



Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

THOUGHTS ALONG THE WAY...

It was one of those perfect Spring days, ideal for sitting outside the Starbucks while nursing a cup of coffee and taking your sweet time to slowly digest an engaging, thought-provoking book. That's exactly what the pastor was doing when she noticed that the woman at the next table kept glancing over at her, not all that surreptitiously. It was pretty obvious she wanted to say something, so the pastor put down her book, looked at the woman, smiled, and waited for eye contact which came almost instantly, to the other woman's slight embarrassment.

"You look like you have something on your mind," said the pastor.

"Oh, it's nothing. I really don't want to bother you," said the woman. The pastor simply looked at her, smiled gently, assessing her while she waited. She looked to be well off, somewhere north of 60 and south of 80—so hard to pinpoint ages in that range. The woman took a deep breath and plowed forward. "You're wearing that collar, so I assume you're a pastor, right?"

"Yep. Pastor Sue. And you are...?"

"Alice."

"Nice to meet you, Alice. So what did you want to talk about?"

"I shouldn't bother you. This is probably your break or something."

"Actually," said the pastor, "I come here twice a week with my collar on precisely so people like you can have a pastor to talk to if you want to."

"Really?" said the woman in tone that was more than half surprised.

"Really."

Alice paused a long moment before blurting out, "Why does the church keep changing?"

"Has your church been changing?"

"Yes. It's just not the same quiet, traditional church I joined years ago."

"Hmmm. So, you like things quiet and traditional."

"Yes."

"The changes...the changes you don't like, when did they start?"

"About five years ago we got a new pastor. He didn't change much of anything the first year. Then the next year he changed communion. I didn't like that at all."

"How did he change communion?"

"He went to—what do they call it—intinction. Dipping the wafer into the common cup. I really preferred it the old way when we all had little individual glasses. Well when that happened, I just quit taking communion."

"Wow. That's kind of drastic."

"Well that's just how I felt about it. Communion was always very special to me—coming to the altar rail for kind of a private moment with God. And besides, the individual cups are more sanitary."

"I see. What else changed?"

"The music. He brought in guitar music twice a month."

"You mean like Praise Worship?"

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GROWING IN FAITH LIFTED BY HOPE GUIDED BY LOVE



"I don't think so—they do that at my niece's church and it's not like that. It's still liturgy, but on guitar. And with different melodies. And some of the words are changed a bit. And he has several different settings so you never know which one to expect. But I think we should just be doing the two settings we do from the hymnal with the organ."

"Mmm hmm. But you still get them on alternate Sundays?"

"Yes, but we used to do them every week and you always knew which one to expect."

"Right."

"But the thing that really got me was the monitors," said Alice.

"Monitors?" said Pastor Sue.

"Big video monitors."

"Oh. And what are they doing with the video monitors?"

"I really don't know or care. I didn't stick around to find out. I took one look at those things and I left and I haven't been back."

"Hmmm," said Pastor Sue. She took a long sip of coffee. Alice opened her mouth to say something but Pastor Sue held up a finger.

"Alice," said Pastor Sue, "I don't think you're going to like much of what I have to say, so, if at any point you want to just get up and walk away, I'll completely understand. Let's start with your original question: 'Why does the Church keep changing?' Alice, the Church keeps changing because the world keeps changing. It has always been the Church's first and foremost job to talk to the world, to reach out to the world, to try to bring forgiveness and healing to the world and to show the world the love of God in Christ. Since the world is always changing the Church has to change in order to do its work. It's that simple. Some think we haven't been changing enough or fast enough. Some think that we're woefully behind. If we're not talking to the world, we're only talking to ourselves—and in a lot of cases we're not even doing a very good job of that. Let me ask you something, Alice...this congregation you just left, do you have a lot of young people there?"

"No..." said Alice, slowly. "We used to. Years ago. We kind of lost them over the years. I don't really know why."

"Well maybe," said Pastor Sue, "one of the reasons you lost them is that you didn't make the changes that would have kept them. Maybe the changes you're seeing now should have been made twenty years ago. That's hard to know. But take those video monitors, for instance. We live in a visual world. Look around you right here at Starbucks. Look at all the people looking at their phones or tablets or laptops. If you want to engage these people in worship, visual media can be a very effective tool for that. That's what stained glass windows were originally all about, you know...something for the eyes to feast on as well as the ears."

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Thoughts Along the Way Continues...

"But what about tradition?" asked Alice, a little defensively.

