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Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

THOUGHTS ALONG THE WAY...

It's hard to believe that we've already come around to Lent again. It sometimes feels like we've been doing Lent for all of the last two years. Lent is a time of reflection and metanoia, a time to think about who we are and how we are doing life. For those of us in the church, it's also a time to reflect on how we're doing church. How are we encouraging spiritual growth—both our own growth individually and our spiritual depth as a community?

Martin Luther said, "This life therefore is not righteousness, but growth in righteousness, not health, but healing, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise. We are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it, the process is not yet finished, but it is going on, this is not the end, but it is the road. All does not yet gleam in glory, but all is being purified." That's part of the goal of Lent—to take time to polish all that does not yet gleam.

We are not yet what we shall be. In 1 John 3:2 we read, "Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is." We are God's children now, but that doesn't mean God is done transforming us. That's what being a Christian, a follower of Jesus is all about. Through Christ, God is transforming the world by transforming us.

Richard Rohr has called Jesus the transformative icon of God. Jesus shows us what God is like so we can discard all our inaccurate mental images that are usually more like Zeus or Santa Claus than they ever were a picture of who God really is. From Jesus we learn that God is humble. From Jesus we learn that God will go to any lengths to show us how much we are loved.

This is a season to look toward and look at the cross. When we look toward the cross we can see the path of transformation. When we look at the cross, we see just how much it can cost to be transformed

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**“He has showered
down upon us the
richness of His grace.”**

~ Ephesians 1:8



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.

We long 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).

Commit to a giving goal for the Lenten season in support of ELCA World Hunger, set aside a portion each day, or make your gifts throughout the season as part of your regular Lenten practice. Visit the ELCA website to **DONATE** !

Thoughts Along the Way Continues...

into the likeness of Christ. Jesus serves as the icon of God, holding up a mirror for us as we seek to follow Jesus more closely and become more like him, to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 13:14).

Richard Rohr tells us that Jesus serves as the transformative icon of God in order to teach us to deal with our own sins and the sins of others with compassion instead of mere judgment. Judgment is easy. Compassion not so much sometimes. If you don't take care of your own anxieties and unfinished business, you're going to end up spilling them all over everyone else. The cross shows us what happens in a world where everyone is looking for a scape-goat. Jesus' wounded body is an icon for what we are all doing to one another, to ourselves, and to the world. Jesus' resurrected body is an icon of God's response to all of our crucifixions.

During this season of reflection, I invite you to spend some time daily in prayer and reflection. Take time to look inside your life, your heart to see what work needs to be done. “Your vision,” said Jung, will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes.”

May this be a season of awakening for us all.

Pro Gloria Dei,

Pastor Steve

CONGREGATION UPDATE

It's hard to believe that the last time we celebrated Ash Wednesday together was in 2020. Good news! On Ash Wednesday (March 2nd) we will resume in-person worship once again. This year **Ash Wednesday will be celebrated at 12 noon.** For those unable to attend, Pastor Steve will also be available at 7:00 p.m. for imposition of ashes. Masks will still be required. We continue to follow the CDC Guidelines and guidelines found on the Long Beach COVID information website.

Worship and Adult Education: Our Sunday worship services will begin in-person and on-line on March 6th at 10:00 a.m. Adult education on Sunday (Constantine's Bible) will resume in-person at 9:00 a.m. Our Wednesday study on Christian mysticism will continue to be delivered on-line via Zoom at 10:00 a.m. (link on our church's website). Our adult education classes are fascinating and thought-provoking! Please join us. We will continue to provide on-line worship via Zoom, thanks to Bob Siemer, for those in our church family who are unable to attend in person. The information for on-line worship can be found on our church's website: www.gdlclb.org

Church Council: Church Council will continue to meet via Zoom on the 1st Monday of every month. Council meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome. If you are interested in attending, please let me know and we'll send you a link.

ELCW: The ELCW will resume in-person meetings beginning on March 10th at 11:00 a.m. Bring a sandwich to share. Dessert and salad are provided and the fellowship is wonderful! **LSS and Fe y esperanza:** We continue to make regular trips to LSS and Fe y Esperanza. In February we delivered \$350 in donations to LSS and \$500 in gift cards to Fe y Esperanza. In addition to the generous monetary donations from our church family, we donated many carloads of gently used clothing and household items. I think we are all in round '3' of cleaning our closets! If you or your neighbors have items for LSS and/or Fe y Esperanza, they can be brought to church and placed in the designated areas or call me at (562) 225-7405 and we'll arrange for a time to pick them up.

A Gift Idea: If you need a gift idea for yourself or someone else, I recently had a birthday and my son and daughter-in-law gave me a very special and unique gift – one food item for each year of my age. The items filled a grocery cart! They know how much joy I receive from making deliveries to LSS and Fe Y Esperanza, how much need there is within our community. This was such a thoughtful and meaningful gift and certainly brought me and others joy!

Property: Work will soon begin on updating the landscaping in front of the church. Our irrigation system needs repair and some plants need to be replaced. The rain last month accentuated the leaks in our church building. A special thank you to Sandy Nelson for placing buckets under the leaks and cleaning up the water! Also, a big thank you to Sandy for making calls to contractors and scheduling meetings with them. After inspection by roofers and air conditioning contractors, bids are being prepared to replace the backside of the roof of the sanctuary and replace one of the air conditioning units. These repairs and replacements will be costly. More information will be forthcoming after bids are received.

