



GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH

Organized in 1927 as St. Johns Lutheran Church
A part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
2600 Pontiac Road
Auburn Hills, MI 48326

First Class Mail

"Sweets for Your Sweetie" Bake sale is February 15, along with a special "Celebration of Love" worship service! See inside for details.

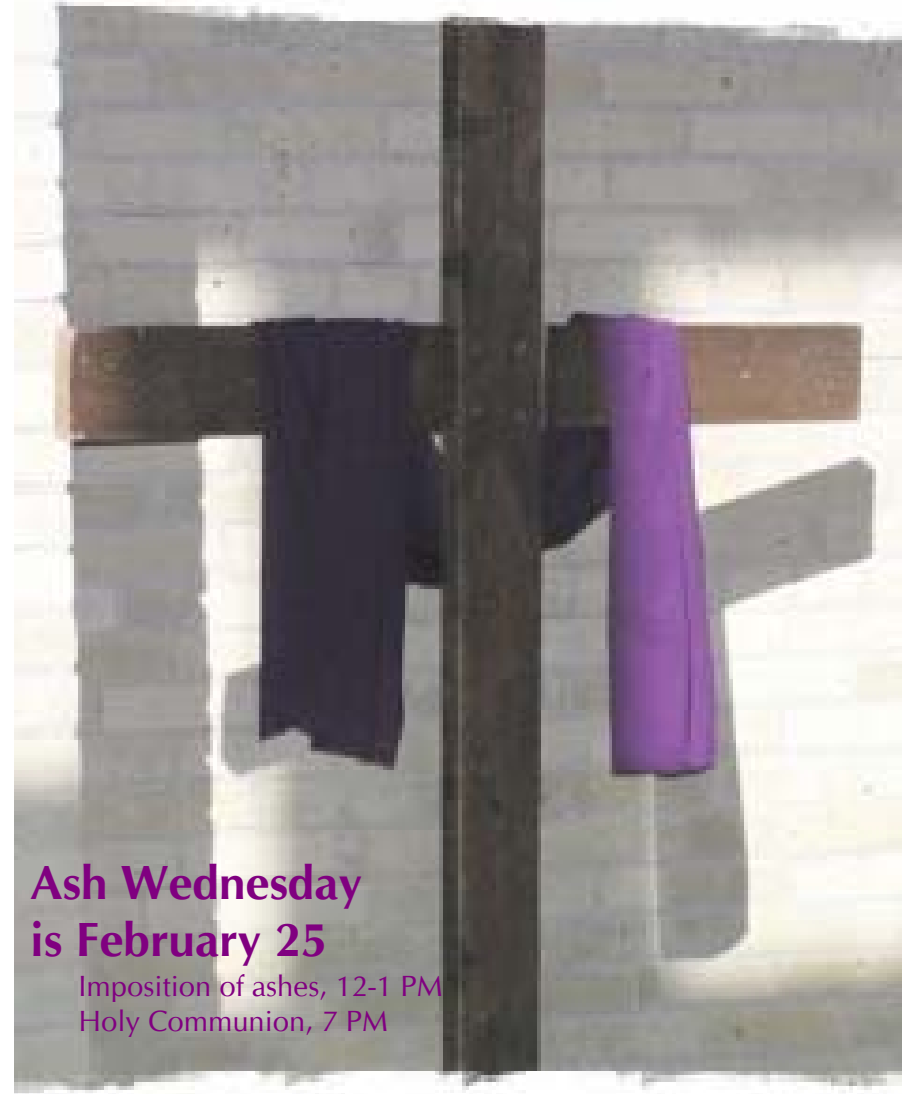
Ash Wednesday is February 25 – Imposition of ashes, 12-1 PM; Worship at 7 PM.

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH

DeiMinder

81 Years of Celebrating the Glory of God

February 2009



**Ash Wednesday
is February 25**

Imposition of ashes, 12-1 PM
Holy Communion, 7 PM

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH

Rev. Mary T. Duerksen, Pastor

Please see page 11 for contact information

Sunday Worship with Holy Communion: 10:30 AM

Adult Bible Study and Confirmation Class (7th grade+): 9:15 AM

Sunday School for children ages 3 years to 6th grade: 10:30 AM

Welcome to Gloria Dei Lutheran Church! You're invited to join us in worship each Sunday at 10:30 AM. Those who are interested in becoming a member of our congregation, please speak with Pastor Mary Duerksen, 248-373-5222 (office), 810-245-1798 (home) or email her at pastor@gloriadei.cc.



The calendar and worship assistant list is now on a handy insert included with this newsletter. Additional copies are available at church or it can be downloaded at www.GloriaDei.cc.

