

Reverend Steven Beckham, Pastor  
5872 Naples Plaza Long Beach, California 90803-5044  
Website: www.gdlclb.org Telephone: 562.438.0929



# Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

## THOUGHTS ALONG THE WAY...

***“Come, Lord Jesus,” the Advent mantra, means that all of Christian history has to live out of a kind of deliberate emptiness, a kind of chosen non-fulfillment.”***

***– Richard Rohr, Preparing for Christmas: Daily Meditations for Advent***

Welcome to Advent, the season of already and not yet. This is the season when we prepare our hearts and our homes for the coming of Jesus the Christ. This is the season when we remember that he has already been born to us and will come again.

This is the season when we remember the eons when humanity waited with longing for the appearance of Emmanuel, God With Us. This is the season when we remember that Emmanuel has come to us already and lives with us in faith while we wait for his return. Already and not yet.

This is the season when we remember that we live lives of anticipation. Perfect fullness, perfect fulfillment is something that always lies ahead of us and hope draws us toward it.

When I was in seminary, Dr. Ted Peters, our prof for Systematic Theology, introduced us to the idea of prolepsis. In literature, prolepsis is the depiction or representation of something as if it already exists before it actually exists. In theology, prolepsis tells us that God has a vision of the future, the reign of God, and is drawing us inexorably toward that vision. It exists fully in Christ. We are moving toward the time when it will exist in and for all of us. It is already and not yet.

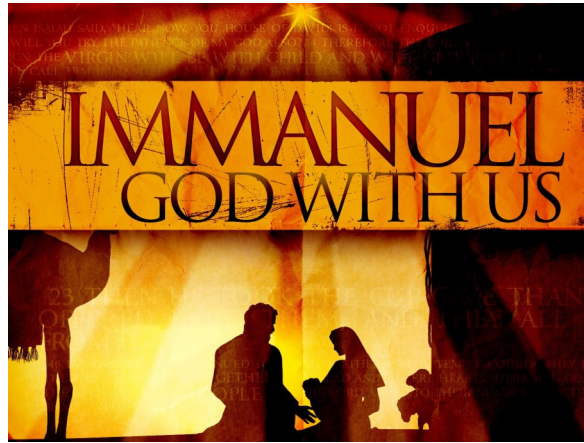
Jesus has called us to live proleptic lives—to live now in that future called the reign of God, but also to honestly acknowledge that we’re not there yet. Jesus has called us to live in Advent.

Living in Advent keeps our eyes and hearts and minds open to grace and the future God has envisioned for us, the future God is pulling us forward into until, inevitably, it becomes the only present we experience. It is coming to us. We are moving toward it. It will come to be...in God’s own good time. It is also now, and Advent tells us to keep our eyes open. To watch for it.

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**LORD, MAKE US GOOD GUESTS AND HOSTS OF YOUR KINGDOM WHO REFLECT THE HUMILITY AND GENEROSITY OF OUR SAVIOR. IN JESUS' NAME. AMEN.**

*Thoughts Along the Way Continues...*

Richard Rohr put it this way: "We can also use the other a words for Advent: aware, alive, attentive, alert, awake are all appropriate! Advent is, above all else, a call to full consciousness."

Last year, because of the Pandemic, we didn't get to be "awake" together in person during this watchful and contemplative season. But maybe we learned something from our Advent apart. Maybe we were awakened to a warmer meaning shining from that first candle on the Advent wreath, the flame of Hope. Hope burns bright with trust and patience. Hope guides us through the unlit corridors of life as we move toward the future, willing to walk forward without closure or resolution or fulfillment but trusting that we are being drawn toward closure, resolution, and fulfillment—they are coming—on God's terms and in God's timeless time.

Advent tells us that history—all of it—is moving toward something. And that alone is reason enough to light the candle of hope.

May hope, peace, joy, and love light your way to Christmas. Pastor Steve

Holy Night **shepherds**  
 Believe *Glorious*  
 JOY *Angels on High*  
 Hallelujah  
 Prince of Peace  
 Wise Men **LOVE**  
 swaddling clothes *Bethlehem*  
 BABE IN A MANGER  
 NOEL *Glory to God*

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## FELLOWSHIP & SERVICE @ GLORIA DEI

The "Joy" in Advent started early for us!

Our "**Little Church with a very Big Heart**" made generous donations to LSS and Fe Y Esperanza this Thanksgiving, creating so much joy for so many people. Through your generosity our church delivered joy to Fe Y Esperanza by providing \$1,000 in gift certificates for their annual Thanksgiving Feast. You made it possible for **Pastor Marta** and her volunteers to provide over 150 turkeys plus canned goods to farm workers in Guadalupe (near Santa Maria in central California).



