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Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

THOUGHTS ALONG THE WAY...

"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."
--Matthew 5:48.

"Perfection is the enemy of good," said Voltaire, although he was rephrasing an older saying: "Don't let perfect be the enemy of good." Winston Churchill said, "Perfection is the enemy of progress," and Tolstoy said "If you look for perfection you'll never be content." Salvador Dali said there's no point in being afraid of perfection because you'll never find it. "If people reach perfection they vanish, you know," wrote T.H. White in *The Once and Future King*.

Well, Voltaire, Churchill, Tolstoy and Dali were right. You can keep trying to make something flawless, and since you don't know what perfection really is or what it looks like—after all, nobody has ever actually seen or experienced it—you may end up ruining something that was perfectly good enough. You can re-write and over-edit your writing until the words lose their meaning. You can agonize over finding the perfect words for your speech and end up alienating your audience because you sound like you're from another era or stratum of society. You can sand and polish your woodwork until the grain disappears. You can keep adding details to your painting and end up overcomplicating what might have otherwise been a masterpiece.

If you're trying to make yourself perfect, it would be good to take T.H. White's words of caution to heart. You can try to live a life that is so moral, intelligent and upright in every way that you make the you that everybody loves—you know, the you that has a slightly wicked sense of humor, the you that's just a little unorthodox, the you whose heart sometimes overrules the head—if you try too hard to be perfect, you can end up making the genuine you disappear into the shell of a pious mannequin. Or into craziness. Because there is no perfect.

We all know that perfection is not possible. And yet, here is Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount telling us to "be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." So is Jesus commanding us to do the impossible?

Probably not. We probably have the wrong word...or at least the wrong understanding of it.

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AUGUST 2022

GLORIA DEI EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

GLORIOUS DEI . . .

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**GREAT
IS OUR LORD,
AND
OF GREAT POWER:
HIS
UNDERSTANDING
IS INFINITE.
-PSALMS 147:5**

ELCA Future Directions 2025 goals and priority areas for the ELCA as a whole church. These are based in a shared trust and hope that the future is in God's hands. And they express what this church has collectively said is important into the future.



Some scholars think that the Gospel of Matthew may have originally been written in Hebrew. If so, then the word that appears in English as “perfect” would have been either *tamam* or *kalal*. Hebrew has two different words that might have been used. *Tamam* is a word that connotes wholeness, soundness, or integrity. It is a word that is usually used to convey ethical significance. So if *tamam* was the word used, we could hear what Jesus is saying as “Be whole, be mature, be honest as your heavenly Father is whole, mature and honest.” *Kalal*, on the other hand, is a word meant to convey an aesthetic sense of completeness, elegance, natural grace or beauty. “Be elegant as your heavenly Father is elegant.”

In Greek, the language of most of the oldest manuscripts of Matthew's gospel, the word our English Bibles translate as “perfect” is *teloi* which comes from *teleios* or *telos*. The overall meaning is wholeness and completeness. It's a word that means mature, a grown person, an adult. It can also refer to someone who is fully initiated into a religious community of faith or who is fully consecrated to a faithful way of life. Sometimes it is used to describe someone who is completely genuine. “Be genuine, therefore, as your heavenly Father is genuine.”

Author and scholar Chaim Benorah points out that Jesus was probably speaking Aramaic. In Aramaic, the word he used would have been *gmeera*. *Gmeera* describes one who has understanding, someone who has reached maturity, an adult. So we could read the instructions of Jesus as something like “Have understanding of the Way, the way God understands the Way” or “Be an adult, the way God is an adult.” I think this meaning may be what Eugene Peterson had in mind when he translated this verse in *The Message* this way: “In a word, what I'm saying is, *Grow up*. You're kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God-created identity. Live generously and graciously toward others, the way God lives toward you.”

David Lose has pointed out that there is an important word in this “be perfect” passage that we tend to ignore. *Therefore*. That little “therefore” should make us back up a bit and look at what Jesus was saying before we got stuck on “be perfect.” He was telling his disciples—telling us—to practice nonviolence, to love our enemies, and to pray for our enemies and those who persecute us. He was giving instructions on adulting in the kingdom. Be a grown up as your heavenly Father is a grownup. **...Continues on**

Perfect. It's just a word, but it's a crazy-making word, and it reminds us that we need to think about the words we're using and how we use them. Telling someone they need to be perfect could set them on the path to life-long neurosis. Inviting someone to imitate God's maturity and wholeness, though, is another pathway altogether. After all, as it says in the *First Nations Version: An Indigenous Translation of the New Testament*, "By loving and blessing all people, you will be walking in the footsteps of your Father from the spirit-world above, who is perfect in all his ways."

Pro Gloria Dei—Pastor Steve

TRANSFORMED & STILL SERVING

By the end of June substantial upgrades to the Lutheran Social Services (LSS) facility on Pine Street had been completed. Needed upgrades to the electrical system and the necessity to remediate mold initiated a significant make-over. The list of improvements includes painting the entire exterior and interior of the building, a security window at the front door, new flooring throughout, a complete remodeling of the food distribution area, a repaired (looks like new) parking lot, and the installation of a new gate at the alley.

