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Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

THOUGHTS ALONG THE WAY...

*I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord."
– Psalm 122:1*

If the county and city safety levels hold or improve, we will be returning to our sanctuary for worship at Gloria Dei on May 16. It has been more than a year since we have been able to be together for worship in our own sanctuary and I know that many of us are looking forward to returning to our familiar and beloved space.

I am mindful that there are some who faithfully attended worship before the pandemic and yet never joined in with us for online worship this past year. I can only guess at why. I suppose that some may have thought that the technology was daunting or more complicated than they wanted to fuss with, although, honestly it's not that hard. I'm guessing that some may have thought that it just wouldn't feel like church. I can understand that. In a lot of ways it didn't feel like church—at least not church as we are accustomed to it. Oddly, though, in some ways it has worked surprisingly well and has felt more intimate to gather online, especially after worship when we have had our "virtual" coffee hour where everyone can see and hear everyone else.

The thing is, when we do return to the sanctuary for worship, it's not going to be the way you remember it. It's not going to be what we were used to. We will be back in our building, but we will still be observing Covid protocols. Everyone will be required to wear a mask. Ushers will monitor distancing on your way in and on your way out. You won't be able to hug anyone. Conversations will have to happen outside, six feet apart. The pews will be marked for social distancing so you'll be spaced apart from people you used to sit next to, except for immediate family members. The ushers will also make sure that the pews are filled from the front first and then at the end of the service that people leave from the back first. This will help maintain proper social distancing. Because of CDC, state, and county restrictions, we won't have congregational singing; Richard will play the hymns on the organ, but you won't be allowed to sing. We won't have spoken responses from the congregation, either, at least not until the CDC says it's okay to allow that. At communion you will stay in your seat, then take your own little sealed cup with grape juice and a piece of bread from a basket, so that will feel different. The Fellowship Hall won't be open, so there won't be any coffee hour or fellowship time after worship until we're in a safer tier.

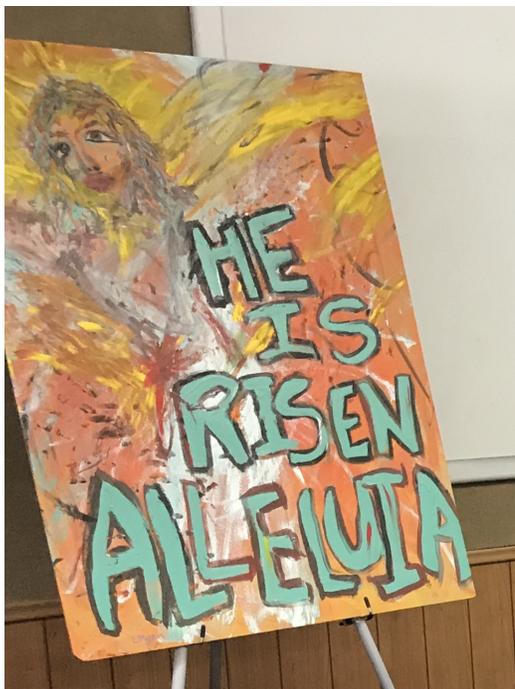
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Thoughts Along the Way Continued...

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GROWING IN FAITH LIFTED BY HOPE GUIDED BY LOVE



BLOOM WITH GRACE...

So, as you can see, even when we are back “in church,” worship and fellowship will be different for some time to come. We will continue to stream our services on ZOOM and YouTube for those who prefer to or need to worship from home.

In chapter 4 of the Gospel of John, Jesus has an interesting conversation with a Samaritan woman. She points out that her people, the Samaritans, think that the only appropriate place to worship God is on Mount Gerazim, and that the Jews think that God must be worshipped in the temple in Jerusalem. “So which is it? Who’s right?” she asks Jesus. “The hour is coming,” he replies, “and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Spirit and truth. Whether online or in the sanctuary, we should worship in spirit and in truth. That means that our hearts and minds are focused on Christ, not on our preferences.

I look forward to seeing you all again in person.
Pro Gloria Dei, Pastor Steve

PASTORAL MESSAGE

The trial of Derek Chauvin, the former Minnesota police officer charged with the killing of George Floyd, has riveted our national attention, and now a verdict has been reached. Together, we have anticipated the jury’s decision with troubled hearts. As members of the community of Jesus, we affirm that “if one member suffers, all suffer together with it” (1 Corinthians 12:26, NRSV). No jury verdict can erase the pain of the Floyd family, and we share our condolences and pray for ongoing comfort in their suffering and for all whose lives have been touched by this tragedy. The ongoing abuse of police authority and the extrajudicial killings of Brown and Black bodies must stop. We recommit ourselves as a church to continue to fight against the sin of racism and to hold accountable unjust systems and structures that perpetuate injustices, including our own. In the words of Martin Luther King Jr:

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

The work of confronting these injustices is long overdue. Let us together in our congregations and communities discern how we are being called in this moment to live out our baptismal promise to serve all people and strive for justice and peace. For further insights and discussion, you can refer to the ELCA website—social statements and policy.

