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# Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

## THOUGHTS ALONG THE WAY...

It's time.

Time to get out the boxes with the special decorations, each one with its own story and all of them together part of the bigger story. It's time to deck the halls, to fill the home with light and music. It's time to dig out recipes and to bake. It's time to prepare.

I loved Christmas as a kid. I still do. What I didn't realize for years, though, was how much I loved Advent. I loved all the preparation. I loved the anticipation. I loved the way the house looked when it was all decorated. I loved the way the kitchen smelled when it was full of baking and roasting. I loved how everyone, even though they were a bit frazzled, still managed to be in a pretty cheery mood.

I love the honesty of Advent. I love the sense of longing in the texts and prayers. "Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come." And yes, Christ has already come to us, but no, Christ has not yet returned, and we surely do feel sometimes like he's overdue. There is an honest yearning for things to be better, especially in this year when everything has been scrambled and turned sideways by the pandemic. "Oh that you would tear open the heavens and come down!" Isaiah shouts for us. We're in over our heads. "Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we might be saved!" the Psalmist cries out for us. But we also hear, "Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God... Every valley will be lifted up. Every mountain and hill made low. The uneven ground shall be made level and the rough places a plain." Things will be smoother. Something better, something brighter is coming. Help is on the way. A new day will dawn.

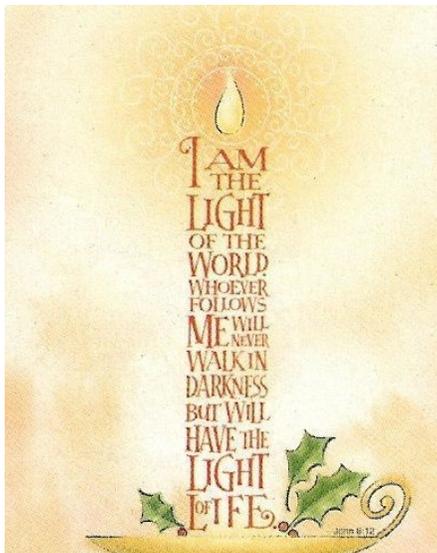
I love the way Advent, if we pay attention to it, sets the scene for Christmas by reminding us that we are not the first ones to live in a time of shadows hoping for light. "During the rule of King Herod of Judea..." we read in the first chapter of Luke. This is the same King Herod who, in Matthew's gospel, murdered all the male babies in Bethlehem under age two. This is the Herod who killed two of his own sons because he suspected them of plotting against him, the Herod who killed his wife Mariamne, the Hasmonean princess, along with her brother and her mother. This is the Herod who replaced the High Priest in the temple with a Sadducee who would be more inclined to do things the way he wanted them done.

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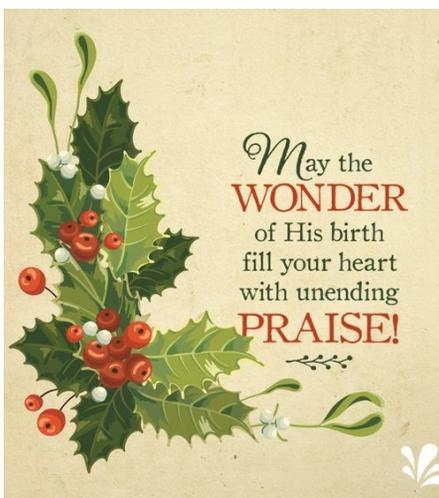
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**“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.”**

~ 1 Chronicles 16:34



*Thoughts Along the Way Continues...*

This is the same Herod who, according to Josephus, as he lay dying, ordered that one member of every family in Judea should be slain so that the whole country would be in mourning when he died. Fortunately the order was never carried out, but the people never forgot that it had been issued.

This is the time, Luke reminds us, when Quirinius is appointed legate of the expanded Roman province of Syria with the specific mandate to carry out a census, something forbidden by Jewish law, so that Tiberius can impose a new tax. This is a time when Rome's domination of Judea is iron-clad and iron-fisted with no velvet glove to make it less harsh. This is a time when work is hard, taxes are heavy, and freedom is limited.

But this is also the time when an angel appears to an aged childless couple, Elizabeth, whose name means “God keeps promises” and to Zechariah, whose name means “God remembers.” The angel promises them that they will have a child and that they are to name him Yochanan, John, which means “God is gracious,” and that many will rejoice because of him and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit.

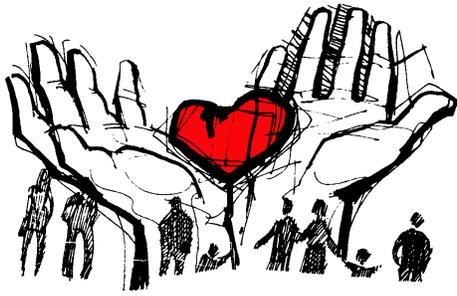
This is the time when a kinswoman comes to visit Elizabeth, a young, unmarried kinswoman named Mary, who is also pregnant with a miraculous child. And when Elizabeth sees her, her unborn child leaps in her womb. This is the time when Mary sings a prophetic song of joy and rebellion that has been bringing hope to people on the margins for two thousand years. My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant... He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty...”