The food distribution area received the most dramatic make-over. For members of our congregation who have volunteered at LSS on Saturday mornings (before COVID) the food distribution area has been transformed. Upgrading the electrical system made it possible to install air conditioning and heating, lighting was upgraded and the comfortable 'cushiony' floor installed throughout the building makes working in the area like 'walking on a cloud'. The newly painted walls, a beautiful sky blue, brings serenity to the room. Maria and those she works with, who prepare and distribute food daily, can now work in a comfortable and healthy environment. The remodeling also retained the shelving Frank Stanley built several years ago for LSS.

Unexpectedly, as the remodeling was being completed, a local food bank called to let LSS know that a commercial grade refrigerator was available — could LSS use it? The answer was 'Yes'— an unexpected and gratefully accepted addition to the updated food distribution area.

When you visit LSS you'll also see a beautifully repaired, resurfaced parking lot. Additionally, at the back of the parking lot, a new gate has been installed. Deliveries to LSS began after the remodeling was completed. For all in our congregation who have contributed time and funds to support LSS these improvements are a blessing to you, as well. Thanks be to God for your continued and steadfast support of the services LSS provides to all in need in the Long Beach area.



COUNCIL UPDATE



GOD'S WORK OUR HANDS

Before starting to write this doing last year, in August 2021. we ever really leave? One of the these 15 months of our physical wherever "we" are!". And now once again, we are back wearing masks and not using the Fellowship Hall and yet we are still fortunate to worship together in person or online and share the love of Christ with each other and continue to serve others in so many ways.

newsletter, I looked at what we were Then I wrote "We're back – but did best lessons I learned throughout separation was that our church is

It was nice to be "normal" again and celebrate being together in the Fellowship Hall and have lunch together for our Congregational meeting in May. Let's pray that the COVID numbers decrease soon and we'll be able to open up the Fellowship Hall and enjoy coffee and cookies together again.

During our Council meeting in June, **we elected officers for 2022/2023**. I will continue as president, Margie Brown as Vice President, Bob Siemer as Secretary and Gary Bockman as Treasurer. Our council members were installed during worship on June 12th and they include; **Lark Adams, Marilyn Bittle, Gary Bockman, Phil Como, Vicki Gammer, Twyla Karkut, Bev Pandora, Beth Rotsel and Bob Siemer**. If you would like to serve on the council, please let one of the council members know. Council meetings are held the first Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. Everyone is welcome to attend. Our next council meeting will be August 8.

On June 11, Margie Brown and I attended the Synod Assembly meeting in Glendale and Pastor Steve attended via Zoom...Bishop Brenda Bos conducted the meeting in a wonderful worship format that contained her message "Enough". During the meeting the Synod launched the Noisy Offering idea that our little church with a BIG heart started years ago to benefit LSS. All the churches synod-wide were given buckets and encouraged to collect a Noisy Offering one Sunday a month to benefit the LSS services within their areas (Long Beach, Pasadena or Ventura). **LSS has added the Noisy Offering information and marketing materials to their website: www.LSSSC.org**. The Noisy 'drops in a bucket' can add up to do so many meaningful things for the underserved plus it creates an additional awareness of what LSS is doing within our communities.

Fe y Esperanza: Their VBS was a tremendous success! The theme "Food Truck Party – on a Roll with God". The extra and unused items from our Sunday School rooms filled several carloads in support of their VBS. Pastor Marta and her team appreciate our donations and extend a big thank you, especially to the ELCW for the spring cleaning they did so they would have so many wonderful and fun items for their VBS. We continue to make deliveries of food, gently used household items and monetary gift certificates each month. Remember to save your grocery bags for their food distribution!

ELCW: The group enjoyed a delicious lunch at the Brewery near the Long Beach pier on June 9 and celebrated the beginning of summer. Our next meeting will be on August 11 at 11:00 in the Fellowship Hall, if COVID restrictions have been eased. Stay tuned for more information. Our project in August will be bagging rice and beans for LSS and Fe y Esperanza. Join us for wonderful fellowship. Please bring a sandwich to share.



LSS: The beauty make-over at LSS on Pine Street is complete! We continued our deliveries as soon as they re-opened. Food and clothing, especially men's casual and business attire is still needed. The need for slightly used children's clothing increases as the school year starts. Bring your donations to church or call Phil Como and arrange for a pick-up time. Deliveries are made most every Wednesday. Let me or Sandy Nelson know if you'd like to join us in making a delivery and you can get a tour of the newly upgraded building and parking lot! LSS provides so many wonderful services to the community and greatly appreciates our support. In addition to food and clothing items, our church provided generous cash donations from our Noisy offerings each month.

Adult Education: Continues on Wednesday mornings at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom. We are exploring and learning about Christian Mysticism during the summer. Join us! These discussions are so insightful and it's also a wonderful way to stay connected during the week.