**The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

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/>

THE UP SIDE — QUOTES FROM POSITIVE THINKERS

“MONDAYS ARE A GREAT DAY TO FOCUS ON WHAT WE GET TO DO, INSTEAD OF WHAT WE HAVE TO DO. LIFE IS A GIFT, NOT AN OBLIGATION.”

~ Jon Gordon, author & speaker on leadership & teamwork

“EVEN WHEN UNCERTAINTY IS THE ONLY THING YOU’RE CERTAIN OF, THERE IS HOPE AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO THRIVE THROUGH GOD.”

~ Nona Jones, preacher & author
Success from the Inside Out: Power to Rise from the Past to a Fulfilling Future

“MY PRAYERS USED TO BE ASKING GOD FOR THINGS, AND NOW MY PRAYERS ARE ‘GOD, WHAT DO YOU NEED FROM ME?’ ”

~ Trent Shelton, motivational speaker

HONOR THE BEAUTY & WISDOM OF MOTHERS



Spend Mother’s Day with some of mariachi’s greatest names!

You can celebrate the women in your life this **Día de las Madres** with some of the best mariachi performances at The Ford Theatre. This concert event brings together leading artists, including Mariachi Ángeles de Pepe Martínez, Jr., Las Jovencitas, Marisa Ronstadt, Mariachi Femenil Nuevo Tecalitlán, Ballet Folklórico Ollin,

Premiering on Facebook and YouTube on Sunday, May 9, at 3:30pm!

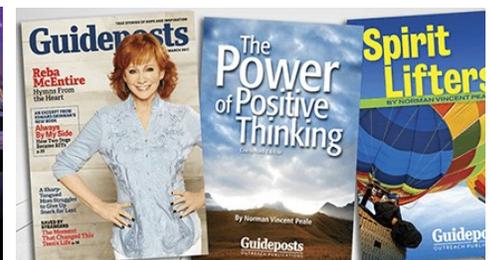


Make Mother’s Day fun— with a free concert with Dueling Grand Pianos!

Two amazing, shiny grand pianos. Watch Adams sit down with **Gustavo Dudamel** to talk about the piece, and then listen to what the composer called a musical pile-up of “dueling pianos, cooing sirens, Valhalla brass, thwacking bass drums, gospel triads, and a Niagara of cascading flat keys.”

LA Phil – Soundstage.com

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



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COUNCIL UPDATE

He is Risen, He is risen indeed.

Greetings to all.

Lots of things were covered in our last council meeting. Opening the sanctuary for worship is the hot topic this month. **Phil Como, chair of the worship committee** has an ad hoc committee working on this. After our first meeting, tasks were assigned and we are moving forward. We will be following all the guidelines from LA County, California, and Federal agencies.

Three people will be going off council: Marilyn Bittle, Beth Rotsel and myself. Please consider serving Gloria Dei. We also need to recruit a new financial secretary. Twyla Karkut has been serving for numerous years. Due to vision issues, she now wishes to step down. So if you are good with numbers and computers, talk to me. (you can talk to me anyway)

We plan to open the sanctuary for worship and **Annual General Meeting on May 16**. At that time, we will elect new council members, and other items for discussion. Please be aware that the worship service will be in a different format that we are used to...but we **WILL** be together.

Thank you for being so faithful in prayer, please continue to keep our church family and the church's financial issues in your daily devotional.

In Jesus' Name...Have a Glorious Dei

Margie Brown
Council President

**"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"



GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS

Dear Neighbor,

Over the past week I have been overwhelmed by so many residents reaching out to me and my office asking how they can support or volunteer to help the migrant children. There has been an amazing outpouring of offers to support or donate time and volunteer coming from residents. In response, I am organizing a donation of kids books and toys that can be dropped off at my **Field Office—340 Nieto Avenue, between 8:00 AM and 3:00 PM Monday - Friday beginning April 27th - May 7th.**