Please continue to pray for each other and for where the Holy Spirit is leading our church within our community. It will be good to see you in church again; bring a friend who would also enjoy our little church with a big heart!

Karen Como, Council President

EXPANDING OUR UNDERSTANDING IN 2022



GOD'S NAME — Becky Crow

There was a moment when Moses had asked God what his name is. God was gracious enough to answer, and the name he gave is recorded in the original Hebrew as YHWH.

Over time we've arbitrarily added an "a" and an "e" in there to get YaHWeH, presumably because we have a preference for vowels. But scholars and rabbis have noted that the letters YHWH represent breathing sounds, or aspirated consonants. When pronounced without intervening vowels, it actually sounds like breathing. YH (inhale): WH (exhale).

So a baby's first cry, his first breath, speaks the name of God. A deep sigh calls God's name – or a groan or gasp that is too heavy for mere words. Even an atheist would speak God's name unaware that their very breathe is giving constant acknowledgment to God. Likewise, a person leaves this earth with their last breath, when God's name is no longer filling their lungs.

So when I can't utter anything else, is my cry calling out God's name? Being alive means I speak God's name constantly. Is it heard the loudest when I'm the quietest?

In sadness, we breathe heavy sighs. In joy, our lungs feel almost like they will burst. In fear we hold our breath and have to be told to breathe slowly to help us calm down. When we're about to do something hard, we take a deep breath to find our courage. When I think about it, breathing is giving God praise. Even in the hardest moments!

This is so beautiful and fills me with emotion every time I grasp the thought. God chose to give himself a name that we can't help but speak every moment we're alive. All of us, always, everywhere. Waking, sleeping, breathing, with the name of God on our lips. ~Psalms 150:6

Want to revisit and contemplate Sunday morning teachings? Sermons are posted every week at
www.thoughtsalongtheway.net

Thoughts Along the Way and Occasional Music from Pastor Steve Beckham

Thank you Pastor — we hope you know that your worship message is always excellent, thought- provoking, and we love the heartfelt delivery each week!



WE'RE ASKING THE QUESTION AGAIN...Thinking about giving up something for Lent? Consider 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 everyday 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.



The WORD *of the* LORD ENDURES FOREVER

A daily 15-minute verse-by-verse Bible study
hosted by Pastor Will Weedon

thewordendures.org



GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS

**Embrace
Empower
Equip**



- Emergency Services
- Transitional Services
- Social Services

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES
Support our Long
Beach Community

[Learn more @ LSS website](#)



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.

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



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

~ James 1:17

CELEBRATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



**Set your clocks!
Daylight savings
SUNDAY, MARCH 13**



**Celebrated
at 12 noon.**
Pastor Steve
will also be
available at
7:00 p.m. for
imposition of
ashes.

- MARCH 2** ASH WEDNESDAY
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 20 SPRING BEGINS



- MARCH 23** Nat'l Puppy Day
MARCH 25 International Waffle Day
MARCH 26 Nat'l Spinach Day

GOD'S BLESSINGS

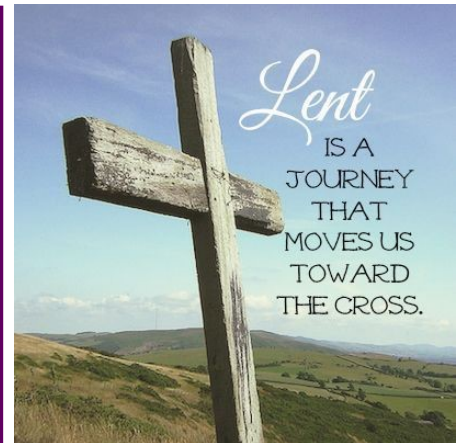
- 5 — Happy Birthday
Ranae Wright
- 7 — Happy Birthday
Frank Boychuck
- 9 — Happy Birthday
P.A. White
- 11 — Happy Birthday
Vicki Gammer
- 17 — Happy Birthday
Galen
Anderson
- 19 — Happy
Birthday
Chris Wacker
- 20 — Happy Birthday
Mark Engle
- 25 — Happy
Birthday
Beth Rotsel
- 27 — Happy Birthday
Bret Engle



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

~ Genesis 12:2 ~

Spring is the season of
optimism and the
anticipation of all good
things to come with the
resurgence of nature: fresh
blooms, singing birds,
sweet scent in the air, and
God's glorious light!

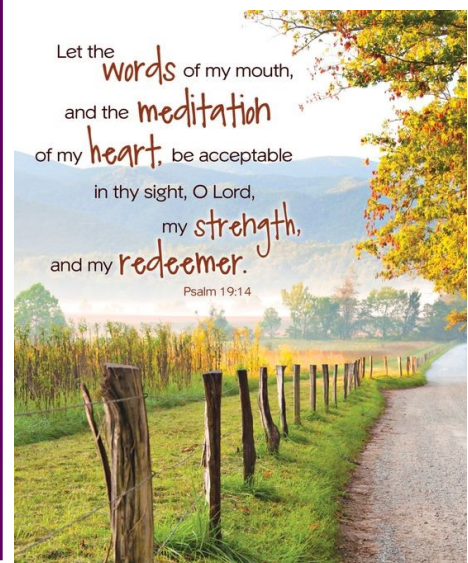


March 25 —

GLORIOUS DEI NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

SUBMIT STORY IDEAS, RESOURCES &
SUGGESTIONS to editor via email:
PBOCKMAN@FULLERTON.EDU

the newsletter



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.....

