



# Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

## THOUGHTS ALONG THE WAY...

*Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain.*

*For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. (1 Corinthians 15:1-8)*

The Gospel of Mark, written somewhere around 68 or 69 C.E. was the earliest of the gospels, which means that Mark gives us the earliest gospel account of the resurrection. In the original ending of Mark (16:8), the women who came to anoint the body of Jesus found the tomb empty. Instead of finding the body of Jesus, they encountered a young man clothed all in white who told them that Jesus was risen, that he had gone ahead of them to Galilee, and that he would meet them there. In response to this, “they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.”

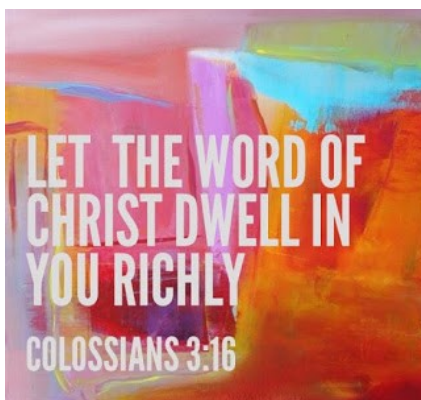
Evidently people were troubled by that original ending, so much so that sometime between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries different copyists or editors added another twelve verses to that mysterious ending to bring it more into conformity with the resurrection stories in Matthew, Luke, and John which were written 20-30 years or so after Mark. Some scholars actually detect four additional endings that were tacked on to the original at different times.

While the writers of Matthew, Luke and John seem to have used Mark as a source for their own versions of the story of Jesus, the resurrection stories in the four gospels differ significantly. Those differences tell us a lot about

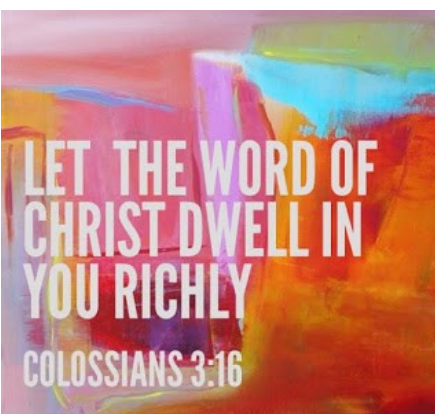
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LOVE  
JUSTICE  
& SERVICE

*Thoughts Along the Way Continues.....*

how the gospel was being taught and proclaimed in different areas and communities in the first century as faith in the risen Christ began to spread throughout the Roman empire. But while Mark is the earliest of the gospels, Mark's account is not the earliest written witness to the resurrection. For that, we turn to the Apostle Paul.

Written to Corinth from Ephesus sometime around 53-54 C.E., Paul's account of the resurrection in 1 Corinthians is the very earliest written account we have and it differs from the gospel accounts in some significant ways. The gospel resurrection stories all start with a focus on the empty tomb. Paul doesn't even mention the tomb except for the passing acknowledgment "that he was buried and he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures." That's a credal statement, rather than an encounter story such as those that appear in Matthew, Luke, and John and the opening chapter of Acts. Even though he doesn't describe or dramatize individual encounters with the resurrected Jesus the same way the gospels do, Paul does give those encounters great weight. Paul wants to stress to the Corinthians, some of whom have apparently begun to doubt the resurrection, that the risen Christ appeared to numerous witnesses. "He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve, then to more than 500 men and women, most of whom are still alive, then to James, then to all the apostles, then last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared to me." "If you don't believe me," Paul is saying, "go ask one of these others. They're still around. They'll tell you they've seen him."

Go ask the witnesses, says Paul, and that's good advice when faith is flagging. As we approach Easter Sunday and the celebration of the resurrection, take some time to check in again with the witnesses. Start with Paul in 1 Corinthians 15. Read on to see what he has to say later in that same chapter about being raised in a spiritual body versus a flesh-and-blood body. Then go back and read the gospel accounts again starting with Mark.

When we gather on Easter morning to proclaim that Christ is risen, may we do so with renewed faith, brighter hope, and new understanding.

*Pro Gloria Dei,*

Pastor Steve

# AN INTERFAITH CALL TO PEACE FOR UKRAINE

February 2022

All our religious traditions call us to pray and work for peace. We join our voices and hands together. We must open our eyes to those who are suffering, and we cannot remain indifferent to the injustice this conflict has brought on the people of Ukraine and may bring on people of neighboring countries.

We call on all those involved—whether governments, movements or individuals—to repent of aggression and violence, and turn instead to the way of peace through dialogue. We also call upon the faithful people of our congregations and communities to pray for wisdom, peace and justice to prevail in Ukraine.

Join with me in praying for peace for the people of Ukraine and that the international community will play a constructive role in this regard. We pray also for the Ukrainian diaspora in our context, that they may know God's peace.