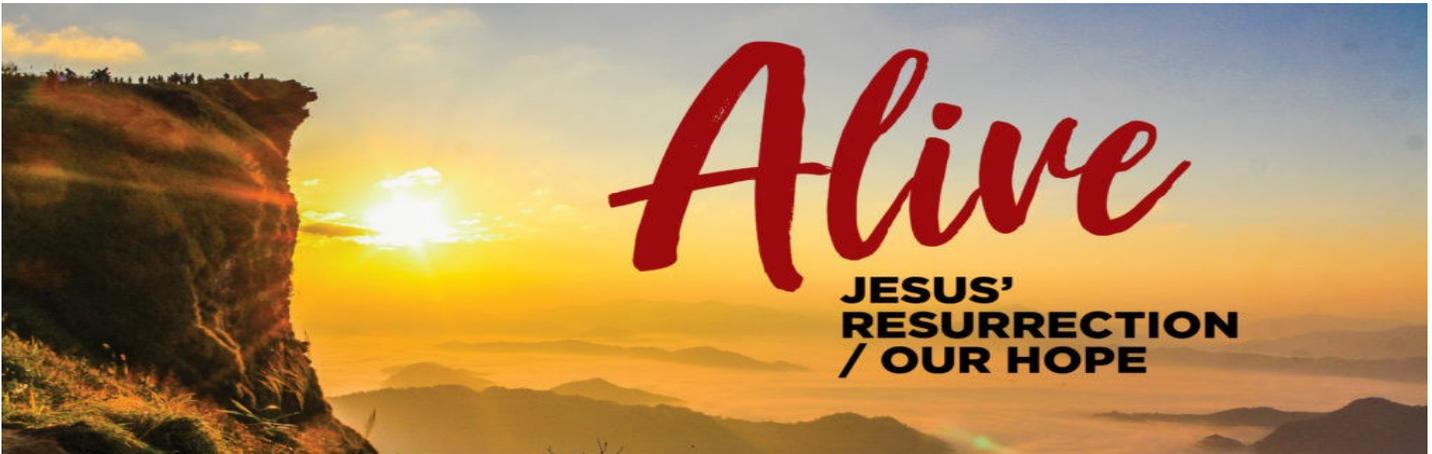
Toys can be for children of all ages and must be unused in original packaging. Books, in English, Spanish, or English and Spanish, for children of all ages must be in new condition. All donated toys and books will be provided to federal government for distribution to the children.

Thank you in advance for helping these children gain some comfort at a time of major uncertainty and change in their lives.

If you have questions please feel free to contact my office any time at (562) 570-6300 or by email district3@longbeach.gov

Sincerely,
Suzie Price, Councilwoman, Third District

GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS



Dear friends in Christ,

Grace and peace to you. It is a time when we, as Christians, reflect on our life together in Christ and the ways in which our identity in Christ is reflected in the world. Being able to articulate that identity can help guide us to a better understanding of ourselves and each other as God continues to call us to respond to the needs of the world.

There are many ways to reflect on our identity as Christians and Lutherans, one of which is by engaging each other across our global Lutheran family. As part of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), we seek to contribute our North American Lutheran perspectives to the larger Lutheran tapestry, made up of 77 million members across 99 countries! And like the ELCA, the LWF has a rich history of theological study processes that can help us better understand ourselves and what it means to be church.

In 2019, the LWF launched a study process to explore the ways our global Lutheran identities are lived out through biblical interpretation, worship and the work of justice, peace and reconciliation. As a member of the LWF, the ELCA is taking part in this unique study process in a number of ways as we examine our Lutheran identity in our own context here in North America. We hope this process will allow us to experience the diverse ways our Lutheran tradition is being lived out. This is an opportunity to discern the ways in which we, in our own contexts, express law and gospel, faith and works, nature and grace, justification and sanctification, freedom and vocation – all parts of our common theological identity.

In addition, between now and June you are invited to take part in a larger conversation that will transpire across the LWF communion. The LWF has produced a discussion guide titled **We Believe in the Holy Spirit: Welcome to a Global Conversation on Being Lutheran**. This guide will help lead your congregation's Christian education and/or youth group on a journey of mutual discovery and learning.

Thank you for sharing your insights and experiences. They will contribute to furthering our understanding of what being Lutheran means in this time and place as we continue to journey together in Christ through these next 500 years of reformation.

**With peace and gratitude,
Elizabeth A. Eaton, Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**





BOOK & TOY DONATION DRIVE FOR MIGRANT CHILDREN

Donate new books and toys at various Long Beach locations through May 8, 2021

LONG BEACH HUMANITARIAN FAMILY REUNIFICATION EFFORTS

Thank you for your interest in the humanitarian family reunification and migrant children relief.

Here you will find information on donations and other ways to get involved in Long Beach's efforts to support the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) with their work to temporarily house and quickly reconnect unaccompanied minors who have been arriving at our southern border.

there is no exercise
better for the heart
than reaching down
and lifting people up

HOW YOU CAN HELP?

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At this time, the easiest and quickest way that the community and local organizations and businesses can support this effort is by providing a monetary donation. The **Long Beach Community Foundation** has launched the **Migrant Children Support Fund** to accept monetary donations from community members, local organizations and businesses. All donations are designated specifically to provide assistance and supportive resources related to the migrant children humanitarian effort in Long Beach. Resources provided through these donations are intended to make the children more comfortable during their stay in Long Beach and during the reunification process. All monetary donations to this fund are tax-deductible.

