

JULY 2023

GLORIA DEI EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

GLORIOUS DEI . . .



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Gloria Dei Lutheran Church the little church with a big heart!

A PRAYER FOR DURABLE JOY

Our hearts ache, but we always have joy. We are poor, but we give spiritual riches to others. We own nothing, and yet we have everything." - 2 Corinthians 6:10

Joy is a radical concept in the Bible. Difficult circumstances accompany many verses about joy. The Bible tells us to rejoice when we suffer (Romans 5:3) And to consider it joy when we face trials (James 1:2). The Bible says to be glad when we are persecuted because we will be rewarded in heaven (Matthew 5:12). And to greatly rejoice when we experience bouts of grief (1 Peter 1:6). This concept confuses most of us because we equate joy with happiness. Happiness is a fleeting emotion completely dependent on our experience or circumstances. For example, I feel happy when it is my birthday, but then I don't feel as happy the next day. Or I feel happy when I win a game, but when another player wins in the next round, my happiness is squelched.

But joy is not a feeling, and it is not fleeting. Joy is not dependent on favorable circumstances. If anything, the Scriptures insinuate the opposite. The more unpleasant our circumstances are, the greater the opportunity to experience joy. Joy, unlike our fleeting feelings, is durable. Joy persists despite hardship. Joy propels us to endure despite extreme difficulties. Joy is never-ending and ever-present. When Jesus endured the heinous suffering of the cross, He was empowered to do so because of joy.

...because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne." - Hebrews 12:2

Joy is durable because it is found in the presence of God, not in the absence of struggles.

"You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore." - Psalm 16:11

Today if you're facing unfavorable circumstances, acknowledge and experience the durability of the joy made possible by Christ. I hope you understand that joy is always available in difficulties and despite hardships. Our hearts may ache, but we will always have joy because of our relationship with Christ (2 Corinthians 6:10).

Let's pray:

Dear Lord,
I don't know what my brother or sister in Christ reading this message are experiencing right now, Lord. They may face the deepest heartache or the most ravenous trial or difficulty of their life. Lord, I don't know the details, but you do. You see them struggling. And not only are you carefully watching over them, but you suffered just like them. You were despised. You were mocked. You were rejected. You were hated and spit upon. You were jeered at and insulted. You were beaten and shamed. You were stripped of your dignity. You suffered for our sake. You were wrongly punished for our shortcomings and sin, Lord. You deeply and compassionately understand my friend's suffering. And you endured your suffering by thinking about the joy of being with us in heaven for all eternity, where there would be no more sadness and no more sin. Amen.

Author~ Ashley Moore is a writer and host of *be the two™* podcast. She is known for her relatability and for passionately writing and speaking about mental, emotional, and relational health from a Biblical worldview. She has written for *Kingdom Edge Magazine*, *Guideposts*, *Crosswalk*, and more.

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**LITTLE CHURCH WITH
THE BIG HEART**
JOIN US FOR 10:00 AM WORSHIP



**GROWING IN FAITH TOGETHER,
LIFTED BY HOPE TOGETHER,
GUIDED BY LOVE TOGETHER**

WELCOME PASTOR RUTH...

Dear Saints of Gloria Dei,
I am so looking forward to being your Interim Pastor, starting in July. You will be my 11th congregation I have served as an Intentional Interim Pastor, having been specifically trained to serve in this specialized ministry. I learned, as a person with ADHD, I am a much better sprinter than I am a marathoner. In spite of the inherent insecurity of this sprint, I really believe that I can use my best gifts and skills in this capacity. And yes, I have served five congregations as a settled pastor, so interim work is not my only experience.

I was born and raised in the small town of Perrysburg, Ohio (outside of Toledo), the youngest of 6 children. I have one sister, who is the oldest, followed by 4 brothers, and then me. Both of my parents have died, as have my two oldest brothers. (I also have an extended family in Southern California that adopted me when I did my internship in Buena Park, but I will tell you more about them along the way.) I went to college nearby at Bowling Green State University and received my BS in secondary education Speech and Theater. It was while I was in college that I attended the University Lutheran Chapel with friends, and eventually was confirmed as a Lutheran. While I had grown up in the Methodist Church, interest waned in high school.

