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Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

THOUGHTS ALONG THE WAY...

You will, no doubt, be hearing about our trip to Germany for some time to come. Those of us who travelled to Luther's Saxony will do a collective unpacking, complete with pictures, sometime in late summer or early fall. In the meantime, I thought I'd share with you a few "snapshots" that I'm still mulling. These are bits and pieces of observation in no particular order and I invite you to apply with me the traditional Lutheran catechetical question: "What does this mean?"

Through an odd twist of circumstances, Martin Luther died only a short walk away from where he was born in Eisleben. He was born in the early hours of a very cold and rainy November 10, 1483. Leaving his mother at home to recover from labor, his father bundled him in a blanket and took him immediately to the church of Sts. Peter & Paul about half a block away. There the infant was baptized and, since it was the Feast of St. Martin, he was named Martin. Sixty-two years later he returned to Eisleben to settle a property dispute between three brothers who shared dominion as Counts of Mansfeld. Luther became involved because his family's mining rights had become entangled in the Counts' dispute. He began his journey from Wittenberg to Eisleben on January 23, 1546 but the roads were bad, the weather was worse, and the rivers were in flood and full of chunks of ice. His health was already bad at this stage in his life. And the trip took its toll. It seems likely from reports of those travelling with him that he suffered a mild heart attack just before arriving in Eisleben. Nevertheless, he pressed on with the negotiations and forced the brothers to come to a resolution. He concluded the transaction with a worship service at St. Andrew's Church at which he preached. While preaching, though, he was "overcome by weakness"—it appears he had another heart attack—and had to be helped down from the pulpit. He was taken to a nearby home where, at 3:00 a.m. the following morning, he died...a brief walk across town from where he was born and baptized.



All the places we visited in Luther's Saxony are in what was, for most of my life, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) or East Germany. In a very odd way, this has served to their advantage. Since reunification began in 1990, a great deal of capital has poured into this part of Germany to restore historic buildings and places that had been left to languish under the cash-strapped GDR. There is also a good deal of newer infrastructure in this part of the country, although Germany, on the whole, is very up to date in that regard. The result is that you get a mix of much of the best of

...Continues on Page 3

AUGUST 2017

GLORIA DEI EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

GLORIOUS DEI . . .

FOND FAREWELL TO FREINDS



Memorial Service for Marilyn Mathes

Plan to celebrate the life and light of our sister in Christ!
Together we'll honor & remember this gift from God....

Friday, August 4 at 4 p.m.

Journey of Faith Church

17456 Downey Avenue, Bellflower 90706

Commemorating the Life of Virginia Lane

September 5, 1937 - April 26, 2017

Virginia Lane was born in Detroit, MI when the city was still the bustling center of the worldwide automotive industry. She was an only child with loving parents and a best friend, Mary, who was as close as a sister without the disadvantage of having to share a room.

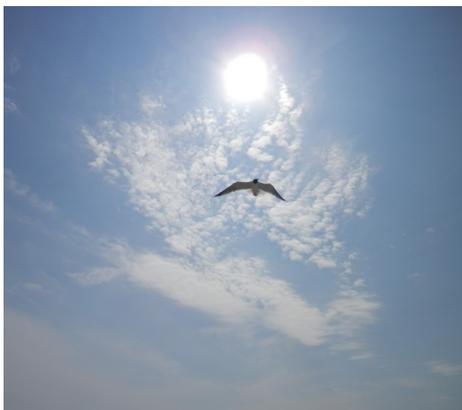
After graduating from high school, Virginia attended the University of Michigan where she not only developed a lifelong affection for the U of M Wolverines but also earned a BA in Sociology. Following graduation, she thought she'd give life in Denver a try. Sociology jobs were hard to come by so she took a job with Schulmberber Well Surveying Corporation during the day and worked nights at the Denver Hilton as a hat-check attendant. After a year and a half, she left for California with an old college friend.

On arriving in Long Beach, Virginia was almost immediately employed by the Matson Shipping Lines as a cruise ship waitress. It wasn't the easiest way to get to Hawaii, but it was fun—for a while. When it stopped being fun she found a position in the Public Relations department of Long Beach Memorial Hospital.

She wasn't at Memorial long, however, when her reputation as a seaworthy person caught up with her and American President Shipping Lines offered her a position as a Recreation Director on cruises to Honolulu, Japan and Hong Kong. On one cruise, she sailed with Alfred Hitchcock.

