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Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

THOUGHTS ALONG THE WAY...

"We need transformed people today, and not just people with answers." -Richard Rohr

When is the last time you were surprised by something you read in the Bible? When is the last time you read something in the scriptures that astonished you and made you re-think your ideas about God or life or humanity?

Most of us fall into certain assumptions about the Bible somewhere along the way. We think of it as a collection of rules or behavior modification or just advice on how to be good. Or we think of it as an anachronistic collection of stories that may occasionally have some relevance but that doesn't really have that much to do with our daily lives beyond being saved. Most of us accept that it is somehow a tool for our spiritual growth and development, but we often don't have a clear idea of how to use it that way.

I remember attending a graduation dinner at a certain faith-based university years ago. Meri and I were seated next to a bright-eyed young woman, one of the graduating students, who was accompanied by her parents. She was graduating with a high GPA in her major, Christian Education, and she had earned a certificate that authorized her to teach Bible and faith classes in her denomination. Her parents were justifiably proud of her accomplishments and her dad said, "Tell the pastor what you told me earlier—about what Bible means, what it stands for." "Oh," she said with a big smile, "it's an acronym: Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth, B-I-B-L-E!" "Isn't that great!?" enthused her dad. I smiled and said something politely encouraging, but inwardly I was dismayed.

I've heard that acronym numerous times since that evening, and I've felt the same sense of dismay every time I've heard it. Invariably it has come up in circumstances where I didn't feel free to say, "No, that's a horrible acronym! That's a worse-than-useless way to describe the Bible!"

Let me explain. First and foremost, the focus of the Bible is not about Leaving Earth—unless you want to say Leaving It Better Than When We Arrived. It's true that there is a fair amount of material that concerns our salvation. But salvation, at least as the scriptures understand it, is about being made well, whole, complete. And yes, rescued, but that's the most limited understanding of the word. Plus, it's clear in the Bible that God intends salvation for all of creation, not just you and me. And yes, there are some instructions to encourage and help us as we "work out our salvation with fear and trembling," but those instructions are given so that we can all live more peaceful and healthy lives here on this earth, in the community of humanity, now. The Bible is not about going to heaven. It's about how God has been working to bring heaven to earth.

But there's another big error in that acronym and it's right there in the first word. Basic. We tend to hear "basic" as "simple." Some of the "instructions" seem simple at first glance, but that's the problem. When God does give an instruction, you're supposed

...Continued on page 2

Inside this issue:

Things Hidden--Wednesdays on ZOOM	2
Church Council Update	3
Holiday Gifts of Life	4
God's Work. Our Hands.	4
Installation of Bishop Bos	5
LSS: Voices of Hope	6
Events & Announcements	7



HEAR & SERVE WITH JOY



Today, let us hear God's trumpet call with joy rather than dissatisfaction. Let us hear God's call to worship—to receive salvation in Christ and rejoice in Him. Let us hear the trumpet sound as we share the joy we have in Christ with our neighbor. Whether we are parents or children, soldiers or civilians, may we drown out dissatisfaction with our refrain: **'Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into His presence with singing!'** Psalm 100:2



Thoughts Along the Way Continues...

to do more than glance at it. You're supposed to figure out how you're going to live it. And living even the "simple" instructions can be more complicated than we tend to think...because we don't think.

Take the Ten Commandments, the most "basic" instructions we're given in the Bible. "You shall have no other gods," says God. And that sounds simple enough until we start to really analyze our relationship with money or other things that are important to us. "Show me what you trust, what your heart clings to, and I will show you your god," said Luther. "You shall not commit adultery," said God. "If you look at someone with lust, you're violating that one," said Jesus. "You shall not murder," said God. "If you're carrying a grudge or hating someone, you've violating that one," said Jesus. And on it goes. The "instructions" we are given may be basic in the sense that they set a baseline for us, but they're anything but basic in terms of trying to live them.

And that's another problem with the acronym. It reduces this amazing library of books and letters to a pocket guide—and one that's pretty useless, at that. There are whole sections of the Bible that are about how people have struggled to understand and live by the "basic" instructions God gave them. There are sections full of songs and poems of praise or lament. There are parables, short stories and fables. There are histories. There is theology—writers sharing what they had learned or come to understand about God. There are hopes and prayers and visions. There are heroes. There are villains.

"This marvelous anthology of books and letters called the Bible is all for the sake of astonishment!" writes Richard Rohr in his book *Things Hidden: Scripture as Spirituality*. "It's for divine transformation (theosis), not intellectual or 'small-self' coziness."

