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Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

THOUGHTS ALONG THE WAY...

"Awake, awake and greet the new morn..."

I feel sometimes as if I am just beginning to wake up. The more I learn, the more I realize the vast depth of my ignorance. The more I see, the more I realize how little I see. I can be kind of obtuse. You may have noticed. Awareness is challenging...but it sure is fun.

It's Christmastime, so I've been doing a lot of thinking about The Incarnation, which means I've been doing a deep dive into the prologue to the Gospel of John. You know, In the beginning was the Word, etc. For reasons that probably have more to do with my own quirky mind than with any deep theological insights, the poetic prologue of John always sends me spinning off into physics. I am fascinated by quantum physics. I don't understand it all that well, and I won't even try to do the math, but what I do understand about it seems to resonate with what John is trying to describe in his prologue.

Logos became flesh and lived among us. The metaphysical became physical. Quantum physics seems to be saying much the same thing. Energy moves through quantum fields as abstract mathematical wave functions. When wave functions are observed, they collapse into particles. Particles want to join together. You get enough of that joining together business and suddenly you have organic molecules and the next thing you know, life. Logos, the pattern, the thought, becomes a collective hoopla of collapsed waveforms which we call particles which join together to become flesh which moves into our neighborhood.

As fascinating as that is, the real kicker is that the driving force behind all these collapsing wave forms and combining particles is... wait for it... love. That's right, love is the driving force of the universe. Love is a cosmic force. Love is what draws the particles together. Love is what drives the evolution of consciousness. According to Teilhard de Chardin, love is a passionate force at the heart of the Big Bang universe, the fire that breathes life into matter and unifies elements center to center. Love is deeply embedded in the cosmos.

And God, the scriptures tell us, is love. Love became flesh and lived among us. And lives with us still.

...Continued on page 2

Inside this issue:

Annual Congregation Meeting	2
Council Update	3
South Gate Partners	4
Farewell — Your Light Remains	5
MLK Day of Service — Long Beach	6
Events & Announcements	7

**SAVIOR OF THE
NATIONS, COME.
MAKE YOUR HOME
HERE IN US.
FEED US WITH YOUR
LOVE, THAT OUR FAITH
SHINE EVER NEW
AND OUR LIVES REVEAL
YOUR LIGHT.**



Thoughts Along the Way Continues...

And this is the point where I realize that I haven't told you all lately how much I love you and how much I appreciate you. I want you to know you are loved. I want you to know how much it means to me that the love that's deeply embedded in the cosmos is also a flesh and blood reality at the little church with a big heart.

So, because I love you, *"I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."*

– Ephesians 3:18-19

That's a lot to ask, but I think you're up to it.

So Merry Christmas, my loves, and a Happy New Year and Insightful Epiphany.

Pro gloria dei,

Pastor Steve

P.S. – If you want to read more about life and love and physics and evolutionary biology and God, I recommend *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being* by Ilia Delio.

CONGREGATION MEETING — JANUARY 22

Please join us on January 22 for our annual meeting as we share the details of the proposed spending plan and enjoy lunch together following worship. We joyfully share the love of the Lord with those we serve, and we continue to demonstrate 'God's Work Our Hands' all year long. We are a truly blessed family of believers!

Let us thankfully and continually celebrate the birth of Christ who fashioned us into a new creation in baptism. And, let us gladly heed the Wisdom of God, who encourages us to read and hear, and live His life-giving Gospel.

CONGREGATION UPDATE

Happy New Year! We have received so many thank you notes and emails from our Mission partners. Their gratitude fills my heart! Our church family provided for so many other families in our community and gave them a happier Christmas. Below is a copy of the note from Wendy Rubio at LSS:

'Dear pastor & members of Gloria Dei Lutheran church, We had another successful event and I am grateful for your faithful support! 69 families and a total of 220 children attended the event. Adults received 1 week worth of groceries, blankets, slippers, hygiene kits and many other gifts. The children received toys books, stuffed animals & gift cards. This was the best Christmas event and we couldn't do it without you! Our Long Beach officers stopped by to say hello to the families and to take pictures with them and they gave out stickers and other goodies to the children.'

