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Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

the little church with a big heart!

THOUGHTS ALONG THE WAY...

It's only a paper moon, sailing over a cardboard sea, but it wouldn't be make believe if you believed in me. — Paper Moon, 1933

Make believe. Those two words have been sticking in my head ever since I read this excerpt last week from *Wishful Thinking* by Frederick Buechner:

You make believe that the tasteless wafer and cheap port are his flesh And blood. You make believe that by swallowing them you are swallowing his life into your life and that there is nothing in earth or heaven more important for you to do than this. It is a game you play because he said to play it. "Do this in remembrance of me." Do this. Play that it makes a difference. Play that it makes sense. If it seems a childish thing to do, do it in remembrance that you are a child.

Make believe. It's not exactly the same thing as pretending, though I admit that the line between the two is sometimes very thin. When we pretend, we know we are engaged in something false, that we are embracing a pretense. But when we make believe, we are entering, for a time at least, a different reality. When I pretend, I may adopt a different persona for awhile, knowing all the time that it's not the real me. When I make believe, I become a different person for at least awhile. There is no pretense. This is the difference between a great actor and a bad actor. The great actors make believe, they become the character. The bad ones pretend, they play at being the character.

Children are naturally adept at make believe; so many of the world's hard edges are still permeable to them. When Gus and Elijah and Casey pick up their styrene swords and cardboard shields, they become Jedi Knights, and they stay Jedi Knights right up to the moment when the rules of their imaginary world are violated or the pain of banging into the corner of a table brings them back to this world. They are not pretending. In their minds' eyes those styrene swords glow and hum like light sabers and they are clothed in Jedi capes. While they are in that make believe land they are no longer little boys struggling with their own coordination, they are bold and skilled and fearless warriors battling evil.

There is a lot about our faith that requires us to make believe. Maybe that's why Jesus said that we had to become like little children. Maybe it's necessary for us to find our way back to a place where the hard edges of our daily reality are more permeable so that we can enter that other realm he described in such elusive yet inviting parables, the Kingdom of God.

Thoughts Along the Way Continues....

Maybe it's necessary for us to take on the serious business of cultivating a playful faith where we use our God-given imaginations to see ourselves as God's children, divine princes and princesses, who live in a divine alternate reality where we can stand up to the dragons of the world with boldness, skill and fearless hearts. And maybe sometimes we can find that we don't have to fight them at all. Maybe we can tickle them helpless or hold up a mirror and make them either laugh at their own fiery silliness or face the shame of their own bullying.

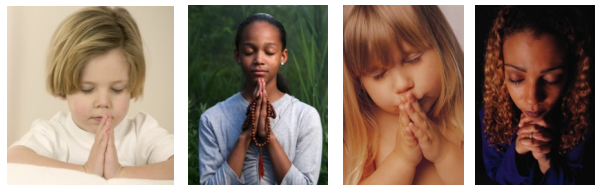
Maybe we should make believe that we are deep-cover spies who have sworn eternal allegiance directly to our Sovereign. Maybe we can make believe our congregation is a sleeper cell carrying out covert operations of grace, generosity, and love, quietly fomenting peace and camaraderie wherever we go, scattering holy jokes like mustard seeds, speaking in code until everyone around us is dying to be let in on the secret. "The Domain of God? The realm we live in? Well... it's like finding the Hope Diamond in a tray of costume jewelry at K-Mart. It's like picking up a scrap of litter on the sidewalk and discovering that it's the winning Lotto ticket. It's like a little bit of sourdough starter that gets passed from person to person for generations, until every home in the world has had a taste of deliciousness."

It takes some imagination, some make believe, to enter the realm where these pictures make sense. You have to enter a different reality to say, "Blessed are the poor. No, really. Blessed are those who mourn. Trust me," and not only believe it yourself but say it in a way that shows whomever might be listening that you are not only deadly serious but also that you're finding great joy in saying it because you can already see how that blessing, that comfort can happen and because you know you'll do whatever you can to make it happen. It takes some powerful make believe to pray, "your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven," and not only really mean it but be committed to the depths of your soul to making it happen, to know that in those words you are signing up to do your best to "subvert the dominant paradigm" as we used to say in our radical youth, back when the vision of a God-transformed world was still clearer in our own imaginations, back when we still understood that the annoying yammerings about how much it might cost were a ploy, a survival mechanism of the status quo, an attempt to make us feel that resistance is futile so that we would give up without really trying. And yet we still pray the prayer, and here and there those words we say without paying much attention turn into little mustard seeds of make believe taking root in unexpected ways and places.

