

## GLORIOUS DEI ...



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## Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

### GOOD STEWARDS OF GRACE

Quite a few years ago, maybe 20, I got a phone call at 7:00 on Easter morning telling me that one of the matriarchs of the congregation had died in the middle of the night. I instantly knew that I could not preach the sermon I had written for Easter and had only the time it took me to shower, get ready, and drive to Van Nuys (about 45 minutes on a Sunday morning) to “write” a new sermon. I had to preach an impromptu sermon that brought resurrection home to a community who found out when I started the sermon that their beloved friend Louise had died. I did it and it went really well. The congregation responded very positively and some even told me that if they couldn’t make it to Louise’s funeral, it would be OK with them because of my Easter sermon. With that success, I tried it again and again and got very good results. This became my method of preaching. I did my usual preparation and then preached it on Sunday morning. This worked well for many years. Then, I started to get lazy on the prep when I was serving two interim congregations at the same time, starting in 2018. I wasn’t happy in the situation I was in but didn’t have other good choices. I wasn’t making enough money to live on and consistently had to take money out of my pension funds to survive, always knowing that it was less and less likely that I would ever be able to afford to retire.

I knew when I came to Gloria Dei that I was following an excellent preacher, and I was very nervous. It wasn’t long before I finally admitted to myself that my memory wasn’t as good as it had been, and this had been going on for a couple of years, causing me to search for words that used to come easily to me. I even got myself evaluated twice for Alzheimer’s disease but was told twice that this was simply a function of aging. I began writing out my sermons again. Early this year I realized that I had been out of my preparation practices that I had used for many years, and I was having a hard time getting back to them. I had even started dreading preaching, when it had always been one of my great loves of ministry. While many of you have good things to say about my preaching, it isn’t up to MY standards.

In March I subscribed to online program called “Backstory Preaching” a whole process and community of preachers gathered

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## JOIN US FOR SUMMER WORSHIP AT 10:00 AM

God loves us and is gracious to us. God expects great things out of us, as a response to God's grace. The law is not too hard for us, and it's not in heaven that we should give up trying to faithfully perform the works of righteousness that God has called us to do before the creation of the world (Ephesians 2:10).  
Instead, we are called bear fruit in every good work.

**Cory Driver** is the director of L.I.F.E. (Leading the Integration of Faith and Entrepreneurship) at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. His book **God, Gender and Family Trauma: How Rereading Genesis can be a Revelation** was released in March 2025 by Fortress Press.



## WHERE ALL MAY DWELL



[WWW.GDLCLB.ORG](http://WWW.GDLCLB.ORG)



WE ARE A CHURCH THAT VALUES & ENCOURAGES DIVERSE VOICES, LIVELY DIALOGUE IN OUR FAITH AND LIFE.

## Pastor Message Continues....

into one website, with several daily zoom meetings over the week to support the sermon prep process. I have gotten a lot from this wonderful group of Biblical preachers, and then I got invited to join in their Mentorship Program. This continuing education program includes process and preaching, including recording sermons and getting feedback from my small group, one-on-one mentoring from my assigned mentor, reading and discussing books, and large group meetings once a month for ten months. It will also include some people in the congregation giving me feedback with the Mentorship's guidelines. The cost is high at \$4,000, but I decided I had to apply. And I got accepted.

I asked Bishop Bos for a scholarship and she graciously gave me \$1,500.00 With what's left of my continuing education fund for this year and next, I have nearly \$3000 total, and I will be responsible for a little over \$1,000, which might be a bit tricky since I have to move and my rent will be no doubt be going up, but I will find a way to make this work. I am investing in this continuing education for myself at the age of 71 (which seems young to many of you!) because I want to love preaching again (which is getting more joyful for me over the last several months). And I want to preach the best sermons that I can in order to better feed this wonderful community with the Word of God. You are a very Biblically and Theologically astute congregation and I want to live up to that. You will be reading and hearing more about this wonderful program. I have high hopes for it all.

God is good...All the time!

Pastor Ruth

# COUNCIL UPDATE



# GOD'S WORK OUR HANDS

— AUGUST 6 —  
VIRTUAL CHURCH  
COUNCIL  
MEETING @ 7PM

Greetings: Our little church with a big heart has a reputation and tradition of caring for so many during 'normal' times and in times of natural disasters. Pastor Ruth has stated that she has never served a church where the members care for each other the way we do at Gloria Dei. I have personally received care from so many of you during my recent surgery and it still brings tears to my eyes when I remember your concern, soups, cards, flowers and prayers.

Our dear sister-in-Christ, Marilyn Bittle, needs our support as she continues to gain strength so she can return to her home and to worship with us again soon. Please consider visiting her at Alamitos Belmont Rehabilitation. As you know, Marilyn loves company and she needs your encouragement.

