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Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

BE OF GOOD COURAGE...

I truly cannot believe that Lent will be here in just a few days! I grew up with one understanding of Lent, i.e. you had to give up something (generally chocolate) during Lent, and then you could feast on all eggs and candy from the Easter Bunny from early morning on. I wasn't very good at giving up chocolate, but I did better some years than others. As a pastor, I quickly came to understand that Lent is so much, much more than that superficial action. It is a season of reflection and renewal, and so much drama in the readings. A dear friend of mine, the late Pastor Carol Nolte, never went to church even once in her life until she was 14, when a friend invited her to her Lutheran Church on Palm Sunday. Carol was hooked. She had to go back to the Holy Week and Easter Service to see and hear and experience the whole story. We will have our visitors with us on Easter who were last with us on Christmas Eve, and they are surely welcome. But Easter means so much more when we engage in the season of Lent and Holy Week.

Lent is a season of mindfulness. Ash Wednesday we are reminded that "from dust you came, and to dust you shall return." That is, we are mortal, and we will all die someday. When my best friend Lynn's son, Peter, was about 4 years old, he was a little young for the Ash Wednesday service. When she came home, he asked his mom what the cross on her forehead meant. She explained that it meant that she, like everyone else, would die someday. Peter got very emotional: "Take it off, Mom, take it off. I don't like that. Take it off." He was crying. Then his sister Alli, 6 years old, asked their mother "Isn't that just like what they do in baptism?" Alli got the connection between baptism and that cross of ashes. We may be reminded on Ash Wednesday that we are mere mortals, and we will die. But on Easter we are reminded that through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we too will share in the resurrection. Easter is so much more to me after spending a season of six weeks remembering my mortality.

I am looking forward to taking up the practice of Kalani and Lanæ Caldwell and Teri Collins, of going to my closet or cupboards every day and taking out something to donate to our mission partners.

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**“He has showered
down upon us the
richness of His grace.”**

~ Ephesians 1:8



**‘I will bless you...and you
will be a blessing to
many others.’**

~ Genesis 12:2



(I’m guessing that none of us would have a problem finding 40 items to give away that we won’t even miss.) Though I am tempted to just pull out 40 things right now, it is a mindful gesture to take each day. Each day I will be reminded of my mortality, I will declutter one more thing, and I will give it to someone who will actually wear it or use it.

Yes, Lent is a season of repentance, but what is repentance if not being mindful of my thoughts and actions that take me away from God, and returning to “trusting God’s sheer goodness”, as Luther said? This was one of his definitions of sin: our inability to trust in God’s sheer goodness makes it impossible to begin to understand God’s will for us, and to trust that. Repentance is to look at what I am doing in my life and finding a better way, that leads me to God.

I hope to see you at each of our special Lenten services (Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday) as well as on Sundays. I hope you will find ways to be mindful and generous in this lovely, rich season of the Church Year.

Pastor Ruth+

Sparked by the tragic death of George Floyd in May 2020, members of Trinity Lutheran Lansdale, PA, approached Karen Matthias-Long, an ELCA deacon who was then serving as the congregation’s director of faith formation, for support in researching resources to educate their children at home about racial justice. From that request, Trinity’s Racial Justice Ministry was formed. Its mission is to educate the congregation about the causes and effects of racism and to find ways to respond and address the issue. The team offers book groups, meet-ups and workshops; provides resources; collaborates with other local racial justice groups; and organizes visits to exhibitions and important sites in Black history. This year the group created a **Black History Month Exhibition** that features 19 notable **Black Lutherans who shaped the church’s history.**

**LUTHERANS
IN BLACK
HISTORY**

BLACK HISTORY MONTH EXHIBITION

Commemorating notable
Black Lutherans
who shaped history in our
church, community
and beyond

TLC Racial Justice Ministry, 2024
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church - Lansdale PA

**LET MINDFULNESS &
PRAYER HELP EASE
EMOTIONAL OVERLOAD**

CONGREGATION & COUNCIL UPDATE

As we begin our Lenten journey, I'm reminded of the thoughtful ideas our little church with a big heart has always had — the tradition during Lent of giving more of ourselves during Lent rather than giving up something. Consider this idea and others (see page 6) for your Lenten journey this year. Our mission partners continue to need our support so they can meet the needs of so many in our community. If you need items picked up, please let our church secretary know and we'll make the necessary arrangements.