AC/HVAC and Roof: Each Sunday morning we are thankful the existing air conditioner is still working and we pray that it will continue to work until the new AC/HVAC unit will be installed in conjunction with the roof repair in October. We have received numerous gifts to offset the cost of our AC/HVAC and roof repairs. The gifts amount to approximately 80% of what is needed for this project. Thank you for your prayerful consideration in making these gifts. The work will begin in early October so there is still time to make a gift to this fund. Watch the "thermometer" in the Narthex to monitor our progress.

As our Mission Statement declares "We are a congregation of Christian servants dedicated to serve the needs of the local community and the mission of the church." Our family of faith reaches so many within our community and those within our church family. We are so blessed to have each other and to share the love of the Lord to those we serve. Thank you for blessing my life with your friendship and examples of Christ-like love...

Karen Como, Council President



**We are confident about who we are in Christ and what God is calling us to do.
Telling the story of the church we are becoming...**

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.

Source: [ELCA .org/Future](https://www.elca.org/future)

RESOURCES FOR CONSIDERATION

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is saddened by the all-too-frequent occurrences of gun violence in the U.S. We mourn the loss of life. We grieve for the victims and their families, who often feel silenced. And we lament for those who have done violence to others and often feel removed from a community of faith.

We invite you on a journey of prayer, scripture, stories and church teachings with this resource, **"A 60-Day Journey Toward Justice in a Culture of Gun Violence."** Together through daily observances, it calls us to work toward the prevention of gun violence as people of God who strive for justice and peace in all the world. It may be used for individual reflection, group Bible study, adult education sessions, and congregational daily devotions. Your journey was intended to start on June 16, but this resource can be used at any time.



In 1994, the ELCA adopted the social message **Community Violence**, calling for advocacy to end the cycle of violence in the U.S. Twenty-five years later, this message is still relevant and should be considered another resource on your journey. Also available to download are an easy-to-use guide and appendix noting key documents and actions, and a gun violence litany.

LIVING LUTHERAN.ORG — Stories of God's People Living Their Faith



READ MORE ONLINE — [Living Lutheran.org](https://www.livinglutheran.org)

NEWS & PROCLAMATIONS — AUGUST 2022

2 CORINTHIANS 4:6

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

"KEEPERS OF THE LIGHT"

— AUGUST 8 —
**VIRTUAL CHURCH COUNCIL
 MONTHLY MEETING @ 7PM**



"WHEN YOU SEE SOMETHING THAT IS NOT RIGHT, NOT FAIR, NOT JUST, YOU HAVE TO SPEAK UP. YOU HAVE TO SAY SOMETHING; YOU HAVE TO DO SOMETHING."

— John Lewis

EXPLORE the *Faith and Society* resource page on the ELCA website. A great site with a visual way to find and download the many types of resources available to curious minds.

- Social Statements
- Social Messages
- Social Resolutions
- Study Docs
- Historical
- Overview Docs

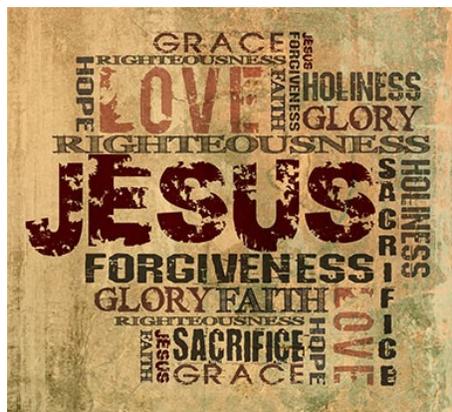
*I've
 So much to be*
THANKFUL
for

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

- 4 — Jonathan Blizer
- 5 — Janet Sims
- 11 — Kay Berg
- 14 — Edie Graber
- 15 — Happy Birthday
 Gus, Elijah & Casey White
- 16 — Sandy Irvine
- 21 — Danny Bach
- 26 — Judy Griggs
- 31 — Peggy Huggard

Happy Anniversary

- 8 — Donna & Mike Malbon
- 10 — Eric & Christy Berg
- 21 — David & Nancy
 Kahakauwila
- 27 — Phil & Karen Como



2 CORINTHIANS 4:6

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

"KEEPERS OF THE LIGHT"

**WHERE ALL
 MAY DWELL**

**JOIN US FOR SUMMER
 WORSHIP AT 10:00 AM**

WE ARE A CHURCH THAT VALUES
 AND ENCOURAGES DIVERSE VOICES
 AND LIVELY DIALOGUE

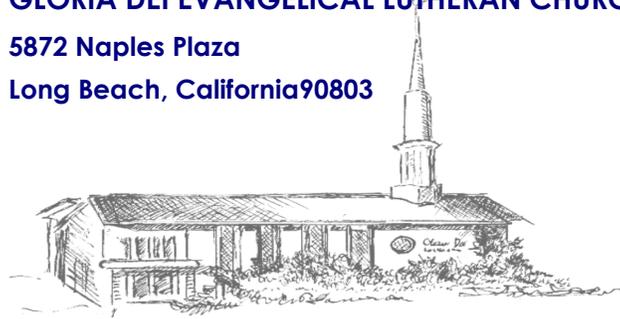


God's community can have no greed in it but must instead be characterized by having open hands toward those in need.



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)