LSS: We delivered many toys, food items and a check for \$900 in support of their Christmas party. Deliveries are always welcome and we typically go to LSS every week. Please let us know if you need items picked up at your home. This time of year, warm, gently used jackets and blankets are in need and food supplies are always welcome!

Fe y Esperanza: The annual Los Posadas celebration was held the week before Christmas. Small gifts of toys were given to the children in celebration of Joseph and Mary's journey to Bethlehem. Over 100 children attended the celebration. Our church family provided gift certificates in the amount of \$900 to support their celebration.

Long Beach Men's and Women's Shelter: Our Narthex swelled with donations of jackets, hats, warm socks and knitted hats for the shelter. Many items for children were included in the delivery that Sandy Nelson and Debi Nahigyan made right before Christmas. Thank you for your generosity!

ELCW: On January 7 at 11:00 a.m. the women will take down the Christmas tree in the sanctuary. Lunch will be served following the 'undecorating' party, and all women are welcome to join us. The next ELCW meeting will be on February 9th when more hygiene kits will be assembled for LSS. Please bring your extra hotel soaps, shampoos, etc. for these kits.

ELCA Good Gifts: Many goats, pigs, honeybees and chickens were purchased through ELCA Good Gifts from our

...Continued on page 4



Congregation Update Continues...

church family and friends in support of families in various parts of the world. If they name the goats or pigs, I hope they might call them 'Gloria'!

Adult Education: Join us on Wednesday mornings at 10:00 via Zoom for a unique approach to understanding and appreciating the bible as we continue a study of "What is the Bible?" authored by Rob Bell. Every week is a unique discussion and you can join us anytime. On Sunday mornings at 9:00 we're studying the Gospel of Mathew using a new translation by Thomas Moore. We are so fortunate to have Pastor Steve conduct fabulous adult education studies.

We mourn, with family and friends, the loss of **Judy Powell, Dee Perretta, Nancy Kahakauwila and Curtis Keil** this year. Our church family has been blessed for so many years by their presence among us. **We will celebrate Nancy on January 5 at 2:00 p.m. at Gloria Dei.** Dee's family will hold a celebration of her life in the spring of 2023.

Karen Como, Council President

**"EVERYBODY CAN BE GREAT . . . BECAUSE ANYBODY CAN SERVE."
- DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. (1929 - 1968)**



Fe y Esperanza Annual Los Posadas Celebration

FAREWELL TO NANCY K

Nancy Kahakauwila was born and raised in Long Beach. She and David were married August 21, 1977 and both were received by transfer from First Lutheran, Torrance, on October 31, 1993. Their daughter, Kristiana (fondly known as Tiana to our congregation) married Britton Warfield and have a beautiful daughter. This amazing family loved to be together and traveled to Hawaii over the years to visit David's family. They liked to ski and traveled to Germany, and Finland. Nancy was an educator, volunteer extraordinaire and community activist. As a committed teacher, she taught special education classes at Anaheim High School and supported many students along the way.



Nancy was an extraordinary Gloria Dei leader and served on the church council for many years. Her contributions were many--serving as committee chair to foster church **Fellowship** and led the **Missions** efforts to develop our ongoing efforts with Maritime Ministries, Lutheran Social Services, and Fe y Esperanza. As **Property** Chair she coordinated the piano donation to our South Gate partners, Fe y Esperanza! An active learner, Nancy attended L.B. Conference Fall Assembly. She also graduated from the **Equipping Leaders for Missions Program** in 2011-- a 2 year training for spiritual formation through theological and practical education. Nancy was instrumental in planning over the years. She was a member of the MET (Mission Exploratory Team) Committee - focused on developing guiding objectives to map growth of Gloria Dei to fulfill the Church's mission. In addition, she served as Chair of the **New Strategic Planning** to implement Natural Church Development-NCD.