Please plan to join us for our **Ash Wednesday Service on March 5**. We will have our traditional **Soup Supper** beginning at 5:30 p.m. followed by our **Worship service and Imposition of Ashes** at 7:00 p.m. If you need a ride, please let Sandy know and we will arrange for your transportation. We want to ensure that everyone who wants to attend can join us for this meaningful worship service.

Fe y Esperanza: Several deliveries of furniture items as well as grocery bags and health supplies and gift cards have been made to our partner church Fe y Esperanza this past month. They appreciate and need our on-going support. Their food distribution day is typically Wednesday and they provide more than 100 families with fresh food products. Although, Hector, Pastor Marta's son is out of the hospital, he has a long road to recovery and being able to walk again. Please continue to keep Pastor Marta and her son, Hector, in your prayers.

Long Beach Men's and Women's Shelter (Lydia House): Wonderful, new children's toys were donated by Isabella Engle (granddaughter of Michael and Martie Engle) to the Women's Shelter. They were thrilled to have some new things for the many young children they have staying at the shelter. Thank you, Isabella, for your generosity and thoughtfulness! Please place your donations for the Men's and Women's Shelter (Lydia House) in one of the boxes under the mailboxes near the kitchen.

Evangelical Lutheran Church Women (ELCW):

The group will continue to meet the 2nd Thursday of each month. Last month we made **darling blankets that were given to Lydia's House**. In March we will be filling Easter Bags for LSS followed by lunch and always dessert! All women are welcome! Join us and bring a friend! The next meeting is on March 13 at 11:00 a.m.



Adult Education: You are missing some very interesting discussions and oftentimes a good laugh each Sunday morning as we continue our exploration of Jesus' parables. It's never too late to join in the discussion! We meet every Sunday, in the Fellowship Hall, at 9:00 a.m. Also, on Wednesday, at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom, we continue to read and discuss the book, **'American Heresy, The Roots and Reach of White Christian Nationalism'** by John Fanestil.

I saw this quote (author unknown) **'Be the reason someone feels welcomed, seen, heard, valued and loved and supported'** and immediately thought of our church family. We are a very special family of believers. There are people in our community who need us, they just don't know it yet. New friends are always welcome!

Karen Como, Council President

'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a right spirit within me.'— Psalm 51

"Courage is the price that life exacts for granting peace." ~ Amelia Earhart

Fauré Requiem

Toward Heaven: Harmonies of Peace and Hope



March 16, 2025 | 4:30pm | Our Lady of Refuge Catholic Church

Mark your calendar and enjoy the Long Beach Camerata Singers event on March 16, 4:30 pm at Our Lady of Refuge Church— Long Beach

Important information for the Camerata Concert: "It's going to be a beautiful concert. The church is lovely and very accessible. Once again, if I sell 10 tickets, they are only \$30. I will have a sign-up sheet at church. Those of you not from Gloria Dei can text or email me." Pastor Ruth

Choral music of the French Belle Époque

The Requiem by Gabriel Fauré is one of the most beautiful and celebrated works in the world. The music contains the incredible harmonic language of this French master composer and is hopeful in its message to mankind. The "Pie Jesu" has become one of the most beloved melodies in the entire classical repertoire and evokes visions of heaven and a better world to come. Join us for this special performance and be taken to sounds of the great cathedrals of Paris.

Lutheran Social Services (LSS): Our resident energizer bunny is at it again! Sandy Nelson has set up a wonderful display for the LSS Easter Bags event.



A 'personal shopper' is available to purchase items to fill the Easter Bags. The Easter Bags will be given at the annual event the week before Easter. If you'd like to contribute, please write a check and add 'Easter Bag' in the memo line or fill out an envelope on the display table and indicate 'Easter Bags' and a personal shopper will purchase the items. The ELCW women will be assembling these Easter Bags during their meeting on March 13.