Make believe. It's why the Holy Spirit has the young seeing visions and the old dreaming dreams. It's God's way of slipping us into a new reality where justice flows like rivers and fairness is spread out like an ocean and swords are beaten into plowshares, where the playing field is not only leveled but made playful once again. God knows if we can envision it, if we can dream it, if we can make believe we are part of it already, then we can make it happen on earth as it is in heaven.

Pro Gloria Dei,

Pastor Steve





**“Receive the
Holy Spirit...”**

~ John 20:22



CSULB: BEACH PROGRESSIVES

— SEAN LANIGAN ORDINATION —

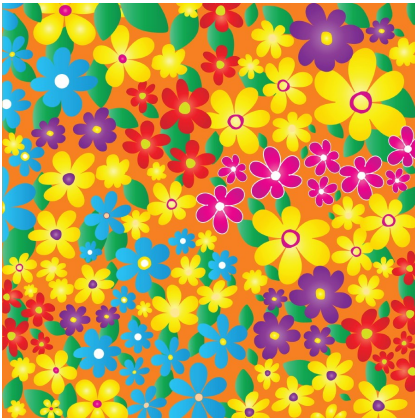
The Rev. Sean Lanigan, who serves as the pastor of **Beach Progressives – our joint ELCA-Episcopal young adult ministry in Long Beach** – was ordained as an Episcopal priest on July 2nd. Three bishops participated in the ordination, including the ELCA SoCal Synod's Bishop Guy Erwin. Many clergy and laity from Long Beach area congregations, including Gloria Dei, also attended – thank you for your presence and support! Sean leads the campus ministry at Cal State Long Beach as well as a young adult community (for folks between the ages of 18-40 who are exploring mainline Christianity) that's in-residence at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church.

We invite you to support this important ministry, checks can be made payable to Gloria Dei and designated for **Beach Progressives**. Join one of our 'small group' endeavors and get involved in this local effort to reach young adults. So many of our members are educators and could greatly impact youth in Long Beach — TAKE ACTION and become a mentor and be the change **YOU** want to see in the world — **YOUR** city and **OUR** Long Beach neighborhoods!

**“His divine power has given us
everything we need for life and
godliness through our knowledge
of Him.” ~ II Peter 1:3**

Beach Progressives (our ELCA-Episcopal young adult ministry) is organizing a mentoring program at **Luther Burbank Elementary School** (located at Junipero and 4th). We're seeking mentors of all ages who enjoy working with children and who can commit to meeting with a mentee weekly.

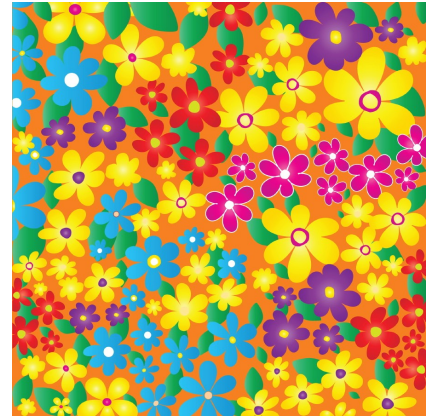
**If you're interested in this opportunity,
please email Pastor Sean Lanigan at
beachprogs@gmail.com**



**GROWING IN FAITH,
LIFTED BY HOPE,
GUIDED BY LOVE**

WWW.GDCLB.ORG

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



CONGREGATION UPDATE

Greetings and Blessings to Members and Friends of Gloria Dei. Your Council met last on July 7, 2014.

Before the meeting, we were introduced to our new Landscape Architects, Rick and Rita Mitchell. The landscape had become a bit overgrown and undefined and Danny Bach took on the need to improve the appearance. The Mitchell's have trimmed and tended it to new life and beauty.

I am so pleased to tell you that Pastor Steve is planning to continue our **Stories, Songs and Supper** "get together". The dates are scheduled for Wednesdays on August 6, August 20, September 3 and 17th. How better to spend a summer eve, than with good food, good fellowship, songs we all know and the wonderful story time that Pastor weaves us through. Are we ever too busy or too fixed in our routine to pass up an opportunity like this? It is totally enjoyable, the Parapet Impromptu Band is great, Pastor is a Master Story Teller and it is just great good fun. Join us and see for yourselves.

Unfortunately, we have lost two valued members on our Council due to business demands. Two positions (Carl Irwin and Randy Hoffman) were approved to be filled by Frank Stanley and Stephanie Siemer until

May of 2015, when the congregation meets to nominate new members to Council.

