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Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

BE OF GOOD COURAGE...

Beloved People of Gloria Dei,
I do believe that the Holy Spirit has been very present and active among us over these last eight months, culminating in your decision to call me as your pastor. I have experienced a deep and growing connection with the congregation as a whole, and each of you individually. Dare I use the metaphor that it has been a lovely period of dating, being engaged, and finally, marrying? Don't take that too far, but it has been, from the beginning, a delight to be with you. Now, I will admit that at nearly the moment I received the invitation to Pastor Steve's retirement, I got in touch with the Bishop to say, "You ARE going to make me the interim at Gloria Dei, Long Beach, right???" There were a few interim openings that got filled by others as I was trying to serve a congregation in my own town. I was so tired of traveling as far as 35 miles each way to the interim I was serving. Over the years I have traveled as far as 45 miles to San Gabriel to be the interim pastor. While I loved the people that I was serving and had served there for 4.5 years, I was thankful for the interim position at Gloria Dei.

Coming to Gloria Dei was far beyond what I had anticipated. I knew and loved Pastor Conter when he was here, as well as well as Pastor Steve. But I never knew what a wonderful, loving, faithful group of people you were. I never knew how interesting and fun you were, or all of the amazing gifts you contributed to the congregation and community. I did not know how big your hearts are, or how compassionate you are towards the least among us. I truly could not believe that I had been so lucky as to get to serve with such amazing Christians. I know some of my clergy friends are a little bit jealous when I tell them I am serving a group of no drama, grown-up people who do their jobs so that I can do what I do best. I very quickly felt that this interim position was my reward for so many difficult congregations I had served.

...Continued on page 2

Oh God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Evangelical Lutheran Worship

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Love God—

Try to find 5 ways every day that you see God at work in the world around you.

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!



LENT—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.

Pastor Message Continues...

I cannot tell you how humbled and blessed I feel to be called to serve as your pastor. It has been twelve years since I left my last position of being called by a congregation, and I have served in six interim positions since. I woke up on Monday morning with a sense of deep, deep calm and contentment. I don't have to worry anymore about what comes next after the interim is over. I don't have to worry about how long I might be unemployed, or how much I might have to take from my pension fund to survive. No, I get to work with you wonderful people until I can't work anymore. We have a future together of loving and serving God. We get to plan and grow together, perhaps not so much in numbers but in love and service together.

I look forward to worship, education, and service together. I am excited to continue to be your pastor, in good times and difficult times. Please know that you can call me with concerns, questions, hurts, sorrows, and joys. I have told every congregation that I have served, that the elders deserved to be loved and cared for until their last breath, and I am here for all of you.

I hope you will all be at my installation on April 20th. The Bishop will be with us, and the outstanding preacher will be one of my dearest friends, who is the pastor of the congregation I have been a member of since I started to do interim ministry. There will be some spectacular music (including a beautiful sung arrangement of "Beautiful Savior", and I have asked Richard to play my favorite piece of Bach for the postlude.) You will have the opportunity to meet some of the amazing people who have loved and helped me along the way, including from my "adopted family" in southern California. It will be a celebration of the Little Church with the Big Heart" which means a celebration for each of you. While there will be a lot of my friends and colleagues here, this is all about Gloria Dei, and our new ministry together. I will end with two phrases that sum up my faith: God is good, all the time, and Soli Deo Gloria: to God be the Glory.

+ Pastor Ruth Sievert

CONGREGATION & COUNCIL UPDATE

Exciting news! **Our congregation has called Pastor Ruth Sievert to be our new pastor.** She will continue to serve us with a wonderfully compassionate servant's heart. We will be blessed by her care for our congregation, her musical gifts, her love of our liturgical heritage and faith-centered education. With her spiritual guidance, our congregation has much to look forward to as we start a new chapter in the life of 'The Little Church with the Big Heart'. Thank you to our **Call Committee: Bob Siemer (Chairman), Margie Brown, Vicki Gammer, David Kahakauwila, Karen Como, Martie Engle, Marilyn Bittle, Beverly Pandora and Edie Graber** for their diligent and prayerful consideration in deciding to call Pastor Ruth. They spent many hours over the past year following a prescribed Synod format in making this important decision. The Call Committee is grateful to Gary Bockman for his support and guidance in determining the compensation plan. The Holy Spirit has brought us to this place and time in our church family's history and we will continue to move forward together in serving each other and our community under the care and guidance of Pastor Ruth.



We will be celebrating Pastor Ruth's installation on **Saturday, April 20th at 10:00 a.m.**, followed by a luncheon at the **Seal Beach Marina Community Center**. Save the date

and plan to attend this very special event.

Thank you for all your donations in support of our mission partners! Deliveries are made almost weekly because of your generosity and gifts from your friends and neighbors. In addition to LSS and Fe y Esperanza, we are also focusing on Lydia House Women & Children's Shelter. Please call Sandy if you need items picked up.

LSS: Their annual Easter celebration is on March 23rd. Please consider a cash donation to provide Easter baskets for the children and a holiday meal for the families.