After College I moved to Berkeley to attend Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (PLTS) as a special student for a year because I did NOT want to teach High School and didn't know what else to do. I believe that the Holy Spirit had to take me through seminary and the process of becoming a pastor one small step at a time, lest I bolt. I was not affirmed in this process by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Campus Pastor who confirmed me, but once I got to seminary, I was so regularly affirmed in this call by my classmates and faculty that it took me a long time to trust it. To go from no affirmation to affirmation from so many sources was foreign indeed.

Since I went to seminary just six years after our Church decided to ordain women, it's not been an easy journey. While I was in several relationships with men in the 1980's, none of them were willing to take the step of becoming a pastor's husband. In spite of all of that, I love being a pastor. I fall in love with every congregation I serve, and I am certain that Gloria Dei will not be an exception. I love to preach, preside at worship, and teach. I love to work

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with the council and congregation as partners in ministry. It brings me great joy to help a congregation go through the process of moving from your last pastor to calling your next one. Oh, and I love to laugh and have fun!

While I am the only human in my home, I have one cat named Stella and an 8 year-old Bichon Friese named Gatsby. I am also looking toward adopting a new kitten after I return from my vacation. If you stop by the office, you might get to meet Gatsby as he is happy to come to work with me and meet EVERYONE who comes along. I always say that he is the Evangelist in the family!

I have two passions outside of ministry. I have just completed my 27th season of singing alto with the Long Beach Camerata Singers. If you haven't heard of us, you will hear a lot more from me, and I hope you will all come to our concerts. My other great passion is quilting, which I have been doing for nearly 30 years. Working with color and fabric makes me exceedingly happy, and both singing and quilting are really part of my spiritual journey. I am also blessed with many friends who have loved and supported me along the way and really, I love living alone!

You will learn a lot more about me, just as I look forward to learning about each and every one of you. I want to know your joys and your sorrows, your life experiences, your hopes and dreams, and the many things you have done in your lives as disciples of Jesus. There might be some hard moments, but I trust that we will be creative and open to this process of getting ready to call your next pastor. Let's do it with joy and faithfulness, as the Spirit leads us. I have no doubt that if we are all open to the work of the Holy Spirit, all shall be well.

Pastor Ruth Sievert



**He did this that He might clearly demonstrate through the ages to come, the immeasurable riches of His free grace in His kindness and goodness of heart toward us in Christ Jesus.
~ Ephesians 2:7**



MID YEAR BUDGET UPDATE

Revenue in 2023 has averaged \$18,188 per month compared to \$16,319 per month in 2022. This is an increase of \$1,869 per month (11%). With expenses in 2023 increasing only \$888 per month we are in a solid financial position as we begin the search for a new pastor.

There may be changes in these figures as we proceed through the call process and funding a new full-time pastor will present challenges. But for the near future our balance sheet reserves are good and the current net income is positive.

Gary Bockman, Gloria Dei Treasurer

SEEK GOD'S FAVOR

Loving God, keep me 'favor-minded' and thankful so I can be my best self. Fuel me with Your perfect truth and love. I sought Your favor with all my heart; be gracious to me according to Your word. Each day You strengthen me with Your grace. Thank You Lord!

CONGREGATION UPDATE

We're still the same – only different – We're still the little church with a big heart and we're still the same loving and caring church family of believers. Yes, it's been different without Pastor Steve and Meri. Seeing their pictures from Kauai brings joy knowing they are relaxing and enjoying their new stage of life in retirement. It's been different having various supply pastors each week during the month of June. We have been blessed and inspired by the messages from our supply pastors. In some ways it's like taking a vacation and visiting another church while staying home. And beginning in July, it will be different when we welcome Pastor Ruth Sievert as our Interim pastor. As is our custom at Gloria Dei, we will welcome Pastor Ruth with a celebration involving food – another way in which we are still the same.

Worship Committee – Thank you to Bob Siemer, Richard Hoover, Phil Como and Sandy Nelson for all of their efforts in coordinating with our supply pastors, preparing the slides and music for worship and ensuring that our worship experience continued as seamlessly as possible. Our supply pastors were so complimentary and enjoyed being with us because of this teams' time and talents in working together.