Our "Small Groups" are active and have come up with some inventive ideas to contribute to our community and members who have special needs. A bond of closeness happens as we prayerfully progress through this venture. We gain from it, what we contribute to it. As with most things in life, and I think most would agree, it is a meaningful addition in our lives.

The Church Picnic is scheduled for September 21st, the last Sunday of our summer schedule. We will return to the Long Beach Marina Park where we met last year. It is less crowded, with spacious shaded area for us to play and meet and enjoy the time together.

Council will not meet in August. We will convene again in September to plan for our Council Retreat on September 10.

May the Lord be with you and have a Glorious Dei.

Barbara White, Council President

God does not demand that we prove ourselves worthy of this love, but asks only that we receive it in faith. In so doing, we are truly "born of the Spirit." ~ John 3:6

SLEEPING BEAUTY OR SLEEPING UGLY— YOU DECIDE

— VICTORIA GAMMER —

If Sleeping Beauty hadn't been a fictional character, would she have been just another pretty face or is there more than meets the eye? Inquiring minds want to know—seriously.

So let's take a look at what results from not enough sleep, in other words, sleep deprivation.

Our circadian clock (our natural rest cycle) manages the health and rejuvenation of the immune system, as well as our muscular, nervous and skeletal systems. Lack of sleep compromises all of it. Researchers at the University of Warwick and University College London have concluded that sleep deprivation can double the risk of cardiovascular disease, and increase the chance of weight gain, high blood pressure and Type2 diabetes.

Study results are indicating that there is a direct correlation with lack of sleep and the rise in dementia among older people. But hang on, that's not all. Lack of sleep disturbs hair health resulting in thinning hair in women and exacerbation of male pattern balding in men. We appear more wrinkled, have dull hair and are irritable. Not exactly date material for those seeking a significant other.

Lack of sleep doesn't allow the sweat of our bodies, naturally produced during the rest cycle, to hydrate and plump the skin, resulting in a more wrinkled appearance.

So now that we've determined sleep is important, the obvious follow-up question is *How much is enough?* David Dinges, the scientist heading the study at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, has found that, "there's a cumulative impairment that develops in your ability to think fast, to react quickly, (and) to remember things. And it starts right away," he said. "A single night of four hours or five hours or even six can in most people, begin to show affects in your attention and your memory and the speed with which you think. After a second night it gets worse. Each day adds an additional burden or deficit to your cognitive ability." He added. Keep in mind that this study was done without caffeine, physical activity or bright light, all of which are counter measures BUT at some point the studies show the impairments get so bad that sleep is the only rescue.

RECLAIMING YOUTH @ RISK

With the M/V Christian in dry dock due to lack of a qualified skipper, Gloria Dei's new Native American partnership is with **Oaks Indian Mission** in Oklahoma. Oaks provides housing, education, and counseling to Native children who are abandoned, delinquent, or otherwise in need of a loving and supportive home where they are prepared to lead and serve. Take some time to look at their web site **Oaks Indian Mission .org** for more information.

Rev. Dr. Gordon Peterson was selected last year as the Executive Director of Oaks. He has been assistant to the bishop of Pacifica Synod and a longtime friend of Pastor Steve.

At the Mission, we are 'reclaiming youth at risk' one at a time. When they come to us, we invite them into our hearts and into our lives. These kids are — a child of God. Our financial support in 2014 will help hundreds of kids needing a place to belong.



WE MADE A JOYFUL “NOISE” UNTO THE LORD!

— PHIL COMO —

Gloria Dei has been in our community for over 50 years; Lutheran Social Services (LSS) has been a mission partner for our church for the majority of those years. Aside from Gloria Dei's continuing financial contributions, many members in our congregation have embraced LSS as an expression of their faith and their commitment to making Christ's compassion a reality in our community. These contributions are gratefully acknowledged by **George Bell, the Executive Director of LSS**. He and his staff are so appreciative and complimentary of Gloria Dei's sustained commitment to LSS, through financial support and personal involvement, in the daily activities of LSS. In particular he mentioned his appreciation to **George Liesenberg, Marion Beckman, Sandy Irvine, and Tywla Karkut** for all that they have done in helping LSS. When you have a moment, take time to thank these individuals for their sustained commitment to this outreach in our community.

Is There More That We Can Do?

Well, yes, always. We can start here.

