

Reverend Steven Beckham, Pastor
5872 Naples Plaza Long Beach, California 90803-5044
Website: www.gdlclb.org Telephone: 562.438.0929



Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

THOUGHTS ALONG THE WAY...

Here we are smack in the middle of the season of Epiphany and I can't help but think of the epiphanies I've experienced. I've had my share of "aha!" moments, but most of my epiphanies roll out slowly with the cover peeled back a bit at a time until I realize that I'm seeing or understanding things differently than before. What are your epiphanies like? How do they happen? What new light of understanding illuminates your world so that you see something differently than you did a month ago, a year ago, a decade ago, a generation ago?

God is almost entirely unpredictable. I say almost entirely because the one thing we can predict is that regardless of circumstances, God loves us. God will love us in, with, under and through all things, but trying to predict what that love will look like, what shape it will take, how it will work? That's crazy-making. God won't be boxed in.

I've been reading a fascinating book called *When Jesus Became God* by Richard Rubenstein, which is about the fascinating theological and political battle surrounding the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE in which the first prototype of the Nicene Creed was formulated. The Emperor Constantine called the Council to settle a raging theological dispute that pivoted around several theological questions: Was Jesus divine? What did that mean, exactly? What was Jesus' relationship to the Father? And the Spirit? Was Jesus subordinate to the Father? Was Jesus co-eternal with the Father or was he created?

These questions had simmered in the background since the very beginning of Christianity but most Christians were more or less content to live with differing opinions on these matters. But when Emperor Constantine became a Christian, stopped the persecutions, and made the religion legal, suddenly it seemed important to find official answers and establish doctrine.

The Council of Nicaea was supposed to settle these matters once and for all, but, even though the Trinitarians "won" the debate and formulated most of the language of the Creed, the Arians continued to push for their interpretation of the faith for more than a century and often were in the majority. They believed that Jesus was created by the Father and was not co-eternal, that he had a kind of divinity as the son of God, but was not equal to the Father, was instead subordinate to the Father. And so on. So while the Creed gave language to the first official doctrine of the Church, in practice it really failed to unify the Church in any meaningful way.

...Continued on page 2

Inside this issue:

Pastor's Message	2
Congregation Update	3
Budget Surplus	3
This is Christ's Church	4
40 Days of Giving	5
God's Call for Service	6
Calendar of Events	7



**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.**



**What language would move
our statement of faith
out of our heads and into our
hearts and hands
and feet?**

Thoughts Along the Way Continues....

Creeds can be useful. Up to a point. They are useful to help clarify what we think. They draw lines that determine the boundaries of what we understand about God and our relationship with God, and help us identify ideas that don't seem consistent with what we've known and experienced of God. They tell us who's in and who's out—who agrees with the official line and who does not. But that's also part of their limitation. God is bigger, deeper, wider and more innovative than any boundaries we draw. God is not a cat. God does not want to curl up inside our box.

Another problem with creeds is that they emphasize some aspects of our faith over others, sometimes even ignoring things that are vitally important. In both the Apostles' and Nicene Creed, for instance, more and more Christian thinkers are calling attention to what's being called The Great Comma.

"But have you ever noticed the huge leap the creed makes between "born of the Virgin Mary" and "suffered under Pontius Pilate"? A single comma connects the two statements, and falling into that yawning gap, as if it were a mere detail, is everything Jesus said and did between his birth and his death! Called the "Great Comma," the gap certainly invites some serious questions. Did all the things Jesus said and did in those years not count for much? Were they nothing to "believe" in? Was it only his birth and death that mattered? Does the gap in some way explain Christianity's often dismal record of imitating Jesus' life and teaching?"
--Diana Butler Bass, *A People's History of Christianity: The Other Side of the Story*.

Perhaps the greatest problem with our creeds, though, is that they focus on what we think about God and not what we're doing to live out our relationship with God. There is nothing in their language about service, love, or hope. There is nothing in them about helping "the least of these brothers and sisters", or life together in a family of faith. Forgiveness of sins is mentioned but there is no actual call to forgive each other as we have been forgiven. In fact, there is no call to action at all. The creeds are, instead, a historical snapshot of what the men who formulated them (and they were all men) understood to be the most important philosophical premises of their faith. And to be clear, these were the statements formulated by those who won the battles—battles that were sometimes physical and not just philosophical. One can't help but wonder how Jesus felt about that...or feels now, for that matter.

