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Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

THOUGHTS ALONG THE WAY...

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. – Philippians 4:6

One of the great joys of serving at the Little Church with a Big Heart is that this congregation has been relatively free from the kind of anxiety that can damage relationships and undermine ministries. The late Pastor Peter Steinke, who founded the interfaith consulting firm Healthy Congregations based on Bowen Family Systems Theory, believed that unnamed and unaddressed anxiety was the single biggest cause of destructive problems in congregations.

Anxiety is the garden in which sin grows. – St. Augustine

In his 1993 book, *How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems*, Peter Steinke wrote, "All relationships become anxious. Put people together and inevitably anxiety will arise. Anxiety can be infectious. We can give it to others or catch it from them. What precisely triggers anxiety is unique to each system. Common Activators are significant changes and losses. They upset the stable patterns and balances of the system."

Anxiety is like a toddler. It never stops talking, tells you you're wrong about everything, and wakes you up at 3 a.m. – Anonymous

Three years ago this month we were ordered to shelter in place in our homes as Covid 19 became pandemic. Every day the news was filled with disturbing statistics and frightening information. On top of that, political tension was high. Anxiety was having a field day in the rest of the world, but our congregation calmly adapted and carried on with our worship and our ministries even though we had to change the way we were doing things.

Smile, breathe, and go slowly. – Thich Nhat Hanh

So why am I writing to you about anxiety when this congregation has been so good at being non-anxious? Well, as the old saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Gloria Dei will soon undergo a big change. Your pastor (that would be me) is retiring. You will be going through the call process to find a new pastor. You will

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HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

April 2— Palm/Passion Sunday
Plan to join us at 10:00 a./via Zoom

April 6 – Maundy Thursday –
Join us in-person for Worship at noon.

April 7 – Good Friday –
Join us in-person for Worship at noon.

April 9 – Easter Worship –
Rejoice with us in-person at 10:00 am or via Zoom

Thoughts Along the Way Continues...

probably have an interim pastor and you will surely have some supply pastors preaching and leading worship. With all that change, anxiety could be waiting in the wings. Remember, “Common activators are significant changes and losses. They upset the stable patterns and balances of the system.”

Our anxiety does not come from thinking about the future, but from wanting to control it. – Kahlil Gibran

Peter Steinke taught that anxiety exists in every system but mature people and healthy systems manage it by being aware of it, naming it, and dealing with it calmly before it can spread. I have every confidence that you all will do exactly that. But anxiety can sneak up on you, so just be aware.

Worry often gives a small thing a big shadow. – Swedish Proverb

The great Charles Spurgeon once said, “Our anxiety does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows, but only empties today of its strengths.” The Little Church with a Big Heart has many, many strengths, the greatest of which is that love is profoundly present and alive in this church. God loves you, and God's love for you is manifested in your love for each other.

Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. – 1 Peter 5:7

I love you, too. And I will continue to love you and pray for you.

Pro Gloria Dei, Pastor Steve

“Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you.” – Anne Lamott

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.

CONGREGATION UPDATE

Greetings this Holy Season....

I'm sure that all of you are very interested and concerned as to what is transpiring in the calling of a new pastor after Pastor Steve's last day with us on May 28th. Margie Brown, Bob Siemer and I had an initial call with Pastor Toni Castaneda-Carrera, Assistant to the Bishop in our Synod in March. We learned that we are a little early in starting the actual call process. The process typically begins once the pastor retires and is no longer serving the congregation. We have guidelines and definite steps to follow under the direction of the Bishop and the Bishop's staff.

The first step is for the Council to appoint and form a Call Committee. If you would like to participate and serve on the Call Committee, please let me know. We would like this Call Committee to be in place by May 1st when Pastor Toni will be joining the Church Council meeting and answering questions as we begin the Call Process.

During the month of May, the Synod office will also present us with a couple of interim

pastors for our consideration. An interim pastor will be with us for several months until our permanent pastor is called to serve our congregation.

It is the aim of the Council and Call Committee to keep our church family informed of the progress being made throughout the call process. Everyone is invited to share their concerns and desires during this process as we look for a well-qualified spiritual leader for Gloria Dei. If you have a pastor to nominate, please let me know so the Bishop's office can follow appropriate procedures.

