

Hark! The Herald . . .

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH
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Long Beach, CA 90803-5044

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DECEMBER 2011

THOUGHTS ALONG THE WAY

We have come again to the season of Advent, the season of Already-And-Not-Yet. The themes of this season are so dizzy with paradox that we are tempted to bypass the season altogether and go straight to the guiding star, the singing angels and the brightness of the manger. But wait a moment. There is wisdom in Advent, this season of waiting for what has already happened. The old year is over already in the church, not yet in the world. The new year has begun already in the church, not yet in the world. Through the cross, the empty tomb, the empowering Spirit, Christ's work is complete—already in the soul of humankind but not yet in the myriad souls where the transformation must be kindled anew for each and every individual soul. In the Church's ancient texts of Advent, Christ comes to us as King of King and Lord of Lords to judge the world and end it. But not yet, because in those same readings Christ comes to us as a helpless baby to inaugurate a new creation, to save us and redeem us. Through the shortest, darkest days of the year, we celebrate the Light of the world.

The tangled messages of this season speak profoundly to who we are and what we are, and to how we are connected to each other and to God. The ancient prayers of Advent take us step by step through the cold corridors of our own sinfulness and selfishness toward the bright warmth of God's love in a manger.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.
— The First Collect Prayer of Advent, ELW, p.18

The first prayer we pray together in the new year acknowledges that only the full, three-fold power of God, stirred up, can save us from ourselves.

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives... —The Second Collect Prayer of Advent, ELW, p.19B

Strength in our conflicts...strength to be victorious, to hold the "right" position? Strength to acknowledge that our conflicts are a certainty of life in dark winter days? Strength to merely endure? Strength to acquiesce graciously? No. Strength to serve. What does that entail? God knows. But we know it takes God's own strength merely to face the fact of our own failings. Is there room for Christ in the unlit, unprepared inn of the heart? Must old tenants be evicted to make way for the Child of Light? And when the Maker of Light sheds light on the path, are we startled to discover that the demons we grappled with in the inky eclipse of fear were merely other mistaken folk like us, thinking they, too, were wrestling with devils in the darkness?

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light... —The Third Collect Prayer of Advent, ELW, p.19

Continued on page 2



We sometimes see a vision of the Kingdom living and vibrant in the future. We often see the hand of God clearly at work in the events of the past. But today—*this day*—is in our blind spot. The Judge will judge the future, but not yet. The Galilean has redeemed the past already. But we need to believe that Christ is *present now* so that we may witness what Christ is *doing now*. If we fail to see what Christ is doing now, we may not only fail to participate in Christ's work, we may end up blocking it.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world... — The Fourth Collect Prayer for Advent, ELW p.19

It's time to celebrate. Clear out any old musty things that would make us timid at the table of Christ's festivities. Break off the manacles that keep us from embracing the sisters and brothers we have not yet met, whom we do not yet know, all God's children. Rejoice! for the Judge has judged the world and it has already ended. Rejoice! for the Christ is redeeming and remaking the world one newborn heart at a time. The work is complete. The work is still in progress. The work has just begun. The end is already. The end is not yet.

All-powerful and unseen God, the coming of your light into our world has brightened weary hearts with peace. Call us out of darkness, and empower us to proclaim the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord....—The Collect Prayer for Christmas Day, ELW p. 20

Even in the dark, short days of winter, God is shedding true Light on the new thing that God is doing. Already. Not yet. Now.

I wish you a blessed Advent and a joyous Christmas, with much love,

Pastor Steve

MANY GIFTS. ONE SPIRIT. MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is an exciting time: a new pastor, the approach of a new year. There is energy and a desire to get on with it. The "it" is the issue. Approaching the new year, it is budget time and committee chairs need to evaluate their programs – are you proud of what you accomplished and should you have done more or perhaps something different. Now is the time, before the holidays overwhelm us, to pray over it and make decisions. If it involves money, be sure to tell the Finance Committee. If you are not a committee chair, what did Gloria Dei do well and what should we be doing different? Now is the time to share your ideas with the committee chairs or a church council member. Finally each and all of us need to evaluate our stewardship of what God has provided us and consider next year. The budget process will remind us that we "cannot do it all" but what we will do will be our best try at God's will.