This is the time to sit with the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love. This is the time to remember. And to look forward. This is Advent. And soon, Christmas.

The King shall come when morning dawns and light triumphant breaks, when beauty gilds the eastern hills and life to joy awakes.

Pro Gloria Dei,  
Pastor Steve

**God keeps promises...**  
**God is gracious...**  
**HOPE, PEACE, JOY, LOVE**



Greetings to church family and friends. As usual we continue working "under cover" as 2020 rolls on.

If you go by the church building, you will see that the plaster repair and painting has been done, the side door is repaired, and the benches refinished. Thanks to **Karen Como** for securing a painter and his team's fine work.

Twyla Karkut and Nancy Sansum have purchased boxes and filled them with goodies for the **Maritime Ministries** in the Long Beach Harbor. This is an annual event that the church women's group usually does, but you all understand why changes had to be made. Floridian **Laura Subke** crocheted and sent 23 caps to be given to the mariners. The sailors are not allowed off the ships, but the chaplains and staff will help to deliver the Christmas boxes on our behalf. We are not the only congregation doing this, so the mariners are grateful. And, please remember to pray for the seafarers trapped at shores aboard ships due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## FELLOWSHIP & SERVICE @ GLORIA DEI

The **Holiday Fund** is growing and you can make more than one gift if you wish. By the time you receive this message, Thanksgiving turkeys have been purchased and delivered to the migrant workers in Guadalupe, California via **Pastor Marta** of Fe Y Esperanza Lutheran church. We are now working on a **toy fund for Lutheran Social Services**. A party is planned for December 19. If you are feeling generous, please help with these fundraising efforts before that date.

A gracious thank you to all who have donated to our on-going mission projects, including food and clothing for **Fe Y Esperana**. Lutheran Social Services is also in our plans—so keep all our Mission partners in your prayers.

**Treasurer Gary Bockman** reports that our budget is behind a bit. Contact him (562.596.2013) for the amount. Please keep up with your promised giving for the church year. Thanks in advance for beginning your **stewardship planning** for next year.

Have a very Glorious Dei holiday. Remember the Lord loves us and is in charge. Be safe and be well.

**Margie E. Brown, Council President**



Equipping those we serve with self-empowering tools and solution-based resources,  
we patiently walk alongside our clients on the road to independence.

**LSS NEWS:** We are excited to announce our new Long Beach Area Director, Carla Kamar. Carla comes to us with 25 years of management experience within the United Nations, and brings with her a deep understanding of poverty initiative programs. Carla will help to guide our Long Beach and South Bay LSSSC office as it continues to navigate today's challenges in preparation for what tomorrow presents, and we are grateful to have her leadership. [#nonprofit](#) [#makeadifference](#)



**“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1)**

Dear friends— On Nov. 2, Hurricane Eta, a powerful Category 4 storm, hit Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala. Throughout Central America, at least 171 people died. Winds as high as 150 mph caused power outages and structural damage while heavy rains caused catastrophic flooding and landslides, damaging homes, crops, roads and bridges. Just two weeks later, Hurricane Iota made landfall in Nicaragua, 15 miles from where Hurricane Eta had made landfall. Iota was the first Category 5 hurricane of the 2020 season.

Lutheran Disaster Response is engaging with many companion churches and ecumenical partners in the region, including ACT Alliance, Iglesia Cristiana Luterana de Honduras, Comisión de Acción Social Menonita, Church World Service, Iglesia Luterana Augustina de Guatemala and Iglesia Luterana de Nicaragua “Fe y Esperanza.” While the extent of the damage is not yet known, we will accompany devastated communities from immediate relief through long-term recovery.

**This is an important part of Christ’s call on our church.**

**Please give today. Your gifts ensure that our church will be able to provide help and hope for those whose lives have been devastated by hurricanes Eta and Iota. Gifts designated for “Hurricane Response” will be used entirely (100%) for direct response until it is complete.**

Together, we can help provide immediate and long-lasting support for those whose lives have been impacted by hurricanes. Please join me in prayer and partnership, and stay connected to the latest events and our response to this and other disasters through our [Facebook](#) page.

With gratitude for your partnership,

**The Rev. Daniel Rift, Director, ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response Funding—  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE - SERVING IN JESUS' LOVE

**Lutheran Maritime Ministry** (LMM) is geared towards serving officers and crews on the ships that visit the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles to deliver goods from around the world, primarily in containers. As the ships approach our coast, their seafarers contact us to arrange our visits. We help by providing communication connections, drive them shopping, and other basic services. We listen, commune, and pray, sharing our lives and faiths. We make this happen through the dedication and support from our chaplains, volunteers and donations from Christian communities.



