



Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

A friend of mine posted a meme on Facebook the other day that said, "What's everyone wearing to the one year anniversary of 14 days to flatten the curve? Asking for a friend." It made me chuckle. At first. And then not so much. Remember when that was what we were thinking? Fourteen days in quarantine. To flatten the curve. Three or four weeks, tops. We'll be back in church for Easter. That's what we were hoping at the time.

A year ago, as we began our journey into Lent, I don't think anyone imagined that Lent would last so long. Through Easter. Through Pentecost. Through Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, and back around to Lent again. This is the longest Lent any of us have ever known.

Fourteen days to flatten the curve. A month at most. It might have worked if everyone had gone along with the program. If everyone had worn masks. If everyone had taken the virus seriously. If everyone, literally everyone, had stayed home for two or three weeks. But people are suspicious and rebellious and ...

All the Monday-morning quarterbacking in the world won't change what has happened. Blaming and finger-pointing won't turn a single day of this long Lent into Easter for the five hundred thousand who have died. Five hundred thousand.

Here we are a year later, praying that the new vaccines will work as advertised and that enough people actually get vaccinated so that we can go grocery shopping with a little less anxiety, so that we can maybe meet each other for lunch and dine inside instead of out in the cold, so that we can cautiously begin to find our way back to being together again. So that we can worship in each other's company. So that maybe, even, we could share a hug. In the meantime, it is Lent again. Still.

Maybe this year we really will take time to reflect. Things seem to be quieter now, inside and out. Maybe this year we will hear God more clearly as we walk with Jesus toward the cross. There don't seem to be as many smokescreens now. Maybe this year we will see the stark reality of the cross more distinctly.

Pro Gloria Dei, Pastor Steve

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The Season of Lent



LENT IS A GOOD TIME TO
TAKE INVENTORY
AND TO WONDER
AND TO BE GRATEFUL



We invite you to study, pray, reflect and give with us during ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving — for our families, our neighbors and communities around the world.

As the world has reeled from the effects of a deadly pandemic, we have seen the number of hungry people around the world rise, watched as food pantries and soup kitchens expanded to serve an ever-growing number of guests, and longed together for the time when we “will hunger no more, and thirst no more ... and God will wipe away every tear from our eyes” (Revelation 7:16-17).

The 45th Anniversary Year of Women's Ordination Research

In the past when the ELCA highlighted the anniversary of the ordination of women, data was collected by the ELCA Research and Evaluation. This data was used to do intentional analysis of the experiences of rostered women in the ELCA, providing material for conversations around the experienced of rostered women in our church. The most recent collection of data took place last year during the 45th anniversary year of women's ordination. The analysis of this new data/report is presented on the ELCA website.

Once again the hope is that this data will be used in conversations across the church. A first conversation took place in August, 2016, at a Grace Gathering workshop led by the Rev. Elise Brown and the Rev. Gwen King.

As we give thanks to God for all the women who accepted the call from God to serve over these past 45 years, we hope and pray that the conversations to come will help us as individuals, as congregations, as institutions, and as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to continue the development of goals that foster equality and health ministry opportunities.

Source: ELCA website

CONGREGATION COUNCIL UPDATE



— Psalm 51 —

**'Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a right spirit within me.'**

The ash on our forehead brands us "marked
with the cross of Christ forever."

God leaves not a moment between our
certain death and the equally sure
embrace of life everlasting.

Greetings one and all.

Council continues to Zoom along, conducting our Gloria Dei business. The Mission chair and committee have been busy preparing for Easter for Fe y Esperanza and LSS. We will use some of the money from our Holiday fund to help these two worthy causes. Many of you attended the plant sale in Naples, the proceeds of which went to LSS, thanks to the hostess who willingly donated to our local community in need.

As we are in Lent now, did any of you give up something for 40 days? Do you have any plans to give up something? Or better yet...follow the ideas in the article on page 4.

We will continue to meet for church online until the risks are much lower. Many of us have had at least one vaccination injection, some have 2. Be advised that after the 2nd one, you may feel like you have the flu. That just means that the vaccine is busy working in your system. The ill feelings should be gone in one to two days—(that's the nurse talking here.) Just drink plenty of fluids, and take Tylenol for aches and pains.