Yes, we do believe. But more importantly, we are called to follow Christ and to live as the Body of Christ. I wonder... what would a creed look like that focused on that? What language would move our statement of faith out of our heads and into our hearts and hands and feet?

Pro Gloria Dei, Pastor Steve

Be intentional about showing God's love to each other and the world.

CONGREGATION UPDATE



The council met on Jan 7. The January council meeting focused on reviewing the 2018 financial report as of December 31. Council then looked at the proposed budget that treasurer, Gary Bockman and the Finance committee prepared based on the pledges returned for 2019 plus an average of weekly offerings over the past few years. I am delighted to report we had a wonderful year of giving in 2018. We met our 2018 budget with a surplus!

Thank you everyone for your support and dedication to our Church. Council's recommendation on how to distribute the surplus funds was presented at the congregational meeting on January 27 and was passed. Refer to the chart below for the recommended distribution of the surplus funds.

[Special thanks to Galan Anderson for another spectacular banner that graces the front of our church!]

The proposed **2019 Spending Plan** was also presented and approval by those attending our annual meeting.

During Lent, March 10 to April 19 the church will be participating in **40 Days of Giving** sponsored by ELCA World Hunger. The suggested donation is \$2.00 per day during Lent. We will be making an extra collection at each **Sunday Worship Service** during the 40 days.

Disbursement of 2018 surplus:

8,000	Synod Mission Support
1,000	ELCA Global Missionary Support
1,000	Fe Y Esperanza
1,000	Lutheran Maritime Ministry
1,000	L.S.S. Long Beach
1,000	Pacific Lutheran Theology Seminary
1,000	So Coast Interfaith Council
1,000	New Life Band - Tanzania
9,000	Property Reserve (\$18,000 was spent on the parsonage in 2018)
2,000	Web advertising
1,224	Reserve for church computer replacement
1,800	Purchase iMac for Pastor Steve (gift current computer to him)
<u>29,024</u>	2018 Surplus
5,522	2017 Surplus (leave on books to cover non-pledged estimate)

Margie Brown, chair of the **Shepherd Committee** asks that you consider being a new shepherd for some new church attendees/members. Please contact her if this is something you would like to do. If you are already a shepherd perhaps you could take on 1-2 more sheep!

In closing, a prayer for good health and happiness to all who enter our doors.

Rejoice in GOD's blessings.

Stephanie Siemer, Council President

Email: ssiemer@charter.net

*Be the change you want
to see in the world.*

~ Gandhi ~

We continue to rejoice in God's abundant blessings as we come together each year for our Annual Congregation meeting and luncheon — thanks to all who made it a priority to attend!



Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. — *Philippians 4:4-7*

"Everybody can be great . . . because anybody can serve."
– Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929 – 1968)



What a joy it is to participate in an event when residents make it a **"Day On, not a Day Off"** on this annual holiday! Next year, I encourage you to join me and contribute to the **MLK National Day of Service in Long Beach**. This year there were **16 service projects** throughout the city — I served on the Houghton Park beautification Project team. **Leadership Long Beach** coordinated, and it was supported by the **Office of Mayor**, Councilman Al Austin, Councilman Rex Richardson, the Port of Long Beach and a host of civic and community organizations.

~ Peggy Bockman

<https://www.presstelegram.com/2019/01/09/heres-how-you-can-honor-martin-luther-king-jr-on-national-day-of-service-in-long-beach/>

ELCA World Hunger's **40 DAYS** of Giving

JOIN OUR LITTLE CHURCH WITH A BIG HEART...

This Lent, you're invited to join together with fellow members and supporters of ELCA World Hunger to study, reflect and give during ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving. Experience how the grace of Christ moves us to engage in transformative works of love around the world as God calls us into the ministry of hope, liberation and restoration for our world.



Pray, fast and give
during ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving –
for the good of our families, our neighbors and
communities around the world.

LIVING LUTHERAN



Human progress never rolls in on the wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of people willing to be co-workers with God. ~Martin Luther King, Jr.



Called to *Serve*

The small, **brave act of cooperating** with another person, of choosing **trust** over cynicism, **generosity** over selfishness, makes brain cells light up with quiet joy. ~ Dr. Gregory S. Berns

We need teams to usher, count offerings, & host refreshments for our Friendship Hall as we gather for fellowship after worship service!