**Lutheran Social Services (LSS):** There's still time to donate much needed school supplies or make a donation so our personal shoppers can obtain supplies before the deadline of August 21. The Annual Back-to-School Event will be held on Saturday, August 23. This year's event will also provide parents with groceries and hygiene products for their family's back-to-school needs. LSS is so appreciative of our generosity as this organization continues serving families and individuals in Long Beach. As a 'personal' shopper, I've experienced the joy of praying with the person checking me out at several stores. Buying large quantities of school supply items often elicits a question from the checker. When I let them know that our church family at Gloria Dei provides supplies for children, they often will pray with me for the success of each of the children receiving these items. God is good and in the hearts of so many we meet!

**Fe y Esperanza:** Vacation Bible School (VBS) was scheduled for mid-July. Pastor Marta has tentatively re-scheduled VBS for early August as many families within their congregation are afraid to have their children separated from them while attending VBS. If they are unable to have VBS this year, the funds Gloria Dei donated will be used to purchase school supplies for the nearly 50 children in their church family.

Pray for these families during these difficult times and for the community outreach Fe y Esperanza provides for so many. If you are willing to deliver food distribution items on Wednesdays to families who are too afraid to leave their homes, please let me know.

Please continue to pray for Pastor Marta's son Hector. Pastor Marta needs our prayers too. She has arranged to have a hospital bed in her office so she can care for Hector while doing so much to care for her church family.

**Long Beach Men's and Women's Shelter (Lydia House):** Sandy continues to make deliveries as often as items are donated. Please place your donations for the Men's and Women's Shelter in one of the boxes under the mailboxes near the kitchen. Clothing and gently used clothing and toys for children are appreciated!

**Evangelical Lutheran Church Women (ELCW):** Our next meeting is on September 11 at 11:00 a.m. in the church Fellowship Hall. Every second Thursday of the month we do a service project, enjoy lunch and each other's company. All women are welcome! Consider inviting a friend or neighbor.

**Adult Education:** Our Sunday morning class will resume on September 7 at 9:00 a.m. Our Wednesday Zoom class will resume on September 10 at 10:00 a.m.

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**"KEEPERS OF THE LIGHT" For God...made His light shine in our hearts. ~2 CORINTHIANS 4:6**

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Congregation Update Continues...

### Coming Events:

August 6 – Church Council via Zoom; all are welcome to attend  
 August 24 – Birthday Cake Sunday and Noisy Offering  
 September 1 – Labor Day; church office is closed

There is so much to be thankful for during these beautiful summer days in our very special place in Southern California. Our weather has been sublime; there's delicious fruits and veggies in the markets and we have the treasure of our church family. The outreach into the community that we provide each month of the year blesses so many families who need our support as we demonstrate the love of the Lord through our hands. Thank you to all who continue to care for each other and generously donate to serve those in need.

**Karen Como, Council President**

“For God so loved <sup>the</sup> world,  
 that he gave his only Son,  
 that whoever believes in him **should not perish**  
 but have eternal life.”  
 John 3:16



This day is an opportunity to celebrate who we are as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America — one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor. Service activities offer an opportunity for us to explore one of our most basic convictions as Lutherans: that all of life in Jesus Christ — every act of service, in every daily calling, in every corner of life — flows freely from a living, daring confidence in God's grace.

God's work. Our hands.



September 7  
 2025

### A LEGACY OF KINDNESS

Another generous hand-made donation arrived recently from Florida and we are ever so thankful for the servant efforts of former Gloria Dei member **Laura Subke**. These amazing hats will be presented to **Maritime Ministries** on August 16.



Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and joy are in his dwelling place.

~ 1 Chronicles 16:27



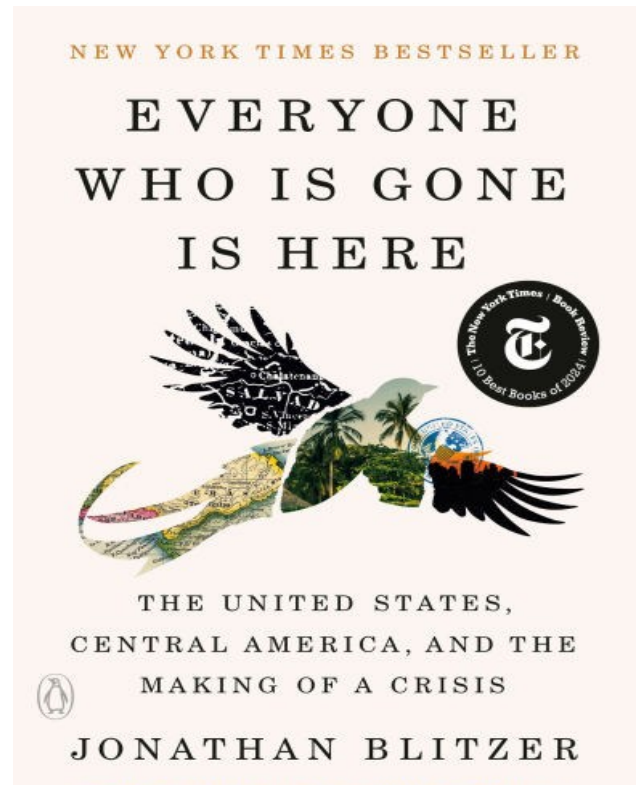
**EXPLORE the Faith and Society resource page on the ELCA website. A great site with a visual way to find and download the many types of resources available to curious minds.**