Eventually Virginia came back to land. She earned a Teacher Credential and master's degree at Cal State Long Beach, then taught school in Westminster for 26 years and also supervised student teachers at CSUF. After retirement, Virginia divided her time between Long Beach and Palm Desert. She was an active volunteer in both communities. Her passions included travelling with Charlie Radke, her companion of more than 50 years, reading, foreign movies, and her godson, David Fuller.

Regarding her memorial, she said, "I hope it will be a cheerful service as I have led a happy life."



THOUGHTS ALONG THE WAY CONTINUES...

the old and the new: lovely cobblestone streets with very modern electric streetcars, for instance. WiFi in a coffee shop in a building that's 600 years old. In Torgau, I bought some very modern toys for my grandsons at a toy store that has been operating since 1685. Martin Luther was about 5'5" tall—average height for his time. Philipp Melanchthon was only 4'5" tall—short even for his time, but recognized by all as a towering intellect. Katarina von Bora Luther was the practical brains of the outfit, though, and stood taller than all of them in some respects. She not only organized her own household, she organized the students who roomed in their home, a former Augustinian monk house. When she discovered that some of the students had set up a printing press in the back room so they could print and distribute their notes from Luther's lectures and table talk, she organized them into a real business and charged royalties for her husband's work. She brewed beer for their household use, which was reputed to be quite good, and sold what was left over. She grew the vegetables served at their table and slaughtered some of the pigs. She also later on had something of a side business as a designer advising on how to convert former nunneries and monasteries to other useful purposes. In short, she saw to it that there was always food on the table and cash in the purse so that Dr. Martin could concentrate on teaching, preaching and writing.

Wittenberg is a nice, picturesque little town, but more than a little out of the way and not really all that impressive. Without Luther, it probably wouldn't be a tourist stop. When Luther first arrived there it was even less impressive. James Kittleson writes in *Luther the Reformer*, "In the early 16th century Wittenberg may have had all of 2000 inhabitants, many of whom earned their living by brewing heavy beer, much of which they drank." When Luther first arrived in Wittenberg, many of its more impressive buildings were not yet built. The monk's residence and the church were "genuine sinkholes." The monastery was under construction and held up by wooden poles. The university church exterior had been completed but Luther remarked that 'the worship area looked like the stall where Jesus was born, above all, in its lowliness.' So, once again, God chose a humble, unlikely and almost-off-the-charts place to light a fire that would change the world. Think Bethlehem. Think Nazareth.

One final thought for now... It will take a long time to process what it meant to me to walk through all that history. We walked on streets where Luther and Melanchthon and the indomitable Katarina von Bora walked. We listened to the music of Bach and Mendelssohn in the church where Bach and Mendelssohn composed and played and conducted it themselves.

We also walked through Buchenwald and stood in places of unspeakable anguish and horror.

We walked past walls that in their hundreds of years of life had mutely witnessed both the soaring triumphs of human insight and creativity and the ugly depths of human hate, fear, and greed. We walked on cobbled streets that have in their hundreds of years echoed with song and laughter but also run wet with blood and tears. If we walk attentively through these streets of history and listen carefully to what they have seen perhaps we can learn to walk more in the way of song and laughter and less in the way of blood and tears.

Pro Gloria Dei,

Pastor Steve

GROWING IN FAITH, LIFTED BY HOPE, GUIDED BY LOVE

CONGREGATION UPDATE

Church council met on June the 5th and there was no meeting in July.

The roof repair has been completed and the property committee is now addressing the air conditioning vents. Appreciation and thanks to Barbara White and Galen Anderson who jointly head up this committee. The kitchen remodel is waiting for some plan revisions.

Newly elected member Sandi Anderson was welcomed to council and Galen Anderson returns for a full term. Please thank them for the fabulous banners that have been adorning our church garden.



I would also like to thank all the hardworking council members who are returning for another year at Gloria Dei; Pastor Steve Beckham, Marilyn Bittle, Gary Bockman, Margie Brown, Twyla Karkut, Everett Parker, Beth Rotsel, Bob Siemer, Barbara White. To our many greeters, counters, and ushers Janet Sims, Danny Bach, David Kahakauwila, the Bockmans, and Roger Powell— thank you for your continued service to our congregation!