Fe y Esperanza: Please donate your plastic grocery bags! They need more bags for their food distribution program. On Easter Sunday they will be providing the children with an Easter Egg hunt. Please consider donating a cash gift to support their food distribution and Easter celebration.

Long Beach Men's and Women's Shelter (Lydia House): Please place your donations in one of the boxes in the Fellowship Hall. Children's clothing is also needed. Your donations are greatly appreciated.

ELCW: Meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of each month. We have a short devotion followed by a service project and then lunch together. All women are welcome! Join us and bring a friend! The next meeting is on March 14^h at 11:00 a.m.

Adult Education: Join us for wonderful discussions on new topics each Sunday morning at 9:00 in the Fellowship Hall. Each Wednesday at 10:00 via Zoom we are reading "**Learning to Walk in the Dark: Because Sometimes God Shows Up at Night**" by Barbara Brown Taylor. Jump in anytime! Every week brings a new and interesting topic to enhance your faith journey and we enjoy fellowship with one another.

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"To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." ~ 1 Corinthians 12:7

SHAPED BY THE WORD

'I will bless you...and you will be a blessing to many others.' ~ Genesis 12:2

President Message Continues...

Mark your calendars...

March 4 – Church Council via zoom at 7:00 p.m.
 March 9 – LB Camerata Concert at 8:00 p.m.
 March 14 – ELCW at 11:00 a.m.
 March 17 – Birthday Cake Sunday/Noisy Offering
 March 24 – Palm Sunday
 March 29 – Good Friday
 March 31 – Easter Sunday (no adult education)

It's not too late to participate in the 40-40-40 Lenten Challenge. Click link <https://www.lentenchallenge.org/> to learn more. I encourage you to register and participate. At the top of the web page click **The Practices** for suggested steps you can take when participating. Phil and I are enjoying the **Lenten Daily Devotions** being sent to our email every morning.

A new beginning for Gloria Dei with Pastor Ruth and exciting times for our church family.

She has been leading us through our Lenten journey with meaningful symbolism. And we have been blessed with beautiful music by Richard. Please note we need **Easter Lily Plants** for Easter Sunday. Easter Sunday is almost here, and our sanctuary will be so beautiful with our cross of lilies! Invite your friends, neighbors and family to experience the beauty of Easter with us.

Karen Como, Council President

EASTER

On Easter Sunday, people across this church will gather in their living rooms or sanctuaries to hear the story of Christ's resurrection. The Easter story is our story—one of death, life, grace and love. As we declare "He is risen!" in and beyond worship, we echo the first disciples, who galvanized Christianity, by spreading the good news near and far.

More than 820 million people - that's about 11 percent of people in our world today - are hungry. As members of the ELCA, we are called to respond. We are a church that rolls up our sleeves and gets to work.

Working with and through our congregations, in the United States, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands Lutheran churches overseas and other partners, **ELCA World Hunger** is uniquely positioned to reach communities in need. From health clinics to microloans, water wells to animal husbandry, community meals to advocacy, your gifts to ELCA World Hunger make it possible for the ELCA to respond, supporting sustainable solutions that get at the root causes of hunger and poverty.

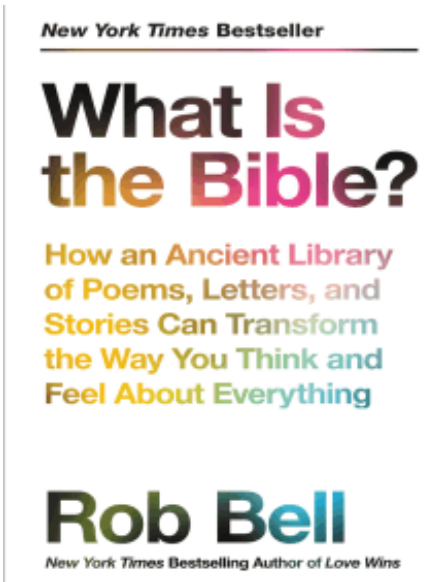




Spring is the season of optimism and the anticipation of all good things to come with the resurgence of nature: fresh blooms, singing birds, sweet scent in the air, and God's glorious, dazzling light!



STRENGTH FOR OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY



Roger Powell & Bob Siemer

BLESSINGS IN ABUNDANCE



Pastor Ruth & Office of the Bishop Representative—
Rev. Tracy Williams

— GOSPEL — NEW PBS PROGRAM

Hosted by
Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr.
Explore the Origin of Black Spirituality
Through Sermon & Song

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- 11 — Vicki Gammer
- 19 — Chris Wacker
- 20 — Mark Engle
- 25 — Beth Rotsel
- 27 — Bret Engle

Amazing — I am on God's mind every day!

God cares for us so that we lack nothing in our growth toward fullness of life. Sometimes our growth can be a painful process. But God know that pruning is a vital part of creating a healthy, mature life. In the end, God is always working to make something good out of our lives. Praise be to our Lord & Savior!

