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Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

BE OF GOOD COURAGE...

I love the season of Advent. When I was growing up, our family tradition was to put up the Christmas tree on December 23, my sister's birthday. My dad was German, and their family tradition was to put it up on Christmas Eve, after the kids went to bed. My mom went with that until the second or third kid arrived and got Dad to at least put it up on the 23rd. As I got older, it went up a little earlier, but never before the 19th or 20th. I remember going to the tree farm and bringing home the tree, but it sat outside for sometimes several days before Dad was allowed to bring it in so that the branches would drop down in the warmth of the house for a couple of days before we could decorate it. I loved the anticipation of each of these events, knowing that once the tree was finally up, Christmas was not too far away.

I did not enjoy seeing decorations up at Costco on September 9, when I saw them this year. It started with people putting their trees up in early to mid-November. One neighbor put hers up on November 1. I have a friend who puts his tree and decorations up on the Fourth Sunday of Advent when there are at least 2 days between it and Christmas Eve and leaves it up through the entire Epiphany Season. Mine always goes up between the third and fourth Sunday in Advent, but it stays up until at least Epiphany and often longer.

Even though we will have our tree up in the sanctuary for the First Sunday of Advent, I still feel like the Church, in celebrating this season, fights against the radical commercialization of Christmas by the entire world of retail. For those of us for whom the season is first and foremost about the birth of our Messiah, there is something counter-cultural about coming into a church with blue paraments, singing hymns of longing for the coming of our Savior, knowing that the birth of Christ changed the world forever. Sure, we're probably going to go to Christmas parties, Christmas concerts and sing Christmas Carols this month, but we still know that the most important gift on December 25 is the gift of our Lord Jesus Christ. We will be caught up in shopping (unless you managed to buy all your gifts on Black Friday, Shop Local Saturday, and Cyber Monday), wrapping presents, baking, and maybe throwing our own parties. But we still know that these are the fun things that accompany the Main Event.

For those of us who know the real meaning of Christmas, we know that the gifts that we will give to LSS, Fe y Esperanza, Maritime Ministries, ELCA Good Gifts, and the Men's and Women's Shelters in Long Beach know that when we give these to the least of our brothers and sisters, we give them to Jesus.

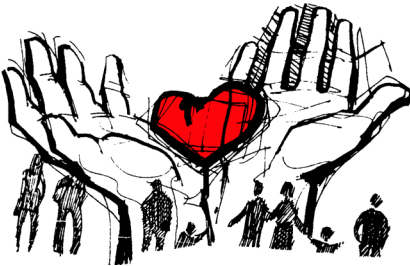
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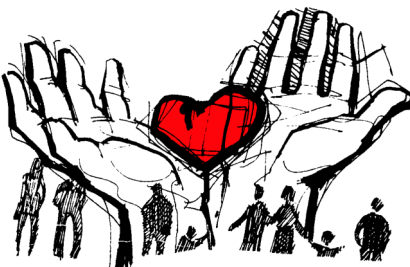
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**THE LORD IS MY
STRENGTH AND MY
SHIELD; MY HEART
TRUSTS IN HIM.**

~ PSALM 28:7



LET ALL THAT YOU
DO BE DONE IN
love
~ 1 COR 16:14



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

Oh God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with **good courage**, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Evangelical Lutheran Worship

Pastor Message Continues...

As we anticipate Christmas and the Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, I invite you to join me in reading the **lectionary texts** appointed for each day of Advent and Christmas through the Epiphany of Our Lord, January 6. It will give us a daily reminder of what this season really is about for us.



On a separate page, I have included all the appointed readings so you can print that out and keep it with your Bible (see page 6). You will see that it begins with "Week around Advent 1". Beginning on Thursday of each week of the Church year, the readings anticipate the Sunday readings and then follow that Sunday reading through Wednesday. Then it changes on Thursday of each week. I hope you will get in the rhythm of the daily lectionary, which will make our Sunday readings that much richer, with more context than we usually have before Sunday. You can read them any time of the day, but I hope you join me in this **Spiritual Exercise to enhance your Advent Season**. Don't think, if you miss a day or two, you need to catch up: just jump right back in on the next day. So that while all the other things take us into Christmas early, we will still be grounded in this season of hope and anticipation.

In the hope of our Lord, Pastor Ruth



10 WAYS TO SPREAD LOVE...

LISTEN without interrupting.

SHARE without pretending.

SPEAK without accusing.

ENJOY without complaint.

GIVE without sparing.

TRUST without wavering.

PRAY without ceasing.

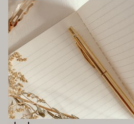
FORGIVE without punishing.

THE BENEFITS OF gratitude journaling



View Slides at <https://www.livinglutheran.org/2023/11/the-benefits-of-gratitude-journaling/>

Finding time for self-reflection can be crucial to maintaining one's spiritual, mental and emotional well-being.



