



Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

THOUGHTS ALONG THE WAY...

I was reading through the Book of Genesis, as one does, when a repeated phrase in chapter 5 made me pause. The phrase was "all the days of" as in "Thus *all the days of* Seth were nine hundred twelve years." As I noted, the phrase gets repeated: "*all the days of* Enosh;" "*all the days of* Kenan," and so on. Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech—each of them was given lots and lots of days, according to Genesis 5, but after telling us how many years of days they lived, each account ends with a stark "and he died." Well, except for Enoch, but he was a special case.

Apparently God thought this kind of longevity was excessive. Right out of the chute in chapter 6 we read, "Then the Lord said, "My spirit shall not abide in mortals forever, for they are flesh; their days shall be one hundred twenty years." It looks like that was meant to be an upper limit and not a prescription for everybody because almost nobody actually gets that old. The longest verified human lifespan in recent times is that of Jeanne Louise Calment of France (1875–1997). Genesis would say the days of Jeanne Louise were one hundred twenty-two years and 164 days; and she died. So she got a couple of bonus years on top of the 120. Good for her.

In Psalm 90 that upper limit gets a few more years lopped off. "The days of our life are seventy years, perhaps 80 if we are strong," we read in verse 10. Tradition says that Psalm 90 was written by Moses. If so, then Moses was in a pretty dark mood that day. It's not a happy Psalm, Psalm 90, and the curtailed life span is the least of its gloominess. Oy.

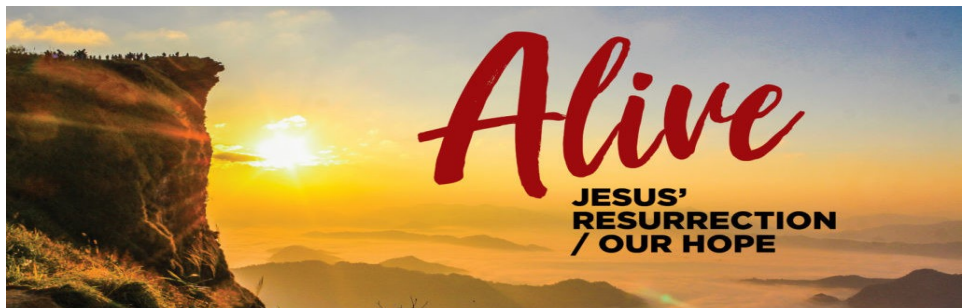
The point of all this is that our days on this earth are numbered. Frankly, I'm okay with that, even though I'm indisputably closer to the end than to the beginning. C'est la vie, as Jeanne Louise would say if she were still here. I'm okay with going on to what comes next, especially since I'm pretty sure that time will be experienced in a very different way—if we experience it at all. It's all in God's hands, so it's all good.

Here's what's not good and what I'm not okay with: if we don't clean up our act, then life on earth, at least life as we know it, is in real trouble. If we don't make some major changes starting yesterday, then our days as a species are numbered...and we'll take a lot of other species with US.

Continued on page 3

Inside this issue:

Easter Message—Bishop Bos	2
All the days...	3
Council Update	4
Earth—God's Precious Gift	5
God is Calling	5
Support Lutheran Social Services	6
Announcements & Events	7



Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

I'm **Bishop Brenda Bos** of the **Southwest California Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in American** and I want to wish you a blessed Easter. A painting was created for me by Pastor Dawn Wilder for my installation. It's actually Ruth and Naomi, I'm reminded of the women who discovered the empty tomb. While it is not in our readings for Easter Sunday, my favorite telling of the Easter story is the one where the angel tells the two women, "Jesus is not here, He has gone on ahead of you. Go find Him!"

I love that image: that Jesus is not where we expected Him to be, but He has moved ahead, calling us to something new. That story is found throughout the Bible: Abraham was called to a new place, Moses was called to take his people out of Egypt into the Promised Land. Later, when the Israelites are driven out of their land, God calls them back to restore the temple in Jerusalem. The New Testament is filled with stories of the apostles leaving their homes to spread the gospel to new places.

