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Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

BUILDING THE KINGDOM...

I have served as an interim pastor for 11.5 of the last 12 years. Having been called by you six months ago and installed as your official pastor 4 months ago, I have begun to comprehend that I am no longer the temporary pastor. It has taken a while for it to really sink in that, unlike my other interim positions, I am not the temporary pastor, just here to clean up the messes of the last pastor, try to find some people who can actually lead, and possibly call a new pastor or just mark time until they have to close. It has finally started to become clear to me that I have been called by you for the long haul, and not just working here week to week, month to month. It is a big paradigm shift after so many years, and I am so happy about that. It is so good to know that I am really home here at Gloria Dei.

Our Sunday morning Adult Education will resume on Sunday, September 8, at 9:00 am. I spent a lot of time this summer reading and deciding what I think we should do with this class. What we did last year, with a different article each week, sometimes worked well and sometime was kind of dismal. I decided we need to read a book that digs deep into an important subject. The book I have chosen is **The False White Gospel**, by Jim Wallis. While it is very present in politics, the issue of Christian Nationalism is NOT a political issue, but a theological issue. It is the perversion of Christianity by people who want our faith to serve them, rather than us serving God. This will not focus on politics! I hope that all of our regulars and maybe some of you who have not attended this class will join in. You will need to have a copy of this book to really participate in the class. You can get it as a Kindle Book on Amazon for \$14.99, or, I will be glad to order you a hardcover copy from Amazon (I belong to Prime and have free shipping) for the cost of \$20.94 or you can buy it yourself. Please let me know by Sunday, September 1 if you would like me to order you a copy. I am really looking forward to this conversation, even knowing that it will challenge all of us in our thinking. You are such smart, well-read people that I know we can have wonderful conversations about this topic.

One thing I want to do is visit each of you in your homes. I want to see where you live and have one-on-one or one-on-two time, to get to know you better. What are your wants and needs in your life and for our congregation? What would you like to see more of or what new ideas do you have? I have no plans for major changes because why try to fix something that isn't broken? But I want to learn what else I can bring to you. Starting on September 1, I will have a sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Hall for you to pick a day and time that works for you.

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SEPTEMBER 2024

GLORIA DEI EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

GLORIOUS DEI . . .

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Pastor Message Continues...

I have another request from you. I have a form I want you to fill out that gives me emergency information and how to reach your next of kin in the event of an emergency. I also want you each to think about what you would like to have happen at your funeral/memorial service. I have no plans of burying anybody any time soon, but I would really like to know what scripture texts are important to you, and hymns you would like to have sung. I hope you will all opt to have your service at Gloria Dei, rather than some mortuary. Will you have a funeral with your body or ashes present, or a memorial service? I always make these services a celebration of life! Let's face it, with few exceptions, we have all past the point of "dying young." It's helpful for you to indicate your preferences, and it makes it easier for your family. Are there particular people you want involved in your service? Other concerns you have? I will have the forms available at church starting on September 1, and it will be one of our topics of conversation when I come to visit you.

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



"DO NOT GET LOST IN A SEA OF DESPAIR. BE HOPEFUL, BE OPTIMISTIC. OUR STRUGGLE IS NOT THE STRUGGLE OF A DAY, A WEEK, A MONTH, OR A YEAR, IT IS THE STRUGGLE OF A LIFETIME. NEVER, EVER BE AFRAID TO MAKE SOME NOISE AND GET IN GOOD TROUBLE, NECESSARY TROUBLE."

— JOHN LEWIS

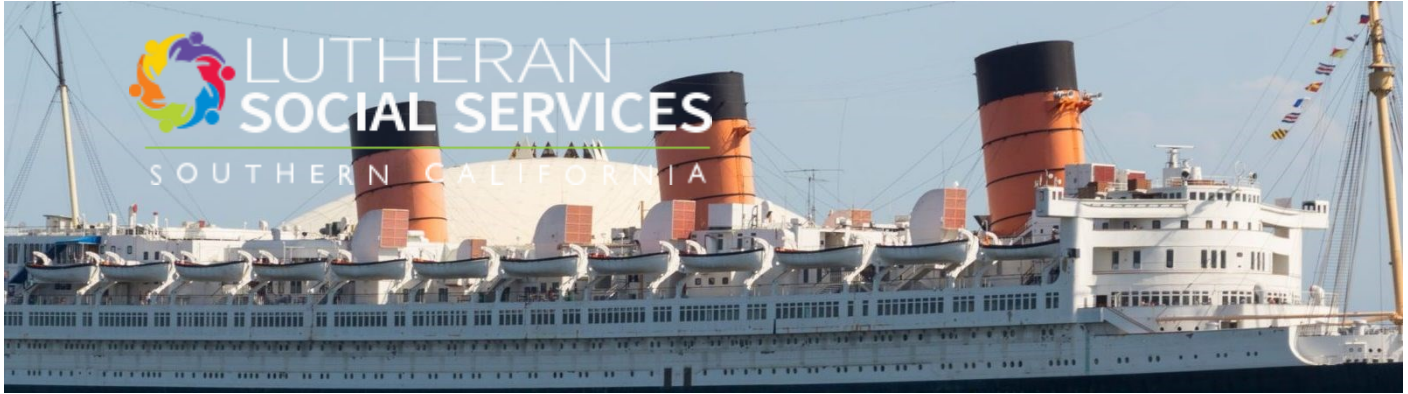
Every time I see or talk to my friends on the phone they ask me "how are you?" to which I respond, "I'm happy!" I love being your pastor, more than I have ever loved being a pastor. This "Little Church With the Big Heart" is a great congregation to serve. You are wonderful people with whom to do ministry and serve our community. Thank you for calling me to be your pastor!

