



Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

THOUGHTS ALONG THE WAY...

“Entering into Holy Week now for the second time without physically being able to hold a palm, or kneel for communion at an altar rail, or sing “Christ is risen! Alleluia!” with a church full of people, is rather sad. Last year it still seemed like an emergency; this year it is more like a penance.” That’s how the Rev. Dr. Guy Erwin, our former bishop and now President of United Lutheran Seminary put it in his weekly message to the seminary community and friends. I’m sure a number of us share that feeling.

I would like to suggest that we use this second Holy Week “in exile” as a time to think about the meaning of these days and the events that we observe. It’s easy to go for years, or in the case of the church, centuries, without really rethinking the things we do and why we do them or thinking again about the deeper meaning of practices and habits that we’ve come to take for granted.

Think about Palm Sunday/Passion Sunday. For many people this day was for a very long time simply Palm Sunday and was all about the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. Because some of our hymn writers seriously misunderstood the meaning of the word hosanna we tended to think of the crowd surrounding Jesus as singing praises. But hosanna means save us! Yes, they were treating Jesus like royalty, laying cloaks on the road beneath the hooves of his donkey and calling him the son of David, but they weren’t just shouting praises. They were begging him to save them from the oppression of the Romans. The palm branches they were waving were a political statement. Palms had been a symbol of political hope for the Jews since the revolt of the Maccabees had triumphed over the Greeks.

It’s easy to view this as a coronation procession. That’s how the Romans probably understood it. That was certainly how Caiaphas was afraid the Romans would see it. If you read the gospels closely, though, you’ll notice that Jesus, himself, never claims the title of king. Others attach it to him.

Somewhere along the way, Palm Sunday, especially as observed in America, had become a little too triumphalist, a little too much about Jesus as king. But Jesus knew when he entered Jerusalem that he wasn’t coming to claim a throne or lead an insurrection. He was coming to be crucified. This is why years ago we reclaimed the ancient observance of Passion Sunday which had been part of the church calendar in the Roman Catholic church since time immemorial. On this day we read the Passion narrative to remind us of what Jesus endured.

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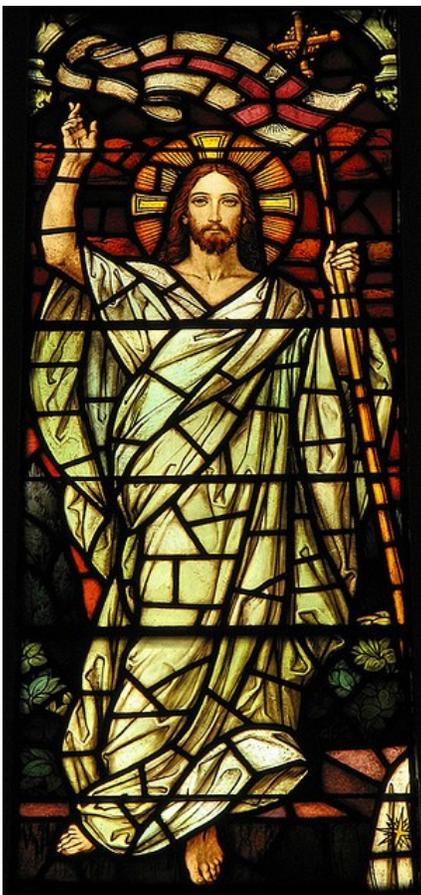
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HOLY WEEK

April 1 Maundy Thursday

April 2 Good Friday

April 4 EASTER SUNDAY



Thoughts Along the Way Continues.....

On Maundy Thursday we take time to remember when Jesus instituted the sacrament of the eucharist. Communion. This is a good time to think about how it is that Christ is present for us as we share the bread and wine. I love Luther's language—that Christ is present "in, with, and under" the physical elements of bread and wine. I can extend that to the Franciscan idea that Christ is present "in, with, and under" everything, extending the sacredness of the communion we share to everything around us, to the earth, itself, but most especially to those who gather to share the meal. Christ is in, with, and under us, too. We are the body of Christ too.

On Good Friday, we remember the crucifixion of Jesus. Let's be honest here—it's an ugly and painful story but it is central to our faith. For centuries the church has taught that Jesus was offered as a sacrifice of atonement to take away our sins. I've been studying with the Franciscans, and they have a different idea. They suggest that it was humanity that wanted bloodshed, not God. God has never wanted or needed any sacrifice. The prophets made this clear long before Jesus (see Isaiah 1, Micah 6:6-8, or Hosea 6:6). Jesus, himself, says to the Pharisees, "Go and learn what this means: I desire mercy, not sacrifice." Atonement, say the Franciscans, happens at Christmas. The breach between God and humanity is healed in Bethlehem.

So then what is the meaning of the cross? Honestly, I think there are so many layers of meaning in the cross that we could spend a lifetime contemplating it. And some have. Nadia Bolz Weber said that the cross is God's way of saying, "I would rather die than stay in the sin accounting business one more minute." Barbara Brown Taylor famously said, "Jesus was not killed by atheism and anarchy. He was brought down by law and order allied with religion, which is always a deadly mix." Seen from that direction, the cross is a stark object lesson in what power will do to protect itself: it would kill God. Jesus was teaching and enacting a liberating love, and that, in the end is, I think, the deepest meaning of the cross. Love.