“What are human beings, that you exalt them, that you take not of them, visit them each morning, test them every moment?” ~ Job 7:17-18

GOD'S LOVE WEAVES US TOGETHER

"Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing to the Lord, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world." ~ Isaiah 12:4-5:



HOLY WEEK — Hosanna to the King

March 24 – Palm Sunday

March 29 – Good Friday

March 31 – Easter Sunday

We need your involvement...please sponsor **Easter Lily Plants** for Easter Sunday! Lily Plants can be ordered through **Christian Outreach in Action** in Long Beach for \$26 per plant. All proceeds go to their foodbank and other programs. If you'd like to order a Lily, please write a check and indicate 'Lily' in the memo line and place your check in the offering plate by **Sunday, March 11**. Information is available in the Fellowship Hall or contact our church office Monday-Thursday 10am-3pm! THANK YOU!



Jesus is a most unsettling character; his teachings, his reckless socializing with the unclean, his baffling parables, his criticism of religious officials, his unexplainable healings. After his death, the two Marys and Salome do not know what to do. A task they can handle—anointing his dead body. From inside the tomb, a voice says the risen Jesus is headed to Galilee and says 'go & tell the others.' But terrified, they run away. Wait, is there more? That's some EASTER story, we might complain. But what if Mark's gospel ending asks...

"How will your life and mine tell the rest of the story?"

*"May the God of hope
fill you with all
joy and peace
as you trust in him,
so that you may
overflow with hope
by the power
of the Holy Spirit."*

Romans 15:13

Camerata Conductor Lecture Series —

Wednesday, March 6 at 6:30 pm

FREE Event— Audience members are welcome to **enjoy the lecture** & stay for the **LBSO rehearsal** immediately following at 8:00 pm in the Terrace Theater!

Free parking in Terrace Theater Garage. **NOTE: Limited Seating Please RSVP!**

BRAHMS' REQUIEM

With the upcoming performance of Brahms' Requiem on March 9 featuring the LB Camerata Singers & the LB Symphony Orchestra, **Dr. Bass will describe the piece & give the audience historical context.**

The **Long Beach Camerata Singers** will be singing the **Brahms' Requiem** with the **Long Beach Symphony** on **Saturday, March 9, at 8:00 p.m.**

It's going to be a wonderful concert. If you are interested in going, you may call the Long Beach Symphony box office at (562) 436-3203, and use the **code Camerata 20 to receive 20% off** the cost of the ticket.

~ Pastor Ruth

[Did you know our pastor is a member!]

"Every time you SMILE at someone it is an action of LOVE. A gift to that person, a BEAUTIFUL thing." ~ Mother Theresa

CELEBRATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



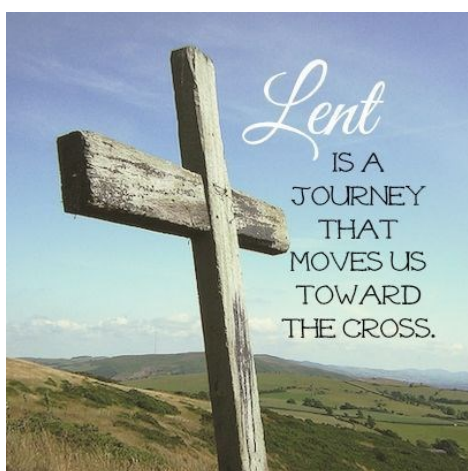
SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendar!
Saturday, April 20

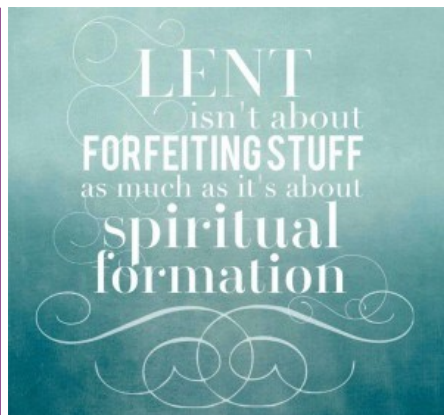
Pastor Ruth Sievert's
INSTALLATION & LUNCH

Thinking about giving up something for LENT? That's one traditional way of observing this season of reflection. There are, however, 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!



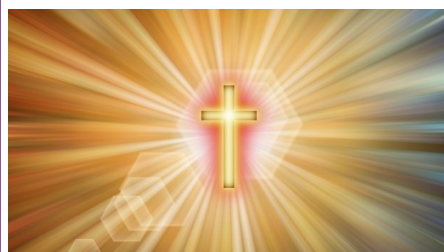
LENT IS A GOOD TIME TO TAKE INVENTORY. AND TO WONDER. AND TO BE GRATEFUL.



FOR GOD ... MADE HIS LIGHT SHINE IN OUR HEARTS!

2 CORINTHIANS 4:6

“KEEPERS OF THE LIGHT”



LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES Support our Local Long Beach Community

Embrace Empower Equip



- Emergency Services
- Transitional Services
- Social Services



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

~ Ephesians 1:8



- MARCH 2 Read Across America Day
- MARCH 5 National Day of Unplugging
- MARCH 10 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS
- MARCH 12 National Girl Scouts Day
- MARCH 14 National Potato Chip Day
- MARCH 17 St. Patrick's Day
- MARCH 19 First Day of Spring



- MARCH 23 National Puppy Day
- MARCH 25 International Waffle Day
- MARCH 26 National Spinach Day

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)