Nancy also enjoyed worship as a Choir member. Her volunteer work touched many areas at Gloria Dei. These included LAMP U.S. - Missionary Pilots, Habitat for Humanity donation coordination and weekly deliveries. In addition to serving as a substitute teacher for CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL, she was active with Vacation Bible School. One year she introduced **Kids to Kids** mission project which brought in enough to purchase over 30 mosquito nets to prevent the spread of malaria in Africa. Finally, for 7 consecutive years, she managed the **CHANCE FLOWERS** - drove weekly to pick up and deliver the floral arrangements for Gloria Dei Sunday services. **—Gloria Dei will fondly remember Nancy — God's servant and passionate human being.**

COMMIT TO SERVANTHOOD IN 2023



Join 'Leadership Long Beach' as we Celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr !

For the 13th year in a row, Leadership Long Beach and our partners have brought together our alumni and community volunteers from across Long Beach to serve together in honor of the **National Day of Service** and in the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Over the years thousands of volunteers have completed dozens of community service projects, growing the Long Beach MLK Day of Service into the largest MLK service day in LA County. Please share this opportunity with family, friends, and community groups to join us in "Making it a Day On, Not a Day Off" for Long Beach.

CALL A FRIEND & FIND PROJECTS ONLINE TO SERVE IN OUR LONG BEACH COMMUNITY! MARTIN LUTHER KING — MONDAY, JANUARY 16

FAREWELL DEE PERRETTA

You may be gone from our sight but you are never gone from our hearts....



DOLORES PERRETTA was born June 21, 1932 and baptized 10 days later. Dee and Venner Farley married in 1957 and moved to Long Beach from Connecticut in 1963. Dee was an advanced placement history teacher at Warren High School in Downey and retired in 1988. Her partner Venner, was a member of the nursing faculty at Long Beach City College from 1963 to 1983; and served as the RN program director for 10 of those years. She earned her doctoral degree at USC in 1977 and they were both TROJANS forever. Venner was Dean of Math, Science and Nursing at Golden West College from 1983-1993. In 1993 they started a healthcare and nursing consultancy and literally took their "show on the road" until 2006.

Dee and Venner moved back to Long Beach from Orange County in 2006 to be closer to Long Beach Memorial Medical Center where all their healthcare needs were centered. They both became members of Gloria Dei and were received by Affirmation of Faith in September of 2012. They noted that "we feel very fortunate to have found Gloria Dei and its wonderful congregation and we thank all of you for the warm welcome we have received as new members." Both were engaged congregants and shared their gifts and resources with our community of worshipers. They were a perfect fit for the 'little church with a big heart' and supported many projects dear to them over the years.

Unfortunately Venner passed away in August 2013 after 56 years of marriage. Dee pressed on and eventually required in-home support. Tho' unable to drive, Dee's caregiver, Blanca Rocha would bring her to church services nearly every Sunday and got to know the congregation before she moved in 2019. What a blessing that Blanca's sister, Lisbey took over as her caregiver. After visits to the hospital in 2015 and 2019 for various tests, Dee returned on December 22, 2019 for a fractured C2 in her neck and a broken left upper humerus in her arm and shoulder. Both fractures were immobilized as she was too high risk for surgery. She kept on 'keeping on' but her health declined. On November 17, 2022, Dee went to St. Mary's ICU, and died a week later, on Thanksgiving Day. A memorial will take place in March or April.

THIS EARTH, OUR TEMPORARY HOME, ALLOWS US TO TASTE THE GLORY WE'LL EXPERIENCE ONE DAY. AS WE GROW MORE IN LOVE WITH GOD, AS WE SHARE THAT LOVE WITH OTHERS, AS WE FULFILL OUR GOD-GIVEN PURPOSES, WE WILL FEEL MORE AND MORE CAPTIVATED BY OUR SAVIOR. ~ EMILY SAXE



The family of **Curtis Keil** is saddened to share the news, he passed away at his home the evening of December 22. His wife of 56 years, Dianne, was with him as began his journey home.