Save the date: On May 28th we will celebrate the final day of Pastor Steve's ministry serving Gloria Dei. Bishop Bos will be attending and participating in the worship service. More details will be coming for this very special celebration.

LSS: Every Easter, LSS provides families with a celebration including lunch, bags of Easter goodies for children and food supplies for the family's Easter dinners. This year's event is on April 1st. Your donations are so important in support of this celebration. ...Continued on page 4

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

~ James 1:17



Congregation Update Continues...

Donations can be made online on the Gloria Dei website (www.gdlclb.org), or by check to Gloria Dei and adding LSS on the memo line. Deliveries are always welcome and we typically go to LSS on Wednesdays. Please let us know if you need items picked up at your home.

Fe y Esperanza: On Easter, Fe y Esperanza has an Easter egg hunt for the children after their Easter worship service. They appreciate all our donations that help to support this event and their ministry. Recently food, clothing, and gently used household items were delivered. They continue to have worship services in their kitchen area as a result of the major damage done to their sanctuary from all of our recent rain. Keep them in your prayers as they work with insurance providers and contractors to make the needed, extensive repairs. Deliveries to Fe y Esperanza are typically made on Wednesdays.

ELCW: In March the women met and assembled hygiene kits for LSS. The next meeting is on April 13th at 11:00 a.m. The women will be sorting baby and toddler clothing and items for Precious Life. Please bring any new and/or gently used baby and toddler clothes to church to add to their donations. Bring a sandwich to share. All women are welcome to join us for a time of special fellowship. Margie Brown, chair of the ELCW recently donated additional quilts to the Long Beach Police Department that she has lovingly made to provide warmth and comfort to children during stressful situations. Margie has completed over 175 quilts (so far!)

Adult Education: Pastor Steve's adult education sessions on Wednesday and Sunday are fabulous! Join us on Wednesday mornings at 10:00 via Zoom. We are reading a wonderful book by Rob Bell, 'Love Wins'. Every week is a unique discussion and you can join us anytime. On Sunday mornings at 9:00 we're studying another fabulous book by Rob Bell, 'What is the Bible'.

Coming Events:

Holy Week will begin with Palm/Passion Sunday on April 2nd.

Church Council meeting, April 3rd at 7:00 p.m. via zoom

Maundy Thursday service will be at 12 noon on April 6th.

Good Friday service will be at 12 noon on April 7th.

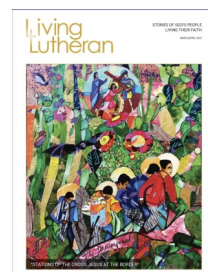
Easter Sunday, April 9th at 10:00 a.m. in person or on zoom.

Celebration of life for Dee Perretta will be on April 11th at 2:00 p.m. at Gloria Dei. A reception will follow the service. Everyone is invited to attend.

Noisy Offering and Birthday Cake Sunday, April 16th

We have so much to celebrate together as we continue to serve our mission partners and care for each other. We are a strong church family. Continue to pray for Pastor Steve as he starts a new season in his life. Pray also that the Holy Spirit will guide our decision-making process in calling a new leader for our church family.

Karen Como,
Council President



DID YOU KNOW...

You can LISTEN to the articles in the monthly publication! As an idea...walk and listen to the Editor's Note, enjoy the "I'm a Lutheran" testimony and ponder 'Holy Saturday, Holy Space' in the message from our Presiding Bishop. Featured in the March/April issue are standouts like "Seeing the Passion Story in a New Way," along with letting your attention be a prayer in "Rewilding Spirituality," and finally my favorite "Living Out the Gospel in Tangible Ways."

Savor the stories of God's People Living Their Faith — LIVINGLUTHERAN.ORG

SOUTH COAST INTERFAITH COUNCIL (SCIC) 70TH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

Marilyn Bittle is recognized as one of South Coast Interfaith's Board of Directors at the Annual Assembly held at Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Long Beach on March 9, 2023. **Representing Gloria Dei**, Marilyn serves on the Executive Committee as the Secretary & Harbor Area Farmers Markets Liaison. Thank you Marilyn for the years of servant work that has impacted the surrounding communities and made a difference in our ongoing quest for peace and collaboration.