Apropos of things we should consider, is the "Living Lutheran" blog at <http://www.livinglutheran.com>. Jay Gamelin, Pastor at Jacob's Porch, Ohio State University, (10/20/2011) spoke to a young adult visitor who although he had a positive worship experience was not coming back because he "didn't see Jesus". The issue here is the word "see". We have moved from a textual culture to an image one. Learning is often video, TV, a picture or an experience. Today, people come to church to "see God". The blog stated it best: "Ask these questions of yourself: Do you look like Jesus? Jesus gave us his life and taught us to imitate him. Do you live a life worth imitating? Does your worship community model the transformed life? Are you teaching ideas or are you modeling a way to live daily in the Lord?" In short, do people see God in you?

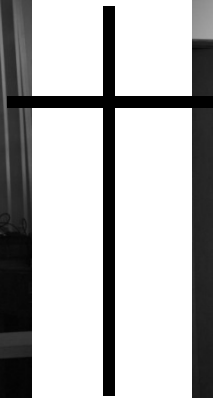
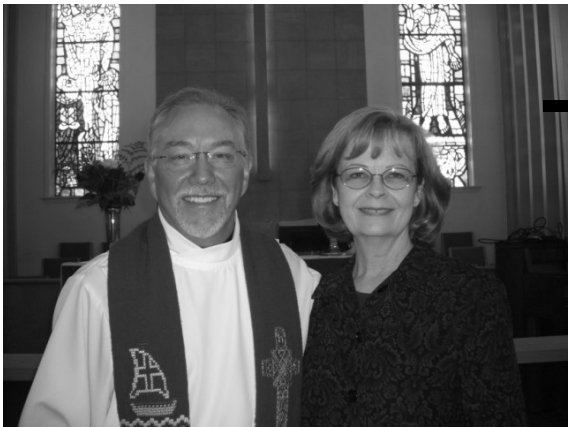
Blessings, Robert E. Siemer, Congregation President



*Rejoice...
Rejoice...
Rejoice...*



Rejoice... Pastor Installation



BOOK CORNER

Looking for a meaningful Christmas gift or just a good read for yourself?

Pastor Steve recommends:

Loving Jesus by Dr. Mark Allen Powell

The Alphabet of Grace by Frederick Buechner

Paul: A Novel by Walter Wangerin

On Sunday, **November 27**, Gloria Dei celebrated new members **Kelly Henderson** and her triplets **Gabriel, Michael and Rachel** (age 7) & **Mark Salsgiver**, and his daughter **Eileen Salsgiver**. Kelly and Mark will be married at a private ceremony at church on December 30...Rejoice!

—**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**—

Joining them were **Meri Beckham**, wife of Pastor Steve, and our friends **George & Pastor Helen Liesenberg**.

NEWS & NOTES REGARDING CHURCH PARKING LOT



The chain and signs designating our south side parking lot as private property have been in place for several weeks and they seem to be effective eliminating the usage of the lot as a through drive for neighbors and service trucks. Good NEWS — No complaints have been received! There is one correction to the directions provided in the previous message relative to getting access to the parking behind the church. If the main parking lot is full or you do not want to release the chain. "Drive past the church until you get to Syracuse Walk where you turn RIGHT and then turn RIGHT again in to the alley" — Thanks again for supporting this project!

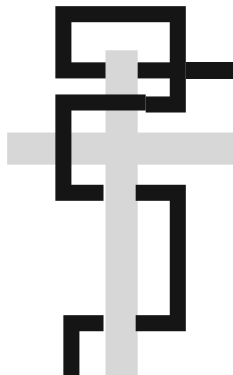


WALK ACROSS THE ROOM...WALK ACROSS THE CANAL

EVERYONE is Encouraged to Join our E-Committee & Choir for a Fun Evening at the Naples Boat Parade!