Your generosity continued to spread joy through a \$1,000 donation from the Holiday Fund to LSS in support of their Thanksgiving initiative to provide groceries and a turkey for 65 families.



**Twyla Karkut** and **Nancy Sansum** donated items for the **Maritime Ministry** seafarer boxes and the ELCW team assembled these boxes. So many men and women off our shore in Long Beach will receive a gift that will without a doubt bring them joy and comfort.

Also, **Kalani Caldwell** organized her 10th Annual swim team run from **Poly High School to LSS**. Each of the swimmers ran with canned goods in each



hand and were joyfully greeted with cheers from the LSS staff and volunteers.

<https://abc7.com/long-beach-poly-athletes-swim/5714202/>

Your donations of clothing, household items, canned goods and monetary gifts are so joyfully received by LSS and Fe Y Esperanza throughout the year. Delivering these items and seeing their gratitude and joy warms our hearts. The opportunity to create more joy continues as Christmas approaches. LSS will host their annual Christmas Party on December 11th. Their goal is to provide toys for children and groceries for the families they serve. Fe Y Esperanza will be hosting their traditional **Las Posadas** by providing a small toy gift to the children they serve. The men and women's shelter (Lydia's House) are in need of new socks and slightly used jackets. Please consider a donation to the **Gloria Dei Holiday Fund** in support of these meaningful events. Donations can be made on our website: [www.gdlclb.org](http://www.gdlclb.org) If you would like to designate your gift for a specific event and/or organization, please write your preference in the memo line of your check. The joy you create through your donations has a ripple effect from the workers and volunteers in each of the organizations to the receivers of these gifts.

Our church family has provided me with an amazing gift of experiencing so much joy as we deliver gifts and donations. Thank you for your generosity, love and concern for others. May the "Joy" in Advent continue to be a year-round experience!

**Merry Christmas! Karen Como, Council President**

# GOD'S WORK. OUR HANDS.

If you are considering a tax-free donation, as 2021 comes to an end, please consider making a donation to Lutheran Social Services, a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, to help with these urgent needs:

- **Parking Lot** - The parking lot is in terrible condition; it has not been repaved in 36 years. The potholes and deep fissures in the parking lot make it dangerous for people coming for assistance, especially those in wheelchairs. LSS also uses the parking lot for many outreach activities and needs to make sure the area is safe. The cost to repave and repair the parking lot: \$11,000.
- **Mold** - The building they occupy is very old. The floors throughout the building have developed mold. An epoxy sealer on the floors is needed to contain the mold and keep it from spreading. The mold is also a health hazard for the workers, the volunteers, and the people they serve. The cost for the epoxy sealer: \$8,000.
- **Heating and Air Conditioning for the Food Pantry** – There is no heating or air conditioning in the food pantry area making conditions difficult for the volunteers and workers as they distribute food throughout the year. In order to add heating and/or air conditioning, the electrical panel needs to be upgraded. LSS is in the process of obtaining bids to make the necessary upgrades. The cost: TBD.

If you are considering helping LSS with any of these urgent needs, please let either myself or Pastor Steve know.

— Karen Como,  
Church Council President

**NURTURING A  
MEANINGFUL  
CHRISTMAS IN  
YOUR HOME...**

**LORD, USE ME AS YOU  
WILL...TO BE YOUR  
VESSEL OF THE GOSPEL !**



***That energy is God's energy, an energy deep within you. ~ Philippians 2:13***



## **A Time to Think**

Faith is the strength by which a shattered world shall emerge into the light.—Helen Keller

## **A Time to Act**

Keep a Bible nearby and each morning open it to the Psalms. Be energized through the power and presence of God's Word.

## **A Time to Pray**

Heavenly Father, give me the energy to celebrate the holiday season. Fill me with joy and help me cherish this blessed time. AMEN.

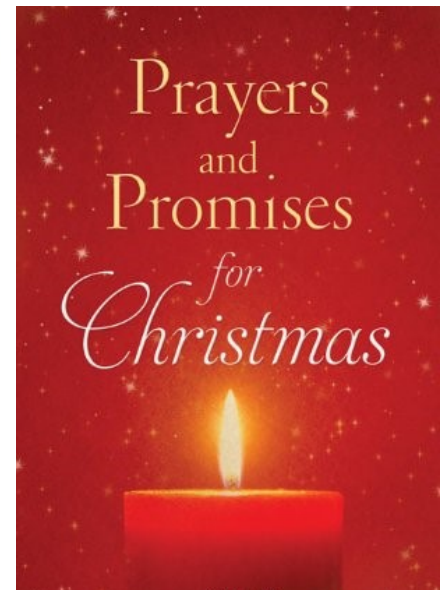
ELCA  
GOOD  
GIFTS

Give something **unexpected** this Christmas.