Our past president and dedicated member, Barbara White's graveside service was very special. We were blessed with beautiful weather, and Pastor Steve gave a loving eulogy.

Pastor Steve, Sandy Nelson and I will soon be attending the local synod conference via Zoom. We will keep you posted on any new information we learn.

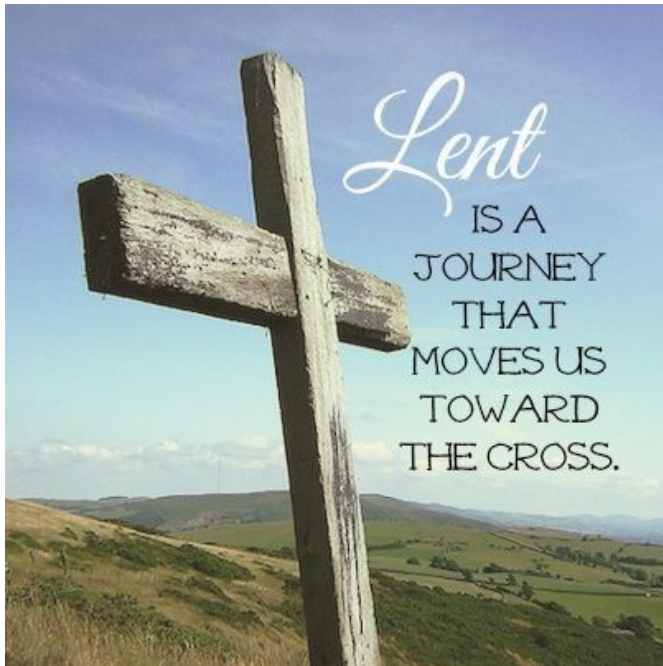
The annual election of new council members will take place during our May meeting. Please pray about serving and make suggestions for others to serve. The time commitment is one meeting per month, usually on the first Monday of the month...plus other duties as assigned. Be on the lookout for a notification of when it is time to nominate candidates.

Thank you for supporting our Christmas Holiday Fund....this was a big success.
Keep our church family in prayer.

Blessings to you all from our Lord and Savior.
Have a Glorious Dei.
Margie E. Brown, Council President

**'I will bless you...and you will be
a blessing to many others.'**

~ Genesis 12:2 ~



Thinking about giving up something for Lent? That's one traditional way of observing this season of reflection. There are, however, some other ways to observe Lent. Jesus said that the greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength, and to love our neighbor as our self. Lent is a good time—40 days—to focus on how we are loving God!

Spend 40 days reading one of the Gospels. Think carefully about each episode and encounter in the life of Jesus. Think about what that episode tells you about what it means to follow Jesus.

Love God—

Try to find 5 ways every day that you see God at work in the world around you. See how often you can see God's fingerprints on "secular" or every-day things

Practice the *Lectio Divina*

Read a brief section of Scripture

Read it again and this time see if a particular word or phrase grabs your attention

Meditate on that word or phrase for a few minutes

Read the entire section again and see if you understand it differently

Make your first prayer of the morning, "God, what do you want today? What can I do for you?"

Love your neighbor—

Practice blessing those around you.

Pray positively for someone you don't particularly like.

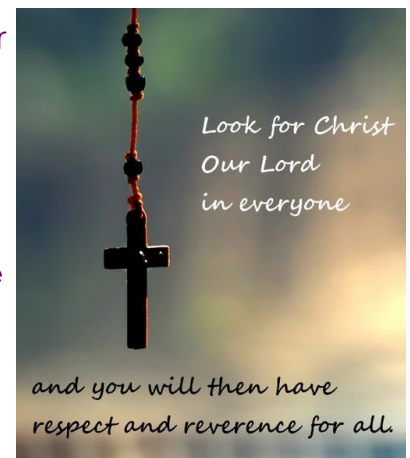
Commit random acts of kindness. When possible do so anonymously. **Smile** at a stranger

Love yourself—

Body—40 days is a good amount of time to make healthy changes and develop new habits.

