have blithely and blindly lived lives of privilege simply because of the color of our skin while others have had to develop stringent habits of caution for the same reason in another color? Wouldn't we have to take a hard look at the painful history of racism and not simply suppress it deep in our collective psyche if we want to be healed of it? **If you want to have peace, wouldn't you have to wish away all those ugly words we have used to describe each other when the other doesn't look like us? To have peace, wouldn't we have to wish for something the opposite of color blindness—a what?—a celebration of color? a gratitude for color? a love of color in every shade of humanity? Shouldn't we wish for that if we're going to wish for peace?**

If we really want peace, if that's our deepest, truest wish, wouldn't we have to first wish away sexism and paternalism and patriarchy and every other ism and archy that wants to maintain systems in which half the human race has more value, more power, more rights, more freedom than the other half simply because of gender, as if that's some kind of accomplishment? If we really want peace, doesn't it mean that we have to discard archaic and primitive structures of our societies and cultures and religions that not only have outlived their usefulness, but that were, in fact, never really useful at all, structures that evolved simply because one half of humanity was generally more capable of physically dominating and subduing and forcing its will on the other half? Isn't it time, for the sake of peace, for us to take a step above our cousins the chimpanzees in this particular matter? If we really want peace, should we not wish first for real parity between the sexes?

And doesn't our endless focus on differing sexualities undermine our quest for peace? Doesn't the fact that someone is always ready to hate or censure or exclude or diminish someone else because of who they are attracted to or who they love or even because they are still trying to understand who they are kind of get in the way of peaceful coexistence? Aren't we all children of God even if some have different love interests? Just because some men wandering through Judea 4000 year ago found certain things distasteful, are we bound to their prejudices forever? They also didn't care for shrimp, barbequed ribs and pulled pork and we seem to have got past that okay. So wouldn't it be a step toward peace if we could all just stop worrying about sexuality and realize that in God's creation it seems to come in a variety of flavors?

If we're going to wish for peace, wouldn't it make sense to also wish that there would not be so many weapons at large in the world and that they were not so readily at hand?

If we're going to wish for peace shouldn't we first wish away hunger and homelessness? Don't people fight for food and shelter? Wouldn't you be tempted to if you didn't have it? If we're going to wish for peace shouldn't we first wish for health and healthcare? And should we not wish for equal access to systems and medicines and technologies that heal and sustain life? If we're going to have peace, shouldn't we eliminate the possibility of people ruining their financial health just to maintain their physical health?

If we're going to wish for peace, shouldn't we first wish for justice? When the people are chanting "no justice, no peace" in the streets, isn't it more than a slogan? Isn't it a prophetic voice calling us to make the rough places plain and the crooked straight so that peace has a straight and easy pathway to our hearts, our homes, our communities, our nation and our world?

If we're going to wish for peace, don't we first have to wish for equity and fairness and level playing fields? If we're going to have peace, don't we first need to eliminate injustice and replace it with restorative justice? In fact, isn't justice the one word that encompasses everything we need to have peace?

Of course, there is another way. You can simply eliminate everyone who doesn't see things the way you do. You can eliminate everyone who doesn't look like you or think like you or worship like you or vote like you or love like you or contribute as much to society as you think you do, or isn't the same sex as you, everyone who you think is competing with you simply because they want the same basic necessities that you want. In the end, if you're really diligent, you would, in fact, eliminate everyone who is not you.

How peaceful would that be?

Pastor Steve's Blog: <https://thoughtsalongtheway.net>

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR NOVEMBER 2016

1 — Tuesday
ADULT EDUCATION
@ 10AM & 7PM

2 — Wednesday
JOIN THE CHOIR... @ 7:15 PM

3 — Thursday

4 — Friday
• A.A. MTG. @ 1:00 PM
• D.A. MTG @ 6:00 PM

Happy Birthday Pastor Schaar

5 — Saturday
CONFIRMATION @ 4PM
JOIN THE CHOIR... @ 7:15 PM
Happy Birthday Laura Subke

6 — SUNDAY

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

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

TURN BACK
THE
CLOCK!



Happy
Birthday
Carl Irwin

7 — Monday
CHURCH COUNCIL MTG @ 7 PM

8 — Tuesday

ELECTION
/POLL SITE
7AM-8PM
(NO CLASS)



9 — Wednesday
JOIN THE CHOIR... @ 7:15 PM

10 — Thursday

11 — Friday - VETERANS DAY

12 — Saturday

13 — SUNDAY

ADULT EDUCATION @ 9 AM
WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM
HOLY COMMUNION
** HUNGER ENVELOPE
PRAYER OF HEALING SERVICE

- O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM
- Happy Birthday Eric Berg

14 — Monday
GARDEN CLUB @ 1 PM
Happy Birthday Jean Betz

15 — Tuesday
ADULT EDUCATION
@ 10AM & 7PM

16 — Wednesday
JOIN THE CHOIR... @ 7:15 PM
Happy Birthday Marilyn Bittle

17 — Thursday
ELC WOMEN @ 10:30 AM
BRING A SANDWICH TO SHARE & A FRIEND

18 — Friday
• A.A. MTG. @ 1:00 PM
• D.A. MTG @ 6:00 PM
Happy Birthday Margaret Chomin

19 — Saturday
LSS WORK PARTY @ 10:30 AM
(9:30AM CARPOOL; 1611 PINE AVENUE)

20 — SUNDAY
ADULT EDUCATION @ 9 AM
WORSHIP & HOLY COMMUNION
@ 10:30 AM
** NOISY OFFERING

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

Happy Birthday: Nancy K.
Frida Layton & Lisa Mellow

21 — Monday
Happy Birthday Marion Beckman
Happy Birthday Heather Wood

Newsletter Deadline

22 — Tuesday
ADULT EDUCATION
@ 10AM & 7PM

Happy Birthday RuthAnn Montague

23 — Wednesday
JOIN THE CHOIR... @ 7:15 PM

24 — Thursday



Happy Anniversary Conters

25 — Friday
• A.A. MTG. @ 1:00 PM
• D.A. MTG @ 6:00 PM

26 — Saturday
Happy Birthday Judy Mellow

27 — SUNDAY
ADULT EDUCATION @ 9 AM
WORSHIP & HOLY COMMUNION
@ 10:30 AM
** NOISY OFFERING

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

28 — Monday
Happy Birthday Denise Stump

29 — Tuesday
Happy Birthday Summer Stiles

30 — Wednesday
JOIN THE CHOIR... @ 7:15 PM

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)

