

GLORIOUS DEI ...



Reverend Ruth Sievert, Pastor
 5872 Naples Plaza Long Beach, California 90803-5044
 Website: www.gdlclb.org Telephone: 562.438.0929

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

BUILDING THE KINGDOM...

I have a great fondness for technology, and happily use it on a daily basis. But, as most of you know, technology and I have been at odds recently. Some weeks, I am able to put together the Power Point presentations for Sunday worship fairly smoothly. Other weeks, I am counting the days until the Siemers get back from their long trip and Bob can take this task back! I have had a couple of weeks in which I seem to be fighting with the computer more than using it. Life is just like that sometimes. We can get caught up in the problem rather than the solution. We can get caught up in frustrations, rather than in enjoying life. Everything becomes about me and my need to solve my problems, rather than in interacting with people. This has been true for me for several days of the last week.

Last October a new restaurant opened just three doors north of us on Naples Plaza, called Marlena's. I think the prices are pretty high, but since we are in a rather high-rent area, that makes sense. Some time ago, I started walking down there after I leave the office for what I call "Happy Hour Evangelism." I sit at the bar and have a drink, and maybe an appetizer. Now this is a whole new experience for me! I have never, ever, in my life, just gone and sat at a bar.

But at Marlena's I have come to know several of the bartenders and the owner. And every single time I am there, I end up in a conversation with someone new and inevitably, I tell them that I work three doors down: I am the pastor of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church. They look down and ask, "The Christian Scientist Church?" "No, we are on this side of the street. The little Lutheran Church." "Oh," they say. Many of them comment on the benches in front and some mention the Prayer Wall and how great they think that is. I have some amazing conversations with people about their relationship with the church, including their frustrations and disappointments with it. They ask me what I like about being a pastor, what Lutherans believe about different things, and they mention bad experiences with church and why church has no meaning for them anymore. And I always invite them to Gloria Dei: "10 am on Sunday morning and we will give you coffee and treats after worship!"

I have never been in an environment outside of the church in which I have consistently had these kinds of conversations. There is just

Inside this issue:

Legacy of Kindness	2
Congregation Update	3
Clairboyance — Bel Canto Book Launch	4
Cal Lutheran Leadership	4
New Member Spotlights	5-6
Celebrations & Announcements	7

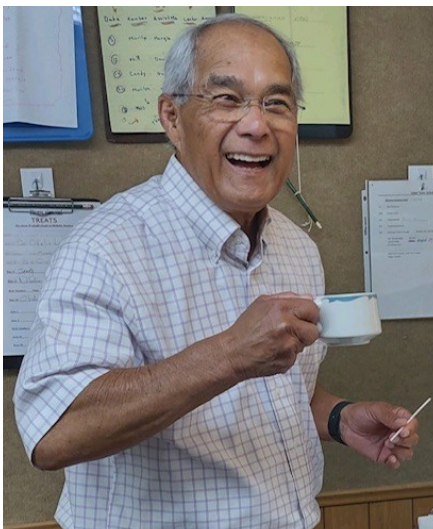


A LEGACY OF LOVE & KINDNESS

Pastor Message Continues...

something about sitting at the bar at the end of the day, having drinks alongside other people who are doing the same thing at the end of their workdays that makes it possible to have these conversations. I don't know if anyone will ever take me up on my invitation, but going there after my technology battles over the last week has reminded me that I am here to share the love of God with the world. Maybe I'm planting some seeds, maybe not. But I know that each of these people have had a pleasant conversation with a disciple of Jesus, hearing that God is about love for all people. And I go home having left my frustrations behind for another day. I really like my Happy Hour Evangelism, and a whole bunch more people know about our church!

Faithfully, Pastor Ruth



Equip your faithful people to approach this world with a sense of wonder. Make your church a safe place to explore big questions, troubling doubts, and honest laments. Humble our hearts to repent of the ways that communities of faith have inflicted pain or trauma.



GROWING IN FAITH, LIFTED BY HOPE, GUIDED BY LOVE

God's love in these times | Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton | 2024 Synod Assembly

Have you heard the phrase, "May you live in interesting times?" Many would say we live in uncertain times, with a world experiencing war and famine, the stress and lingering effects of the pandemic. But Bishop Eaton reminds us that as people of the Resurrection we also live in hope. God's love sustains us even in the most difficult times. We live in interesting times because God's love is always real. download: <https://bit.ly/3vUbyhe>

CONGREGATION & COUNCIL UPDATE

It seems that every Sunday is a celebration at Gloria Dei! Fellowship following Sunday worship, our Birthday Cake Sundays, and celebrating the many ways we serve the community. In June we had an extra **'Birthday Cake Sunday' to celebrate Pastor Ruth's** new-decade birthday. Of course, we also had our scheduled Birthday Cake Sunday to celebrate all June birthdays. On July 21 we will again celebrate birthdays and have our regular Noisy Offering.