Especially on social media, our society tends to emphasize what we lack or need to improve.

Here are a few prompts to incorporate into your meditation or journaling practices:

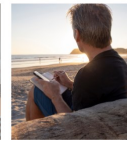
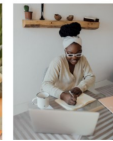


When engaging in intentional gratitude, dedicate a few moments each day to reflect on and cultivate a heart of thankfulness. Doing so can unlock a wealth of benefits, transforming our outlook on hard or difficult situations, reducing stress and contributing to a more fulfilling and resilient existence.



- No. 1 What is gratitude? How do you define thankfulness in your own words? Also, reflect on times when others showed you kindness, compassion or generosity, or you showed them to yourself. How did this influence your perspective?
- No. 2 Take time to acknowledge and express gratitude for your prayers that have been answered. Reflect on how these answers have influenced your faith journey. How has this strengthened your relationship with God?
- No. 3 Reflect on the people in your faith community who have supported and inspired you. Who are they? Take a moment to express gratitude for the relationships that have played a role in your spiritual journey.
- No. 4 Take note of the beauty of the natural world as a manifestation of God's creation. Write about specific elements of nature that inspire awe and gratitude in you.

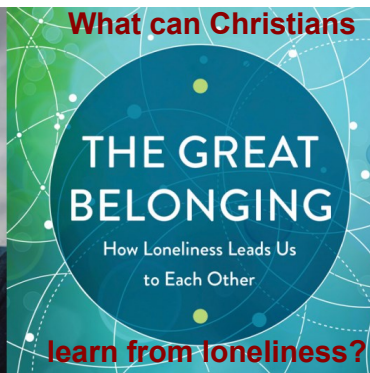
Allow these prompts to guide you in expressing your gratitude within the context of your faith.



Kelly Wilkerson is a content strategist for the ELCA.

Spiritual Renewal — Communities of Jesus are intended to be life-changing. Vitality comes as our spirits become alive in Christ. We are living in unprecedented times—a health pandemic with economic uncertainty and unresolved racism. There is much that we cannot control, but we can control our choices of behavior. Now is the time to intentionally choose healthy patterns to offset the grief and lament related to these times as we shift to a new normal. Healthy choices includes faith practices.

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



Bring your thanksgiving offerings to God whether your hearts are heavy or light, whether they are filled with joy or filled with anxiety—or perhaps a mixture of both. We offer our hearts in sincerity, trusting that God is near, taking up residence in our brokenhearted praise and making a home for all of humanity. Thanks be to God!

READ MORE... **Author: Angela T. !Khabeb**, ELCA Pastor

C.S. Lewis wrote an entire book on the subject of joy, opening with the idea that "joy has indeed one characteristic ... in common with them; the fact that anyone who has experienced it will want it again." It doesn't explain to us what joy is, but it does help us understand that what gives us joy is beyond the idea of what gives us happiness.

READ MORE... **Author: Lindsay Mack**, ELCA Pastor

GOD'S WORK. OUR HANDS.

Congregation Update Council President — Karen Como

So many gifts to think about this time of the year! I've been thinking about the many gifts of time and talent we have at Gloria Dei year-round. Sandy Nelson is a treasured gift to all of us in so many ways. She is our cheerleader and energizer-bunny rolled into one! Richard Hoover provides us with his amazing musical gifts and enhances our worship every week. Bob Siemer (aka 'OZ') uses his technology gifts to keep us connected. Gary Bockman keeps us updated on all of our expenses and ensures that the gifts to our Mission Partners are distributed. Peggy Bockman has unique gifts as she prepares our beautiful newsletter every month (I've been told that our newsletter is the most beautiful in the entire Synod!). In June, Pastor Ruth came to us as our interim pastor. She has been a gift, especially to our members who are unable to attend church, with her home visits. Each of you in my church family is a special and treasured gift as we share our joys and concerns throughout the year. We are truly blessed at Gloria Dei.

Our sanctuary will be beautifully decorated the first week of December to launch us into Advent. The Worship committee, led by Phil Como, can use your help! **Join the fun in the decorating the sanctuary from 10 – 12 noon on Saturday, December 2.**

Once again, we have so many ways to support and add joy to those within our community as we prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. Sandy, our in-house elf, has made gift boxes and lists of items for the various mission partners we support, especially during Christmas. **Please consider gifts to individual mission partners** or make a monetary gift to Gloria Dei and write 'Christmas' on the memo line.

ELCW: On December 2 at 10:00 a.m. the women will decorate the Christmas tree with the traditional Chrismon ornaments lovingly made so many years ago.