Please remember all in need of prayer, including:

Pastor Cherlyne Beck
Joyce Corey
Joel Englund
Jeffrey Gorecki
Ray Lucas
Pearl Pennybacker
Jonathan Reese
Family of Sharon Schaefer
Delores Steensma
Mrs. Stevens
Bill Vandecar
Amber Whitehead



From the desk of the Pastor

REV. MARY T. DUERKSEN

Someone said to me this week that they think this whole economic recession we are going through in our country is going to end up by lowering everyone's lifestyle. I am not sure the person was saying it as good news or bad news. In either case, this person was indicating to me that significant change was on the horizon for most Americans in the next few years.

I am equally unsure whether our current situation at Gloria Dei is good or bad news. And I am equally certain that significant change is upon us. This is always difficult for human beings. We just aren't wired to have much tolerance for change. We find routine and regularity comforting and anything else DIScomforting.

However, if we look at the Gospel witness to all that Jesus said and did during his earthly ministry, we can see that routine and regularity were the farthest thing from his goals. Most of what Jesus said and did caused him to be challenged by the local religious authorities. The reason for this is that he said and did things that were startlingly different from their idea of normal, routine and regular. All their attempts to 'tame him' into someone they could use for their purposes, to maintain the status quo, failed. Finally, they were forced to do the only thing they could think of in order to stop him from causing radical change in their world-they strung him up like a common criminal and killed him.

My friends, we are at the brink of radical change in our life together as God's people in this place. It is natural to feel unsettled, uncomfortable and downright afraid in such times. Jesus came into our world to radically change hearts and minds, to build a kingdom for his Heavenly Father that no evil could tear down. He promised us that following him would be hard, but the rewards would be great.

The DeiMinder: February 2009



Over the centuries, I am afraid, mainline Christian denominations traded his promise for a worldly one-the blessing and cooperation of society in exchange for being a little less radical and a lot less critical of the status quo.

And so I offer you some 'thought provokers' to ponder this month. By month's end we will be fully into the Lenten season. By month's end your leaders will be coming to you with proposed changes in our way of life together. I simply ask you to read and ponder what I write here. Bring your most spiritually strong self to the task of seeing what God is doing in our midst-and what part you might have in it.

Ponderings...

In the world we mostly grew up in, the church was at the center of society. Society counted on, and supported the churches in training good citizens who had proper values, proper manners and properly supported the status quo. A respectable citizen was a churchgoer. Congregations were modeled on having a building, a pastor and enough members to pay the bills. The church's responsibility was to provide services for its' customer base-the members. The pastor was the CEO or at least the chief provider of the services that people wanted-initiation(baptism), indoctrination (instruction, Catechism), sanctification (worship), social rituals (marriage, funerals, etc.) This all worked pretty well until about the mid 1950s to mid 1960s.



Several things happened to change that model. Vietnam. Water-gate. All the pillars of society became, in just a few years, something to suspect. Trust in social institutions eroded and was replaced by cynicism. One of the many casualties of this era was trust in religion to provide answers to hard questions. Denominational sexual and financial scandals were revealed, and trust in churches went the same way as trust in government.

By the mid 1970s, churches had to face diminishing numbers of participants and dollars. They had to support a building, (many of

them quite large and expensive to maintain), professional staff and programs their 'members wanted' with fewer people and less money. In a desperate attempt to regain the central position in society, some churches went even further to accommodate to the culture-giving up the radical and unpopular message of the Gospel in order to offer their 'customers' what they wanted. They 'tamed' Jesus into a nice guy with a good message. They focused on the 'positive' lest any mention of sin or forgiveness would scare away potential members. All programs, worship and activities were designed to entertain, comfort or make people 'happy'.

Churches who bought into this model in a big way worried a lot about 'keeping the people happy' even when it meant giving up important teachings or challenging injustice in society.

Now jump ahead a few decades. Society has pretty much told churches that we cannot be trusted and aren't needed to train useful citizens. Current wisdom says people can find their own religion anywhere they want to-in nature, in work, in relationships, in pleasure-seeking. So what happens now? What about those faithful servants of the Gospel who gather to worship each Sunday, who try to be the hands and feet of Christ to their neighbors, who are aging in a world not very hospitable to the elderly?

Most of them are in our pews-the pews of the churches still trying to hang on to that old model where the church is defined by a building, a pastor, and, increasingly, fewer and fewer members to pay the bills.

I said last Sunday (January 25th) that a definition of insanity is trying the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. I think it's time to try something else. Try to view who we are and what we are here for with a different lens.

- What if we stopped trying to accommodate culture and instead offered people an alternative to the darkness of self-indulgence, loneliness, fear and anxiety about the present and the future?
- What if we changed from a goal of 'putting on church every Sunday' to changing lives so that people could infiltrate society with the Gospel everywhere they go? What would it take to do that?