In June we also celebrated the installation of our **Council members for 2024-2025**. Those serving as Council members are: **Lark Adam, Marilyn Bittle, Gary Bockman, Margie Brown, Karen Como, Phil Como, Vicki Gammer, David Kahakauwila, Jean O'Connell, Roger Powell, Beth Rotsel, Bob Siemer and Candy Wood**. Thank you to all who are serving! According to our church's constitution, we have room for two (2) additional Council members. If you are interested/willing to serve, please let one of the members know and we'll be happy to have you join us!

Please note: all church members are welcome to attend Council meetings which are held via Zoom. Because of vacation schedules, the Church Council will not meet in July; our next meeting will be held on **Wednesday, August 7 at 7:00 p.m.**

At a recent Long Beach Century Club event, **Kalani Caldwell** was awarded the **'Keith Hansen Memorial Award' for her long-term support of athletics in the Long Beach Unified School District**. As the swim coach at Long Beach Poly High School, she led her team to five (5) consecutive Moore League Championships. This is a school record for consecutive league championships! Congratulations to Kalani for her many years of service and her accomplishments.



Thanks, also, to **Sandy Nelson** for spearheading the 'Diaper Drive' in support of the Christian Outreach in Action initiative.

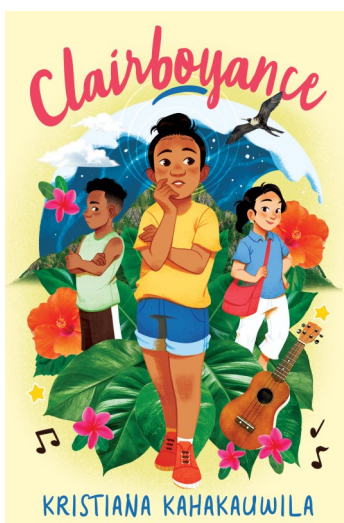
...Continued from Page 3

LSS: Although summer has just started, it's time to begin our Back-to-School shopping. The necessary school supplies for one child can be purchased at the Dollar Tree for \$25. Personal Shoppers are available! On your check, please write 'School Supplies' on the memo line or put cash in an envelope, labelled 'School Supplies' or place it in the Sunday offering plate and the shopping will begin. LSS needs the items in early August so they can be distributed to the children and families they support. **Back-to-school clothing** is always needed for older students, especially this time of the year.

Fe y Esperanza: They will be celebrating another **Vacation Bible School** from July 15 through July 27. If you would like to support this program please indicate on your worship card. Regular deliveries of gently used household items and grocery bags are made nearly every week. Your support is appreciated and celebrated by their members and the community they serve.

Mark your calendar and bring your gift list for a book launch at **Bel Canto** books in **Long Beach** — **Sunday, July 28 at 4pm**. Tiana would love to sign books for the young and young at heart!

It's her second book! It's a **novel for middle grade readers (roughly ages 8-12)** and tells the story of Clara, a Hawaiian girl who, after wishing on a family heirloom to hear what



boys are thinking, gets her wish! But does her newfound gift come too late to figure out what went wrong with her ex-best friend Leo? If Clara can use what she hears to solve her problems, then her powers might just be able to make up for lost time— but instead, she ends up making a bigger mess of everything. While scrambling to fix her mistakes, Clara must question old friendships, enter into new ones, and try to figure out what makes a home, and if she is willing to leave hers behind.

ELCW: The women celebrated another year of being together at a luncheon at the Sun Café in Seal Beach. We will take the summer off and begin meeting again in September.

Coming Events:

July Council Meeting in recess

July 21 – Noisy offering and Birthday Cake Sunday

August 7 – Council Meeting via Zoom at 7:00 p.m.

September – Adult Education will resume on Sunday and Wednesday mornings

We have so many reasons to celebrate the many blessings in our lives, especially our time together and the laughter that fills our Fellowship Hall every Sunday. Invite your friends and family to experience the joy we share. Continue to pray for our many members as they travel this summer, and for those who are unable to be with us.