I invite you to start reading the Bible in a new way. I invite you to forget what you think it says and let it speak to you as if you're hearing or reading it for the first time. I invite you to open yourself to the possibility of being astonished as you allow yourself to be led by the Spirit on a journey of discovery. The Bible...whatever you think it is, it's not that. It's more. Much, much more.

Pro Gloria Dei, Pastor Steve

I invite you to join us on Wednesdays on Zoom as we read and discuss **Things Hidden: Scripture as Spirituality** by Fr. Richard Rohr. Details and links are on our website — www.gdlclb.org

GLORIA DEI COUNCIL UPDATE

Greetings:

One of our grandchildren's favorite stories is 'Stone Soup'. It's a folk tale in which hungry strangers ask the people of the village to share a small amount of their food in order to make a meal that everyone enjoys. The moral of the story speaks to the value of sharing and the joy in doing it together. This story reminds me of our family at Gloria Dei – **a little church with a big heart!**

Our small church is filled with people with big hearts who are always eager to share and participate to assist those within the community who need help. In the past few weeks, we have heard from our mission partners at **Fe Y Esperanza** the importance and how helpful our regular deliveries of food and household supplies mean to them. It helps them sustain the members of their church family during this very difficult pandemic time.

Because of your donations to the **"God's Work. Our Hands."** initiative the ELCW had supplies to assemble 20 hygiene kits for the homeless plus additional hygiene items that will be distributed by Lutheran Social Services.

Our Noisy Offering each month really adds up and provides LSS with funds to feed more families and to make many much-needed improvements to their site on Pine Street in Long Beach.



Lanai Caldwell, Bishop Bos, Karen Como

Gloria Dei has partnered with LSS on Pine Street since this site opened over 35 years ago. As we heard from Dr. La Sharnda Beckwith, President and CEO of Lutheran Social Services Southern California who visited with us during a recent worship service, the work they do at LSS in support of families could not be as successful without the many ways the big hearts at Gloria Dei serve and donate.

During the **Maritime Ministry Recognition** dinner, several people including the Chaplain Samson Chauhan, Twyla Karkut and I heard how grateful they are for the wonderful ways in which Gloria Dei provides support for their ministry for hundreds of seafarers in the Long Beach Harbor. The annual Christmas shoeboxes, knitted hats and warm jackets mean so much to these men and women who are away from their families for as much as a year at a time and now with COVID sometimes even longer.

The need for more "Stone Soup" is never-ending and because of

the big hearts at Gloria Dei, joy is created with our outreach and sharing with those in need.

Be well and take care,

Karen Como, Council President
Email: karen@pkcomo.com

MONDAY, OCTOBER 4



COUNCIL MEETING @ 7PM

A note from me: "Our newsletter has quite a following! During meetings and visits with the staff at LSS and Maritime Ministries I've heard that the 'Glorious Dei' is the best one they receive and also it's the most beautiful! Our new Bishop Brenda Bos also commented on how much she enjoys our newsletter when she served as our supply pastor this summer. Several of us send to friends and family and especially to the guests who visit our worship services. Our newsletter wonderfully represents who we are and what we do to serve the Lord. We are so blessed to have the talent and commitment of Peggy Bockman who curates this beautiful newsletter each month! Thank you Peggy!"

GROWING IN FAITH

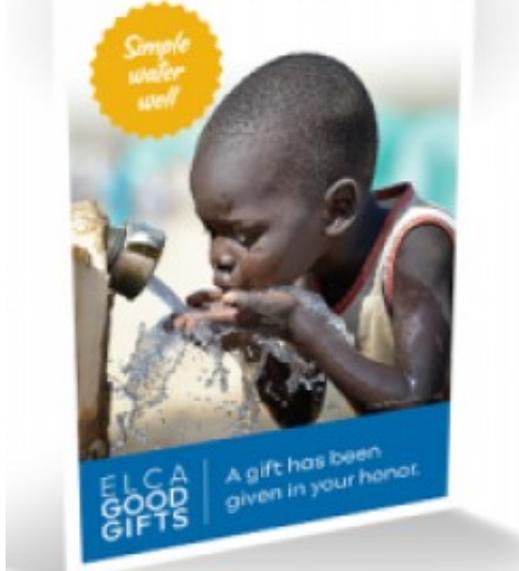
LIFTED BY HOPE

GUIDED BY LOVE

MAKE A DIFFERENCE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

- Stock Backpack with Food — \$10**
- School Fees & Uniform for a Girl —\$40**
- Microloan for a Woman — \$120**
- Simple Water Well — \$2,500**
- Piglet — \$30 Goat & Chicks — \$60**

WHAT ARE ELCA GOOD GIFTS?