Blessings to you and have a glorious day,
Stephanie Siemer, Council President, Ssiemercharter.net



WITTENBERG—TRAVEL TO GERMANY



Report from Wittenberg 06/20 – 06/30/2017

Wouldn't you know, the plan was late?

So on **Tuesday** morning, June 20, five cranky parishioners, Pastor Steve, Sandy Irvine, Margie Brown and former GD members—Walter & Erica Eidam, met in Berlin with Stephanie & Bob Siemer for the Luther's Saxony 2017 Tour. The tour was led by none other than **Bishop Guy Erwin**, himself a Luther scholar who had studied in Leipzig.

After a night's sleep, we toured Wittenberg. Yes, we saw the location of the famous doors where the ninety-five theses were supposedly posted. (There's some scholarly doubt.) Martin & Katharina Luther's Home was a converted monastery. It was larger than expected but Katharina, ever the efficient steward, took in students. Luther obviously wasn't alone in his quest to reform the Catholic Church. While he was a thoughtful and principled writer, a colleague, Philip Melanchthon excelled in argument and logic. Melanchthon's home was much smaller and more the scholar's retreat.

Thursday. We visited the home of Luther's wife, Katharina von Bora. It included the opportunity to pose as Martin and Katharina. (See picture) Katharina was a nun who left the convent along with other nuns, in connection with the Reformation movement. She even sponsored issues of women's equality.

Friday. Each morning began, usually on the bus, with a devotion, insightfully prepared by the Bishop's team and faithfully delivered by the tourists. The hymn demonstrated that more than a few tourists were choir members. In Leipzig, we visited St. Thomas Church where Luther preached and later J.S. Bach was choir director. We also visited St. Nicholas church, founded by the city's merchants. It was reformed in 1539 and home to demonstrations to end communism in East Germany.



Saturday, it's off to Dresden to see the Protestant Church of Our Lady – obviously a reformed Catholic church. It's unusual to see Jesus on the cross in a Lutheran church. Later we visited Zwinger Palace – you can tell it was royal by the crown over one of its gates. (See picture) A few visited the Green Vault that has an extensive armory and jewelry collection. (See jousting picture)

Sunday, we're off to Halle. Here George Handel, think "The Messiah", was baptized. As an expression of German/English competition, there is a statute of Handel in the square with a plaque. The plaque shows a muse taming a unicorn and a lion, both symbols of England. (See picture) Being Sunday, Bishop Erwin led a church service at St. Andrews Church which is where Luther preached his last sermon. One of the tourists was an organist – so we sang in this hundreds of years old church. Sounded great.

Monday. Wartburg Castle is noted as Luther's friends kidnapped him and placed him here to protect him from harm by the King or Pope. At Wartburg Castle, Luther translated the New Testament into German. One comment, although undercover, the furnishings of the castle seemed very comfortable for the time.

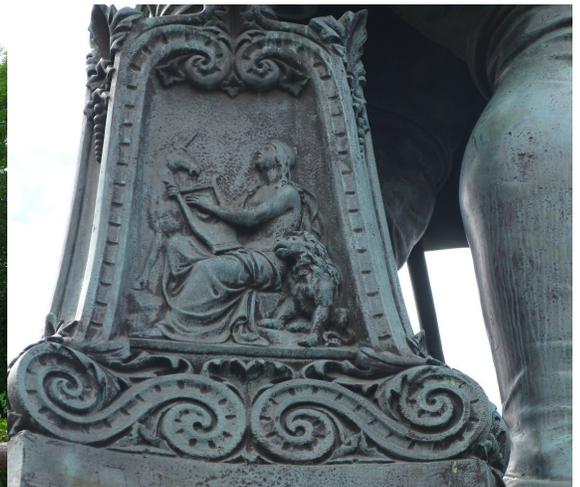
Tuesday. The tour visited Buchenwald, a WW II German work camp. We had visited Dachau earlier, so we skipped this. While many more Jews were killed at extermination camps, thousands were murdered at each of these work camps when they became too old or disabled to work. The inhumanity of the Reich, citizens and guards was nothing less than appalling. The displays to some extent speak to (warn of) the conditions that permitted this to happen. At the end of WW I, Germany was saddled with reparations which led to a severe economic depression. Hitler promised jobs to the citizens and a better Germany while identifying a scapegoat, the Jews, alleged to be enriched at the expense of Germany's poor.

