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# Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

## BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES



The ELCA teaches that promoting justice, equity, and peace is central to living out our Christian faith, grounded in God's call to love our neighbors and seek the well-being of all people. The church actively works to confront injustice, dismantle barriers of exclusion, and advocate for the dignity and inclusion of all, especially those who are marginalized. Through ministries, advocacy, and public witness, the ELCA encourages members to participate in building a more just and peaceful world, trusting in God's grace to guide and sustain this work.

The ELCA teaches that serving the community and engaging in the public sphere are central expressions of Christian faith, rooted in God's call to love our neighbors and seek justice for all people. The church encourages members to participate in civic life, advocate for justice, and support ministries that address human suffering and promote dignity, equity, and peace. Service and advocacy are seen as ways to live out our baptismal promise and reflect God's abundant love for all creation.

In the ELCA, our baptismal promise to "strive for justice and peace in all the earth" calls us to actively seek justice and wholeness for all people, reflecting God's love through advocacy, service, and accompaniment, especially for the vulnerable and marginalized. This striving is rooted in our relationship with God and is lived out by confronting injustice, promoting peace, and working for the well-being of our neighbors and creation. Though we may never see perfect justice or peace in this world, we are called to give our best effort, trusting that God's Spirit empowers us to be instruments of peace and hope.

Finally, the ELCA encourages congregations to promote justice, equity, and peace by advocating for fair policies, supporting marginalized groups, and building relationships across differences. Activities may include hosting anti-racism trainings, supporting immigrants and refugees, engaging in community organizing, and participating in public advocacy for the common good. Worship can also lift up social concerns and pray for those in authority, sending members out to serve their neighbors in daily life. Through these actions, congregations embody Christ's love and work for the flourishing of all people.

**Our Baptismal Promise: To Strive for Justice and Peace**

APRIL 2026

GLORIA DEI EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

# GLORIOUS DEI . . .

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**Our name means *The Glory of God*, so we try to live accordingly. Our life together as a family of faith is built on worship, service, education and friendship.**



## Give Hope. Take Action. Share.

The ELCA has a long history of being present in communities, working to help and serve the greatest need. We are called to respond with both immediate relief and ongoing, long-term assistance.

### PASTORAL MESSAGE ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

March 24, 2026

Dear church,

It is hard to avoid the crushing news of the headlines and what they mean for individuals every day. Today, I am writing specifically to address the sexual and gender-based violence that is all too familiar to many of us. I know many of you who are survivors live with this trauma and that the news cycle of these stories can push you deeper into despair and anxiety. I want you to know that I hear you. I see you.

I can only imagine what you are feeling. I understand that the trauma of sexual and gender-based violence goes deep. This church stands with you to say that all forms of sexual and gender-based violence are wrong. At their roots, these forms of violence are dehumanizing misuses of power.

No one deserves this evil. All people are made in God's own image. The abusive actions of others cannot change this truth.

As the psalmist wrote:

**“For it was you who formed my inward parts;  
you knit me together in my mother’s womb.  
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.  
Wonderful are your works;  
that I know very well”** (Psalm 139:13-14).

All people bear the image of God. It is my prayer that those who have been abused will know the healing power of God's presence. It is my prayer that those who have wielded power to abuse another will come to know the gravity of their actions and, through the Spirit's power, seek repentance and reparations wherever possible.

As a church, we must continue to seek the welfare of all people for the sake of the abundant life Jesus came to give (John 10:10). We continue to, in the words of the Lord's Prayer, seek the reign of God “on earth as in heaven.”

In Christ,

**The Rev. Yehiel Curry — Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

# OUR JOURNEY TOGETHER — APRIL 2026



## HOLY WEEK



STRICKEN SMITTEN  
AFFLICTED PIERCED  
WOUNDED BRUISED

HE DIED  
SO THAT  
WE MIGHT LIVE



### Handling the Truth

~ 2017 Augsburg Fortress

We still struggle with the call to pick up our own crosses and name the hard truths about our own lives and failings. We enter Christian community by first having the truth of a promise made over us. In baptism, God declares faithfulness, grace and mercy over our lives and deaths. It is with confidence in this truth that we gather together to name hard truths in our lives and our world, knowing that in love God can receive and heal it all. Led by faith in Christ and following in his footsteps, we can handle the truth.