How It Works?

As members of the ELCA, we believe that God is calling us into the world – together. And with generous, loving hands, we can make a difference.

ELCA Good Gifts is your opportunity to provide critical support to the ministries and programs that mean the most to you and the people you love. Check the ELCA website now!



GOD'S WORK. OUR HANDS.

ELCW participants met on September 16. We had six stalwarts and one guest, Jean O'Connell joined us for a work party and lunch. Our gathering consisted of filling some bags with hygiene supplies. Anything left over will also go to Lutheran Social Services as the staff can always use a few extra things to give out.

We discussed plans for our future activities till the end of the year. To be continued The ELCW will be meeting on the 2nd Thursday of each month (this changed as they always met on the 3rd Thursday). Next meeting will be on October 14 and we will be working on blankets for the Long Beach Police Department. This is one of the projects that **Laura Subke** started and we have continued to contribute to our local community. These blankets are kept in the trunks of police cars and given to children during very stressful situations; accidents or when taken into protective services. The children can keep the blankets that are each made with love and prayers by the ELCW.

Bring a sandwich to share (side dish and dessert will be provided by Karen Como and Edie Graber) and plan to join in this servant-hood activity. We meet at 11:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. All congregants of the church family are welcome.

Shoeboxes for the **Maritime Ministries** will be assembled by the ELCW in November. Watch for more information on the list of items that are needed for these boxes.

Margie Brown, Chair
ELCW — Evangelical Lutheran Church Women



Fr. Richard Rohr is a globally recognized ecumenical teacher bearing witness to the universal awakening within Christian mysticism and the Perennial Tradition. He is a Franciscan priest of the New Mexico Province and founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation (www.cac.org) in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where he also serves as Academic Dean of the Living School for Action and Contemplation. Fr. Richard's teaching is grounded in the Franciscan alternative orthodoxy--practices of contemplation and self-emptying, expressing itself in radical compassion, particularly for the socially marginalized.

LORD, MAKE US GOOD GUESTS AND HOSTS OF YOUR KINGDOM WHO REFLECT THE HUMILITY AND GENEROSITY OF OUR SAVIOR. IN JESUS' NAME. AMEN.



Southwest California Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 God's work. Our hands.



Murray D. Finck, interim bishop of the Southwest California Synod, ordained Bos in 2014. "Amid a remarkable calling in television production, God summoned Brenda Bos into a new and different avenue of communication," said Finck, who served as bishop of the Pacifica Synod from 1998 to 2016, in an email. "Brenda followed that call into a ministry of Word and Sacrament in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, bringing with her the diversity of her gifts, life experiences and personal identity."

Affirming Bos' "faithfulness, her leadership skills and her gifts of communication and proclamation, the Spirit of God and the people of the Southwest California Synod have now chosen Brenda to lead this synod as its fifth elected bishop," Finck said.

Bos believes "God wants us to be the best version of ourselves."

"I am both grateful and humbled to be serving as Bishop for the Southwest California Synod and I look forward to seeing how the Spirit will guide us all as we further the Gospel of Jesus Christ together."

Bishop Brenda Bos

Email: bbos@socialsynod.org

Many bishops have had interesting and varied career paths to their current calls. But most of those paths don't travel through Hollywood.

Brenda Bos of Glendale, California, was elected June 5 to serve a six-year term as bishop of the ELCA Southwest California Synod. But before entering ministry, she spent 18 years working in production for Warner Bros. Television. As a production staff member for sitcoms such as *The Golden Girls*, *Mad About You*, and *Suddenly Susan*, Bos said, "I was always taking care of a lot of people who were working at their maximum skill." She believes that "a huge part of being a pastor and, certainly, a bishop, is [asking,] how do we give people what they need to be the best version of themselves—live into their vocation, live into their faith?"

For Bos, living into vocation and faith is about wholeness. "It's a wholeness that's got gender and sexuality and personality and [an] emotional palette, all of those things are becoming more fully realized," she said. "And as we become more fully realized is when God says, 'That! That full person, that's the one I want.' Some of us are called to rostered ministry and some of us are called to other beautiful vocations that have nothing to do with rostered status."

The first openly lesbian bishop in the ELCA, Bos said her call to ministry was directly tied to her coming out, something she finds to be common in the LGBTQIA+ community. "The integration of my sexuality and my spirituality has been a key piece of my evolution as a spiritual person and a religious leader," she said. "They're almost inextricable."

