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Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

A Social Statement:

THE CHURCH IN SOCIETY: A LUTHERAN PERSPECTIVE

This social teaching statement was adopted by a more than two-thirds majority vote at the Second biennial Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, meeting in Orlando, Florida, August 28-September 4, 1991.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is called to be a part of the ecumenical Church of Jesus Christ in the context in which God has placed it—a diverse, divided, and threatened global society on a beautiful, fragile planet. In faithfulness to its calling, this church is committed to defend human dignity, to stand with poor and powerless people, to advocate justice, to work for peace, and to care for the earth in the processes and structures of contemporary society. This statement, *The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective*, sets forth affirmations and commitments to guide this church's participation in society. It seeks to be true to this church's mandate to confess and teach both Law and Gospel as the whole Word of the triune God. This church witnesses to the living God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who in love creates, judges, and preserves the world and redeems, sanctifies, and brings it to fulfillment in God's reign.

AFFIRMATIONS

The Gospel and the Church

The Church, the baptized people of God, is created by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel to proclaim and to follow God's crucified Messiah. As the gathering of children, youth, men, and women who hear, believe, and receive the living Christ in Word and Sacrament, the Church witnesses in word and deed to Jesus as Lord and Savior. The proclamation of the Gospel as the good news of God's salvation given in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus distinguishes the Church from all other communities. The Gospel liberates from sin, death, and evil and motivates the Church to care for neighbor and the earth. The witness of this church in society flows from its identity as a community that lives from and for the Gospel. Faith is active in love; love calls for justice in the relationships and structures of society. It is in grateful response to God's grace in Jesus Christ that this church carries out its responsibility for the well-being of society and the environment. Word and Sacrament are the originating center for this church's mission in the world through its baptized members, congregations, synods, churchwide organization, social ministry organizations, and educational institutions. Through preaching, teaching, the sacraments, Scripture, and "mutual conversation and consolation," the Church is gathered and shaped by the Holy Spirit to be a serving and liberating presence in the world. In praying for the peace of the whole world and in interceding for those who suffer and for those in authority, the Church serves the world. The Church gives thanks to God for the blessings of creation and prays to be empowered to do God's will in society. ...Continued on page 2

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**MAY YOU OBSERVE
the WORLD with LOVING
CONSIDERATION.....**

Church in Society continued....

The Baptismal Vocation of Christians

One of the ways the Church participates in society is through its members. In dying to sin and rising with Christ in Baptism, Christians are called to “walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:1-11). They fulfill their baptismal vocation in ordinary life as family members, friends, citizens, workers, and participants in voluntary associations. Since “daily life [is] the primary setting for the exercise of [the] Christian calling,” it is in that setting that Christians are to serve God and neighbor. This church sustains its baptized members through the ministry of Word and Sacrament. **The gifts of the Spirit form and transform the people of God for discipleship in daily life.** In the body of Christ, the character, outlook, and moral convictions of Christians are shaped in distinctive ways. Jesus frees Christians to serve others and to walk with people who are hungry, forgotten, oppressed, and despised.

A Community of Moral Deliberation

Christians fulfill their vocation diversely and are rich in the variety of the gifts of the Spirit. Therefore, they often disagree passionately on the kind of responses they make to social questions. United with Christ and all believers in baptism, Christians welcome and celebrate their diversity. **Because they share common convictions of faith, they are free, indeed obligated, to deliberate together on the challenges they face in the world.** In their witness to

instruct it in its deliberation. **Transformed by faith, this church in its deliberation draws upon the God-given abilities of human beings to will, to reason, and to feel.** This church is open to learn from the experience, knowledge, and imagination of all people, in order to have the best possible information and understanding of today’s world. **To act justly and effectively, this church needs to analyze social and environmental issues critically and to probe the reasons why the situation is as it is.** Deliberation in this church should include people—either in person or through their writing or other expressions—with different life-experiences, perspectives, and interests. Christians struggle together on social questions in order to know better how to live faithfully and responsibly in their callings. **In dealing openly and creatively with disagreement and controversy,** this church hopes to contribute to the search for the individual as well as for the common good in public life.

COMMITMENTS

In light of these affirmations, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America makes the following commitments:

— Sustaining Vocation — Witnessing as an Institution — Deliberating on Social Questions

GOD’S FAITHFUL LOVE

The Church has the “treasure” of the Gospel “in earthen vessels to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us” (2 Corinthians 4:7). We in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America set forth these affirmations and commitments with the prayer that our words and deeds may be earthen vessels that witness to the power of the cross. **We care for the earth and serve the neighbor in society with the joyful confidence that God’s faithfulness alone sustains the Church and renews our faith, hope, and love.** Our witness is a response to God’s faithful love received in Word and Sacraments. The bread and the wine, the body and blood of Christ, are a sacrament of love. **As love and support are given you, you in turn must render love and support to Christ in his needy ones. You must feel with sorrow all the dishonor done to Christ in his holy Word, all the misery of Christendom,** all the unjust suffering of the innocent, with which the world is everywhere filled to overflowing. **You must fight, work, pray, and—if you cannot do more—have heartfelt sympathy.**

Source: www.ELCA.org

For full text see ELCA Teachings—

Faith & Society: Social Messages; Social Statements; Address Social Concerns; Current Social Writing Project; Moral Deliberations; & Social Policy Resolutions

CONGREGATION UPDATE



We invite you to study, pray, reflect and give with us during ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving — for our families, our neighbors and communities around the world.