Married in Winnipeg in 1966, the couple moved to Hamilton so Curtis could pursue his Masters in Business Administration at McMaster University. Once completed he was employed by the Government of Manitoba in various roles in The Commerce Department. Over the ensuing years there were a number of various provincial government roles in BC and Manitoba, culminating with his appointment as Chief Financial Officer for the City of Oshawa. In 1994 the family moved to Long Beach and he worked in education for a number of years as well as pursuing a career in real estate.

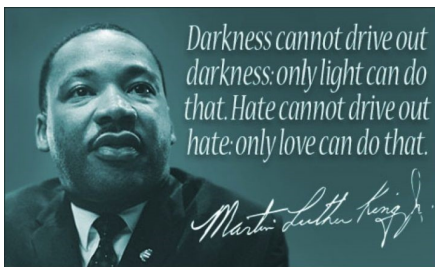
Dianne has been a member of Gloria Dei for many years. Please keep her in your prayers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS

What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? ~ Micah 6:8

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING @ 7 PM MONDAY, JANUARY 9

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING AFTER SERVICE ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 22



God created you to be unique and has given you talents and gifts to use in serving others. If you ask, He'll lead you.

- Keep your eyes and heart open to those around you.
- Listen to someone who's different from you. You may have neighbors of varying ethnicities, ages, back grounds, goals, desires— beautiful people you can learn from.
- Serve your own family.
- Acknowledge a harm you have caused; build a bridge to the person you've harmed.
- Pray for someone you might not care for.



Rejoicing in Him daily relieves us of coveting, leaving us contented. May Jesus redeem our heart's desires, making us rich toward God.

UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- 6 — Morgan Adams
- 11 — Cameron Chinn
Olivia Adams
- 14 — Edith Cheoros
- 15 — Karen Como
Sally Oberjurge
- 18 — Cyndi Manley
- 19 — Jean O'Connell
- 28 — Stephanie Siemer



UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN

ELCA Faith Practices Initiative urges members of this church to “put their faith into practice” by living out the promises contained in the liturgy for the Affirmation of Baptism. In that promise, we pledge as members of the body of Christ via baptism to:

- **live** among God's faithful people
- **hear** the word of God and **share** in the Lord's supper
- **proclaim** the good news of God in Christ through word and deed
- **serve** all people following the example of Jesus
- **strive** for justice and peace in all the earth



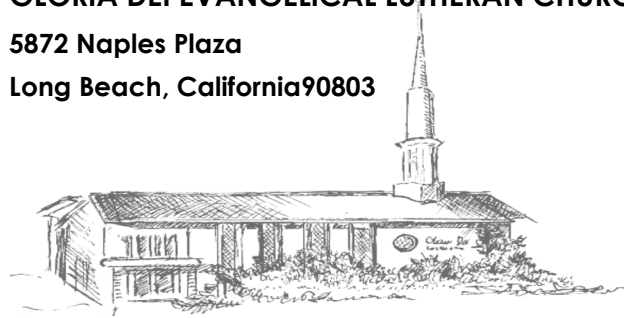
MAKING IT A DAY ON, NOT A DAY OFF

MLK Day of Service starts with breakfast festivities at MLK Park for the kick-off event that brings us together as a community that will collectively serve all over Long Beach. Invite friends & enjoy pancakes together, and learn about this annual event's impact!

MONDAY, JANUARY 16

GLORIA DEI EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

**5872 Naples Plaza
Long Beach, California 90803**



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(2 Corinthians. 5:17-19)

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.

**He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done
from beginning to end..... ~ Ecclesiastes 3:11**