Goat \$50

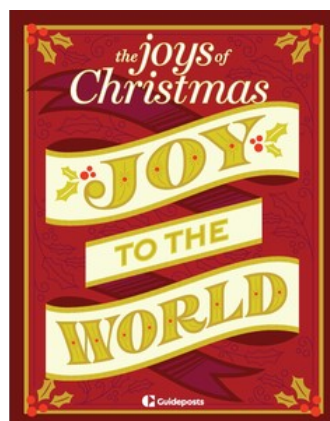
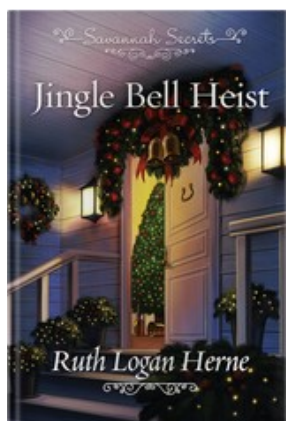
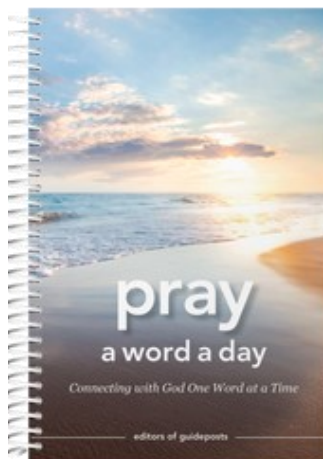
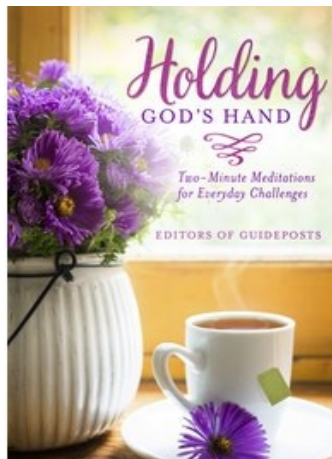
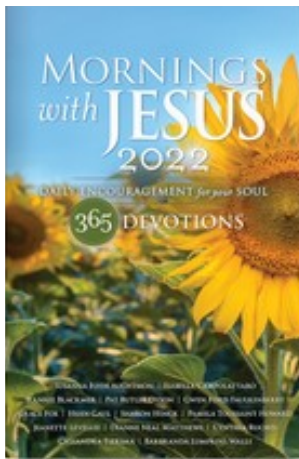
SHOP NOW





## THOUGHTFUL GIFT GIVING

Find something special for your loved ones this holiday season. **ELCA Good Gifts** are sure to put a smile on someone's face! What a delightful way to honor your family and friends by giving to those in need! Another option is to [ShopGuideposts.org/holidaygiftguide](http://ShopGuideposts.org/holidaygiftguide)...Devotionals, Planners and Magazines will provide joy all year long! Give cards to those confined to their homes, or share Fiction & Non-Fiction to avid readers!



Lord Jesus, help me to live wisely everyday and not squander my precious life. You found me and gave me life for Your good pleasure. You are the Lord of all creation and in You I trust each day. Let Your will be done in my life and may I glorify You with my words and my actions. All my accomplishments I lay at Your feet; they are Yours. At the end of each day, may You bring me rest, joy and peace. May Your Spirit remind me of Your works in my life. Thank You for this glorious season as we celebrate Your birth. My joy comes from You and Your provision. It is my honor to serve You and others. In the powerful name of Jesus. Amen.

**OH, THE DEPTH OF THE RICHES AND WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE OF GOD!**  
~ ROMANS 11:33



## FIRST WE PRAY

May God's grace cover you in these days.

We have watched with anticipation and possible dread as two trials of national interest concluded in the previous few weeks. Many opinions about race and justice and guns have been spoken. As a leader of a faith community, I am not called to opine about the outcomes. I am here to inspire us as a faith community in light of current events.

From the beginning of time, humans have done horrible things to each other. The first sin recorded in the Bible is the deception of Adam and Eve. The second is the murder of Abel. After Cain kills his brother Abel in a jealous rage, he tries to cover it up. God answers, "What have you done? Your brother's blood cries to me from the ground." (Genesis 4:10).