Please join us for **CAROLING** at Jim Ferrero's home, 134 Rivo Alto Canal, Long Beach, 90803 on Saturday, December 17 @ 5pm. Grab a flyer for directions and details about parking in the church lot! Come early...please RSVP to Donna Malbon at 433.3592 or email her at djmalbon@verizon.net. **REJOICE!**





**Deadline for January Newsletter:
December 18**

**Send information via email:
— CurtWhall@aol.com**

Gloria Dei Missions

For more details, call the numbers listed below or contact **Nancy Kahakauwila**. A big thanks to all who contribute prayers, finances, and/or time to Gloria Dei Mission Partners.

Can you spare one hour or more to give a gift of service to the needy in our local area? Here are volunteer opportunities with nearby Gloria Dei Mission Partners:

Downtown Long Beach: *Lutheran Social Services (LSS)* 1611 Pine Avenue (562) 599-1321

To do: sort clothes, bag food, misc. tasks; 8am-4pm Monday -Thursday

Downtown Long Beach: *Trinity Lutheran Church*, 759 Linden Ave. (562) 437-4002

To do: cook and/or serve lunch on Saturday (s) to children and parents during Saturday Outreach Program in partnership with LSS; 10:30am-1:30pm Sat.

Port of Long Beach: *Lutheran Maritime Ministry at International Seafarers Center*, 120 So.Pico Avenue (562) 432-7560, Chaplain Chim (424-8798) or email cmandalia@msn.com

To do: misc. office help, drive van to pick up seafarers, bake and deliver cookies to Center 3-11pm Mon.-Sat.

South Gate: *Faith Lutheran Church* (Fe y Esperanza), 13431 Paramount Blvd., (562) 634-1484

To do: misc, office help Tues.-Sat.; give guitar or piano lesson to children /teens on Friday evening (s); cook/serve food for their Community Christmas Dinner

Special concerns at this time are for the Native Peoples served by the M/V Christian and other Alaskan coastal villages as they try to recover from November's storm surge, causing the worst coastal flooding there in 40 years. The five ELCA congregations on the Seward Peninsula of Alaska affected by this storm comprise one-third of the native ethnic-specific congregations of the ELCA. **Please pray for the continued safety of ELCA members in Alaska and support their recovery with a gift to ELCA Disaster Response.**

December

Birthdays

MARGARET CLARK	12/4
DERRICK SKONECHI	12/10
LUPE KAISER	12/12
SUSAN MUNZER	12/14



December

Anniversaries

HOWARD & JANIE DAVIS
12/11

TOM & OLGA DAHLGREN
12/27

CRAIG & YUKIKO MCCARTY
12/30

MARK & KELLY SALSGIVER
12/30

*Advent is the
beginning of a new
church year!*

But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Ephesians 4:7



GLORIA DEI CHURCH COUNCIL

The information listed below is a summary from the Minutes of the Church Council meeting held on November 7, 2011. Council meetings are normally held at 7PM on the first Monday of the month.

President's Report —

A Motion Carried to establish a Strategic Planning Committee; Pastor and council members noted that the "Meet Pastor Steve" meetings have been well-received; Special thanks to all who organized the Veteran's Day Luncheon that hosted 39 guests for this annual event; the Synod Assembly is slated next spring May 31-June 2 2012; Over one hundred guests and members were on hand for the *Pastor Installation Service* on November 30.

Financial Planning—

The treasurer report was accepted as submitted. The Finance & Planning committee is involved in the annual budget review process. Again, special thanks to Jim Ferrero, Marilyn Bittle, Gary Bockman, Walter Eidam, Twyla Karkut, Curt Whallon and Barbara White for their important work and commitment to secure our financial future. Their sound management practices help the planning process and will be critical to the upcoming strategic planning work ahead.

Evangelism—

The 'E-Committee' continues to plan many events and programs for our congregation. Look for more information about our upcoming VBS Kids Christmas program, a food for students CSULB Lutheran Ministry is being planned; and improvements to the church website.