- Social Statements
- Social Messages
- Social Resolutions

## RESOURCES FOR CONSIDERATION



The spring 2025 issue of **LifeLines** offers stories of how your gifts to **ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response** help communities and families in the United States and around the world.



**God is our refuge and strength – Psalm 46:1**

***As siblings in Christ, the ELCA is called to bear witness to the conditions affecting so many communities and to work to find solutions that will acknowledge the humanity in all of God's children. Join us in making a difference in the lives of vulnerable children and families.***

**Accompanying Migrants with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO)**

The word "amparo" in Spanish means the protection of a living creature from suffering or damage. This ELCA's strategy was envisioned after witnessing the plight of children who are forced to flee

their communities because of complex and interrelated reasons, including chronic violence, poverty, environmental displacement and lack of opportunities in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. The ELCA is well-positioned to help ensure that these vulnerable children are protected. In a holistic, whole church response that connects international and US outcomes, the **ELCA has developed this strategy based on the following commitments:**

- Uphold and guarantee basic human rights & safety of migrant children and their families;
- Address the drivers of migration around the world and the treatment of migrants in transit;
- Work toward just and humane policies affecting migrants in and outside the U.S.; and
- Engage as a church body with all of its companions, affiliates and partners to respond to the migration situation and its causes and to advocate for migrant children





# NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS — AUGUST 2025

Love  
→ one →  
another

JOHN 15:12



Southwest California Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.



Bishop Brenda Bos' public witness  
as read in synodical newsletters  
and media posts

## Recent Bishop Messages

Dear siblings in Christ,  
Yesterday, June 7, 2025, exactly five  
months after wildfires raged through  
Pacific Palisades and Altadena, the  
President of the United States  
deployed National Guard troops to  
Los Angeles. These troops were  
not requested by our governor.  
There is no natural disaster here.  
These troops were sent to quell  
"widespread violent protests"  
against ICE raids in our city.  
[Continue Reading on web...](#)



Joy is Disarming.  
Spectacle is Powerful.  
And Resistance Can't  
be Ignored!  
That's How We Win.

HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY!



- 5 — Janet Sims
- 14 — Edie Graber
- 15 — Happy Birthday  
Gus, Elijah & Casey White
- 16 — Sandy Irvine
- 21 — Danny Bach
- 26 — Judy Griggs
- 31 — Peggy Huggard

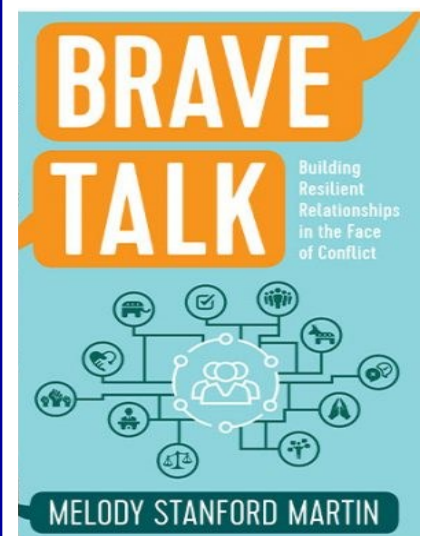
## CELEBRATING LOVE

- 8 — Donna & Mike Malbon
- 10 — Eric & Christy Berg
- 27 — Phil & Karen Como

Act Justly,  
LOVE MERCY  
AND  
Walk Humbly  
with your GOD.  
Micah 6:8

Like good stewards of the  
manifold grace of God, serve one  
another with whatever gifts each  
of you has received. Whoever  
speaks must do so as one  
speaking the very words of God;  
whoever serves must do with the  
strength that God supplies, so  
the God may be glorified in all  
things through Jesus Christ.

~ 1 Peter 4:10-11



AUGUST 26 —

## GLORIOUS DEI NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

SUBMIT STORY IDEAS,  
RESOURCES & SUGGESTIONS  
to editor via email:  
PBOCKMAN@FULLERTON.EDU

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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)