Contributions – ‘Can-do’ Sunday is a great way for all of us to make our personal contributions to help those served by LSS. In particular, LSS needs canned meats and protein-type canned foods. Financial – Aside from the regular financial contributions Gloria Dei makes to all of our mission partners, which includes LSS, we've started something new - on the 20th we had our first ‘noisy’ offering and what a success! It was everything hoped for and more – ‘pennies plus from heaven’. Thank you all for the generosity of your contributions; keep setting aside your spare change and keep it close at hand – more noisy offerings are in our future. One of the requests George shared was the need for items to actually be purchased and brought to LSS. Why? There are two full-time staff (George and Wendy) and two part-time staff (Maxine and Evelyn). Their presence at LSS is important; taking time out of their day to make purchases leaves less time to be on-site and manage the activities at LSS.

What items do they need?

Let's start with these:

New socks and underwear for all.

Children – sizes 3 -14. They grow so quickly families don't have enough money to keep up with their children's needs.

Men – sizes 34 – 50

Women – all sizes

Slippers for seniors – all sizes (new and slightly used)

Baby formula

Diapers of all sizes

Volunteer NOW!

Aside from what has already been mentioned there are opportunities to volunteer your time at LSS. George shared these, for example:

- Help answering the phones

- Sort food

- Sort clothing

- Stuff envelopes

- Read to and tutor elementary children

- Sharing the Mission of LSS

Arrangements are being made to have George come and share with us all the wonderful ways that LSS is serving the community and ways that LSS is hoping to expand that service. Anticipate what Pastor Steve calls a ‘temple’ talk in the near future.

More to Come...

There's lots to share about LSS, like the ongoing renovations of an adjacent church for use by LSS, a drop-in center for the homeless, ESL classes and more. Future newsletters will have more to say about these activities.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS — AUGUST 2014

1 — Friday

- A.A. MTG.@ 1:00 PM
- D.A. MTG @ 6:00 PM

2 — Saturday

3 — SUNDAY

SUMMER WORSHIP
@ 10:00 AM ****
HOLY COMMUNION

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

4 — Monday

VACATION BIBLE CAMP

5 — Tuesday

VACATION BIBLE CAMP

Happy Birthday Janet Sims

6 — Wednesday

VACATION BIBLE CAMP

STORIES, SONGS AND SUPPER

7 — Thursday

VACATION BIBLE CAMP

Jerry & Gwen Gross Anniversary

8 — Friday

VACATION BIBLE CAMP

Donna & Mike Malbon Anniversary

- A.A. MTG.@ 1:00 PM
- D.A. MTG @ 6:00 PM

9 — Saturday

10 — SUNDAY

SUMMER WORSHIP
@ 10:00 AM ****
HOLY COMMUNION

Happy Birthday Janeene Conter
 Eric & Christy Berg Anniversary

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

11 — Monday

Happy Birthday Kay Berg
 Happy Birthday Jerry Gross

13 — Wednesday

Happy Birthday Mike Lynch

14 — Thursday

Happy Birthday Edie Graber

15 — Friday

Happy Birthday Gus, Elijah &
 Casey White

- A.A. MTG.@ 1:00 PM
- D.A. MTG @ 6:00 PM

16 — Saturday

Happy Birthday Sandy Irvine

STORIES, SONGS AND SUPPER

17 — SUNDAY

SUMMER WORSHIP
@ 10:00 AM ****
HOLY COMMUNION

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

18 — Monday

19 — Tuesday

20 — Wednesday

21 — Thursday

Happy Birthday Danny Bach
 David & Nancy Kahakauwila
 Anniversary
 Pastor & Sue Schaar Anniversary



OAKS INDIAN MISSION .ORG

22 — Friday

- A.A. MTG.@ 1:00 PM
- D.A. MTG @ 6:00 PM

23 — Saturday

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

24 — SUNDAY

SUMMER WORSHIP
@ 10:00 AM ****
HOLY COMMUNION

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

25 — Monday

26 — Tuesday

Happy Birthday Judy Griggs
 Jim & Nancy Brown Anniversary

27 — Wednesday

Phil & Karen Como Anniversary

28 — Thursday

29 — Friday

- A.A. MTG.@ 1:00 PM
- D.A. MTG @ 6:00 PM

30 — Saturday

Don & Margie Brown Anniversary

31 — SUNDAY

SUMMER WORSHIP
@ 10:00 AM ****
HOLY COMMUNION

O.A. MTG. @ 7:00 PM

Happy Birthday Peggy Huggard

GLORIA DEI EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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



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