And then...Resurrection. Richard Rohr said, "If you believe in incarnation, resurrection is the most natural thing in the world."

Life is eternal. Love is immortal. Christ is in, with, and under all things, making all things sacred. Including you and me.

Pro Gloria Dei,

Pastor Steve

CONGREGATION NEWS

Greetings to all...

First of all, I want to compliment Peggy Bockman on our monthly newsletter. The quality is outstanding. I really appreciate that she curates content that is current and timely. Thank you, Peggy, for the good work that you do to enhance our congregation communications. The newsletter is bright, cheerful and uplifting. Another big *Thank You* goes to Bob Siemer, our tech guru. He keeps us all "online" for our worship services, group studies and social hour connections. (He even helps with personal technology issues, if you ask him.)

Not much has changed since last month. Bible studies and meetings go on via Zoom. Pastor has added his recorded music to worship and all of it is a very welcome enhancement to our Sunday gathering. Remember to participate in your own way in the **40 days of Lent** program. Check with Sandy for material and ideas.

My nephew phoned from the state of Washington today. We shared our activities and wishes. He related that the Amazon driver in his neighborhood stopped by recently to ask if the family was okay. Russ said "yes, what makes you ask? "Well you haven't had anything delivered this week so I thought something might be wrong." How great that the driver was watchful. How great that our Savior is watchful too.

Suggested reading: Peggy Huggard put me onto a series called **The Kingdom and the Crown**. This series of 3 books is written in a novel format. The author uses scripture as the basis of his stories. At the end of each chapter he discloses the Bible reference and other historical resources. These are good to read while we are at home making our best effort to support the pandemic restrictions so we can all get back to normal as soon as possible—thanks for doing your part!

Keep our church family in your prayers. Be safe and be well.

**Have a Glorious Dei.
In His Holy Name,
Margie Brown, President**



**WE GROW IN KINDNESS WHEN OUR
KINDNESS IS TESTED.**
ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU

**GOD IS LOOKING FOR PEOPLE TO
USE, AND IF YOU CAN GET USABLE,
HE WILL WEAR YOU OUT.**
~ RICK WARREN

**SOME CHANGES LOOK NEGATIVE
ON THE SURFACE BUT YOU
WILL SOON REALIZE THAT SPACE IS
BEING CREATED IN YOUR LIFE FOR
SOMETHING NEW TO EMERGE.**
~ECKHART TOLLE

**PEOPLE DON'T CARE HOW MUCH
YOU KNOW UNTIL THEY KNOW
HOW MUCH YOU CARE.**
~ AMISH PROVERB

**THE CONSTANT HAPPINESS
IS CURIOSITY.**
~ ALICE MUNRO, NOBEL PRIZE-WINNING AUTHOR

**ALMOST EVERYTHING WILL WORK
AGAIN IF YOU UNPLUG IT FOR A
FEW MINUTES...INCLUDING YOU.**
~ ANNIE LAMOTT, AUTHOR

GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS

Fe y Esperanza is getting ready for Easter !

Children will receive bright Easter baskets and bags thanks to your donations to our Holiday Fund at Gloria Dei. Fe y Esperanza has also received our financial help for family Easter meals. Pastor Marta Moscoso sends her heartfelt message of appreciation, "Thanks for all the blessings that we receive from all of you for this season and all year long!"



COUNCIL UPDATE

Please join us on Monday, April 5

7:00 p.m. on Zoom

We will be discussing the **timeline** and necessary steps for **returning to in-person worship in our sanctuary**. We appreciate your input—everyone is welcome to attend. Bob Siemer will make the Zoom link available on our website!

Birthdays & Anniversaries



APRIL 3

Happy Birthday Peggy Bockman

APRIL 7

Roger & Judy Powell Anniversary

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

Happy Birthday Sandi Anderson

APRIL 20

Happy Birthday Don Melin

APRIL 23

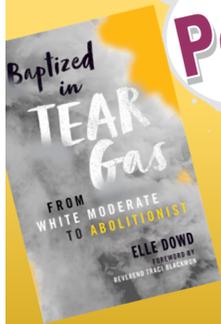
Happy Birthday David Fuller

APRIL 28

Happy Birthday Brooke White

**Southwest California Synod
Spring Multi-Conference Assembly**

**CONVERSATIONS
THAT MATTER**
Policing and Faith



Special Guest: Elle Dowd
she/her

Lutheran Activist, Author, Candidate for Ministry

April 14, 6:00-7:30 pm

FEEDBACK

Are you receiving this monthly newsletter?
Tell us what you think...
Send ideas, comments and suggestions to
pbockman@fullerton.edu



Our name means *The Glory of God*,
so we try to live accordingly.
Our life together as a family of faith is
built on worship, service, education
and friendship.



