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Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

THOUGHTS ALONG THE WAY...

"Sacrifice the Weak. Reopen TN," said the sign. It was arresting. Shocking, stark and heartless, the sign was held by a woman at a protest rally in Tennessee, a gathering of people frustrated with a shut-down economy and tired of being ordered to stay at home to prevent the spread of the corona virus. They want businesses to reopen. They want life to get back to normal. I suppose they think that by protesting they can make that happen sooner.

In the pictures in the news, the woman with the sign and others at similar protests are not following the proper protocols for physical distancing. Many are not wearing masks, although the woman with the sign was wearing one and her sign seemed to acknowledge the potential deadliness of the contagion. I can't help but wonder how many of them will come down with the virus. I hope they don't, but the odds are not in their favor. I wonder if they understand that. I wonder if they understand that even if they never experience so much as the sniffles they still might carry the virus home with them or into the grocery store, that they might pass it on to someone else who won't be so lucky, that they might become the instrument of someone's death.

In explaining their reasons for protesting, some of the protesters cite the stay-at-home orders and the shuttering of businesses as an infringement of their civil liberties. It's true that certain rights are being curtailed for the time being in order to protect public health, to keep people from getting sick and dying. Other protesters cite economic concerns. They want businesses reopened. They want the money to flow. Sacrifices must be made, they say. And yet they don't seem so willing to make the sacrifice of staying home to protect the health of others.

According to Planet Money, the podcast from NPR, the official US Government value of a human life is \$10 million. There are all kinds of valid reasons why the government had to come up with such a number. (For more information about that you can listen to the podcast: Planet Money, episode 991: Lives vs. The Economy.) Thinking only in terms of numbers for a moment, that means that every 100 persons who have died because of Covid 19 represent a \$1 billion hit to the economy. This doesn't take into account the cost of hospitalization, equipment, medication, personnel and other costs associated with fighting the virus. So far we've lost more than 50,000 persons. Do the math. Clearly, the most cost effective way to deal with it is to prevent people from getting it. But that's all just cold, hard dollars. Aren't lives worth more than dollars?

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COUNCIL UPDATE

Your church council had a very productive meeting on April 6 via ZOOM. This is our electronic system set up by Robert Siemer to assist us in keeping our church family moving and maintaining the social distancing mandate. We are using ZOOM for sharing and for church services. It works, all from the privacy of our own homes. We are not opening the church for meditation time so that project is on hold.

The SouthWest Synod assembly has been placed on hold as well. This will probably be moved to August.

We continue to share our 'noisy offerings' with our local church partner in South Gate. They are doing a great job serving their congregants and their community. Thanks to everyone who helps us support **Fe Y Esperanza's** outreach efforts.

Even though we are not having services at church, our bills must be paid. We voted to take the excess from 2019 and apply it to our current needs in 2020. If that becomes insufficient, we can tap into our reserve fund.

Our annual congregation meeting, which is usually held in May, may have to be rescheduled. This meeting is to elect officers to the council and conduct any other business as needed. Stay alert for updates as they become available.

We have received a thank you letter for continuing our financial and prayer support for our special missionary in Mainland China. Please keep her in your prayers.

Our Prayer Wall is being used regularly. Keep all the petitioned ones in your prayers, as well as our church family members.

Have a Glorious Dei. Margie E. Brown, Council President

LORD, OUR SAVIOR,

We ask that you renew our hearts, minds, and lives, for the days ahead. We pray for your refreshing over us. Keep your words of truth planted firm within us, help us to keep focused on what is pure and right. Shine your light in us, through us, over us. May we make a difference in this world, for your glory and purposes. May we reflect your peace and hope to a world that so desperately needs your presence and healing.

Thoughts Along the Way Continued...

The thing I find hardest to deal with is the attitude. Or attitudes. Plural. What are civil liberties worth if they are exercised without responsibility? Should their right to assemble jeopardize your right and my right to good health? How important is getting the economy running again if doing so kills ten percent or more of the population? What would be an acceptable percentage? Whose life are we willing to sacrifice? How do we decide that? On what basis?

I could pretty easily build a biblical argument to question this rush to get the cash flowing. "The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil," springs pretty immediately to mind. (1 Timothy 6:10) "The lover of money will not be satisfied with money; nor the lover of wealth, with gain. This also is vanity." (Ecclesiastes 5:10) But Jesus, as always, puts it best: "No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth." (Matthew 6:24 and Luke 16:13) So who is being served by a rush to reopen?

As for those who say they are protecting their civil liberties, I am mindful of St. Paul's words to the church at Corinth, "If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal." (1 Corinthians 13:1)

I could go on. But I suspect that quoting scripture won't mean much to those who carry signs that say "sacrifice the weak" or to those who believe their individual rights and freedoms outweigh the safety and health of others. I suspect that Christ's words about serving two masters will be lost on those who are already dedicated to the dollar. I cannot help but wonder how these values became so widespread, at how so many stop short of critical thinking, at how many seem to have misplaced their souls.