We are also called to this. What we expect from life, even death itself, as seen in the story of Jesus, is changed. Jesus' friends and followers were shocked and saddened by the crucifixion, but at least they understood it: He was dead. It was over. And although it was tragic, it was explainable, understandable, expected. And then on Easter Sunday the women come to find that nothing is as they expected.

That is our call today: Don't assume anything. Expect that God is able to do remarkable, miraculous, life-changing things. We think we know how life is supposed to happen. And yet, the Resurrected Savior is always calling us to something new, something startling. It's uncomfortable, but it's what it means to be a person of faith.

I pray this Easter season is especially sacred for you. I also pray you find confidence and courage in the call Jesus is offering to you: **"Come to a new place. You'll find me there."**

May God bless you.

Thoughts Along the Way Continued...

Scientists are already calling our age the *Anthropocene*. They give names like that to bygone eras of mass extinction. *Anthropocene*. From *anthropos*, the Greek word for human. When they call this current era the *Anthropocene*, they are saying that this is the era in which humanity has caused the extinction of massive numbers of other species. Not our proudest moment.

I don't care so much about my own personal extinction. Don't get me wrong, I'm not in any hurry to shuffle off this mortal coil, but I'm also not worried about it. It will come when it comes. On the other hand, I care quite a lot about the threat of extinction to the various biomes of this beautiful planet, and all the other creatures that share the earth with us. I quite like dogs, for instance. And cats and horses and frogs and dolphins and owls and even crows. And octopuses, who, it turns out, are quite smart! They didn't have a say in the damage we've created with our massive carbon footprints. They weren't given a vote when our plastics were swept into the waters of the world. I rather suspect they would have objected. Strenuously. I also care quite a lot about my children and grandsons and their potential progeny. I would like for them to live in a world at least as nice as the one I've lived in.

Helen Caldicott once wrote, "We didn't inherit the earth from our parents, we have borrowed it from our children." She has a really good point. We did inherit some things from our parents, especially attitudes and habits that can have a profound effect on what the world will be like when we hand it over to those who come after us. It would do us all a world of good if we treated the world as if we were renting it from the future and wanted to return it in better shape than when we entered it so we can get our security deposit back.

We are Easter people. We believe that God can and will give all of creation a new birth, a resurrection life. But let's leave the timing of that up to God, shall we? Killing the planet simply because we believe that God can un-kill it would not reflect well on us. It's not a good look and it will upset our grandkids.

There is a lot of amazing work being done to develop new energy and transportation sources as quickly as possible (see https://www.sciencedaily.com/news/matter_energy/batteries/.) The world of science and technology has finally realized that we're on a pretty serious deadline here and that there's more at stake than impressing their colleagues. There is really hope for the future. It's slim, but it's there. We can help if we all figure out how we can conserve and contribute less to the problem. You're all using LED lightbulbs, right?

Your days and my days are numbered, but let's do what we can to make sure that the world God loves (John 3:16) has a much longer and healthier run.

Pro Gloria Dei,

Pastor Steve

**All the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be. ~Psalm 139:16**

COUNCIL UPDATE

Our Mission Statement: *Gloria Dei Lutheran Church is a family of people called by God, saved by grace through Jesus Christ, and nourished by the Holy Spirit. We are a congregation of Christian servants dedicated to serve the needs of the local community and the mission of the church. We seek to accomplish this through prayer, worship and music, Sacraments, Christian stewardship, Scripture-based youth and adult education, community outreach, and fellowship. We do this in Thanksgiving for God's blessings.*

For more than 25 year I have noticed our church mission statement over the piano in the Fellowship Hall. After attending a leadership meeting conducted by Bishop Brenda Bos, I have re-read it many times over. Our mission statement so accurately describes Gloria Dei and who we are, especially within the local community. So many wonderful people within our church family care for others as demonstrated through donations of time, monetary gifts, household items, gently used clothing and, especially, praying for each other.