Pastor Ruth Sievert



Soul, adorn yourself with gladness!

“History judges every civilization by the same criteria: how far they allow the poorest among them to fall” – Arnold Toynbee



SUPPORT FOR LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES — LONG BEACH

In addition to the large quantity of **Back-to-School supplies** we delivered, weekly trips to LSS were made this summer because of the numerous donations of clothing and gently used household items. Our 'Noisy Offering' is really appreciated and continues to be a special tradition at Gloria Dei. As we move into Fall and the colder months ahead, consider your donations of gently used jackets (especially for children and men) and blankets. Reassess your garage for unwanted sleeping bags—remember they are always in NEED and are always appreciated.



God’s LOVE...Let it Give You Eyes to See the World!



REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR OUR COMMUNITY

RECENTLY REFRESHED...ADD A NAME OR TWO !

PRAYER OF PEACE

May I become at all times, both now and forever:

- a protector for those without protection;**
- a guide for those who have lost their way;**
- a ship for those with rivers to cross;**
- a sanctuary for those in danger;**
- a lamp for those without light;**
- a place of refuge for those who lack shelter;**
- and a servant to all in need.**

“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

SPIRITUAL DEEPENING — BISHOP BOS

Most beloved siblings,

A man shot several bullets into a campaign rally in Pennsylvania on July 13. A former president, again a candidate, was targeted. People died. We are reminded again of how fleeting life is and how close by violence lurks.

Over and over people say, 'This is not who we are as a country.' Friends, this is exactly who we are as a country. Divided, angry. Single gunmen destroying multiple lives within seconds. We have limited access to mental health care and vast access to weapons.

I despair because as a spiritual leader, I can pray and call for peace all day long and it does not seem to matter. Evil exists all around us. Genocide, mass shootings targeting children or migrants or African descent shoppers or Jewish worshippers. Stunning disregard for the cries of the oppressed. Cruelty, dressed up as a veto or a legislative bill. 'Political objectives' carried out with missiles and embargo.

The challenge seems to be the distance we allow ourselves from the suffering. This is the height of privilege, to be able to take a break from violence or agony. We can shut down the news site, we can whisper a prayer, and go about our day. Do you know some news outlets have a minimum about of casualties necessary for a shooting to be reported? If three people are gunned down in a mall, that may not make national news. But think of the hundreds of people who will be affected forever by their proximity to loss and violence. We have to care.

And yet, compassion fatigue is real. We cannot bear the weight of the world. We have to look away. Humans cannot take on the pain of wars in Ukraine and Gaza and a shooting in Pennsylvania and a hurricane in Texas and our own family and the ministry you serve simultaneously. We know that is harmful to our body and mind.

So what is a person of faith to do? First, we must acknowledge there is a problem. After COVID, none of us can ever believe 'everything is fine.' When we see all the suffering in the world, we wonder if anything can ever be OK again. We are broken. God told us this was true.

Second, only God is capable of holding the pain of the whole world. We are not the world's savior. Jesus took care of that so we don't have to. This does not mean we abdicate our responsibilities to love others. But it is right for us to feel helpless. The world needs Jesus.

Third, we must understand time and place. We are already living eternal life. Some of our eternal life is lived in human bodies on this earth, most will be lived in our spirit long after this life is over. I do not say that to dismiss our earthly toil, but that this moment in time is only one part of eternity. God is the Author of the eternal story and we are invited into that story. We need endurance and we need resilience. And we need to understand it's not all about us, but all about God, who knows all. In my mind, the only way to stay engaged in this earthly struggle is to stay connected to our eternal home and our eternal parent. We can only love and forgive and hope because God gives us the ability to do those things.

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“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone” — Colossians 4:6

When we position ourselves as people who love and forgive, we can become people who can live in the midst of turmoil. We can engage in dialogue with people with whom we disagree because we realize God loves them too. But we **MUST** take a hard look at ourselves. As soon as we say, 'Those people need to change,' we miss the point. We must look deeply at our own hearts. Where is there hatred or distrust or gossip or assumptions which are harmful within our own thinking? This seems to be the work of the faithful in these days. Instead of pointing out the flaws of the world, let's do the deep spiritual work of cleaning up the areas in our own lives which keep us from brave, fruitful relationships. God calls us to healing, first between us and God, then us with ourselves, then us with each other. Only God can do this, and as people of faith, we have received the incredible gift of knowing how to connect to God, receiving grace.