Won't you consider volunteering a few Sundays a year? — a small gesture to enhance our ability to connect and meet others at GLORIA DEI! Add your name to the sign-up clipboard in the fellowship hall...we need YOU to be part of our HOSPITALITY Team! Please lend a hand....



CALENDAR OF EVENTS — FEBRUARY 2019

1 — Friday

- MEN'S A.A. @ 7-8:00 AM
- A.A. MTG.@ 1:00 PM
- D.A. MTG @ 6:00 PM



David & Sarah Fuller Anniversary

2 — Saturday

- MEN'S A.A. MTG.@ 7-8:00 AM



Happy Birthday Bob Siemer

3 — SUNDAY

**ADULT EDUCATION @ 9 AM
WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM
HOLY COMMUNION**

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

4 — Monday

- MEN'S A.A. MTG.@ 7-8:00 AM

CHURCH COUNCIL MTG @ 7 PM

5 — Tuesday

**God's Story, Your Story, My Story
ADULT EDUCATION @
10:00 AM & 7 PM**

6 — Wednesday

- MEN'S A.A. MTG.@ 7-8:00 AM

JOIN THE CHOIR... @ 7:15 PM

7 — Thursday

- SLAA MTG.@ 7:30 PM

8 — Friday

- MEN'S A.A. @ 7-8:00 AM
- A.A. MTG.@ 1:00 PM
- D.A. MTG @ 6:00 PM

9 — Saturday

- MEN'S A.A. MTG.@ 7-8:00 AM

10 — SUNDAY

**ADULT EDUCATION @ 9 AM
WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM
HOLY COMMUNION
Hunger Envelopes & PRAYERS FOR HEALING**

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

11 — Monday

- MEN'S A.A. MTG.@ 7-8:00 AM

NAPLES GARDEN CLUB @ 1 PM

12 — Tuesday

**God's Story, Your Story, My Story
ADULT EDUCATION @
10:00 AM & 7 PM**

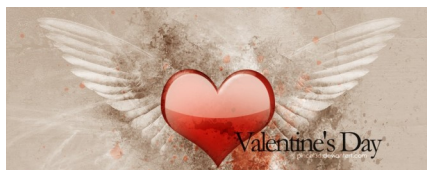
13 — Wednesday

- MEN'S A.A. MTG.@ 7-8:00 AM

JOIN THE CHOIR... @ 7:15 PM

Happy Birthday Mike Meckna

14 — Thursday



15 — Friday

- MEN'S A.A. @ 7-8:00 AM
- A.A. MTG.@ 1:00 PM
- D.A. MTG @ 6:00 PM

16 — Saturday

**LSS WORK PARTY 10-NOON
1611 Pine Avenue, Long Beach**



17 — SUNDAY

**ADULT EDUCATION @ 9 AM
WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM
HOLY COMMUNION
Noisy Offering**

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

18 — Monday (church office closed)

PRESIDENT'S DAY HOLIDAY



**Happy Birthday
Roger Powell**

19 — Tuesday

**God's Story, Your Story, My Story
ADULT EDUCATION @
10:00 AM & 7 PM**

20 — Wednesday

- MEN'S A.A. MTG.@ 7-8:00 AM

JOIN THE CHOIR... @ 7:15 PM

Newsletter Deadline

[send submissions to pbockman@fullerton.edu]

21 — Thursday

- SLAA MTG.@ 7:30 PM

22 — Friday

- MEN'S A.A. @ 7-8:00 AM
- A.A. MTG.@ 1:00 PM
- D.A. MTG @ 6:00 PM

23 — Saturday

**Happy Birthday
Lyn Hicks**



24 — SUNDAY

**ADULT EDUCATION @ 9 AM
WORSHIP @ 10:30 AM
HOLY COMMUNION**

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

Happy Birthday Carrol Irwin



25 — Monday

- MEN'S A.A. MTG.@ 7-8:00 AM

**Happy Birthday
Sarah Fuller**



26 — Tuesday

**God's Story, Your Story, My Story
ADULT EDUCATION @
10:00 AM & 7 PM**

27 — Wednesday

- MEN'S A.A. MTG.@ 7-8:00 AM

CHOIR @ 7:15 PM

**Happy Birthday
Sandi Anderson**



28 — Thursday

- SLAA MTG.@ 7:30 PM

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



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)