### April 2—Maundy Thursday

Worship Service @ 12 noon

### April 3—Good Friday

Worship Service @ 7 PM

### April 5—EASTER SUNDAY

Worship Service @10 AM



**“So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.”**

~ John 8:36



# CONGREGATION NEWS



Do you remember the first time you saw our beautiful sanctuary on an Easter morning? I'm always amazed at the beauty of the cross covered in calla lilies and the sanctuary filled with flowers. Even the stained-glass windows seem brighter on Easter morning! So much time and dedication and volunteer hours are spent in preparation for Holy Week - beginning with

Palm Sunday, followed by Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and, of course, Easter.

Thank you to everyone who volunteered to change paraments, decorate, change banners and donate lilies. Thank you to Pastor Ruth for preparing all of the meaningful worship sermons and messages. Her thoughtful and insightful messages for each of these services moved us onward in our own faith journeys. We are so fortunate to have the musical talents of Richard Hoover! His music adds so much to our worship! Thank you Richard for your dedication to our church family.

Thank you, also, to so many who took the 'giving' of **40 days of Lent** to heart! The donations of shoes, clothing and household goods will be a blessing to those who will be served by your generosity. Remember that donations are appreciated all year long and trips to LSS, Fe y Esperanza and the Men's and Women's Shelters continue every week.

**Lutheran Social Services (LSS):** At their recent Easter celebration, LSS served over 230 families. As Wendy Rubio stated in her recent email message, "**Thank you for standing with us in service to the Long Beach community and helping families enjoy a memorable Easter. We are so grateful for your partner-**

**ship—this could not have happened without you. Wishing you all a blessed and joyful Easter!"**

**Fe y Esperanza:** On Easter, Fe has an **Easter Egg Hunt** for the children after their Easter worship service. They appreciate all our donations that help to support this event and their ministry. Deliveries to Fe y Esperanza are made on Wednesdays each week. Let Sandy know if you have items that need to be picked up and we can make arrangements.

**Long Beach Men's and Women's Shelter (Lydia House):** Sandy Nelson continues to make deliveries of clothing and toys. Donations are welcomed, especially for children. Please place your donations for the Men's and Women's Shelter in one of the boxes under the mailboxes near the kitchen.

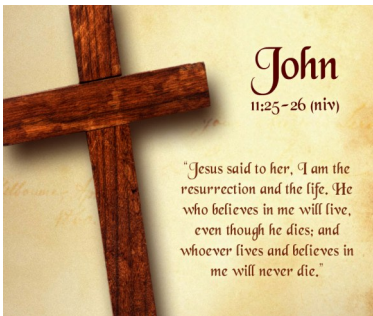
**Evangelical Lutheran Church Women (ELCW):** We continue to meet the 2 Thursday of each month at 11:00 a.m. At our next meeting, on April 9, we will be **making children's blankets** for Lydia House. We always enjoy a delicious lunch and dessert together! All women are welcome! Join us and bring a friend!

**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. We meet every Sunday (except Easter Sunday), in the Fellowship Hall.



Congregation Update Continues...

**"Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ"**  
~ Romans 8:38-39



### Coming Events:

**April 1<sup>st</sup> — Church Council meeting at 7:00 p.m. via zoom**

**April 2<sup>nd</sup> — Maundy Thursday service will be at 12 noon**

**April 3<sup>rd</sup> — Good Friday service will be at 7:00 p.m.**

**April 4<sup>th</sup> — Decorate for Easter from 10:00 a.m. -12 noon (donuts!)**

**April 5<sup>th</sup> — Easter Sunday (no adult ed) at 10:00 a.m.**

**April 9<sup>th</sup> — ELCW at 11:00 a.m.**

**April 19<sup>th</sup> — Noisy Offering and Birthday Cake Sunday**

Please plan to attend our Annual Spring Congregational meeting on May 17<sup>th</sup> following worship. Your attendance ensures that we have the necessary quorum in order to conduct the business of our church. During this meeting we will be electing new council members and reviewing our spending plan for the year. This short meeting will be followed by a delicious lunch. Please consider serving on the Church Council. This is a wonderful opportunity to serve your church family!

Invite your friends and neighbors to experience the beauty and joy in our Easter morning worship. They will be amazed at the beauty of our sanctuary and inspired by the wonderful music, meaningful message and the warm welcome of our church family!