Examples of the use of funds include, but are not limited to: grants to organizations that will provide educational and play items for the children during their stay in Long Beach, and gift cards to assist the children as they are reunited with their families. Uses of these charitable funds will be updated as the needs arise during the children's stay in Long Beach.

Donations can be made online, or by mailing a check to the Long Beach Community Foundation at 400 Oceangate, Suite 800, Long Beach, CA 90802. Check donations should include "Migrant Children Support Fund" in the memo section of the check.

GRATITUDE A TO Z

Rick Hamlin's blog post **Pray the Alphabet** (Instead of Counting Sheep), at guideposts.org/prayabc—about praying for others, beginning with folks whose name starts with A and going to Z—inspired me to do my own version. I struggle with depression and have difficulty falling asleep, so at bedtime I go through the alphabet and pray my gratitude for a blessing that starts with each letter. "Thank you, Lord, for another day to spend with my loved one, for the beauty of a sunset, for my cats...." This alphabet approach puts me in a different mindset. It shows me how much I have to be thankful for. I feel closer to God as I thank him for everything he's bestowed upon me, my family and friends. Ending my day on a happy note helps me sleep better and lets me wake up thanking God for another day. ~ Kathy Moore, Beulah, Colorado

ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS — MAY 2021

MAY 8

Happy Birthday Michael Engle
Happy Birthday Chuck Dean

MAY 9

Happy Birthday Dianne Keil



MAY 18

Happy Birthday Pastor Steve

MAY 23

Happy Birthday Nancy Sansum
Happy Birthday Jim Mintie

MAY 27

Happy Birthday Richard Hoover

MAY 31

Happy Birthday Christie Berg



MAY 8

Peggy & Gary Bockman

MAY 19

Mike & Martie Engle

MAY 19

P.A. & Brooke White

“LET GO OF WHO YOU think YOU’RE Supposed TO BE, AND Embrace WHO YOU ARE.”

~ Brene Brown

**BELLA MADRE
Sunday, MAY 8**

“CREATOR GOD, THANK YOU FOR CREATING EACH OF US. HELP US TO USE OUR WORDS BOTH IN PRAISE TO YOU AND TO ENCOURAGE THE PEOPLE YOU EXPERTLY DESIGNED. ”



Dear Lord & Savior,

We confess our need for you...fresh...new...again. **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, give us the power to be obedient to your word.** We trust that your voice speaks louder and stronger, reminding us we are safe with you and that your purposes and plans will not fail. We ask that you will be our defense and rear guard, keeping our way clear, removing the obstacles, and covering the pitfalls. Lord, lead us on your level ground. **Shine your light in us, through us, over us.**

May we make a difference in this world, for your glory and purposes. Set your way before us.

May all your plans succeed. **May we reflect your peace and hope to a world** that so desperately needs your presence and healing.

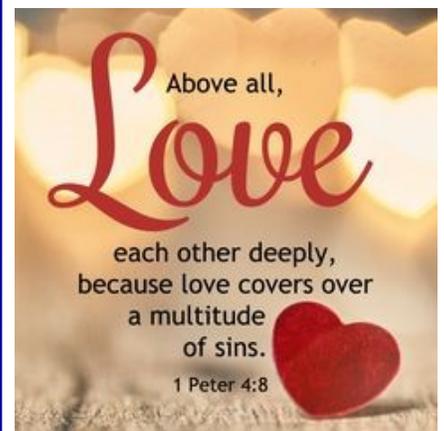
Thanks be to you God, for your indescribable gifts.

**TARGET DATE...
REOPENING OF OUR CHURCH & ANNUAL CONGREGATION MEETING — MAY 16**



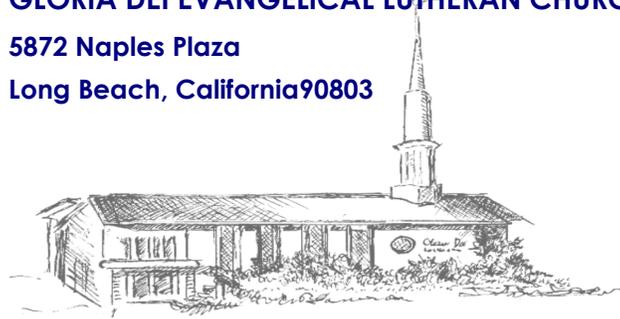
**Ecclesiastes — 4:12
“A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”**

GOD’S AN ENDLESS SUPPLY OF LOVE AND GRACE—THE THINGS WE NEED MOST TO STAY HAPPILY UNITED WITH EACH OTHER.



GLORIA DEI EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

**5872 Naples Plaza
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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)