Installation of Board of Directors for Renewing of Commitment
Present from Gloria Dei were Pastor Steve Beckham, Twyla Karkut, Margie Brown, Stephanie Siemer, and Sandy Nelson with husband Jeffrey Nelson.



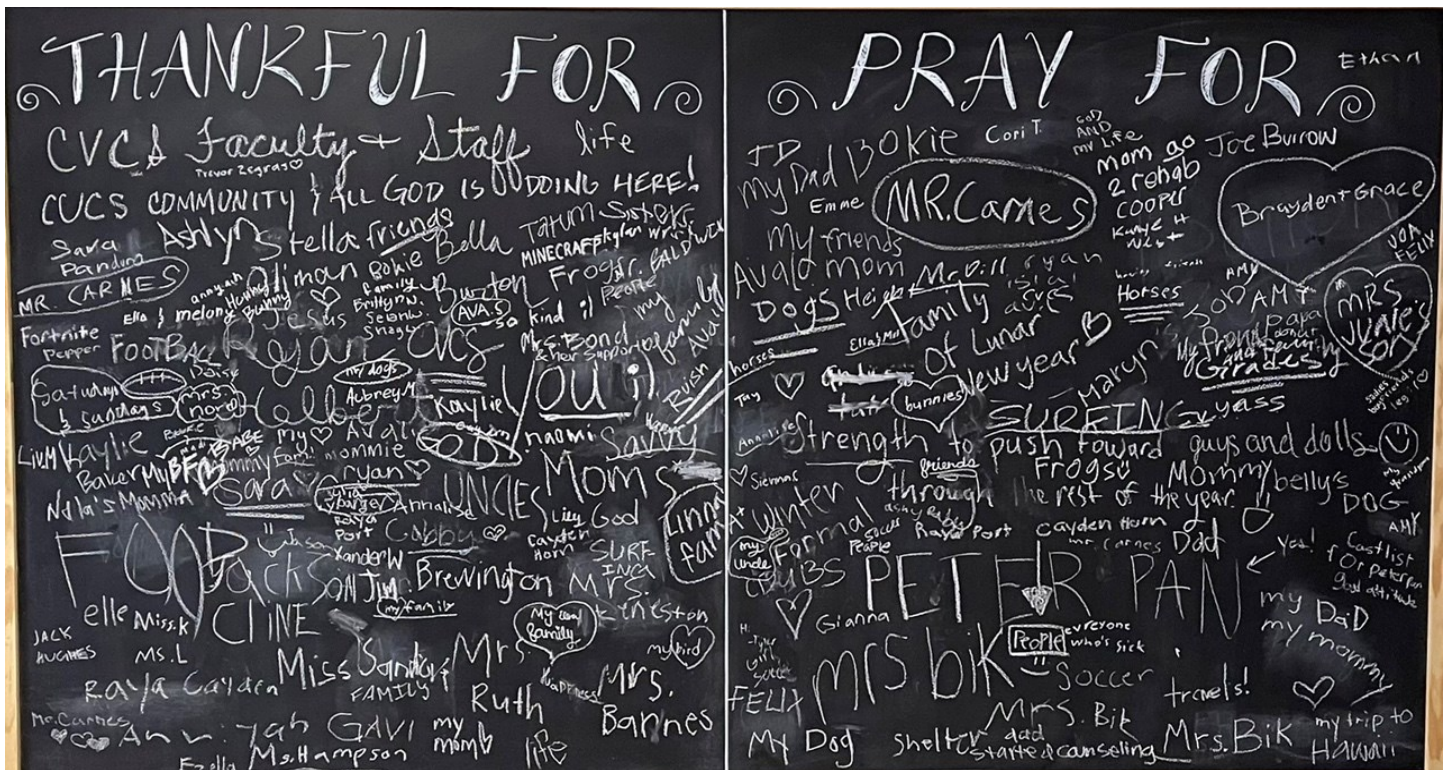
We are a church that values and encourages diverse voices and lively dialogue in our faith and life. You are invited to join us for Sunday worship and Holy Week services.

HELP, THANKS...WOW!

Our prayer wall welcomes all to share with the Naples community their petitions of intercession or expressions of gratitude and thankfulness. The prayer wall was inspired by Pastor Steve and installed by Galen Anderson. It is a powerful and visible belief in the efficacy of shared prayer. It is also an idea that has influenced others.

