



GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH

GATHERING IN CHRIST ✝ SHARING HIS LOVE

THE GLORION

DECEMBER 2024

www.gloriadeielca.com

IN CASE OF PASTORAL EMERGENCY
Contact the office during regular office hours:
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. – Monday thru Friday
After office hours contact:
Pastor Lynn M. Fonfara via email:
pastorgloriadeileesburg@gmail.com

ADDRESS: 130 S. Lone Oak Drive, Leesburg, FL 34748

OFFICE PHONE: (352)787-3223

OFFICE EMAIL: gloriadeilutheranleesburg@gmail.com

WEB SITE: www.gloriadeielca.com

OFFICE HOURS: Monday – Friday from 9:00-1:00 PM

PASTOR: LYNN M. FONFARA

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC: LEONARD CREMISIO

OFFICE MANAGER: EVELYN ROLLINS

SEXTON: TINA JANOSA

SUNDAY WORSHIP – 9:30 A.M



December, 2024

Hurry up and wait

It seems like no one has the ability to wait anymore. Patience lasts about 30 seconds. Get in line, so you can crawl forward with harumphs and hurry-up toe-taps. The concept of “Good things come to those who wait” no longer exists. Not that this is a new thing.

In my lifetime, we have gone from snail mail to email to texting and chatting; from pink message slips to voicemail to instant notification pop-ups. We have gone from sit-down family dinners to eating whatever we can grab, as we have time between work or school and after-school or after-work events.

Christmas decorations were going up even though the Halloween merchandise still filled the shelves. Christmas music is on the radio and piped in at stores before Thanksgiving, and gone December 27. There are Christmas movies in July, and a new one each week for 12 weeks before Christmas.

It's no wonder we want to rush through Advent to get to Christmas! But if nothing else, the Church calendar teaches us to wait. For the four Sundays in Advent, we get to ponder what it means that Jesus was born as an infant. We consider the promises made to the ancient prophets and the challenges issued by John the Baptist long before we get to hear about the coming of a special child.

Yet, we can never forget that the baby named God-with-us (*Emmanuel*), and God-Saves (*Yeshua/Joshua/Jesus*) is headed for the cross, to demonstrate God's extreme love for us. We are never alone, because God is always with us. We are always forgiven, because love outweighs the pain of sin. We weep with joy at his birth, and weep with grief at his death, only to shout with joy at his resurrection.

I look forward to waiting with you for the celebration of the Birth of the Baby, so dear to our hearts.

THANKSGIVINGS

This month I give thanks to all the folks who magically appear to do something, no matter how large or small the task is. A glass of water at the pulpit, ice in my glass for iced tea when I finally get to the window for after-church snacks, flowers in just the right place for Sunday or a funeral, care for the homebound and hospitalized, and answers to my countless questions. You all are awesome!

AND, few congregations I have served have observed have made note of Pastor Appreciation. Thank you for making serving with you so special. And come by anytime for a square or two of chocolate. I have plenty to share!

In peace and love / Pax et bonum

Pr Lynn

COMMUNITY NOTICES

Joining Hands is once again asking for donations of Little Debbie Christmas Cookies/Cakes to hand out at our December Food Distribution on December 13. Please bring them either to the church or to the WELCA luncheon on December 5th. We need approximately 200 to give one package to each family. There will be a collection bin by the front door of the church with a Little Debbie sign on it.

Thank you!

RECENTLY HOSPITALIZED

Members or friends hospitalized or had surgery in November: Sandy Kolb.

GIFTS OF REMEMBRANCE

In loving memory of Joseph J. Kancel – Nancy & MaryJean Kancel / Communion Wine

In Honor of Jim Rieb's Birthday - June Rieb / Communion Wine

In Honor of Craig Carlson's Birthday - Christine Carlson / Altar Flowers

PRAYERS

We will pray for the joys, sorrows, and concerns of the following members for December:

- 12/1** Mary Humphries, Irvin & Susan Johnson, MaryJean Kancel, Nancy Kancel, Shirley Kelley.
- 12/8** John & Arlene Kelly, Mary Kelpel, Bess King, Bernadine Kirkpatrick, Byron & Crystal Kirkpatrick
- 12/15** Sandy H. Kolb, Helga La Cava, Barb & Dock Lias, Judy Lorenz, Sylvia Mackey
- 12/22** Gail Madson, Dennis & Dianne Marcotte, Carol Marshall, Evelyn Matthes,
- 12/29** Ray & Arlene McGuire, Jame, Julian and Quiana Menchaca, Andy & Taeko Mincer, Rita Moritz