Commit to a giving goal for the Lenten season in support of ELCA World Hunger, set aside a portion each day, or make your gifts throughout the season as part of your regular Lenten practice. **Visit the ELCA website to DONATE !**

The preparation of our sanctuary for Ash Wednesday and the Lenten services to follow are always enhanced by the lovely purple streamers in the windows. These streamers are a wonderful reminder of our dear friend Barbara White and the talents and contributions she shared with us for so many years.

The **Ash Wednesday service** is always impactful and being together for our traditional soup supper is a meaningful way for us to start together on our Lenten journey. Thank you to those who brought soup, cookies, bread and drinks! **Please consider giving one item a day during Lent to enhance the lives of others.**

Warm jackets, gently used clothing and shoes (especially for men), extra canned goods and items to set-up a household for those newly housed are always in need and very much appreciated. Just think of how many people could be served by 40 donated items per person! Items can

be brought to church every week. If you need items picked up, we'll be happy to make arrangements. Deliveries to LSS, Fe y Esperanza and the Long Beach Men's and Women's Shelter (Lydia House) are made weekly. A special 'Thank you' to Sandy Nelson for sorting clothing delivered to church, selecting the items most needed by the shelters, and then making the essential deliveries.

LSS: Rice and beans were bagged by ELCW and recently delivered to LSS. In addition, contributions of clothing and household items were delivered in February. Warm jackets and gently used blankets are needed, especially during this cold weather. Paper grocery bags are always in need for their food distribution program especially now that plastic bags can no longer be used.

Looking ahead, the **Lutheran Social Services of Southern California 2026 Gala and**

Awards event, 'HOPE Starts Here' will be on April 18 at the Orange Hill restaurant. Please let us know if you are interested in attending.

Fe y Esperanza: Rice and beans were also delivered to support their weekly food distribution. The members appreciate the support we provide as they serve families in need. Our support is greatly appreciated. If you have items that need to be picked up, please call the church office and we'll make arrangements. The ongoing service and expertise of Pastor Ruth, Bob Siemer and Gary Bockman is greatly appreciated as they assist Fe y Esperanza in transitioning from Synod's administrative management.

Long Beach Men's and Women's Shelter (Lydia House): Clothing items for men, women and children are always needed. Lydia House has many children and appreciates receiving children's clothing and toys too!

Congregation Update continues...

ELCW: On March 12th at 11:00 a.m. we will have a service project and enjoy lunch and fellowship. All women, including friends and neighbors, are invited to attend.

Adult Education: Join us for wonderful discussions on Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. as we continue to read and discuss **'Mathew – The Gospel of Promised Blessings'** authored by Mathew Skinner. Every week is a new topic that promotes faith-inspiring discussions.

Coming Events:

March 4th – Church Council at 7:00 p.m. via zoom

March 12th – ELCW at 11:00 a.m.

March 15th – Noisy offering and birthday cake Sunday.

March 22nd- Camarata Singers will perform the Mozart Requiem; **see Pastor Ruth for tickets**

March 29th – Palm Sunday and the beginning of Holy Week

'The Little Church with a Big Heart' really sums up who we are. We are fulfilling our

Mission Statement each and every month as we care for each other and reach out to those in need. I am so thankful and grateful for our service and outreach together. I am blessed and excited to be a part of this wonderful church family.

**Karen Como,
Council President**



THE UP SIDE — INSPIRATION FOR LIFE

“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

“Even if we don’t have everything we want, there is always at least one thing we can thank God for. Another day, another breath, the beauty of creation—the list goes on.”

~ Anitha Abraham, writer

“Christ’s peace is...a gift that is meant for all, a gift that brings new life. Let us pray for his peace, which is reconciliation, forgiveness and the courage to turn the page and start anew”

~ Pope Leo XIV

“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

“Take a ‘Worth Pause’ today. Find a quiet moment to close your eyes, take a deep breath and reflect on one quality you love about yourself”

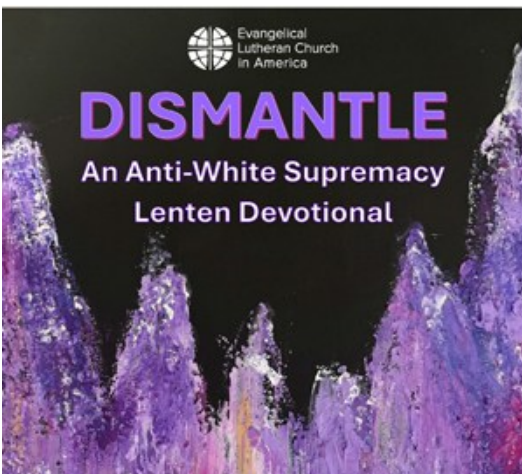
~ Kristen Butler, writer

“Joy doesn’t cancel out the heavy things—but it gives you little pockets of strength to carry on.”