The 12-step process understands this. We focus on cleaning up 'our own side of the street.' The only person we can change is ourself. And that we can do, with God's help.

You may be surprised that this message, after a presidential assassination attempt, is to turn inward so we can love more deeply outward. But it seems we are a nation that has forgotten that step, to welcome God's healing in ourselves first. I truly believe God wants a spiritual deepening in each of us, and I see this is where spiritual authority, in bishops, pastors and deacons, and teachers is best claimed. May God make it so. ~ Bishop Brenda Bos

PARTNERS IN CHRIST — FE Y ESPERANZA



Fe y Esperanza: This special church is actively providing for their church family and surrounding community seven (7) days a week with their food distribution, mental health counselling and health and wellness classes. Your support is appreciated and celebrated by their members. Please let Sandy Nelson know if you'd like to join one of us when making a delivery to see, first-hand, the joy Fe y Esperanza brings to their community. Regular deliveries of gently used household items and grocery bags are made nearly every week.

Please keep **Pastor Marta** and her son Hector in your prayers. Hector will be having heart surgery in early September.

GOD'S WORK — OUR HANDS

Christ asks us 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.

WALKING IN GRACE

“Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.” - Luke 22:29

Summertime is typically a time for vacations and relaxing from our normally busy schedules. While many of us took vacations and had some exciting adventures, our 'Little Church with a Big Heart' kept very active this summer in reaching out to our community.

In July we supported the needs of the **Christian Outreach in Action initiative** with a **Diaper Drive**. We also had a special offering to support Fe y Esperanza's two (2) week **Vacation Bible School**.

During July and August, we collected school supplies for the LSS Back-to-School event that was held on August 24th. Our church family helped many children in the Long Beach area with the supplies and tools needed to ensure that they will have a successful year in school. We are so fortunate to have our own in-house cheerleader, Sandy Nelson, who oftentimes alerts us of the needs and requests from various entities and then coordinates the activities and distribution.

New and improved lighting is in the Sacristy and in Pastor Ruth's and Sandy's offices and two of the rolling barricades in the parking lot have been fixed thanks to Phil Como.

ELCW Women group will resume meeting on September 12th at 11:00 a.m. Everyone is welcome including friends and family. This is a wonderful time of fellowship with good lunches and desserts!

The service and fellowship of our church is more than a once-a-week occurrence. In addition to our regular Sunday morning worship services, we extend opportunities for many groups to meet in our Fellowship Hall throughout the week. We extend our friendship and service within our community to LSS and Fe y Esperanza and others who help to provide for those in need during the week. Encourage your friends, neighbors and family members to donate their gently used items as way of participating in service to our community. Let them know that we are a church that is active every day of the week, even during summer vacation, and all are welcome to join in the joy of serving!

Council President
Karen Como

Coming Events:

September 4th – Council Meeting via Zoom 7:00 p.m.

September 8th – God's Work. Our Hands Sunday (more information to follow)

September 12th – ELCW in the Fellowship Hall at 11:00 a.m.

September 15th - Noisy offering and Birthday Cake Sunday

September – Adult Education will resume on Sunday and Wednesday mornings

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS — SEPTEMBER 2024

God's Work. Our Hands. Sunday September 8

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.

"For the joy of the Lord is your strength."
- Nehemiah 8:10

the newsletter

SEPTEMBER 23 —
**GLORIOUS DEI
NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**

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

Wonderful God, we praise you for your extravagant love, protection & mercy. Your marvelous works add beauty & aesthetics to my life...so thankful I am wonderfully and beautifully made! Amen!



Our values are grounded in faith, in our biblical and Lutheran confessional sources and our love of God and neighbor. They speak to the way this church lives and practices our faith, and they will guide how we journey forward in Christ as church together.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

- 9 — Ted Conter
Debi Nahigyan
- 12 — David Kahakauwila
- 18 — Margie Brown
Kalani Caldwell
- 20 — Meri Beckham
- 21 — Howard Davis
- 22 — Tiana Kahakauwila

2 CORINTHIANS 4:6

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

"KEEPERS OF THE LIGHT"

WHERE ALL MAY DWELL

JOIN US FOR
WORSHIP AT 10:00 AM

WE ARE A CHURCH THAT VALUES
AND ENCOURAGES DIVERSE VOICES
AND LIVELY DIALOGUE
IN OUR FAITH AND LIFE.

SEPTEMBER 4 —

**CHURCH COUNCIL
MEETING @ 7PM**

BISHOP EATON —
"Political violence has a long history but no place in democracy."



This church belongs to God, and our unity in Christ is a grace-filled and healing gift in a fractured society."

A LEGACY OF KINDNESS



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)