"Frankly, I'm not sure you've really understood your tradition all that well," said Pastor Sue as gently and quietly as she could. "Take communion. You mentioned your fondness for individual cups. Did you know that using those started out as a novelty in a Brooklyn Baptist church in 1894? In terms of Church practice, that's pretty new. Those cups caught on because people thought they were more sanitary but several studies have shown that that is simply not the case. In the meantime, the powerful symbolic value of the common cup gets completely lost when those little shot glasses are used. You talked about communion as your 'private moment with God.' But where did you get that idea? The word itself doesn't allow that. Com—with. Union—united together. The word 'communion' is all about being together as the body of Christ in the presence of Christ. There is no moment in worship when you are less alone with God. And that raises the whole question of what, exactly, do you think is happening in worship? It's not ever supposed to be about the comfort of familiar ritual. Ritual is there to guide us into a place where God can transform us through Word and Sacrament. But it's a pathway, not a destination. And there's nothing private about it. It's about everyone who's there. And everyone who's not. It's about opening your heart to God and giving yourself to God and your brothers and sisters. And walking out the doors somehow different from who you were when you walked in. But if you don't like change, that's going to be difficult."

Alice stood up from her table. Her brow knit, she looked at Pastor Sue for a long moment then said simply, "Thank you for your time," and walked away. Pastor Sue sighed and took another sip of coffee.

Pro Gloria Dei, Pastor Steve

**Our name means *The Glory of God*,
so we try to live accordingly.
Our life together as a family of faith is built on worship,
service, education and friendship.**



WELCOME SALLY OBERJUERGE (RIGHT)
Merciful GOD, we thank you for this sister, whom you have made your own in the Word of baptism.

**— EMBRACE —
WELCOME
— EMPOWER —**



WELCOME MICHAEL MECKNA (FRONT)
Merciful GOD, we thank you for this brother. Uphold your servant in the gifts and promises of baptism.

— COUNCIL UPDATE —

Council met on April 4.

- Roof repair should begin in 2-4 weeks.
- The kitchen remodel is scheduled with the contractor to begin April 24th barring any problems with the permit process.
- The Ad Hoc health emergency committee headed by Margie Brown has ordered a defibrillator. Twyla Karkut volunteered to cover the cost, so it will not affect our budget. Please thank Twyla for this generous donation. Last month I missed mentioning that Twyla also helped pay to have the benches repainted.
- New council member, Galen Anderson volunteered to paint and repair the parking lot cross barriers. So we won't need a work party of volunteers. Please thank him for this effort.
- The visual monitors, approved at the special council meeting on March 26th were installed in time for Easter Service. The sound system will be evaluated by some specialists. We need to confirm that the monitors have not interfered with the organ sound system and make modifications as necessary.
- Synod Assembly will be held June 1-3 at California Lutheran University. We need 2 volunteers to attend. Please contact me or Pastor Steve if you are interested in representing Gloria Dei.

Our next Congregational meeting will be May 21st after service. **Robert Siemer** and **Galen Anderson** will be eligible for re-election and we need to replace **Mike Lynch** and **Phil Como**. Please give some thought as to who you think would be good candidates, including yourself.

Blessings to you and have a Glorious Dei.
Stephanie Siemer, Council President
 Email: ssiemer@charter.net

**HE IS RISEN —
 HE IS RISEN,
 INDEED!**



**“GOD MEETS DAILY NEEDS DAILY. NOT WEEKLY OR ANNUALLY. HE WILL GIVE
 WHAT YOU NEED WHEN IT IS NEEDED.” ~ Author MAX LUCADO**

SPREADING JOY & CHANGING LIVES



To honor **Don Melin's** faithful presence among us, members have offered to purchase altar paraments in his name. These paraments will be used for Easter, Christmas, and Sundays when we use the white linens with gold lettering. The paraments were dedicated during Easter worship service and they beautifully dressed the altar beneath the beautiful lily cross. Friends and family gathered together to honor our faithful servant as we continued to celebrate his birthday in the Friendship Hall.

Interested in taking part in this congregational recognition? Contact our church office or send a donation to Gloria Dei adding **'Paraments for Don'** on your check. Praise God for this wonderful role-model and prayer warrior.

“Love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor.” ~ Roman 12 :10

On April 16, we at Gloria Dei had a day of celebration with causes too numerous to list but I would like to mention a few. I am humbled that my name has been placed on the new paraments and that they have been dedicated to enhance the beauty of our worship services.

I truly struggled to write this thank you note because I find it hard to find words worthy enough to carry the message of heartfelt thanks to such a generous congregation. Where does a 92-year-old person find the words? My solution is to fold my hands in prayer and holler “help.” I don't really have to holler for help because God is so close to me that he lives within my heart. Thank you, everyone, for honoring my name by placing it where it will remain in the archives and living memory of Gloria Dei.