Clearly this new status quo is already wearing thin for a lot of people. It's working our nerves. Patience is not our strong suit in 21st century America. But it helps me to remember that we are all enduring this sequestering out of love. "Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

So let's be patient. Let's be kind. Let's not be arrogant or rude or envious or boastful. Let's not insist on doing things our own way. Let us not gleefully do the wrong thing. Let's listen carefully for the truth. Let's bear up under the circumstances. Let's believe that with God's help and each other's prayers and help we'll get through this. Let's hope for the solution, a vaccine and better days.

And until then, let's endure. In other words, let's love.

Pro Gloria Dei, Pastor Steve



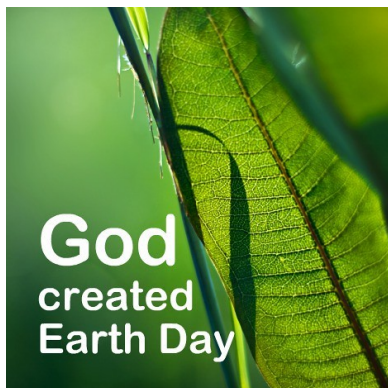


"SHE IS CLOTHED IN Strength AND Dignity, AND SHE Laughs WITHOUT FEAR OF THE FUTURE."
~ Proverbs 31:25



NEWS FROM ELCA Advocacy

- elca.org/advocacy
- [/elcaadvocacy](https://www.facebook.com/elcaadvocacy)
- [@ELCAAdvocacy](https://twitter.com/ELCAAdvocacy)



Beginning as a United Nations initiative, the Earth Charter was launched in 2000 after more than 10 years of worldwide, cross-cultural dialogue in which common goals and values were shared. The Earth Charter reflects that we are “one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny,” as written in its preamble.

The ELCA endorsed the Earth Charter by action of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly, which resolved to “reaffirm the commitment of this church to engage in creation care through principles of sufficiency, sustainability, solidarity and participation.” These principles, stated in the ELCA social statement “**Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice**,” guide us in our call to justice for a world where all are heard and have basic needs met, and where we stand together to create a life of quality for the present generation without compromising future generations.

With more than 6,000 organizational and governmental endorsers, the Earth Charter seeks transition to a sustainable way of living and human development through the collective goals of ecological protection, eradication of poverty, equitable economic development, respect for human rights, democracy and peace.

As official endorsers, the ELCA continues the journey to understanding our human role in creation and to serving through individual and community action, worship, learning, moral deliberation and advocacy. What steps are you, your congregation and your community taking to promote a transition to sustainable ways of living?

Find resources at elca.org/environment.

YOUR ACTIONS CAN BE CONTAGIOUS & INSPIRING...

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart. ~ Jeremiah 29:11-13

EMBRACE. EQUIP. EMPOWER.

Emergency Services Social Services Transitional Services

Not everyone can volunteer...But, with your gift,
YOU can help turn despair into hope for many in our Long Beach community.

<https://www.lsssc.org/location/south-bay-long-beach/>

"Christians live not in themselves, but in Christ and in their neighbor. Otherwise they are not Christians. They live in Christ through faith, in their neighbor through love." ~ Martin Luther, "The Freedom of a Christian"

**I give you a new
commandment:
Love one another as
I have loved you.**

John 13

The world's richest nation—our own—is deeply scarred by economic and racial inequalities that leave 37 million Americans, including 1 out of every 6 children,* in households of food insecurity.

*(According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Hunger Free America, respectively.)

Source: PERSPECTIVE: Ending hunger could bring us together By Arthur Simon

AROUND THE BLOCK, COUNTRY AND WORLD

Beyond your congregation, consider living out your calling through your synod. If you aren't already receiving your synod's newsletter, sign up. What speaks to you? There may be synod-led initiatives you can support. Your vocation as an ELCA member also includes the work of the churchwide organization. From **ELCA World Hunger** to **ELCA Advocacy** to the **ELCA Youth Gathering**, there is a place for you to match your talents with existing ministries. Learn more at elca.org/our-work. Consider your spiritual gifts and passions and the ways they might match the needs of the ELCA in its three expressions (your congregation, your synod and the churchwide organization). Ask: Do I feel tugged toward leadership? Do I feel a need to step back from congregational work that is not fulfilling and make room for new opportunities? Write this down. Remember, you don't have to do it all. We are part of a faith community doing **God's work with our hands—together.**

Martin Luther knew the church wasn't the center of the universe. He was more interested in how God calls us outside the church walls. "The absolute core of Luther's ethics is the notion of neighbor love." **Vocation urges us to love and serve our neighbors.**

Calls in society include being a:

- **Neighbor to people living on our block or in our community.**
- **Greeter to those visiting or seeking refuge in our city.**
- **Citizen who votes, pays taxes, obeys laws and speaks out against injustice.**
- **Volunteer who assists schools or civic organizations.**
- **Activist who protests poverty, racism and other kinds of injustice, near and far.**
- **Earth-dweller tasked with caring for a planet in crisis.**

Source: Spiritual Practices & Resources — LIVINGLUTHERAN.ORG

CALENDAR OF EVENTS — MAY 2020

1 — Friday

2 — Saturday

3 — SUNDAY

VIRTUAL WORSHIP SERVICE

@ 10:30 AM (SEE WEBSITE FOR DETAILS)

4 — Monday **VIRTUAL**

COUNCIL MEETING @ 7:00 PM

5 — Tuesday

COMMUNITY CONNECTION @ 2 pm

6 — Wednesday

ONLINE BIBLE STUDY @ 10 am

7 — Thursday

8 — Friday



Peggy & Gary Bockman Anniversary

Happy Birthday Michael Engle

Happy Birthday Chuck Dean

9 — Saturday

Happy Birthday Dianne Keil

10 — SUNDAY

VIRTUAL WORSHIP SERVICE

@ 10:30 AM



11 — Monday

12 — Tuesday

COMMUNITY CONNECTION @ 2 pm

13 — Wednesday

ONLINE BIBLE STUDY @ 10 am

14 — Thursday

15 — Friday

16 — Saturday

17 — SUNDAY

VIRTUAL WORSHIP SERVICE

@ 10:30 AM

18 — Monday

Happy Birthday Pastor Steve

19 — Tuesday

COMMUNITY CONNECTION @ 2 pm



Mike & Martie Engle Anniversary

P.A. & Brooke White Anniversary

20 — Wednesday

ONLINE BIBLE STUDY @ 10 am

21 — Thursday

22 — Friday

23 — Saturday

Happy Birthday Jim Mintie

Happy Birthday Nancy Sansum

24 — SUNDAY

VIRTUAL WORSHIP SERVICE

@ 10:30 AM

25 — Monday



26 — Tuesday

COMMUNITY CONNECTION @ 2 pm

27 — Wednesday

ONLINE BIBLE STUDY @ 10 am

Happy Birthday Richard Hoover

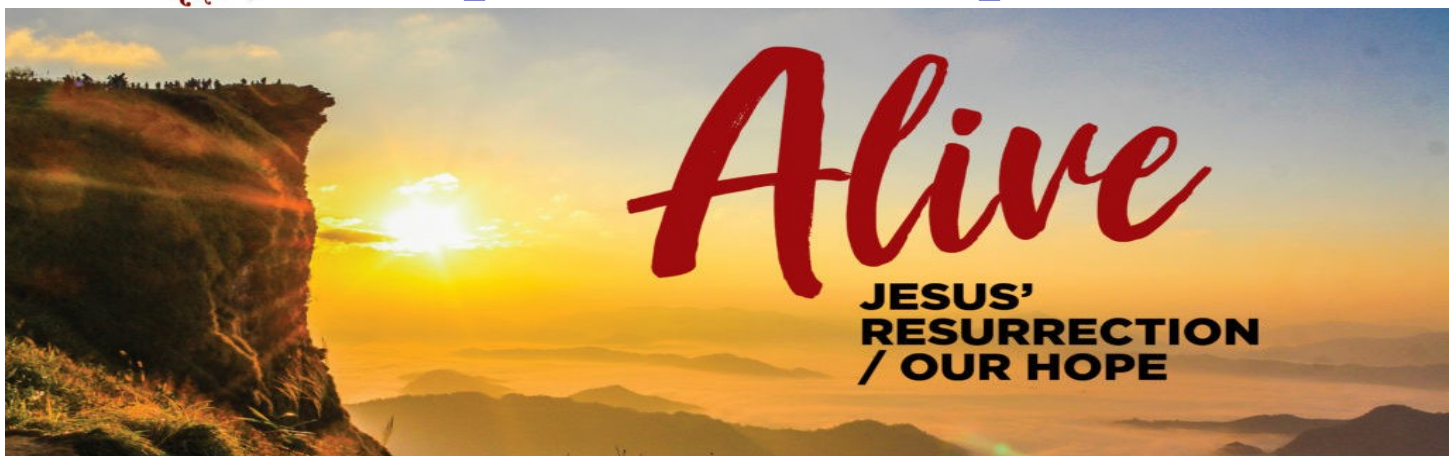
28 — Thursday

29 — Friday

30 — Saturday

She
IS CLOTHED IN
strength
AND
dignity.
AND SHE
laughs
WITHOUT FEAR
OF THE FUTURE.

PROVERBS 31:25



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 Cor. 5:17-19)