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

**Special congratulations to those celebrating fifty or more years of marriage.*

- 12/13 Loraine & Bill Van Haecke 27 yrs.
- 12/18 Taeko & Andy Mincer 40 yrs.
- * 12/20 Peg & Michael Stewart 55 yrs.
- 12/23 Mary & John Grissom 37 yrs.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- | | | | |
|-------|---------------------|-------|----------------|
| 12/03 | John Braun | 12/27 | Mary Kelp |
| 12/05 | Bill Van Haecke | 12/27 | Gail Madson |
| 12/08 | Gayle Bloom | 12/29 | Mary Rhoades |
| 12/08 | Linda Hide | 12/30 | Larry Goerke |
| 12/10 | Forrest Berg | 12/30 | Marlene Farris |
| 12/16 | Lorraine Van Haecke | | |

THANK YOU LETTERS

To Our Gloria Dei Family and Others Elsewhere:

I have been deeply grateful to so many friends in Gloria Dei and elsewhere for their tender and graceful responses to the occasion of my dear wife, Beverly's, passing in early October. The volume of cards, letters and other communications has sustained me in such difficult times.

Bev's funeral/celebration of life was held on November 16th, and I was so gratified by the number of people who came and expressions of love of all who attended. Your demonstrations of love were touching and again, sustained me then and now and I believe, into the distant future.

Gloria Dei is sacred ground.

Dick Healy

BIBLE STUDY

Advent midweek services



As we wait for the coming of Jesus this Advent, we will gather once again on Wednesdays at 4pm to sing the beautiful service of Holden Evening Prayer, by Marty Haugen.

Our Theme will be “Waiting, Watching, and Wondering”, as we reflect together on a scripture reading. I hope you will join us often.

Christmas Worship

The Christmas Eve service will be at 5pm on Dec 24. It will be preceded by music at 4:30pm. Because we never get to sing enough Christmas Carols, worship on Sunday, December 29, will be a traditional Service of Lessons and Carols. Both services will include Holy Communion.

GLORIA DEI WOMEN OF THE ELCA

By: Loraine Van Haecke

Hope you ladies have signed up and purchased your ticket for the Annual Christmas Luncheon. Mary/Martha Circle is hosting the party at Chesapeake Bay Grill at Arlington Ridge on December 5th at 11:00am. We are asked to bring Little Debbie's to the church or the restaurant for Joining Hands.

Baskets for our Home Bound will be prepared and delivered on December 20 th at 9:30am. If you have any questions, please call Arlene Kelly at 605-999-4555.

There were about 140 ladies (and a few men) attending the Fall Gathering at the Warren Willis Methodist Center. There were six commuters and one staying over from our congregation. The theme for the weekend was "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands." One of the highlights of the weekend was Pastor Rob Rose from the Synods office. He brought greetings from our Bishop and offered if we collected \$3,000.00 for our Love Offering recipient GraceWay Villages that the Synod would match it. Well to everyone's surprise we collected \$4,024.00 so the Synod matched \$4,000.00. GraceWay Villages are in Ft. Pierce. Every two years a charity is selected for two years. Total for year given to GraceWays will be almost \$15,000.00. GraceWays will be our recipient until January 31, 2026. We shared the center with about 550 Methodist Youth. It was a joy to see so many youths.

We wish everyone a Very Blessed Christmas and a Very Happy and Healthy New Year!

DECEMBER COUNCIL CORNER FOR 2024

By Vaike O'Grady

As the warmth of Thanksgiving gives way to the anticipation of Christmas, we find ourselves in a season of both celebration and transition. The twinkling lights and festive decorations remind us of the eternal hope we share, even as we navigate changes within our church family.

This time of year holds different meanings for each of us. While many experience the joy of family gatherings and cherished traditions, others among us carry heavier burdens. Some face their first holiday season without a loved one, while others struggle with illness, financial hardship, or loneliness. The very celebrations that bring delight to some may deepen the sense of loss or isolation for others.

In this period of pastoral transition, we have a unique opportunity to demonstrate the true meaning of being the body of Christ. Our strength lies not in any single leader, but in our collective faith and commitment to one another. The birth of Jesus reminds us that God often works through times of change to bring about His greatest blessings.