In November the ELCW women prepared 22 boxes for the Seafarers. A special thank you to Twyla Karkut and all those who made a donation to our 'personal shopper' for the necessary items. See the thank you note from Maritime Ministry in the Fellowship Hall.

In November the Wounded Warriors received a donation of \$50 from the donations collected from the ELCW library. The library has many wonderful books available for a small donation. There are numerous 'free' greeting cards available for all occasions, including many Christmas cards to send to your friends and family.

A SEASON OF GIVING



Gloria Dei's ELCA (Woman's Group) Hard at Work— 20 shoeboxes were assembled and filled with items (socks to candy) for the group's annual Christmas project for the mariners. Friends of Gloria Dei also helped by donating some of the items or by making a financial donation for the group's "personal shopper" to purchase.

Gloria Dei servant Twyla Karkut will share boxes with Ron Nelson (Maritime Ministries-Seafarers at the Port of Long Beach) who will make the delivery in time for Christmas. We're confident these gifts will bring a little joy to the seafarers as they are far away from home and family during the holidays.



ELCA Good Gifts: Go 'Tail-it' on the mountain! See our ELCA Good Gifts tree in the Fellowship Hall and consider purchasing pigs, goats, cows, chickens or honeybees. Choose an ornament, write your name on the back, enclose a check made payable to 'Gloria Dei' and place the check for your animal(s) of choice in the box next to the tree. Write 'Good Gifts' on the memo line.



REJOICE! Pastor Marta Moscoso & crew, from Fe y Esperanza, delivered turkeys to farm workers at the Field of Guadalupe in Santa Rosa.

Fe y Esperanza: The annual Los Posadas celebration will be held the week before Christmas. Small gifts of toys are given to the children in celebration of Joseph and Mary's journey to Bethlehem to welcome baby Jesus. Monetary gifts are appreciated so they can purchase the toys.

The week before Thanksgiving, Pastor Marta and her team delivered turkeys and food baskets to farm workers in Guadalupe, CA. Pastor Marta was so thankful for our monetary gifts to make these purchases possible. Thank you for generously supporting our mission partners!

Gloria Dei will be giving a gift of 50 Spanish language Bibles in support of the dedication of their newly repaired and remolded sanctuary. All of their Bibles were destroyed in the rain last year.

LSS: On December 16 LSS will celebrate their 26th annual Christmas event for families within the Long Beach area. LSS has requested unwrapped toys for children 0-11 years and Target or Walmart gift cards for the older children. They are also in need of canned goods for their food baskets as well as monetary gifts for the purchase of food and supplies for the party. Donations are needed by Sunday, December 10.

Long Beach Men's and Women's Shelter:

As the cold weather approaches, the shelter is in need of gently used warm jackets, blankets and new socks. Children's jackets are needed also. Please place your donations in one of the boxes in the Fellowship Hall. These items will be distributed just prior to Christmas Eve.



Adult Education: We have wonderful discussions on Sunday morning at 9:00 in the Fellowship Hall and on Wednesday at 10:00 via Zoom. Jump in anytime! Every week brings a new and interesting topic to enhance your faith journey and enjoy fellowship with one another. Adult Education will be in recess December 20 through January 2.

Blessing to you and your families especially during this wonderful season of Christmas. Thank you for your gift of friendship! Remember each other in prayer and invite your friends & family members to our Little Church with a BIG heart! **Merry Christmas, Karen Como**

Coming Events:

December 2 – Decorate Sanctuary for Advent
10:00 a.m. -12 noon

December 4 – Church Council meeting via zoom
at 7:00 p.m.

December 17 – Birthday Cake Sunday and Noisy offering

December 21 – Handel's Messiah at 7:30 p.m.
Beverly O'Neill Theater

December 24 – Christmas Eve Service at 5:00 p.m.
(regular Sunday worship at 10:00 a.m. – no adult ed)

January 21 – Annual Congregational Meeting
following worship

Week around Advent 1**Thursday**

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Zechariah 13:1-9
Revelation 14:6-13

Friday

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Zechariah 14:1-9
1 Thessalonians 4:1-18

Saturday

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Micah 2:1-13
Matthew 24:15-31

Sunday**First Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 64:1-9
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Mark 13:24-37

Monday

Psalm 79
Micah 4:1-5
Revelation 15:1-8

Tuesday

Psalm 79
Micah 4:6-13
Revelation 18:1-10

Wednesday

Psalm 79
Micah 5:1-5a
Luke 21:34-38

Week around Advent 2**Thursday**

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
Hosea 6:1-6
1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

Friday

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
Jeremiah 1:4-10
Acts 11:19-26

Saturday

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
Ezekiel 36:24-28
Mark 11:27-33

Sunday**Second Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 40:1-11
Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
2 Peter 3:8-15a
Mark 1:1-8