In peace,  
The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

***"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God"***  
~Matthew 5:9

## GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS



As you know, since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, millions of people have fled the country and are seeking refuge in neighboring countries including Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. There are major humanitarian concerns for both internally displaced people and refugees. Many of these Ukrainians fleeing their homes need shelter and such basic necessities as food, water and toiletries. Care for people also includes pastoral and psychological support to address the trauma they've endured. **Lutheran Disaster Response** is accompanying our companions in Ukraine, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, as well as such ecumenical partners as Lutheran World Federation and Church World Service, in their humanitarian responses to the crisis. These partners provide refugees with immediate support and supplies such as food, blankets, water and hygiene kits. **Your gifts will support people impacted by this crisis. Please go to the ELCA website. Gifts designated to "Eastern Europe Crisis" will be used in full (100%) for direct response to assist those affected.**

# GLORIA DEI — CHURCH UPDATE

**We are a church that values and encourages diverse voices and lively dialogue in our faith and life. You are invited to join us for Sunday worship and Holy Week services.**

March was a month of many blessings, especially being together again and in-person. It was so special to share coffee and cookies after worship and catch up with each other. It's good to see so many new faces too! It was especially delightful to celebrate Pastor Steve's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination.

**ELCW:** In their March meeting, members of ELCW started cleaning and sorting out unused materials in our rooms upstairs and found wonderful items to donate in support of Vacation Bible School for Fe y Esperanza and more quilts for the Long Beach Police Department. They are thrilled with the donations. The bagged rice prepared by the ELCW was appreciated too. We will not meet in April. Join us for the next meeting on May 10<sup>th</sup>.

**LSS, Fe y Esperanza and Lydia House:** The Spring-cleaning bug has caught so many of us this year and our mission partners are so grateful! So many members and friends are cleaning out closets with slightly used clothing, gently used household items and hygiene kits for LSS, Fe y Esperanza and Lydia's House. The weekly trips to LSS and Fe y Esperanza will continue and if you need items picked up at your house, please call me (562) 225-7405.

**Donations:** Our church family has a big heart for giving! The donations for the people of Ukraine have been so generous. The need is so great. Please continue to make donations as you are able. The donations can be made on our church website [www.gdlcib.org](http://www.gdlcib.org) or by check. Please indicate on the memo line 'Ukraine'.

Sandy Nelson prepared packages for **World Hunger's 40 Days of Lent** (A Way in the Wilderness). There's still time to make a gift to this very important initiative. Information and Lenten study packages are still available in the Narthex.

**Property:** Repair work on the backside of the sanctuary roof and replacement of one of our air conditioning and heating units will begin in October. The \$71,000 cost of these repairs will deplete our reserves. Please consider an extra gift to our 'A/C Roof' fund. The irrigation and lighting in the front of our church is in need of repair. The council will be reviewing bids and suggestions for these repairs and keeping the expenses minimal.

**Worship and Adult Education:** Easter week will soon be celebrated - together in-person, and, thanks to Bob Siemer, on-line as well. Pastor Steve prepares and delivers wonderful and meaningful worship opportunities during Easter week. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday worship services will be at noon. Our Sunday, Easter morning celebration will be at 10:00 a.m. Come and be blessed by these worship opportunities and bring a friend to share in these meaningful worship services.

*President's Update Continues.....*

**Church Council:** In May we will hold our annual congregational meeting. During this meeting we will be electing church members to serve on the church council. Please consider serving our congregation. Council meetings are held once a month to consider the business of the church and discern the Holy Spirit's direction for Gloria Dei within our community.

Please continue to pray for each other and for peaceful resolution to the conflict in Ukraine. Our church family continues to provide so much support wherever there is need. I am so thankful to be a part of such a wonderful church family!

Karen Como, Council President

## AMAZING GRACE—25 YEARS OF SERVICE

Spring 2022 ushered in a new season of hope and the opportunity to worship in our sanctuary. We were pleased to gather together to celebrate Pastor Steve's 25 year Ordination Anniversary. Gloria Dei has been blessed to have him lead our congregation, provide inspiration, and guide our spiritual journey for the past ten years. Thank you!