As we look toward 2025, we encourage each of you to consider how you might deepen your connection to our church family:

- Reach out to someone you haven't seen recently
- Join one of our small groups or Bible studies
- Consider serving in a leadership role on our church council or committees
- Support our ministry through your prayers, presence, and gifts

- Share your talents in new ways, whether in worship, education, or service

Remember that every act of kindness, every prayer, and every gesture of support strengthens the bonds of our church family. If you are struggling, please reach out – you are not alone. If you are in a season of abundance, consider how you might extend Christ's love to others who may be hurting.

Let us move forward together in faith, supporting one another as we welcome both the joys and challenges of this season. May the peace of Christ dwell in your hearts, and may His love shine through our church family as we prepare to celebrate His birth.

STEWARDSHIP ANTICIPATION & STEWARDSHIP

How does the word “anticipation” make you feel?

Happy anticipation can be a parade, a party, a concert, a vacation, or any number of things that you look forward to in your life. At this point in my life, I find my happiest anticipation involves seeing my family and friends.

On the flip side, anticipation of something that you deem unpleasant – think a doctor visit, surgery, or leaving family after a visit - can bring on anxiety, stress, and tears.

The giving that accompanies this time of year is a form of stewardship with mixed anticipation. As Christians, there are several dates that we anticipate, with none greater, in my opinion, than the birth of Christ. We share our love for each other with our time, talents, and finances to celebrate Jesus’s birth.

Don’t lose sight of the fact that God is the GREATEST steward, as He shares his love for us by sending His Son as a baby, anticipating His death, resurrection, and our salvation. Talk about mixed anticipation!

Have a blessed holiday season, and I hope all your anticipation is filled with happiness!

Arlene Kelly

FELLOWSHIP

By Loraine Van Haecke

Many thanks to all of you that have taken your time to make sure we have coffee and treats each Sunday for our fellowship time after our service. We do need more to step up and help. There are also other ways in our church that we can use our time and talents. What are your gifts that God has given to you? Maybe, a Reader, Communion Assistant, Literacy Assistant, Usher, Altar Guild, Post Worship Secretary, Fellowship, or a Counter? We have vacancies in all areas!!

Have a Blessed Christmas and a very Happy new Year!

RUTH CIRCLE

WELCA Christmas Party Dec 5 at Arlington ridge. Tickets will have been sold up to Sunday 11/24.

Next Ruth Circle regular meeting will be held on Thursday Jan 2nd at 10:30.

SAVE THE DATE: Friday January 17th at 10 am to pack personal care kits.

THE KINDNESS TREE

KINDNESS TREE- Salvation Army Angel Tags will be on kindness tree in Dec.

ANNUAL REPORTS

All 2024 annual reports are due to me by **December 20th 2025**. Please email them to gloriadeilutheranleesburg@gmail.com. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Thank you
Evelyn Rollins

EDUCATION-BIBLE STUDIES

There is bible study on Monday evenings at 7:00 p.m. by zoom. If you would like to attend, please email the church office at gloriadelutheranleesburg@gmail.com and we can send you a link.

JOINING HANDS IN FOOD MINISTRY

Just a gentle reminder that Joining Hands in Food Ministry's December food distribution will be on FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13th. We need volunteers so please mark your calendars. Set up begins at 7:00 AM and the opening prayer will be at 8:00 AM. Please bring cookies. See you there! Thank you!

Please put your donations in the Narthex on the shelf. Thank you for your support.
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MARY-MARTHA CIRCLE

Mary-Martha Circle will meet on the 2nd Tuesday, December 10. We will start our Mission Quilting at 9AM and have a break at 10:30. Bible Study at 11 will be out of the Gather Magazine. We will have copies of the lesson for anyone who needs one. We will also be Mission Quilting on the 4th Friday, which is December 27th at 9am. Please come and join us for fun & fellowship. Please continue to sew tops as we will continue to need them.