We have been delivering many items in support of the **LSS 'Moving-In' initiative** which supports families moving in to permanent housing for the first time. Many items for this initiative were donated by various groups who meet in our Fellowship Hall during the week. Thank you to all who continue to donate to LSS to support those in need within the city of Long Beach. God's Work. Our Hands.

Christian Outreach Long Beach:

COA is promoting their **Easter Lily Sale** again this year. We encourage you to support this fundraiser! Those who wish to purchase a 6" potted Lily will get one with 5-7 blooms. Cost is \$26 for each plant. Delivery to the church is scheduled for April 13, the week before Easter Sunday. We will begin the promotional announcements and look forward to a beautiful array of lilies for our worship service on Sunday, April 20! **Please note that the Easter Lily orders are needed by March 30.**

THE UP SIDE

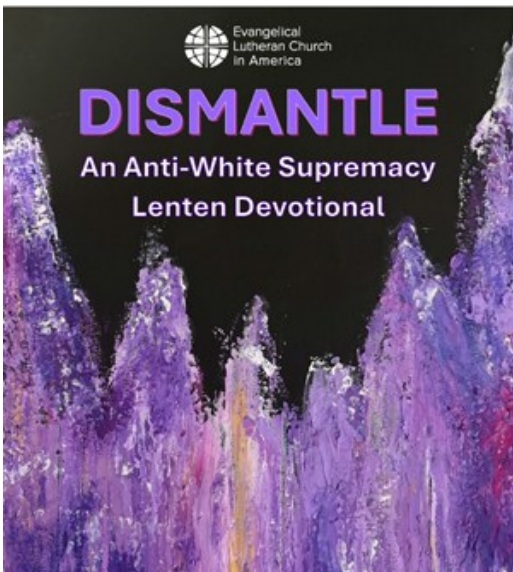
"When we feed our faith, we starve our doubts."

~ Christine Caine, author of *Undaunted: Daring to Do What God Calls You to Do*

"In stressful times, see God. In painful times, praise God. In terrible times, trust God. And at all times...thank God." ~ Ann Voskamp, writer

"Prayer pushes us through life's slumps, propels us over the hump and pulls us out of the dumps. Prayer is the oomph we need to get the answers we seek."

~ Max Lucado, writer

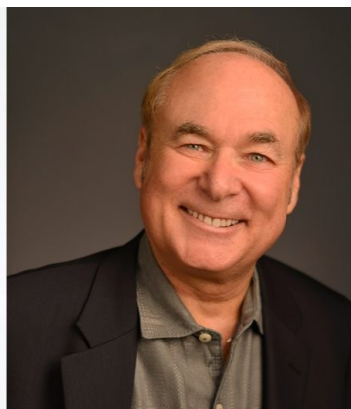
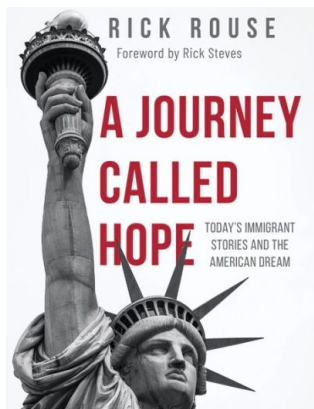


The devotional was created in response to the call of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to condemn white supremacy and racist rhetoric. **As you journey through Lent, this resource will challenge you and bring you closer to the radical neighbor-love** that God demands in the Gospels.

In a message to the church, ELCA Presiding Bishop Eaton says that **“despite misinformation and baseless doubt cast today on funding that supports Lutheran organizations across our country, the ELCA remains steadfast in our commitment and work with our many Lutheran partners and expressions of our church.”**



GOD'S LOVE MADE REAL
 This video is about creating a world where all people and creation experience the difference of **God's grace and love in Christ** make for all people.



Presiding Bishop Eaton Issues Statement on Immigration Executive Orders

In this video, Bishop Eaton responds to the executive order on immigration that rolled back guidance to immigration authorities in protected areas such as places of worship, schools and hospitals.

Though the book is timely, it's also **a call to the same actions followers of Jesus have sought to live out since he first preached on welcoming the stranger.** Rouse explores the particular circumstances of the history of immigration in the United States and shares personal stories from refugees now living here.