~ Stacie Swift, illustrator

“Every good and perfect gift from above, coming down from the Father.”

~ James 1:17



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 this season of Lent, challenge yourself and find ways to bring yourself closer to the radial neighbor-love that God demands of us in the Gospels.**



LENTEN DEVOTIONAL NOW AVAILABLE

Beauty for Ashes, a Lenten devotional by leaders of the ELCA the Homeless & Justice Network, can be downloaded to your computer. This devotional book can be read by individuals or by groups and follows the Network's eight principles.

NEW RESOURCE —

"Forgive Us and Transform Us for the Life of the World" contains stories, poetry, art, and explanations created by ELCA members to help people dig into what sexism and patriarchy are and how people experience them.

Visit: [ELCA website!](#)

ASKING THE QUESTION AGAIN...

Thinking about giving up something for Lent? Consider 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.



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 Lenten devotions
- Make a thank you list of people who have helped you over your lifetime

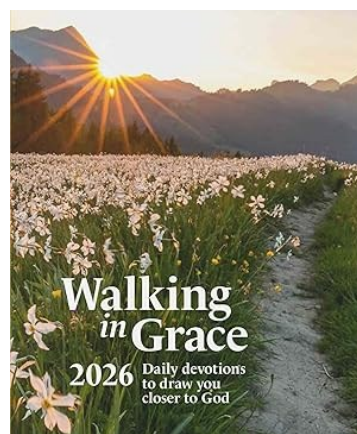
Financial Well-Being

- 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

WALKING IN GRACE 2026



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FAREWELL MY FAITHFUL SERVANT

The Reverend Gerald D. Schaar



Our dear friend and former pastor, 'Jerry' Schaar joined his Lord and Savior the evening of February 13, 2026 with his loving wife, Sue at his side. Pastor Schaar had been in Hospice Care for almost a year following issues with his heart.

Pastor Schaar was born on November 4, 1942 and raised in Detroit, Michigan. He was ordained into the holy ministry in 1977. He served as a

teacher, principal, and pastor in Lutheran schools and churches in Indiana, New York, and Florida before moving to California.

He was installed at Gloria Dei on February 11, 2007 and served our church family until August 29, 2010. Immediately prior to coming to Gloria Dei, he spent five years as principal at St. Timothy Lutheran Church and school in Lakewood. He had advanced degrees in both education and theology.

Pastor Schaar was married to Dr. Sue Ann Schaar, also an educator and professor. He is survived by his wife, three children and five grandchildren.

After retiring, he and Sue moved to Cameron Park in Northern California and lived around the corner from their daughter, son-in-law and grandson. He was an avid birder and made sure the feeders on his patio were well stocked in order to receive many visitors. He also enjoyed taking the train all over the country.

Pastor Schaar continued to write beautiful cards and letters to so many people across the country after he retired. His printing was like none other and the cards and letters were filled with stickers and words of encouragement. Each letter and card from Pastor Schaar was a work of art!

Pastor Schaar's family has planned a private celebration of life this summer. **In honor of Pastor Schaar, Pastor Chrisopher Schaar (nephew and Pastor at First Lutheran in Pasadena), sent Gloria Dei a monetary gift to memorialize his uncle.** We will be purchasing banners for our sanctuary in Pastor Schaar's memory and dedicating them during an upcoming worship service.

We were blessed by Pastor Schaar's ministry and his friendship!

SPIRIT LIFTING

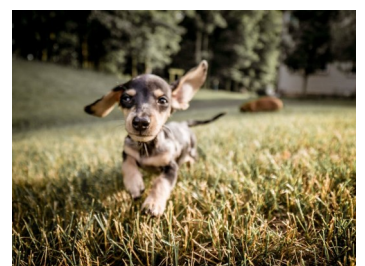


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CELEBRATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

the newsletter

March 26 —

GLORIOUS DEI NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

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



Set your clocks!
Daylight savings
SUNDAY, MARCH 8



- MARCH 5 Day of Unplugging
- MARCH 12 Girl Scouts Day
- MARCH 14 Potato Chip Day
- MARCH 17 St. Patrick's Day
- MARCH 19 Let's Laugh Day
- MARCH 20 First Day of SPRING
- MARCH 23 National Puppy Day
- MARCH 26 Spinach Day
- MARCH 29 PALM SUNDAY



— Spring begins March 20 —
It is the season of optimism and the anticipation of all good things to come with the resurgence of nature: fresh blooms, singing birds, sweet scent in the air, and God's glorious light!

THANKSGIVING FOR THE GIFT OF LIFE !



'I will bless you...and you will be a blessing to many others.'
~ Genesis 12:2 ~

- 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

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy God, you confound the world's wisdom in giving your kingdom to the lowly and the pure of heart. Give us such a hunger and thirst for justice, and perseverance in striving for PEACE, that in our words and deeds the world may see the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.



God does not want or expect lavish sacrifices to attempt to earn divine favor. Rather God empowers the people to do justice, to love loyalty to God, and to walk in God's service.



"He has showered down upon us the richness of His grace."

~ Ephesians 1:8

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 Corinthians 5:17-19)