Wednesday. We're back in Berlin to see the Reichstag, the Brandenburg Gate and Checkpoint Charlie. It rained. As another poignant reminder of the wastefulness of war, we visited the Kaiser Wilhelm Gedachtnis-kirche. This was a grand church reduced to rubble. (See picture) It has been rebuilt as a non-denominational church. (See picture)

Thursday. Our last touring day was spent touring the German History Museum. It is another example of the victors writing history. There were many uniforms and furnishings of the nobles but little of commoner's way of life. Sansoucci Palace, once home to Frederick the Great, was another imitation of Versailles-complete with gold accented rooms and halls.

The tour impressed me – that first and foremost, Luther was just a man trying to do the right thing before his God and that a timely idea, well stated, can have a widespread and lasting effect. We have to recognize that while the printing press sowed the seed of the Reformation widely, the seed fell upon fertile soil. The Catholic Church's holdings and power were a bounty to be harvested by any sovereign who renounced the Pope as holding the keys to the Kingdom.

Special Thanks to Author: Robert Seimer



CALENDAR OF EVENTS — AUGUST 2017

SAVE THE DATE

ANNUAL PICNIC

**Sunday @ NOON
September 17**

MARINA VISTA PARK

**Bring a friend & help
us build our community
of faith!**

1 — Tuesday

2 — Wednesday

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

3 — Thursday

4 — Friday

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

Marilyn Mathes Memorial

**JOURNEY OF FAITH CHURCH
BELLFLOWER— 4 PM**



5 — Saturday

Happy Birthday Janet Sims

6 — SUNDAY

**SUMMER WORSHIP
@ 10:00 AM ******

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

7 — Monday

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

CHURCH COUNCIL MTG @ 7 PM

8 — Tuesday

Donna & Mike Malbon Anniversary

9 — Wednesday

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

10 — Thursday

**Happy Birthday Janeene Conter
Eric & Christy Berg Anniversary
Happy Birthday Mike Lynch**

11 — Friday

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

Happy Birthday Kay Berg

12 — Saturday

13 — SUNDAY

**SUMMER WORSHIP
@ 10:00 AM
HOLY COMMUNION
PRAYERS OF HEALING**

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

14 — Monday

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

Happy Birthday Edie Graber

15 — Tuesday

**Happy Birthday Gus,
Elijah & Casey White**



16 — Wednesday

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

Happy Birthday Sandy Irvine

17 — Thursday

ELCW LUNCH @ 11AM

18 — Friday

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

19 — Saturday

**LSS WORK PARTY @ PINE
10AM—NOON**

20 — SUNDAY

**SUMMER WORSHIP
@ 10:00 AM ****
HOLY COMMUNION
NOISY OFFERING**

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

WWW.GDCLB.ORG

21 — Monday

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

**Happy Birthday Danny Bach
David & Nancy Kahakauwila
Anniversary
Pastor & Sue Schaar Anniversary**

22 — Tuesday

23 — Wednesday

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

24 — Thursday

25 — Friday

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

26 — Saturday

**Happy Birthday Judy Griggs
Jim & Nancy Brown Anniversary**

27 — SUNDAY

**SUMMER WORSHIP
@ 10:00 AM ****
HOLY COMMUNION
COOKIE SUNDAY**

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

Phil & Karen Como Anniversary

28 — Monday

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

29 — Tuesday

30 — Wednesday

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

31 — Thursday

Happy Birthday Peggy Huggard

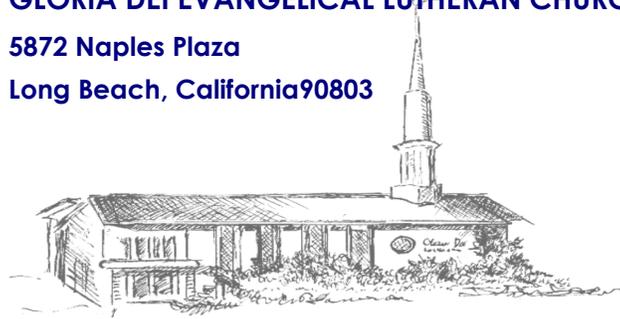
**Live in love,
as Christ loved us.**

~ Ephesians 5:2



GLORIA DEI EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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



Return Service Requested

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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)