Rick Rouse, a retired ELCA pastor and professor, collaborated with Global Refuge on his latest book, A Journey Called Hope: Today's Immigrant Stories and the American Dream (2024).

LENT IS A GOOD TIME—40 DAYS—TO FOCUS ON HOW WE ARE LOVING GOD!



Thinking about giving up something for Lent? That's one traditional way of observing this season of reflection. There are, however, some other ways to observe Lent. Jesus said that the greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength, and to love our neighbor as our self.



The ash on our forehead brands us "marked with the cross of Christ forever." God leaves not a moment between our certain death and the equally sure embrace of life everlasting.



Spend 40 days reading one of the Gospels. Think carefully about each episode and encounter in the life of Jesus. Think about what that episode tells you about what it means to follow Jesus.

Love God—

Try to find 5 ways every day that you see God at work in the world around you. See how often you can see God's fingerprints on "secular" or everyday things

Practice the *Lectio Divina*

Read a brief section of Scripture
Read it again and this time see if a particular word or phrase grabs your attention

Meditate on that word or phrase for a few minutes

Read the entire section again and see if you understand it differently

Make your first prayer of the morning, "God, what do you want today? What can I do for you?"

Love your neighbor—

Practice blessing those around you.

Pray positively for someone you don't particularly like.

Commit random acts of kindness. When possible do so anonymously. **Smile** at a stranger.

Love yourself—

Body—40 days is a good amount of time to make healthy changes and develop new habits.

40 LENTEN WELLNESS ACTIVITIES

Spiritual Well-Being

- Go for a walk in nature & pray during your walk
- Read a psalm a day, or one before every meal
- Call someone you care about and ask them to name 3 things you can pray for. Then do it!

Emotional Well-Being

- Set healthy boundaries
- Start a practice of mindfulness for your Lenten devotions
- Make a thank you list of people who have helped you over your lifetime

Financial Well-Being

- Write a will
- Set a savings goal for the rest of the year
- Find a mentor or be a mentor
- Make a list of the charities you support & why they are important to you

Physical Well-Being

- Explore podcasts and listen to one or more on a walk

CELEBRATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



MARCH 5 *Soup Supper at 5:30 pm*

MARCH 5 *Imposition of Ashes & Worship at 7 pm*

MARCH 12 *Church Council at 7 pm
Via ZOOM (date change/Ash Wed)*

MARCH 13 *ELCW meets at 11 am*

MARCH 16 *Birthday Cake Sunday & Noisy Offering*

MARCH 16 *LB Camerata Concert*

MARCH 17 *St. Patrick's Day*

"I learned silence from the talkative, and tolerance from the intolerant, and kindness from the unkind."

~ Khalil Gibran



March 25—

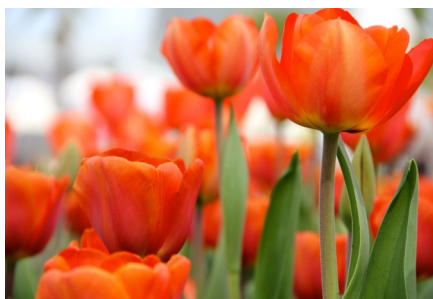
GLORIOUS DEI

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

SUBMIT STORY IDEAS, RESOURCES & SUGGESTIONS to editor via email: pbockman@fullerton.edu



Set your clocks!
Day light savings begins **SUNDAY, MARCH 9**



LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES

Support our Local Long Beach Community

[Learn more @ LSS website](#)

- Emergency Services
- Transitional Services
- Social Services

**Embrace
Empower
Equip**



"Every good and perfect gift from above, coming down from the Father." ~ James 1:17



GOD'S BLESSINGS

- 11 — Happy Birthday Vicki Gammer
- 19 — Happy Birthday Chris Wacker
- 20 — Happy Birthday Mark Engle
- 25 — Happy Birthday Beth Rotsel
- 27 — Happy Birthday Bret Engle



Health and Wellness

Physical and mental health is an essential component of a Christian and is God's intention for every human being. It is vital to our well-being and helps strengthen relationships and enhance our Christian service in our communities and world.

Promoting good health is our shared endeavor with God, just as caring for our neighbor's health is an expression of Christian love and service.

GLORIA DEI EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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)