Pastor Ruth Sievert – Getting to know Pastor Ruth over the last couple of months has been a joy! She is fun to talk with and passionate about being a pastor and serving congregations as they transition from one pastor to another. This is her specialty! Pastor Ruth has received special training to support congregations through the stressful time in calling a new pastor. I'm looking forward for our church family to get to know her and for Pastor Ruth to get to know our wonderful members and friends. She has many talents including singing and quilting plus, she loves to share her love of the Lord! We are so fortunate to welcome Pastor Ruth on July 2nd!

Call Committee - On June 18th the committee met and elected Bob Siemer as the chairperson.

There are pathways for our call process based upon our financial feasibility to pay a pastor the recommended salary as determined by the Synod. One of the requests by Synod is that we have a GROW meeting with the members of our congregation. GROW is an acronym for: Goals and aspirations, Reality (current obstacles or situations), Options (strength and resources), Way forward (accountability and personal actions – what, when, by whom, and the will to do it). As part of our discussion, we agreed that we would have a GROW congregational meeting towards the end of August after Pastor Ruth has had time to assimilate and get to know our church family. More information on this meeting will follow and several announcements will be made as to the date and time to ensure as many of the members can attend this important meeting. Everyone's input at this meeting is very important as we seek to find the best pathway in calling our new pastor.

LSS: The 'Back to School Supply Drive' is on! A flyer with a list of supplies is in this issue and also available in the Fellowship Hall. The supplies are needed by August 24th. As school approaches, children's clothing in good condition is needed. New socks and underwear are always in need. LSS is also in need of gently used men's clothing and shoes in support of their job finders' program. We continue to make nearly weekly deliveries because of the generous givers within our church family and friends.

Fe y Esperanza: Pastor Marta has been in the hospital this month and needs our prayers. She is home now and appreciates our cards and especially our prayers. We will be resuming deliveries typically on Wednesdays. Fe y Esperanza always welcomes grocery bags for their food distribution program. If you have grocery bags, clothing and gently used household items to donate, please bring them to church. If you would like to schedule a pick up, contact Phil Como.

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**Make me ever so grateful for the richness and depth of my life experiences.
Thank You for guiding me to live my best life through Your gifts and blessings.**

President Message Continues...

ELCW: On June 8th, the ELCW celebrated another year of service together with lunch at the Belmont Brewery. They are in summer recess and will resume their service projects in September. All women are welcome to join us! Consider inviting



friends and neighbors who might enjoy working on projects to help various outreach groups within the city of Long Beach. The **Long Beach Police Department** gratefully accepted new fleece blankets and quilts that provide solace for a child being taken into protective custody, talk to Margie for more information.

Recent Events: Synod Assembly

Our congregation elected Margie Brown and Bob Siemer to represent us at the annual event held June 2-3, 2023 at Cal Lutheran. Bishop Bos stated 'we need to start to think about different neighbors. Because of our diversity in Southern California, we can lead where other parts of country wouldn't dare. We don't need a million people to change the world, we need one'.

Pastor Marta from Fe Y Esperanza made a presentation on the twenty-four mental health support groups held in connection with their church. A number of participants have obtained certificates from LA county. Finally, Churchwide is developing an **ELCA Social Statement on Faith**

and Civil Life. Local churches are encouraged to utilize an available study guide to discuss the issues covering such topics as Christian nationalism, partisanship, and how Christians interact in the square. This is to encourage feedback to Churchwide in finalizing this statement.



Sandy & Jeffrey Nelson and Marilyn Bittle attended the **South Coast Interfaith Council Gala** on June 24 at the Cabrillo Beach Bathhouse in San Pedro. Marilyn is a member of the Board and represents Gloria Dei at their fundraising events—thanks for being our Gloria Dei ambassadors!

Coming Events:

- July 2** —Welcome Pastor Ruth Sievert; worship followed by reception in our Fellowship Hal
- July 10** — Church Council meeting via Zoom at 7pm
- July 16** — Noisy Offering & Birthday Cake Sunday

When members of our church family are not with us, they are missed. Each member has unique gifts and talents that make us a stronger and healthier group to love and serve the Lord.

GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS

Karen Como, Church Council President

LONG BEACH COMMUNITY OUTREACH...



"God's work. Our hands. Sunday" — September 10, 2023

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. You work every day to love your neighbors and make your community a better place. Now let's do it together. A church that rolls up its sleeves ELCA members and congregations have always been active participants in God's work in the world. Are YOU ready to continue to serve our communities and neighbors? Mark your calendar!