HOLY WEEK HOLY WEEK

On the church's liturgical calendar, Easter is called "The Resurrection of Our Lord." That name reminds us of the deep power of God at work to save. The God who created the world out of nothing creates new life on the other side of death. Easter isn't the celebration that Jesus "got out of it in the end." On Easter, we celebrate the fact that Jesus saw things through to the end, to the cross, to death, to the grave, and that God raised him up to new life!

Our creeds and confessions of faith insist on this: Jesus was crucified, died and was buried. They confess just as clearly that Jesus rose from the dead. There is no narrow escape, no getting out of it. Without death, there can be no resurrection. Jesus' resurrection shows God breaking into our death-dealing world to give new and eternal life. When we gather for worship, we say in the words of the Apostles' and Nicene creeds that we believe this! We really believe it! And then, even more boldly, we say we believe in this promise of resurrection for ourselves too!

Paul described Jesus' resurrection as "the first fruits" of a harvest that will include all believers (1 Corinthians 15:20-23). Former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams expressed it like this: "God is never at the end of God's resources when we are at the end of ours. We really die, and God really remakes us. Creation and resurrection are inseparable activities in God's response to the death of God's loved ones."

The good news of Easter keeps getting better. Easter is not just one day but a liturgical season lasting for seven weeks. In the Scriptures, the number seven conveys a sense of completeness. Because there are seven days in a week and seven weeks in the season of Easter, Easter is sometimes referred to as "a week of weeks," a fulfillment of fulfillment. The good news is so good that we keep on celebrating and witnessing to God's gift of new life long after the rest of society has moved on to thinking about the next holiday.

Read the entire article: [Living Lutheran—ELCA website](#)
 [Kathryn A. Kleinhans is dean of Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University in Columbus, Ohio]

OUR JOURNEY TOGETHER — APRIL 2021

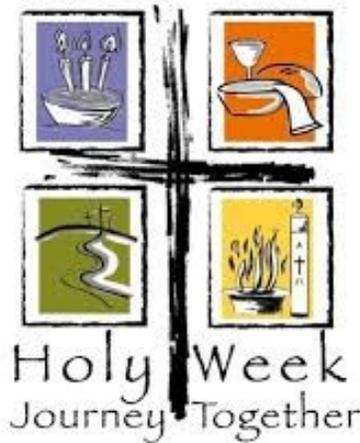
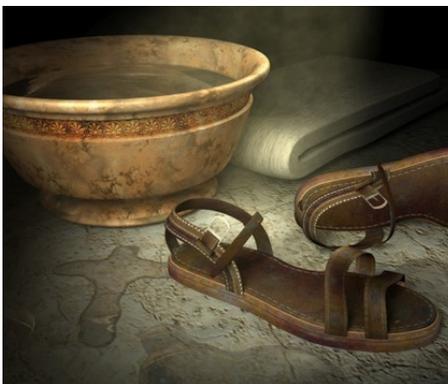
“Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ”

~ Romans 8:38-39

As a nation, we continue to witness and suffer from the cruelties of racial and gender-based violence. In recent days, we have witnessed the horror of gun violence in Atlanta and the vandalism of one of our ELCA congregations in Seattle.

As church we grieve the mass shooting in Atlanta, Ga., that took the lives of eight people, six of them Asian women. As church we join Bishop Kevin Strickland of the Southeastern Synod in observing that "God has called us to become the beloved community that God created where all are valued and honored. We then are called through the waters of our baptism to strive for justice and peace in all the world, for all."

~ Bishop Easton (3/19/2021)



April 1

Maundy Thursday

Worship Service @ 7 PM

April 2

Good Friday

Tenebrae Service @ 7 PM

April 4

**EASTER
SUNDAY**

Worship Service @10 AM

“So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.”

~ John 8:36

Handling the Truth

~ 2017 Augsburg Fortress

We still struggle with the call to pick up our own crosses and name the hard truths about our own lives and failings. We enter Christian community by first having the truth of a promise made over us. In baptism, God declares faithfulness, grace and mercy over our lives and deaths. It is with confidence in this truth that we gather together to name hard truths in our lives and our world, knowing that in love God can receive and heal it all. Led by faith in Christ and following in his footsteps, we can handle the truth.

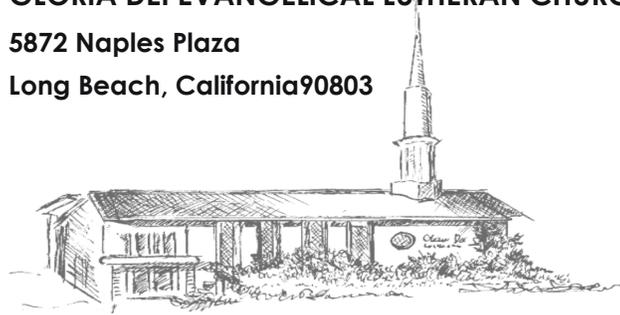
STRICKEN SMITTEN
AFFLICTED PIERCED
WOUNDED BRUISED

HE DIED
SO THAT
WE MIGHT LIVE



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 Cor. 5:17-19)