Carol Marshall, Leader Phone 352-787-0435

FINANCIAL CORNER

FINANCIAL CORNER

GENERAL FUND

	October, 2024	Year to date 2024
Contributions	\$14,174.68	\$171,776.25
Expenditures	\$20,087.94	\$201,171.16

RESTRICTED FUNDS

	Beg. Bal. 1/1/2024	Donations	Withdrawals	Ending Bal 10/31/24
Elementary School	14.69	0	0	14.69
Oak Park Middle	0	0	0	0
Thrivent Choice \$\$	2,249.34	509.00	1,385.70	1,372.64
Eternal Light	665.00	100.00	0	765.00
Fellowship	504.98	1,220.00	1,640.88	84.10
JHIF	0	695.00	695.00	0
World Hunger	0	191.00	191.00	0
Flowers	526.90	665.00	1,161.90	30.00
ELCA	0	90.00	90.00	0
Altar wine/bread	196.02	100.00	48.12	247.90
Quilt Shipping	0	400.00	400.00	0
AV Equipment	138.33	0	0	138.33
First Impressions Phase 3	2,430.63	32,735.00	17,185.00	17,980.63
Evangelism	1,123.00	342.00	0	1,465.00
Choir/music	550.00	0	0	550.00
TOTALS	8,398.89	37,047.00	22,797.60	22,648.29

DECEMBER CALENDAR

Sun.	12/1	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Worship
Mon	12/2	7:00 p.m.	Zoom Bible Study
Tues.	12/3	10:00 a.m.	Morning Prayer
		11:00 a.m.	WELCA Board Meeting
Wed.	12/4	4:00 p.m.	Vespers
		4:30 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal
Thurs.	12/5	11:30 p.m.	WELCA Board Meeting
Sun.	12/8	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Worship
		11:00 a.m.	Executive Council Meeting
Mon	12/9	7:00 p.m.	Zoom Bible Study
Tues.	12/10	9:00 a.m.	Mary Martha Circle
		9:00 a.m.	LWR Quilters
Wed.	12/11	4:00 p.m.	Vespers
		4:30 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal
		10:00 a.m.	Morning Prayer
Thurs.	12/13	8:30 a.m.	Joining Hands in Food Ministry
Sun.	12/15	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Worship /Hunger Offering
		11:00 a.m.	Council Meeting
Mon	12/16	7:00 p.m.	Zoom Bible Study
Tues.	12/17	10:00 a.m.	Morning Prayer
Wed.	12/18	4:00 p.m.	Vespers
		4:30 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal
Fri.	12/20	9:00 a.m.	Christmas Baskets for Homebound
Sun.	12/22	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Worship
Mon	12/23	7:00 p.m.	Zoom Bible Study
Tues.	12/24	10:00 a.m.	Morning Prayer
		11:00 a.m.	Council Meeting
		4:00 a.m.	Christmas Eve Service
Fri.	12/27	9:00 a.m.	Mary Martha Circle
		9:00 a.m.	LWR Quilters
Sun.	12/29	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Worship
Mon	12/30	7:00 p.m.	Zoom Bible Study
Tues.	12/31	10:00 a.m.	Morning Prayer

DECEMBER WORSHIP LEADERS

Assistant Ministers

Legend: R-Reader, +-Crucifer, C-Communion Assist., A-Liturgy Assist.

9:30 a.m.

12/1	R= Linda Hide += Leone Goding C= A= Patricia Bressler	12/8	R= MaryJean Kancel += James Menchaca C= A= Vaike O'Grady
12/15	R= Arlene Kelly += Leone Goding C= A= Vaike O'Grady	12/22	R= Arlene Kelly += Julian Menchaca C= A= Patricia Bressler
12/24	R= MaryJean Kancel += Leone Goding C= A= Patricia Bressler	12/29	R= Loraine Van Haecke += Leone Goding C= A= Ellen Clement

Ushers

If you are able to serve or have any questions, please contact Crystal Kirkpatrick at 552-3983.

9:30 a.m.

12/1	Crystal Kirkpatrick Byron Kirkpatrick Craig Carlson John Kelly	12/8	Crystal Kirkpatrick Byron Kirkpatrick Craig Carlson John Kelly
12/15	Crystal Kirkpatrick Byron Kirkpatrick Craig Carlson John Kelly	12/22	Crystal Kirkpatrick Byron Kirkpatrick Craig Carlson John Kelly
12/24	Crystal Kirkpatrick Byron Kirkpatrick Craig Carlson John Kelly	12/29	Crystal Kirkpatrick Byron Kirkpatrick Craig Carlson John Kelly

Altar Guild for November: Crystal & Byron Kirkpatrick

Post Worship Secretary for November:

Greeter for December:

12/01

12/8

12/15

12/22

12/24

12/29

Fellowship

12/05

12/8

12/15

12/22

12/24

12/29

Counters – Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m.