No matter the outcome of any trial, I frequently think of this text. We seek justice for victims. But is justice ever truly served while our brother's blood cries out to us from the ground? I know I'm speaking about an idealized society, where violence is quelled. But isn't that what the kin-dom of God is all about? Peace, compassion, equity, love?

As people of faith, I believe we have something to say about those things. I believe the church is *supposed* to have something to say about those things. We are not called to wring our hands in despair. We are not even called to stand in judgment, in my mind. As people of faith, we are called to pray, and then we are called to work against violence.

First, we pray. We pray for the impoverished and oppressed. We pray for police officers and jailers and bailiffs. We pray for investigators and judges and district attorneys and defense lawyers. We pray for the families of victims. We pray for the wrongly accused and the desperately guilty. All of these are our siblings. This is the painful truth: we are all the Body of Christ. Those who kill and those who are killed. What a challenge for us, to pray for those who have done horrible things. How else can healing come in our society?

I do not mean we should forgive and forget. But we need to look at the culture which has raised up violent offenders and ask God's help to change our world. We need to fund better schools and jobs and medical care. We need to work against gun

violence and domestic violence. We need to stop the cycles of abuse and poverty and ignorance.

These are huge tasks. And we serve a mighty God.

Many of us are afraid to get into "political" conversations. We avoid talking about who is guilty, or how a jury should have voted. I invite us to stay away from the legal proceedings and focus on the violence. How can we be influencers against violence? What are the root causes of racism, misogyny, transphobia? How might we live and act to change society?

These are huge questions. And we serve a mighty God.

Perhaps this is why the modern church is not as powerful as it once was. Perhaps we have not leaned into the power to which God calls us.

We serve a mighty God.

God can use us to bring mercy and justice and peace to a broken world. We doubt our power. Jesus told us we would be able to do even more powerful deeds than He did (John 14:12) and we never believe that. We are capable of doing more than Jesus did because we are more in number than He was, than his first disciples were. Jesus knew we had enough, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to change the world.

What if we united in prayer, and then took action to break cycles of violence and hate? What a mandate. It is one Jesus called us to. Please join me in praying for the Holy Spirit to guide us into paths of peace. "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace," is one of St. Francis' most famous words. As we enter into this Advent season, let's pray for peace. Let's pray for God to use us as instruments of peace.

As we pray, some of you will start to be inspired. You will see the needs of the world in sharper detail. God will introduce you to people to accompany. God will open doors to partnership and ministry. Listen to the voice of God whispering in your ear. Share your dreams with others. Notice when you see things clearly. This is how God uses the church.

This is a broken world. And we serve a mighty God. Let us go forth with faith, trust and love.

**Bishop Brenda** - [bbos@socalsynod.org](mailto:bbos@socalsynod.org)

# PROCLAMATIONS AND EVENTS

**THE RICHES  
THE WISDOM  
THE KNOWLEDGE  
OF GOD!**

**FIRST DAY OF WINTER**  
DECEMBER 21

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



**NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE  
WITH GOD.**  
~ Luke 1:27

**YOUR PERFECT WILL  
BE DONE IN MY LIFE !**



**JOIN US FOR  
CHRISTMAS  
EVE SERVICE  
@ 5:00 PM**  
Friday, DECEMBER 24



**1 Timothy 6:6**  
Godliness with  
contentment is  
great gain.

**YOU ARE THE  
SOLID ROCK UNDER  
MY FEET!**

For to us  
*a child is born,*  
to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called



*Wonderful Counselor,*  
**MIGHTY GOD,**  
*Everlasting Father,*  
**Prince of Peace.**

Isaiah 9:6

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**THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH  
AND MY SHIELD;  
MY HEART TRUSTS IN HIM.**  
~ Psalm 28:7



LUKE 2:

**HELP ME TO BRING  
GLORY TO YOUR  
NAME, OH GOD!**



**MERRY  
CHRISTMAS**

DECEMBER 25



**THE JOY OF THE LORD  
IS MY STRENGTH!**  
~ Nehemiah 8:10

**ALL MY WORRIES  
& FEARS I LAY  
AT YOUR FEET,  
OH LORD!**



**GLORIOUS DEI  
NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:**  
DECEMBER 27

**SUBMIT COMMENTS,  
STORY IDEAS,  
RESOURCES & SUGGESTIONS**  
to editor via email:  
pbockman@fullerton.edu

**GLORIA DEI EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**5872 Naples Plaza  
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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 Corinthians. 5:17-19)**

**MAY YOU OBSERVE the WORLD with LOVING CONSIDERATION.....**