LSS: We provided \$450 for the annual Easter celebration at LSS. The money was used to buy holiday food for families. Our noisy offering in April was \$217! We also made weekly deliveries of food and clothing. LSS said they especially needed men's clothing and thanks to Sandy Nelson, Bev Pandora's neighbor and Phil Como, we were able to provide much needed professional men's clothing.

Fe y Esperanza: Thanks to Pastor Steve and Meri we delivered a full truckload of household items. Plus, we have delivered items to support their upcoming Vacation Bible School from our unused Sunday school rooms. Additional monetary gift certificates have been provided to assist with their food pantry for their weekly distributions within their church family and local community.

Lydia House: Many hygiene items and gently used bedding were donated and given in support of women and their children.

Ukraine: Our church family donated over \$2800 in relief funds for Ukraine.

Worship: After 3 years we were finally back together in-person for a wonderful Easter celebration. It was so nice to see so many friends, families and visitors. Thank you to Pastor Steve for the many meaningful services he prepared throughout Lent, Holy Week and our joyous Easter morning. A special thank you to Sandy Nelson, Phil Como, Bob and Stephanie Siemer, Jean O'Connell, Frank Stanley and Marilyn Bittle for

decorating our beautiful sanctuary. And a special thank you to Galen Anderson for the beautiful signage outside on the corner inviting the community to join us for worship. The wonderful music provided by Richard Hoover and solos by Phil Como added so much to our worship experience. We are so thankful for their talent and dedication!

Adult Education: Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. is a wonderful way to start your day with a discussion and overview on the Kingdom of God/Heaven. On Wednesday mornings at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom we continue with our learning about Christian Mysticism. Pastor Steve prepares such insightful studies to deepen our understanding of just how much we are loved by God.

Landscaping: In early May repair work on some broken sprinklers and lighting will be done. Some new pavers and ground cover will also be installed in the parkway to enhance the appearance of the front of our church. Some new plants will be added and some will be replaced. Thank you to the Siemers for their generous donation to offset the expense.

AC/HVAC and Roof: We have received over \$2500 in gifts to offset the cost of our AC/HVAC and roof repairs. This amount reflects approximately 25% of what is needed for this project. Thank you for your prayerful consideration in making these gifts. The work will begin in early October so there is still time to make a donation to this fund.

Congregational Meeting: Put May 15th on your calendar and plan to attend our annual congregational meeting immediately following worship. We will meet in-person and lunch will be provided. This is very important meeting to review our spending plan year-to-date and to elect new council members. Please prayerfully consider serving on our church council.

ELCW: The group will resume their meetings on May 12th. Join us for a short devotional message, wonderful fellowship, fun projects and a delicious salad and dessert; bring a sandwich to share. We meet at 11:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

Council Meetings: Everyone is welcome to attend the monthly council meetings. They are held via Zoom on the first Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m. If you would like to attend, please contact Bob Siemer and he'll provide you with information and the link.

Our cup of blessings overflows at Gloria Dei and we have so much to be thankful for. I am blessed to be a member of this family of faith who are so dedicated to serve the needs of others.

Karen Como, President

NEWS FROM ELCA Advocacy

- elca.org/advocacy
- [/elcaadvocacy](https://www.facebook.com/elcaadvocacy)
- [@ELCAAdvocacy](https://twitter.com/ELCAAdvocacy)



GOD CREATED EARTH DAY

YOUR ACTIONS CAN BE CONTAGIOUS & INSPIRING...

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart. ~ Jeremiah 29:11-13

AROUND THE BLOCK, COUNTRY AND WORLD



Easter, 2022

Dear Friends, Tomorrow is the Easter Sunday here. I would like to take this opportunity saying my favorite words a little bit earlier: He is Risen! He is Risen indeed! Especially during the time like this, His Resurrection gives us the Hope which we need the most more than ever before. I will not forget one sentence which I first heard from one of my college professors, "We are the Easter people in a Good Friday world." How true it is!