HOLIDAY FUND CONTRIBUTIONS

LSS and **Fe Y Esperanza** are asking for our financial support for their annual **Easter Celebrations**. LSS will have their family celebration on March 27 and Fe Y Esperanza will deliver Easter bags to their children after Easter services on Easter Sunday. In years past we have put together Easter bags for the children but because of COVID we'll make a financial contribution and the volunteer staff at LSS and Fe Y Esperanza will put together the Easter bags. Please consider making a contribution to our **Holiday Fund either online** at www.gdlclb.org or send a check to the church office. LSS and Fe Y Esperanza are so grateful for the wonderful support from Gloria Dei's generous members. Thanks for your support!



"Every good and perfect gift from above, coming down from the Father."

~ James 1:17

St. Francis Prayer

Lord, make me a channel
of thy peace
that where there is hatred,
I may bring love
that where there is wrong,
I may bring the spirit of
forgiveness
that where there is discord,
I may bring harmony
that where there is error,
I may bring truth
that where there is doubt,
I may bring faith
that where there is despair,
I may bring hope
that where there are shadows,
I may bring light
that where there is sadness,
I may bring joy.
Lord, grant that I may seek
rather to comfort
than to be comforted
to understand,
than to be understood
to love, than to be loved.
For it is by self-forgetting
that one finds.
It is by forgiving
that one is forgiven.
It is by dying that one
awakens to Eternal Life.
Amen.

National Recognition of COVID Deaths

By the light of 500 candles as "Amazing Grace" played outside the White House, in a minute of reflection on the 500,000 American lives lost to the coronavirus. Moments earlier, the president noted that the U.S. death toll from the pandemic has exceeded both world wars and the Vietnam War combined.

Although it was not reflected in the solemn sundown ceremony, it also brought good news on the coronavirus front. The pace of vaccinations is accelerating, deaths and new infections are sharply down, and worries about just how bad the pandemic can get are being replaced with halting questions about when all this will be behind us.

But between the somber bookends, officials provided some of the most unreservedly good news the nation had received in nearly a year of pandemic-induced isolation. The seven-day average number of cases is down 75 percent from the peak on January 11, the coronavirus task force reported. The daily hospital admission rate dropped 60 percent since its peak on January 9. Deaths have dropped nearly 39 percent.

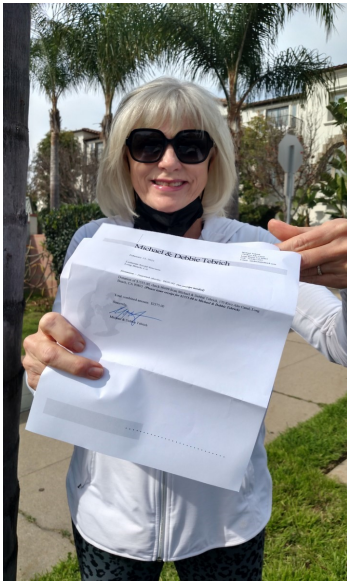
From the beginning, President Biden and his administration have sought to temper expectations. On the first full day of his presidency, Biden warned that the pandemic would get worse before it got better, adding that a wartime footing was needed to defeat the virus. Although the federal government has secured enough vaccine to inoculate every American by July, Biden has said it could be Christmas before things begin to feel like normal. Dr. Fauci has warned that Americans could still be wearing masks in 2022. While tempering expectations can be a political reflex, the events of the past few days also show how easy the positive trend can be reversed.

The pandemic has cost more American lives than several wars the country has fought, Biden said on February 22. And its infectious nature added a particularly painful side effect, he added: It has stopped Americans from engaging in the common rituals of mourning that honor the dead and help survivors share their sorrow. "That's what has been so cruel," said Biden, who has suffered his own share of personal tragedy and put compassion at the heart of his political identity. "So many of the rituals that help us cope, that help us honor those we love, haven't been available to us." He said he hoped Monday's moment would give at least a semblance of solace. "We have to resist becoming numb to the sorrow," Biden said. "We have to resist seeing each life as a statistic or a blurb on the news."