Karen Como, Council President



ELCA

Several of us have had the privilege of knowing Dr. Nunes through his exemplary work as

President and CEO of Lutheran World Relief and as the president of Concordia College in New York. His leadership and dedication were evident both as the keynote speaker at the 2019 Pacifica Synod Assembly, where he inspired us with his profound love of Jesus and unwavering faith in the gospel, and during the latest gathering of the Lutheran Executive Alumni Network. Dr. Nunes is a long-time supporter of Lutheran higher education, and we are confident that under his leadership, the mission of Lutheran higher education will continue to thrive. His experience and dedication to the values of our faith will undoubtedly guide **California Lutheran University** through these challenging times for higher education. We ask you to join us in praying for his courageous leadership. We are eager to walk alongside Dr. Nunes and California Lutheran as they continue to embrace and celebrate their Lutheran identity, loving God and God's people,

With heartfelt support,
Bishop Brenda Bos, Southwest California Synod Bishop Jim Gonia, Rocky Mountain Synod Bishop Deborah Hutterer, Grand Canyon Synod Bishop Jeff Johnson, Sierra Pacific Synod Bishop Dave Nagler, Pacifica Synod

MEET NEW MEMBER — OFELIA LOPEZ

How did a retired Air Force Major who was in Honduras during the time of the Sandinistas and assisted the soldiers during Desert Storm find her way to our "Little Church With A Big Heart" in Naples?

The answer is nursing and music.

Born and raised in Santa Barbara, she left home at nineteen years of age. "I knew in high school that I would go into nursing. I did some theater arts but knew that I could not support myself on that so decided I would be a nurse," she explained. "I wanted to go to medical school but couldn't afford it and calculus was too hard," she said with a laugh. While studying for her Family Nurse Practitioner degree at L.A. County School of Nursing, she met her future husband, a Colonel and pathologist in the military. "We traveled a lot because of the military," she explained and, after putting in her twenty years, she retired as a Major in the United States Air Force. Unfortunately, she was widowed when her husband died of stomach cancer.



While at Ford Ord, she worked with Desert Storm troops and in the late 1980's was in Honduras during the time of the Sandinistas. "I provided various types of medical support in a "tent city" type of situation, performing physicals, providing medical supplies and handling sick calls for the troops.

Not one to let grass grow under her feet, Ofelia continued in her healthcare career. She obtained her Masters Degree from CSULB, and eventually her Doctorate degree from Chamberlain College of Nursing, as a Family Nurse Practitioner. Eventually she met and married her second husband Frank. They split their living time between La Quinta and Long Beach. "Frank was from Long Beach so he loved spending time here," she explained. "We bought a condo in 2003 and a boat slip so we would have a place to retire. We enjoyed sailing on our Catalina 32." In 2016 they moved permanently to Long Beach. "Frank was happy that I took a teaching job as a professor in the School of Nursing at CSULB so we could live here full time." After 20 years, Ofelia was widowed for a second time when Frank died in 2016 of heart failure and lung cancer. "I cherish the time that I had on the boat with Frank and have such wonderful memories of that. I didn't know many people in Long Beach before that but after Frank died I started meeting a lot of people," she said. "I'm enjoying my life now and do whatever I want to do. Life is good. I'm spending time with my family too." She has two sons and six grandchildren and a sister, Coralia, in San Marino who is a retired LAPD detective. She is enjoying her life sailing, paddle boarding and "Driving my electric boat," she exclaimed with contagious enthusiasm. "I love the water! I love music too", she said, explaining how she met Edie Graber. "I went to the Orange County Fair and heard a great band called 'Johnny Tyler and the Soul Review' and Edie's son, Billy, was playing. We started dating and eventually he took me to Edie's house for Thanksgiving."

Her life is not all just boating and music now. Born to serve, she went back to work for the U.S. Customs and Border protection in support of the humanitarian mission through a government contract. Working three days a week allows her to serve and still have free time to pursue her other interests.

With so much living under her belt serving others, I asked her what was the most fulfilling. "I was humbled the most in Central America. You know, ignorance really is bliss, as they say. These little kids had nothing and they were happy. They had no shoes and would walk through the jungle barefoot," she said thoughtfully. "I remember I was going to eat a cracker with some peanut butter on it and they were watching me and I just gave it to them. I learned to appreciate what I have."

She loves her lifestyle now, going to musical gigs and going to church. Take the time to welcome Ofelia when you see her!

Author: Vicki Gammer

MEET THE RICHARD YOU DIDN'T KNOW

Richard has been playing organ at Gloria Dei for 34 years but when he became an official member, May 19, some were surprised that he wasn't a member all along.

I asked him why he decided to change his status after so long. "I always thought it might be a conflict to be a member and an employee at the same time," he said adding, "then Pastor Ruth asked me why not join and I said, 'I don't know, I guess I could.'"