With the pandemic situation in different places in the world, I am grateful for His care and protection. Thanks for your concerns and care, most of all for your faithful support in both prayers and finances!

With more carefulness, I do have plenty to do each day. Like I said before, the need is great. With His Grace, I am teaching this semester. The class has become smaller. Please do pray for their direction and guidance, as they asked for our prayers. With special permission, our congregation will have a gathering for Easter Sunday service. We have been online since the pandemic started. Please do pray for us for His Grace, Mercy and Favor for the future.

International travel is difficult so I will forego my summer visit this year. Thank you all very much for being my partners!

YOU are my blessings! **Grace and Peace, Your Lutheran Missionary Abroad**

The **Long Beach Center of Lutheran Social Services of Southern California** would like to thank our friends at Gloria Dei Church for their generous contribution to our 9th Annual Easter Community Celebration, which was held on Saturday, April 9th, 2022. What a wonderful day! A day where the care and compassion of our Lord were expressed through acts of service by our supporters and precious volunteers that made this event possible. Over 100 people attended the event who repeatedly communicated their appreciation which is still being talked about by participants, LSS staff, and volunteers. Activities included arts and crafts, a photo booth, carnival theme food, games and prizes, and Easter bags for the children. The adults were blessed with groceries, hygiene supplies, and gift cards.

Thank you, again Gloria Dei Lutheran for partnering with LSS and making Easter extra special for our participant families this year. **Wendy Rubio, Emergency Services Program Manager, Lutheran Social Services/SC**



EMBRACE. EQUIP. EMPOWER.

Emergency Services Social Services Transitional Services

Not everyone can volunteer...But, with your gift,
YOU can bring hope & kindness to neighbors in our Long Beach community.

<https://www.lsssc.org/location/south-bay-long-beach/>

ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS — MAY 2022



MAY
30

Birthdays & Anniversaries

BE A LIGHT IN THE WORLD

**You are a chosen people,
a royal priesthood, a holy nation,
God's special possession,
that you may declare the praises
of Him who called you
out of the darkness into
His wonderful light.**

~ 1 Peter 2:9

MAY 8

Peggy & Gary Bockman Anniversary

MAY 9

Happy Birthday Dianne Keil

MAY 18

Happy Birthday Pastor Steve Beckham

MAY 19

Marie & Mike Engle Anniversary
P.A. & Brooke White Anniversary

MAY 23

Happy Birthday Nancy Sansum

MAY 28

Happy Birthday Richard Hoover

TRUST IN HIS TIMING

**But they who wait for the Lord
shall renew their strength, they
shall mount up with wings
like eagles, they shall run
and not be weary, they shall
walk and not faint.**

~ Isaiah 40:31

**"SHE IS CLOTHED IN Strength AND Dignity, AND
SHE Laughs WITHOUT FEAR OF THE FUTURE."**

~ Proverbs 31:25



MOTHER'S DAY, MAY 8

Blessing

By the power and authority of God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I bless you.

May your mind be open to the deep logic of God's work in this world. May you discern God's presence. May you have new insight and understanding.

May you be inspired with constructive thinking and productive creativity.

May your ears be attuned to the melody of God's harmony which is the center of all things. May you hear joy and laughter. May you listen to the pain of the world with Christ's own attentiveness and compassion.

May you see the hand of God at work around you in all things. May you look past your own concerns to see the needs of other that lie before you. May see beauty, hope and promise even in shadows.

With every breath you breathe in and breathe out, may you breathe the Holy Spirit, the breath of God.

May the breath of God restore you, strengthen you and renew you.

May your hands craft things of beauty and usefulness. May they lift someone's burden and lighten someone's load. May they bring the touch of healing.

May your feet carry you into the world with grace to bring gifts that only you can give. May you walk willingly in the of Way of Christ.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

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 Corinthians. 5:17-19)