### **Karen Como, Council President**



**You make known to me the path of life; You will fill me with joy in Your presence,  
with eternal pleasures at Your right hand . ~ Psalm 17:11**

**When you run alone, you run a race. When you run with God, you run with grace. Grace is God's bestowed favor upon an undeserving soul. With all that may be going wrong right now, let us thank Him for the grace He has shown to us in giving us the privilege to live among such abundance.**

**We know God is in the long-term restoration business--You want us to have a life with an abundance of joy & happiness. Grant me peace & courage to live a life pleasing to You.**

**The difference between being happy and being joyful, it seems to me, is that happiness comes because something really good has happened to you, and it's in that particular moment. But joy is something deeper than that, and joy is something you can feel even when your current circumstances are actually quite difficult. ~ Gene Robinson, retired Episcopal Bishop of New Hampshire**

## ELCA INTRODUCES NEW WEBSITE



The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has launched the new **ELCA.org**. The new website provides a central, unified location where current and potential members, church leaders and visitors can know and understand what it means to be an ELCA Lutheran.

**Visit the new ELCA.org!** Noticed the new look and feel, plus improvements that include these features:

- **One place to look:**  
Provides a central location to nurture your faith and discover community.
- **Enhanced search and guided exploration:**  
Includes ELCA's resource library, congregation profile information, Living Lutheran articles and the ELCA's seeker site to provide better search results. Navigate the resources, learn about key topics and find communities of support.
- **Easier navigation:**  
Find and connect with the ministries and programs that help you act on your faith.

See how members of the ELCA live out their faith in the public sphere through justice, advocacy, inclusion and partnership, working toward peace, equity and dignity for all people.

## ELCA IN SOCIETY

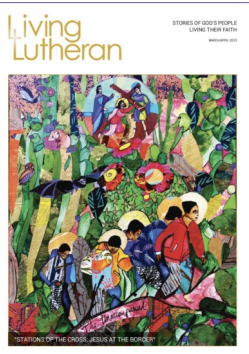


## TEACHINGS ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

To learn more about the ELCA's teaching on gender-based violence and steps that ELCA synods are taking to prevent abuse and support survivors, see the resources below.

- ELCA social message on "Gender-based Violence" (including Spanish translation and study guide)
- ELCA social message on "Commercial Sexual Exploitation"
- ELCA social message on "Child Protection"
- ELCA domestic violence resources, including a study guide on resources for ministry sites

Each ELCA synod provides boundaries training for its rostered ministers. Contact your synod office for details: Sexual Boundary Violations report; Sexual Boundary Violations synod assessment tool. If you or a loved one are experiencing violence or threats of violence, this resource provides helpline phone numbers. **National Domestic Violence Hotline 800-799-SAFE (7233)**



### Listen, Learn & Be Inspired...

You can LISTEN to the articles in the monthly publication! As an idea...walk and listen to the Editor's Note, enjoy the "I'm a Lutheran" testimony and ponder the message from our Presiding Bishop. **Savor the stories of God's People Living Their Faith — LIVINGLUTHERAN.ORG**



SOME CHANGES LOOK  
NEGATIVE ON THE SURFACE  
BUT YOU WILL SOON REALIZE  
THAT SPACE IS BEING CREATED  
IN YOUR LIFE FOR SOMETHING  
NEW TO EMERGE.

~ ECKHART TOLLE



## Another Trip Around the Sun!

### APRIL 3

Happy Birthday Peggy Bockman

### APRIL 8

Happy Birthday Lanae Caldwell

### APRIL 13

Happy Birthday Beverly Pandora

### APRIL 16

Happy Birthday Donna Malbon

### APRIL 23

Happy Birthday David Fuller

WE GROW IN KINDNESS WHEN  
OUR KINDNESS IS TESTED.

~ ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU

## CELEBRATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name  
in all the earth. — Psalm 8:9



## APRIL 14 — Holocaust Remembrance Day

A Holocaust memorial day or Holocaust remembrance day is an annual observance to commemorate the **victims of the Holocaust**, the **genocide** of six million **Jews** and of millions of other Holocaust victims by **Nazi Germany** and its allies. Many countries, primarily in **Europe**, have designated national dates of commemoration.

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**5872 Naples Plaza  
Long Beach, California 90803**



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**Gloria Dei Lutheran Church is a Reconciling in Christ Congregation**



At Gloria Dei, 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)**