The process is about recognizing your full personhood, Bos said. "As you become a fully integrated person who has come out to themselves, you realize that God has created you this way, God delights in you," she said. "That empowerment, that acceptance of grace, happens to look like a certain sexual or gender acceptance and celebration for an LGBTQ person, but all of us need to come to terms with God's unrelenting love and grace."

Bos said she didn't necessarily spend much time thinking about the historic nature of her election, but she embraces her role. "It matters so much to the community that I joyfully carry that banner," she said. "I'm just being me. It really matters to those in my community and those who went before and those who are coming after me."

Source: John Potter, *Living Lutheran*

VOICES OF HOPE



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



WE EMBRACE...
...those in crisis, with short-term, emergency services.



WE EQUIP...
.... individuals and families, with program resources to help them on their journey.

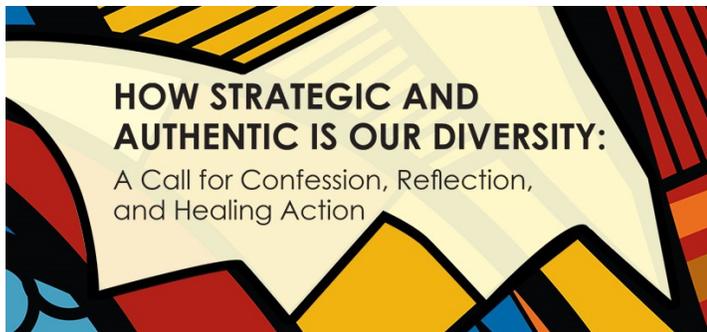


WE EMPOWER...
.....people to break the cycle of poverty, live with dignity and become self-sufficient.



The world hungers for so many things, including food, peace, companionship, clothing, education, safety, medical care, housing and relations with God and God's people. All these important needs fall under the umbrella of God's love.

DEEPER UNDERSTANDING



Since its inception, this church has wrestled with the challenge of becoming an authentically multiethnic, multicultural church. The vision and promised "kingdom" and reign of God lie within us. The transformative power for being **God's change agent in society** is intricately bound to our own transformation as God's people.
Learn more on the ELCA website

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton has co-signed with other heads of churches from Churches Beyond Borders a letter on the legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery, inviting members to commemorate **September 30 as a day for truth and healing.**
Read: Telling and Teaching the Truth: The Church's Obligation to Education about the Ongoing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery

ANNOUNCEMENTS, EVENTS & RESOURCES

EXPLORE THE HIDDEN BRAIN....

9 podcasts that will change how you think about human behavior

- Happier with Gretchen Rubin
- Hidden Brain - Shankar Vedantam
- Arming the Donkeys—Dan Ariely
- Freakonomics Radio - Stephan Dubner
- Waking Up - Sam Harris
- All in the Mind - Lynn Malcolm
- The Psychology Podcast - Scott Barry Kaufman
- 99% Invisible - Roman Mars

Source: INSIDER Chris Weller

INVEST TIME TO LISTEN & LEARN — AMAZING ONLINE PODCASTS....

Pretty much everyone is interested in learning what makes people tick. Fortunately, there are no shortage of podcasts designed to cater to that interest — whether it's a short one-one-one chat about building good habits or an hour-long compilation of novel ideas.



The Lord bless you and keep you.

~ Numbers 6:24

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.



CELEBRATIONS

- 10 — Happy Birthday John Blizer
- 20 — Happy Birthday Ellen Rhoda
- 24 — Happy Birthday Ian Adams
- 27 — Happy Birthday Gary Bockman 
- 28 — Happy Birthday Phil Como

A SEASON OF REFLECTION



In **Hidden Brain** podcast host **Shankar Vedantam** guides listeners through their own cognitive missteps, biases, and blind spots. He reveals the many hard-to-see ways our decision making and judgment are influenced by various forces, such as our built-in fear of losing money and our tendency to romanticize the past. There's a lot we don't know about the human brain, but Vedantam shows listeners that even what we do know can be almost impossible to notice.

OCTOBER 1

National Coffee Day

OCTOBER 5

National Child Health Day

OCTOBER 15

National I LOVE LUCY Day

OCTOBER 22

International Stuttering Awareness Day

OCTOBER 24

United Nations Day

OCTOBER 26

National Pumpkin Day

OCTOBER 28

Nat'l Immigrants Day

GLORIA DEI EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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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)

MAY YOU OBSERVE the WORLD with LOVING CONSIDERATION.....