**We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. — Psalm 78:4**



## HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

**April 10—Palm/Passion Sunday**  
Plan to join us at 10:00 a.m.

**April 14 – Maundy Thursday –**  
Join us in-person for Worship at noon.

**April 15 – Good Friday –**  
Join us in-person for Worship at noon.

**April 17 – Easter Sunday Worship –**  
Rejoice with us in-person at 10:00 a.m.



**You make known to me the path of life; You will fill me with joy in Your presence, with eternal pleasures at Your right hand .**

— Psalm 17:11

**Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth.**

— Psalm 8:9



## Birthdays & Anniversaries

**Faith Step: Go outside, raise your hands in the air and thank Jesus for the peace, joy and hope He has showered on your life!**

**APRIL 3**

Happy Birthday Peggy Bockman

**APRIL 7**

Roger & Judy Powell Anniversary

**APRIL 8**

Happy Birthday Lanae Caldwell

**APRIL 11**

Al & Judi Mellow Anniversary

**APRIL 13**

Happy Birthday Beverly Pandora

**APRIL 16**

Happy Birthday Donna Malbon

**APRIL 18**

Galen & Sandi Anderson Anniversary

**APRIL 23**

Happy Birthday David Fuller

**APRIL 28**

Happy Birthday Brooke White

**Lord, I want my life to be evidence of Your transforming power. May I live every day in the awareness that I have everything I need to accomplish whatever You want me to do !**

## SPREADING JOY



### Birthday Gift Redux

**1** Instead of a traditional gift, many people ask family and friends to support their favorite charity or donate to a local place that is dear to their heart. Last month our council president shared a nifty gift idea—for yourself or someone else. For Karen Como's birthday, her son and daughter-in-law gave her a very special and unique gift – one food item for each year of her age. The items filled a grocery cart! They were delivered to LSS and Fe Y Esperanza. This was such a thoughtful and meaningful gift that put a smile on her face and brought joy to others!

### Warm Wishes Go Around

**2** Give thanks, praise, or send a 'hello' to family, friends, neighbors or coworkers. Rather than buy a brand new box of greeting cards, save ones you receive and cut off the colorful front. Use it as a postcard or note and pass on a recycled warm greeting!

### Reinvent A Circle of Love Everyday

**3** Pray for others by using a rosary—caress each bead and lift up and name your tribe one by one! Pray for their health, a joyful heart, and that God will bless each person according to their unique gifts and needs!



# THE POWER OF PRAYER



**Love is patient, love is kind** and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ~1 Corinthians 13

Let's ask God for help in soaking in every truth as we pray His powerful words back to Him. Let's ask for the freshness of His Spirit to bring His message of love alive within our hearts and flowing through our lives. We can't do it on our own. We'd never be able to muster enough strength within us. It's only possible through Him. And more than ever before, our world needs to see what true love looks like. We can do a lot of good things in this life, we can give gifts, and even make notable sacrifices for others. But if we do not have Christ's love within us, compelling us, filling us, every moment of every day, "it profits me nothing." Source: iBelieve, Debbie McDaniel



Every day, *Living Lutheran* offers a prayer from the ELCA resource **Prayer Ventures**, which can be downloaded on the ELCA Website— [www.livinglutheran.org/](http://www.livinglutheran.org/)

These daily petitions are offered as a guide for your own prayer life as together we pray for the needs of the world and give thanks for the ministries of our church.

## Prayer Ventures for April 2022

**1 Arab American Heritage Month-** Remember in prayer the diverse gifts, cultures, heritages and stories of our Arab and Middle Eastern neighbors and siblings in Christ, who remind us of the rich history and tradition of Christ's church in the world. Ask God to bless and advance the advocacy, witness, leadership development and support for ministries provided by ELCA Arab and Middle Eastern Ministries and the Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage.

**2** Give thanks for the resources of our church, including ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving, which guides us through Lent and helps us pray, study Scripture, respond to our neighbors in need and give generously for the good of communities around the world.

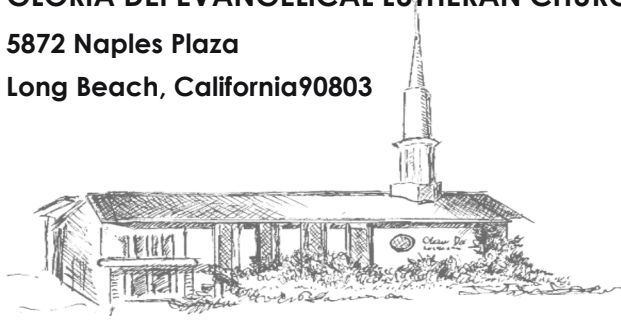
**3** Pray that we will each use our unique gifts and passions as disciples of Christ, called to share the gospel and serve our neighbors, and that we will trust the Spirit to equip, inspire and embolden us for doing God's work in the world, together.

**4** Ask the Spirit to make us purveyors of grace, joy and unexpected generosity, especially to people who live with worry, despair, turmoil or loneliness.

**5 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, theologian (1906-1945)** Remember and give thanks for our siblings in Christ — past and present — who risk their lives for justice, the well-being of our neighbors and the truth of the gospel. Pray that their witness, courage and sacrifice will inspire and guide our pursuit of justice and peace in the world.

**GLORIA DEI EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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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.....**