Now let me share the words of a song I repeat each night in my prayers. “When I pause in the hush of his holy presence—when I'm so still I can hear each whispered word—but when I pause to pray I enter his cathedral—then is when my Lord seems so near. But there are times that I cannot feel his presence—when the cloud of doubt obscures my master's smile and when I'm still enough to hear his gentle whisper that is when I know my Lord has been with me all the while.”

With much love and thanks, Don Melin

GRACIOUS GIVING

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

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



CALENDAR OF EVENTS — MAY 2017

1 — Monday

- MEN'S A.A. @ 7-8:00 AM

CHURCH COUNCIL MTG @ 7 PM

2 — Tuesday

ADULT EDUCATION – 10AM & 7 PM

3 — Wednesday

- MEN'S A.A. @ 7-8:00 AM

CHOIR @ 7:15 PM

4 — Thursday

Happy Birthday Everett Parker

5 — Friday

- MEN'S A.A. @ 7-8:00 AM
- A.A. MTG. @ 1:00 PM
- D.A. MTG @ 6:00 PM

6 — Saturday

7 — SUNDAY



ADULT EDUCATION @ 9 AM

WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM

HOLY COMMUNION

Noisy Offering

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

8 — Monday

- MEN'S A.A. @ 7-8:00 AM

GARDEN CLUB @ 1 PM

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

9 — Tuesday

ADULT EDUCATION – 10AM & 7 PM

Happy Birthday Dianne Keil

10 — Wednesday

- MEN'S A.A. @ 7-8:00 AM

CHOIR @ 7:15 PM

11 — Thursday

Happy Birthday Helen Liesenberg

12 — Friday

- MEN'S A.A. @ 7-8:00 AM
- A.A. MTG. @ 1:00 PM
- D.A. MTG @ 6:00 PM

13 — Saturday

Happy Birthday
Jim Ferrero



14 — SUNDAY

ADULT EDUCATION

@ 9 AM

WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM

HOLY COMMUNION

Hunger Offering

Prayers for Healing

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

15 — Monday

- MEN'S A.A. @ 7-8:00 AM

16 — Tuesday

ADULT EDUCATION –

10AM & 7 PM

17 — Wednesday

- MEN'S A.A. @ 7-8:00 AM

CHOIR @ 7:15 PM

18 — Thursday

ELCW LUNCH @ 11:00 AM

Happy Birthday Pastor Steve

19 — Friday

- MEN'S A.A. @ 7-8:00 AM
- A.A. MTG. @ 1:00 PM
- D.A. MTG @ 6:00 PM

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

20 — Saturday

LSS WORK PARTY @ PINE AVE
10:00 AM—NOON

21 — SUNDAY

ADULT EDUCATION

@ 9 AM

WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM

HOLY COMMUNION

Noisy Offering

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

Newsletter Deadline

22 — Monday

- MEN'S A.A. @ 7-8:00 AM

23 — Tuesday

ADULT EDUCATION – 10AM & 7 PM

Happy Birthday Nancy Sansum

Happy Birthday Jim Mintie

24 — Wednesday

- MEN'S A.A. @ 7-8:00 AM

CHOIR @ 7:15 PM

25 — Thursday

26 — Friday

- MEN'S A.A. @ 7-8:00 AM
- A.A. MTG. @ 1:00 PM
- D.A. MTG @ 6:00 PM

27 — Saturday

Happy Birthday Richard Hoover

28 — SUNDAY

ADULT EDUCATION @ 9 AM

WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM

HOLY COMMUNION

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM



29 — Monday

MEMORIAL DAY

30 — Tuesday

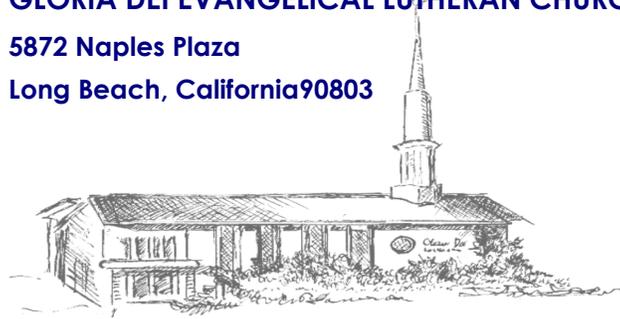
ADULT EDUCATION – 10AM & 7 PM

31 — Tuesday

Happy Birthday Christy 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)