Born in Los Angeles, Richard said he lived there until his brother was born. "For the first 3 years of my life, I lived close to the famous Los Angeles Coliseum. Ours was a musical family—my dad played trumpet, drums, and a little piano; mom played piano, and my brother played the guitar and drums."

Even though I've known Richard for many years, I was fascinated to find that his initial dream was to be an astrophysicist. He said, "I first did not intend to become a musician, but had, from an early age, been fascinated with astronomy. I had two telescopes and spent many a chilly evening on the roof of our family home looking at the moon, the planets, and stars. In high school there was a group of us who were science nerds, much like the TV show *The Big Bang Theory*," he said with a chuckle. "I totally related to the guys in that show."

"When I graduated I was accepted into the astrophysics department at UCLA. But at the last moment I couldn't attend due to transportation problems. Instead went CSU-Long Beach as a physics major. I loved math, but soon I learned that the real world of physics wasn't as exciting as I had envisioned it. I looked around for a new major, and because I had studied piano as kid, I thought I would try a music class. In my first music class, I met and became friends with Karen Carpenter of the Carpenters singing duo. The music people were so fun and creative I knew I had found my field."

Richard added that his mother was not happy with his decision and asked him what he was going to do with a music degree. "That's funny because there aren't a lot of job opportunities out there for an astrophysicist," he chuckled.

"Growing up in the Lutheran Church, I became fas-

cinated with the pipe organ. At CSULB I earned a Bachelor's degree in music and then Master's Degree in organ performance, with an emphasis in church music and choral conducting." While pursuing his masters in 1974, he wrote his thesis on American Organ Music. Because it was 1976, it was perfect timing for his organ recital for the 200-year anniversary of our 1776 Independence.

Studying organ gave him the opportunity to get to know Gaylord Carter. "Gaylord was famous for being the organist for the silent movies. He traveled all over the United States playing in theaters. He even played for the film *Birth of a Nation*," he said, adding, "He was at least in his 80's back then. I have one of his autographed albums."

"I worked at my home church as organist and in January 1990 I took over the duties of organist at Gloria Dei Lutheran and later became Director of Music and Organist-Choir Director. At the same time I started working at Lakewood High School as choral and dance accompanist. After 25 years, I retired in December 2015."

"For fun I enjoy composing music for choir and organ. I also enjoy traveling and have visited Australia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Ecuador, Peru, and Mexico."

"My abiding passion for over 40 years has been genealogy. I have traced my mother's roots back as far as the 1700's in Germany. I traced my father's lines back to the 1100's in Norway, the 1500's in England, to colonial America in the 1600's where I had one relative who was executed as a witch in Salem, Massachusetts. I discovered I am related to a number of famous people including poet Emily Dickinson, and actor Ben Affleck."

As far as his bucket list goes "I would really like to take the famous Hurtigruten cruise up along the Norwegian Coast and then take the train back down."

Author: Vicki Gammer



NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS — JULY/AUGUST 2024



10 WAYS TO LOVE

LISTEN
without interrupting.

SHARE
without pretending.

SPEAK
without accusing.

ENJOY
without complaint.

GIVE
without sparing.

TRUST
without wavering.

PRAY
without ceasing.

FORGIVE
without punishing.

ANSWER
without arguing.

PROMISE
without forgetting.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

JULY

2 — Twyla Karkut

6 — Martie Engle

22 — Lark Adams

AUGUST

4 — Jonathan Blizer

5 — Janet Sims

14 — Edie Graber

16 — Sandy Irvine

21 — Danny Bach

26 — Judy Griggs

31 — Peggy Huggard

CELEBRATE GOD'S LOVE

JULY

22 — Sandy & Jeffrey Nelson

AUGUST

8 — Donna & Mike Malbon

27 — Phil & Karen Como

For God...made His light
shine in our hearts.

KEEPERS OF THE
LIGHT



My soul magnifies the
Lord, and my spirit
rejoices in God
my Savior.

~ Luke 1: 46-47

God's work. Our hands. September 8, 2024

This day is an opportunity to
celebrate who we are as the
Evangelical Lutheran Church
in America — one church,
freed in Christ to serve and
love our neighbor.

Service activities offer an
opportunity for us to explore
one of our most basic
convictions as Lutherans: that
all of life in Jesus Christ —
every act of service, in every
daily calling, in every corner
of life — flows freely from a
living, daring confidence in
God's grace.

the newsletter

GLORIOUS DEI
NEWSLETTER
AUGUST HIATUS

SUBMIT STORY IDEAS,
RESOURCES & SUGGESTIONS
to editor via email:
PBOCKMAN@FULLERTON.EDU

GLORIA DEI EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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



Return Service Requested

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage paid
Long Beach, California
Permit No. 2190



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)