12/05 Jeanne Talts

12/8 Linda Steege & Janet Braun

12/15 Arlene Kelly

12/22 Arlene Kelly

12/29 John Braun



RULE OF LIFE

Living in Community at Gloria Dei

Gathering In Christ ~ Sharing His Love

A Rule of Life does for our spiritual journey what a trellis system does for a grapevine - it creates a framework for growing in a consistent direction through our faithful response to God.

"Those who [have no intentional Rule] are like wild, untamed grape vines. They will produce some fruit, but they probably won't be as abundant as they could be. Instead, they become more vulnerable to things that threaten their spiritual vitality. However, those who are intentionally reflective, prayerful, and attentively responsive are like cultivated vines... Our lives will produce an abundance of fruit for the glory of God."
- from "Crafting a Rule of Life" by Stephen Macchia.

LIVE FOR THE LORD - Follow

Love one another - Set example – show others how to live

As a developing disciple of Jesus Christ and a member of the Gloria Dei Faith Community, we continually, actively, and intentionally live our lives for the Lord by loving one another and by setting the example for others in the world of how to live in that love through the following commitments.

PRAY

We pray intentionally, daily setting aside a time and space.

We pray continually, aware of our deep need for the promise of God's continuing presence with us.

We offer prayers of:

ADORATION, CONFESSION, THANKSGIVING, SUPPLICATION

WORSHIP

We worship God regularly in love.

We worship God individually and communally, joyfully participating with others in singing, praying, touching, listening, sharing, and communing at the Lord's Table.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

We intentionally welcome others and continually build relationships by: spending time together, listening without judgment, understanding without agreement; and always forgiving one another.

STUDY

We intentionally and continually read Scripture for faithful understanding through sharing with others by thinking, discussing, believing, and applying Jesus' teachings to our daily lives.

CONTRIBUTE /SERVE

We serve our Lord continually, intentionally, regularly, actively – seeking the passion God instills in each of us towards the least by contributing our time (volunteering, helping, serving), our talents (gifts and skills), and our treasure (our financial possessions.)

Healthy responses to disagreements and conflicts

As disciples of Jesus, we embrace the following:

Five keys to healthy response to disagreements are: (based on Matthew 18:15-17)

1. We speak to each other, not about each other behind their backs.
2. If someone complains to you about another person, we ask them to speak to the person first and tell them it is so important that you will follow up in a week to see how the conversation went.
3. We don't respond to anonymous comments or letters.
4. We don't carry other people's mail. Ask, "What would you like me to do with your comment? You can come to council/meeting yourself or I can bring your comment with your name attached."
5. We explain each other's actions in the best possible light. We check with the person quoted or referred to for accuracy before we repeat the comment. (Luther's explanation to 8th Commandment)

Disagreements happen in any organization, including churches. Using healthy responses can stop the disagreement from spreading and engulfing the whole organization.

Thank you for practicing healthy responses and encouraging others to do the same.

Approved by Gloria Dei Lutheran Church Council June 21, 2018.

2024 CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS

Pastor	Lynn M. Fonfara	352-249-8533
President	Loraine Van Haecke	407-252-4692
Vice President	John Braun	412-926-3381
Secretary	Vaike O'Grady	512-827-6344
Treasurer	Bill Birdsall	732-773-2680
Financial Secretary	Janet Braun	412-445-7774
Fellowship	Loraine Van Haecke	407-252-4692
Property	Bill Birdsall	732-773-2680
Worship & Music		
Evangelism/Technology/ & Communications/Webmaster	Bill Birdsall	732-773-2680
Christian Education	Christine Carlson	516-458-7355
Finance		
	John Braun	412-926-3381
	Joel Weinhardt	330-936-8451

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Worship & Music	Pastor Lynn M. Fonfara	352-249-8533
Evangelism/Technology/ & Communications/Webmaster	Bill Birdsall	732-773-2680
Property	Bill Birdsall	732-773-2680
Fellowship	Loraine Van Haecke	407-252-4692
Stewardship	Dianne Marcotte	508-723-2073
WELCA	Loraine Van Haecke	407-252-4692