Source: The
Washington Post



"He has showered down upon us the richness of His grace." ~ Ephesians 1:8



GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS

Naples resident, **Debbie Tebrich**, made a large donation to Lutheran Social Services with our help. Several weeks ago, Marilyn Bittle was asked by Debbie if she knew of a charity that could benefit from proceeds of her plant sale. A few weeks later Debbie had a very successful **succulent sale** which included homemade wind chimes and hand-painted greeting cards. **A check in the amount of \$2375.00 was delivered to Wendy Rubio, manager of the LSS Pine Avenue office.** This donation will go directly to feeding those in need in our Long Beach community. God's Work, Our Hands continues at Gloria Dei and those around us. Thanks to all who supported this effort.

You're not imagining it, nobody seems to want to talk right now.

Messages are brief and replies late.

Talk of catch ups on zoom are perpetually put on hold.

Group chats are no longer pinging all night long.

It's not you.

It's everyone.

We are spent.

We have nothing left to say.

We are tired of saying 'I miss you' and 'I cant wait for this to end'.

So we mostly say nothing, put our heads down and get through each day.

You're not imagining it.

This is a state of being like no other we have ever known because we are all going through it together but so very far apart.

Hang in there my friend.

When the mood strikes, send out all those messages and don't feel you have to apologise for being quiet.

This is hard.

No one is judging.

Health and Wellness

Physical and mental health is an essential component of a Christian and is God's intention for every human being. It is vital to our well-being and helps strengthen relationships and enhance our Christian service in our communities and world. Promoting good health is our shared endeavor with God, just as caring for our neighbor's health is an expression of Christian love and service.

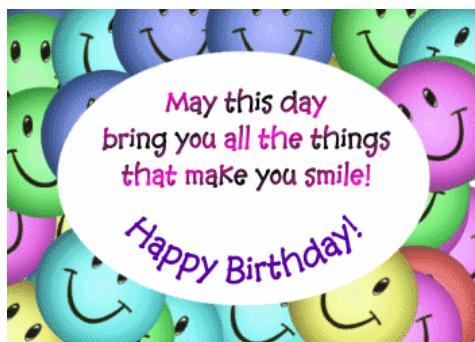
Bread for the Day 2021: Daily Bible Readings and Prayers

For those seeking a daily way to engage with Scripture and deepen their prayer lives, look no further than the 2021 edition of *Bread for the Day*. This beautifully designed resource offers a Bible reading, prayer and hymn for each day, with many other treasures throughout its pages: table prayers, household blessings, prayers for children, and information about church year seasons, festivals and commemorations. A monthly prayer list provides space for adding individual prayer concerns (Augsburg Fortress).

Source: ELCA website

"I learned silence from the talkative, and tolerance from the intolerant, and kindness from the unkind." ~ Khalil Gibran

CELEBRATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



GOD'S BLESSINGS

5 — Happy Birthday
Ranae Wright

7 — Happy Birthday
Frank Boychuck

9 — Happy Birthday
P.A. White

11 — Happy Birthday
Vicki Gammer

17 — Happy Birthday
Galen Anderson

19 — Happy Birthday
Chris Wacker

20 — Happy Birthday
Mark Engle

25 — Happy Birthday
Beth Rotsel

27 — Happy Birthday Bret Engle

the newsletter

March 22 —

GLORIOUS DEI

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

SUBMIT STORY IDEAS, RESOURCES &
SUGGESTIONS to editor via email:

PBOCKMAN@FULLERTON.EDU

Embrace Empower Equip



LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES
Support our Local Long Beach Community

- Emergency Services
- Transitional Services
- Social Services

Learn more @ LSS website

2 CORINTHIANS 4:6

For God...made his light
shine in our hearts.

A Time to Think

Don't let the noise of the world
keep you from hearing the voice
of God.

—Author Unknown.

A Time to Act

Concentrate on serving God
in whatever way He directs.

A Time to Pray

Lord, may all that I do be
praise for Your glory.

Guideposts

Set your clocks!

Day light
savings
begins
SUNDAY,
MARCH
14!



MARCH 2 Read Across America Day

MARCH 5 Nat'l Day of Unplugging

MARCH 8 International Women's Day

MARCH 12 Nat'l Girl Scouts Day

MARCH 14 Nat'l Potato Chip Day

MARCH 17 St. Patrick's Day

MARCH 19 Nat'l Let's Laugh Day



MARCH 23 Nat'l Puppy Day

MARCH 25 International Waffle Day

MARCH 26 Nat'l Spinach Day



GLORIA DEI EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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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)