Last month Capistrano Valley Christian School (CVCS) received a prayer wall installed by our daughter, Carrie, and her family. The inspiration came from our prayer wall. Grades range from elementary and junior high to high school. It was announced to the school with these words: "Let's lift one another in prayer! Announcing the new CVCS prayer wall located in the hallway outside the Worship Center. CVCS believes in the power of prayer, and we know how powerful prayer can be in changing lives. We encourage any student, staff, or parent to write your prayer request or something you are thankful for. Students, please be respectful of the prayer wall and use it appropriately. (postscript – Donated by the Lybarger Family)

The prayer wall encourages these essential prayers – **Thankfulness and Help**. And here is the **Wow!** part. This is how the prayer wall looked at the end of the first day - a wonderful expression of belief in prayer, regardless of the age.



Recently Karen and I made a stop at Solvang. We started a casual conversation with a shop person who had recently moved from Long Beach. During our conversation, when she asked where we were from she mentioned that she often posted prayers on the prayer wall of a church near Seal Beach. It was gratifying and humbling to hear her share this with us.

The prayer wall is a visible expression of belief to the Gloria Dei's extended community. When you arrive at church, or when you leave, take a moment to acknowledge the prayers others have posted and say a prayer for all those who are reaching out to all of us.

(Apologies to Anne LaMott for appropriating for this article the title of her book 'Help, Thanks, Wow - The Three Essential Prayers'.)

~Author: Phil Como

CELEBRATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Birthdays & Anniversaries

APRIL 3

Happy Birthday Peggy Bockman

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

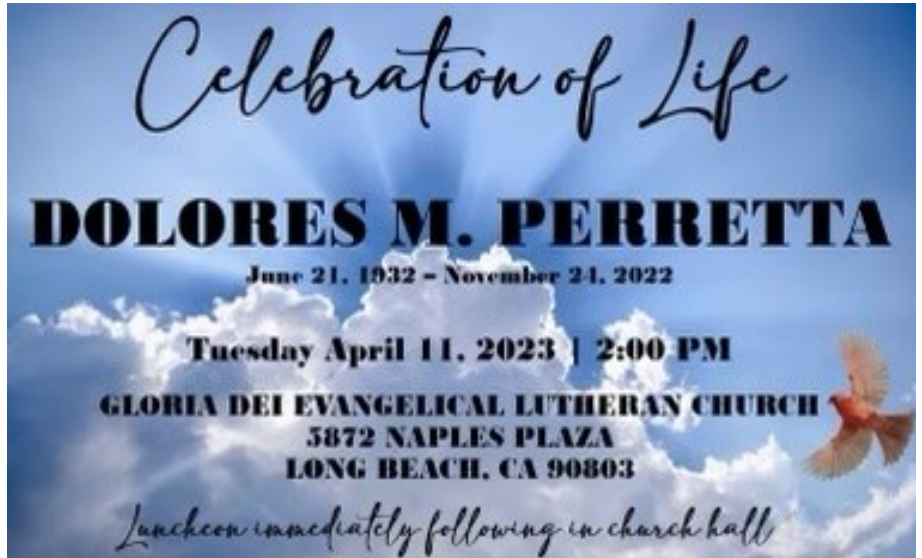
Happy Birthday Brooke White

“Be the reason someone feels welcomed, seen, heard, valued, loved. Sometimes the strength within you is not a big fiery flame for all to see, it’s just a tiny spark that whispers softly “you got this, keep going.”

~Denzel Washington

HONOR SOMEONE SPECIAL OR IN NEED!

PROVIDE YOUR OWN CHANCEL FLOWERS OR CONTACT SWEET PEAS FLORIST: 562.433.1342



THE POWER OF PRAYER

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



EARTH DAY — APRIL 22
Wisdom is a tree of life to those who embrace her. ~ Proverbs 3:18

Set this important day of celebration & recognition on your calendar!

Pastor Steve's RETIREMENT LUNCHEON

SUNDAY, MAY 28



- 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.

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

~ Genesis 12:2

GLORIA DEI EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

**5872 Naples Plaza
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)**

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