**Special thanks to Nancy Sansum and Twyla Karkut who filled 20 shoeboxes for Maritime Ministry— 24 bars of soap, 23 hand-made knitted caps, and 2 bags of warm sweaters and jackets. Thank you to those who donated to this annual servant project. Your support makes a difference!**



Chaplain Ron Nelson



**ELCA GOOD GIFTS**

Give something **unexpected** this Christmas.

Goat **\$50** [SHOP NOW](#)

## SAY GOODBYE TO TRADITIONAL GIFT-GIVING

ELCA Good Gifts provides more than 50 different gift-giving options that grow the church, fight hunger and transform lives. These gifts, starting at just \$10, provide direct support for the church wide ministries of the ELCA.

Explore the ELCA website—catalogs, coin banks, and more— make it easy and fun for your family, to say **“goodbye”**

to traditional gift-giving and “hello” to meaningful gifts that really make a difference in the world.

**Ready to shop now?** Visit the **ELCA Good Gifts** store and print or order cards to tell loved ones about gifts given in their honor.



## THE MEANING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

The Advent wreath symbolizes the never-ending love of God. There are typically four candles on the wreath.

### WEEK 1 CANDLE



#### Prophecy Candle (purple)

This candle reminds us of the promises of Scripture to send a Savior. The many prophecies of the Old Testament teach us this truth! (Isaiah 9:6)

### WEEK 2 CANDLE



#### Bethlehem Candle (purple)

This candle reminds us of the humble birth of Christ. It also reminds us to prepare our hearts for Jesus during the season! (Micah 5:2)

### WEEK 3 CANDLE



#### Shepherds Candle (rose)

This candle reminds us that Christ came for all people. The shepherds were unnoticed by most of the world but God chose them to be the first to receive the good news! (Luke 2:8-9)

### WEEK 4 CANDLE



#### Angels Candle (purple)

This candle reminds us of the good news that the angels announced--Emmanuel, God with us, has come! (Luke 2:13-15)

Check out YouTube — you can find creative inspiration and tutorials on DIY projects.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWw83CCa2cg>

# ADVENT

Prayer is a wonderful way to help cut away from distractions of the season and open your heart to prepare for the joy and hope of Christ's birth. Here are sample 'starters' to use during the season to focus your heart and mind for the birth of Jesus Christ.

- This Advent, Lord, come to the manger of my heart.
- Fill me with Your presence from the very start of each day
- Speak to my heart today, Lord, and help me to yield.



- Dwell within and around me, as I unwrap Your presence each day.





## DECEMBER ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

10 — Liz & Tyler Asenas-Alt

30 — Craig & Yukiko McCarty

**MICAH 6:8**  
‘What does the Lord ask of you? ...to do justice, and to love kindness and walk humbly with God.’

**MONDAY, December 7**  
**VIRTUAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING @ 7PM**



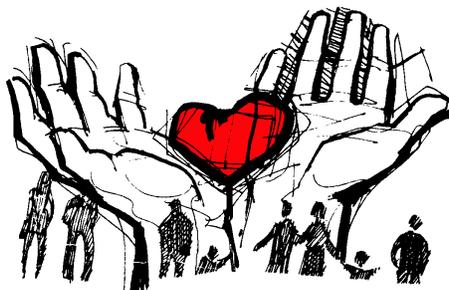
**December 28 —**  
**GLORIOUS DEI NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**

**SUBMIT STORY IDEAS, RESOURCES & SUGGESTIONS to editor... Email: PBOCKMAN@FULLERTON.EDU**

**WAKE UP JOYFUL.  
BE AMAZING.  
BE KIND. BE BRAVE.  
BE GOD’S LIGHT.**

**WE ARE  
CHURCH  
TOGETHER**

## GOD’S WORK OUR HANDS



**God of LOVE**—Your name is still called “Wonderful,” “Counselor,” “The Mighty God,” “The Everlasting Father,” and “The Prince of Peace.” As Your children, we cry out for a fresh filling, and a new awareness of Who You are. We choose by faith to make the “good news of great joy” a reality in our own lives, so others can see us as lighted trees of life, pointing to You this Christmas. We know one day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that You are Lord.

And we also know that peace on earth can only come when hearts find **Peace** with You. You are still our **Joy**. You are still our **Peace**. You are no longer a babe in the manger. You are Lord of lords and King of kings. And we still **Hope**, and celebrate You as Lord—this Christmas.

~ Rebecca Barlow Jordan



***Christmas is the season of joy, a time to celebrate the gift of the Savior, to share the blessings we know because of Him.***



## KEEPERS OF THE LIGHT

**“For God...made his light shine in our hearts”**

~ 2 Corinthians 4:6

**GLORIA DEI EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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



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## **SEEK TO UNDERSTAND**

**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 Cor. 5:17-19)**