Monday

Psalm 27
Isaiah 26:7-15
Acts 2:37-42

Tuesday

Psalm 27
Isaiah 4:2-6
Acts 11:1-18

Wednesday

Psalm 27
Malachi 2:10—3:1
Luke 1:5-17

Week around Advent 3**Thursday**

Psalm 126
Habakkuk 2:1-5
Philippians 3:7-11

Friday

Psalm 126
Habakkuk 3:2-6
Philippians 3:12-16

Saturday

Psalm 126
Habakkuk 3:13-19
Matthew 21:28-32

Sunday**Third Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
Psalm 126 or Luke 1:46b-55
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
John 1:6-8, 19-28

Monday

Psalm 125
1 Kings 18:1-18
Ephesians 6:10-17

Tuesday

Psalm 125
2 Kings 2

Wednesday

Psalm 125
Malachi 3:16—4:6
Mark 9:9-13

Week around Advent 4**Thursday**

Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
2 Samuel 6:1-11
Hebrews 1:1-4

Friday

Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
2 Samuel 6:12-19
Hebrews 1:5-14

Saturday

Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
Judges 13:2-24
John 7:40-52

Sunday**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38

Days around Christmas**December 24 (evening)****Nativity of Our Lord I**

Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

December 25 (Monday)**Christmas Morning****Nativity of Our Lord II**

Isaiah 62:6-12
Psalm 97
Titus 3:4-7
Luke 2:[1-7] 8-20

December 25 (Monday)**Nativity of Our Lord III****Christmas Evening**

Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98
Hebrews 1:1-4 [5-12]

ADVENT THROUGH EPIPHANY**LEXIONARY READINGS**

PROCLAMATIONS AND EVENTS

**LOVE ONE ANOTHER
WITH MUTUAL
AFFECTION; OUTDO
ONE ANOTHER IN
SHOWING HONOR!**

~ PSALM 12:10

**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.

Help our congregation and your community 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 website and print or order cards to tell loved ones about gifts given in their honor.



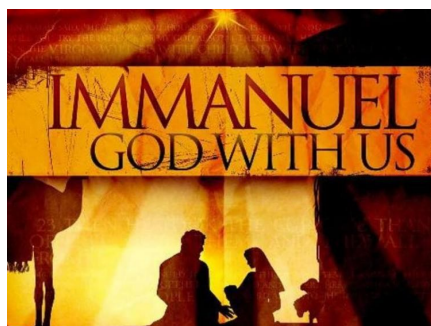
**GLORY TO GOD
IN THE HIGHEST!**

**MERRY
CHRISTMAS**



**CHRISTMAS EVE @
5:00 PM !**

**LORD, MAKE US GOOD
GUESTS AND HOSTS OF
YOUR KINGDOM WHO
REFLECT THE HUMANITY
AND GENEROSITY OF
OUR SAVIOR.**



**GLORIOUS DEI
NEWSLETTER HIATUS
SLATED FOR JANUARY**

**THE RICHES
THE WISDOM
THE KNOWLEDGE
OF GOD!**

**MARK YOUR
CALENDAR**

**7 PM — JOIN ZOOM
COUNCIL MEETING**

DECEMBER 4

NAPLES BOAT PARADE

DECEMBER 16

FIRST DAY OF WINTER

DECEMBER 21

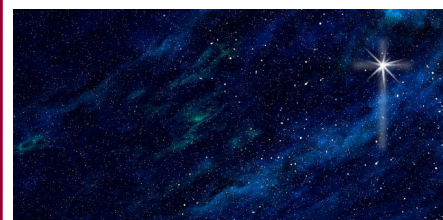


WWW.LBCAMERATA.ORG

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21

PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS ASAP

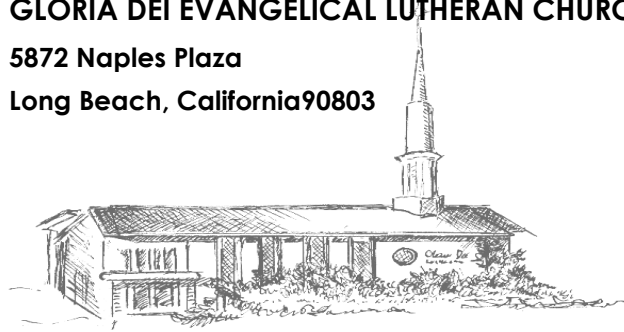
Oh Holy Night



**JESUS...
BEST. GIFT. EVER.**

GLORIA DEI EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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



Return Service Requested

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage paid
Long Beach, California
Permit No. 2190

Holy Night **shepherds**
Believe *Glorious*
Angels on High
JOY *Hallelujah*
Prince of Peace
Wise Men **LOVE**
swaddling clothes *Bethlehem*
good tidings **BABE IN A MANGER**
NOEL *Glory to God*

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)