"God's work. Our hands." Sunday

September 10 2023



LONGBEACH/SOUTH BAY
BACK TO SCHOOL
SUPPLY
DRIVE

**ANNUAL BACKPACK &
 SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE**
JUNE 15 - AUGUST 24, 2023



**ELEMENTARY
 SCHOOL SUPPLY LIST:**

- BACKPACKS (BOYS & GIRLS)
- CRAYOLA CRAYONS,
- CRAYOLA MARKERS,
- PENCILS, ERASERS,
- PENCIL SHARPENERS,
- PENCIL CASE, GLUE STICKS, SCISSORS,
- FOLDERS, COMPOSITION BOOK, SPIRAL NOTEBOOK - WIDE RULED, INDEX CARDS 3 X 5,
- HIGHLIGHTERS , POST-IT-NOTES

**MIDDLE &
 HIGH SCHOOL
 SUPPLY LIST:**

- LARGE BACKPACKS (BOYS AND GIRLS), BLUE BLACK & RED PENS, #2 PENCILS, ERASERS, MECHANICAL PENCILS, SHARPENERS, PENCIL CASE , HIGHLIGHTERS, MARKERS FINE POINT, INDEX CARDS 3 X 5 (WHITE), TWO & THREE IN BINDERS, COLLEGE RULED PAPER, FOLDERS, SUBJECT TABS, SCISSORS, TAPE, COLLEGE RULED SPIRAL NOTEBOOK, RULER (WITH CENTIMETERS AND INCHES

**SUPPLIES SHOULD BE DROPPED OFF
 NO LATER THAN:**

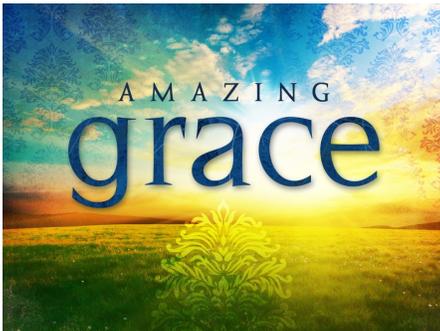
 **THURSDAY AUGUST 24**
 by 2 p.m.

 1611 Pine Avenue
 Long Beach CA 90813



**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: WENDY
 RUBIO (562) 599-1321 EXT. 1029
 WRUBIO@LSSSC.ORG**

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



Grace is a foundational and distinctive piece of the Lutheran faith. This gift, undeserved and freely given, changes lives and perspectives as people realize they are enough because of what Christ has done and are called into the world to serve their neighbor and share the good news.



Acts 4:33-34

God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them.

Thank you God, for all You've given me, including Your grace. Help me to extend Your grace to others. And, may I see bursts of Your glory and experience the fullness of Christ every day!

Happy Birthday

Happy July 2 Twyla Karkut
 Happy July 6 Martie Engle
 Happy July 7 Rebecca Brook
 Happy July 15 Paul Gannoe
 Happy July 22 Lark Adams
 Happy July 27 Stuart Subke
 Happy July 28 Sue Schaar
 Happy July 29 Mike Caldwell

Happy Anniversary — July 22
 Sandy & Jeffrey Nelson

**Live in love,
 as Christ loved us.**

~ Ephesians 5:2



JULY 3 Big Bang on the Bay



JULY 4 Independence Day



JULY 14 Mac & Cheese Day

JULY 17 World Emoji Day

JULY 24 Amelia Earhart Day

JULY 25 Wine & Cheese Day

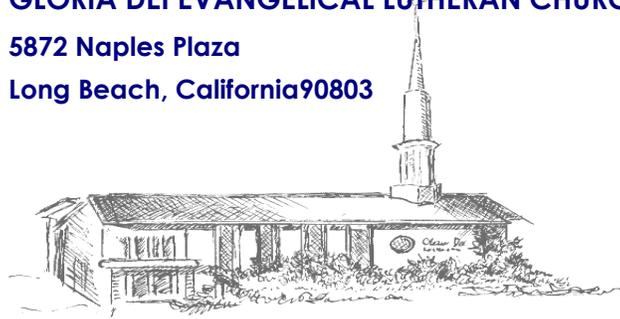
JULY 27 'Love is Kind' Day

Everything is possible for him who believes.

~ Mark 9:23

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**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)