The committee meets the third Sunday of each month. They plan to meet after church service on December 18 and January 15 — More volunteers are needed — contact Stephanie Siemer.

Property Committee—

A detailed inspection and maintenance of the 5 different furnace units that serve our church has been completed and we are in good shape for the winter season.

We are fortunate to have an architect joining our church who is willing to work with a committee that Property Committee will be forming to consider the possible changing of the exterior color of the church in conjunction with the installation of a hard tile band on the east side below the stain glass window sills. This band would eliminate the continual flaking off of the current stucco finish. We are also in the process of developing an estimate for enclosing the balcony with sound proof glass to form a cry room where adults with infants could sit during the church service and still hear and observe the service. This is a feature that many churches have. Recent visitors with infants have commented about the lack of this kind of space and how it would affect their choice of a church to join. Also being explored is what can be done to improve the sound system in the sanctuary designed to aid those parishioners who have hearing difficulties.

Shepherds—

Let us know if you want to be added to our shepherd list as a visitor or friend of Gloria Dei.

Office of Governmental Ministry



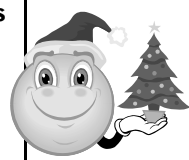




Five CROP-WALK volunteers collected \$850; we recently purchased advertising space in the SCIC program.

— GOD'S GRACIOUS SERVANTS —





DECEMBER CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A.A. Mtg. 1 PM • D.A. Mtg. 6 PM 	
4 Adult & Children's Sunday School at 9:15 AM ADVENT Communion Worship @ 10:45 AM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O.A. Mtg. @ 7PM 	5 Council Meeting @ 7 PM	6 Mark Your Calendar: Tuesdays, Bible Study at 10 AM and 7 PM 	7 Choir Rehearsal @ 7:15 PM Everyone is invited to help us enhance our worship through music!	8 ELC Women's Group Church Tree Trimming @ 10:30 AM Luncheon follows at Marian Beckman's home in Naples		10
11 Adult & Children's Sunday School at 9:15 AM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADVENT Worship @ 10:45 AM • O.A. Mtg. @ 7PM 	12	13 Mark Your Calendar: Tuesdays, Bible Study at 10 AM and 7 PM 	14 Choir Rehearsal @ 7:15 PM Everyone is invited to help us enhance our worship through music!	15	16	17 Boat Parade 5pm Walk Across the Canal Caroling & Fellowship Event! 
18 Adult & Children's Sunday School at 9:15 AM ADVENT Worship @ 10:45 Holy Communion by Intinction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-Committee meeting after service • O.A. Mtg. @ 7PM 	19	20 Mark Your Calendar: Tuesdays, Bible Study at 10 AM and 7 PM 	21 Choir Rehearsal @ 7:15 PM Everyone is invited to help us enhance our worship through music!	22	23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A.A. Mtg. 1 PM • D.A. Mtg. 6 PM 	 Christmas Eve Service
25 Christmas Day Worship Service @ 10:45 	26	27 Mark Your Calendar: Tuesdays, Bible Study at 10 AM and 7 PM 	28	29	30	31



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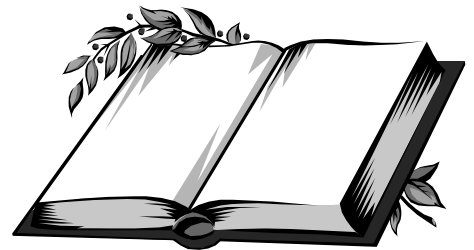


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MISSION STATEMENT

—Gloria Dei Lutheran Church is a family of people called by God, saved by grace through Jesus Christ, and nourished by the Holy Spirit. We are a congregation of Christian servants dedicated to serve the needs of the local community and the worldwide mission of the church. We seek to accomplish this through prayer, worship and music, Sacraments, Christian stewardship, Scripture-based youth and adult education, community outreach, and fellowship. We do this in Thanksgiving for God's blessings.



Gloria Dei is a 'Book of Faith' Congregation