- What would it be like to stop feeling guilty about not inviting people and be equipped to witness in small ways on a daily basis? What would that look like?

Research into growing, thriving churches tells us that people go there feeling 'normal' and expecting to come out 'transformed'. They don't need churches to reinforce their feelings of going through life day by day. If they want to remain as they are they'd rather spend Sunday on the golf course or sleeping in and having breakfast out somewhere.

--What did Jesus do when all else was taken away from him? (What did he do on the cross?)

1. Heals/Forgives "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."
2. Proclaims the good news, "Today you will be with me in paradise."
3. Sacrifices himself for others (dies) "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit"

And if you haven't had enough to ponder, or this is more than you want to think about-try answering these three simple questions:

1. Does God only work through Christians? (Did Jesus only work through followers?)
2. Are God's purposes only accomplished through the institutional church?
3. What happens if society addresses injustice before the church does?

See you in church!

Mary T. Duerksen

Souper Bowl luncheon is February 1

Once again this year, Gloria Dei will be participating in the "Souper Bowl" fundraiser. We'll have a special soup luncheon following the worship service, with a freewill offering that will be donated to the Lighthouse of Michigan. Our congregation has been participating in the Souper Bowl since 2004 and since then, we've raised over \$730 for charity! If you're able, please bring a cup of cut-up vegetables to add to the soup stock or a side dish or dessert to pass. We're sure there will be enough for all!



Watch the Super Bowl at Gloria Dei on the big screen!

You're invited to an evening of fellowship, fun and football! Come to the Gloria Dei Super Bowl party on Sunday, February 1, starting at 5:00 PM. We'll be watching the game on the big screen TV in the fellowship hall. If you're able, please bring munchies to pass. Chili and hot dogs will be served for dinner. Bring a friend!



"Sweets for your Sweetie" bake sale

Sweets for your Sweetie Bake Sale sponsored by our Youth-Sunday, February 15th before and after worship. Proceeds will be used to help fund church camp activities. Matching funds have been applied for courtesy of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. If you can help set up, bake or sell items, please see Pastor Mary.





Ash Wednesday is Feb. 25

Ash Wednesday is February 25th. Ashes will be distributed from Noon to 1:00 PM. Ash Wednesday Holy Communion service will be at 7:00 PM.

Dining out with Gloria is February 19

Join us for an evening of fun, food and fellowship at **Dining out with Gloria**, at Buddy's Pizza on Walton (at Squirrel Rd.) in Auburn Hills on Thursday, February 19 at 7:00 PM. Remember to invite FRAN (Friends, Relatives, Associates and Neighbors) to join us! *(There is a coupon in the Entertainment Book).*



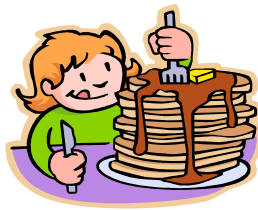
Pistons Faith and Family Night: March 6

Faith and Family night at the Detroit Pistons-Friday, March 6, 8:00 PM at the Palace. We need a minimum of 15 ticket sales to get the reduced price! Tickets are \$32 each-and each ticket holder receives a free Pistons duffel bag and a chance to get on the court and shoot a basket after the game. Sign up on the bulletin board in the east hallway across from the library. The deadline to sign up is February 4.



Pancake Breakfast will be March 15

Coming March 15th-Pancake Breakfast sponsored by Gloria Dei Youth-join us for all you can eat pancakes, sausage, juice and coffee. A free will offering to benefit summer camp activities will be taken. Matching funds have been applied for courtesy of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.



GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH



You're invited to a special Celebration of Love Worship Service!

Sunday, February 15 at 10:30 AM

The service will offer a moment of blessing and prayer for married couples - and also affirm the marriage commitment those whose spouses have gone on to the Church Triumphant.

Plus there will be a special coffee hour after the service with special treats for the occasion!

DON'T FORGET! Remember to invite FRAN! Friends, Relatives, Associates and Neighbors!

Valentine's Dinner and Concert at Good Samaritan

You're invited to a Valentine's Day Dinner and Live Music Concert by the Praise Group 150, at Good Samaritan Church on Saturday, February 14. The event is from 5-7 PM, to benefit the Good Samaritan Bus Ministry. The church is located at 517 W. Walton Blvd. in Pontiac (Between Silver Lake and Telegraph Road). The menu includes choice of chicken breast or roast loin of pork. For tickets, call 248-335-9881 - they are \$8.00 at the door; \$7.00 in advance; children: \$4.00 (ages 3-12).

Annual Meeting held in January

Budget presented and council members elected

The 2009 Annual Meeting of the congregation was held on Sunday, January 25 following the worship service. The 2008 Annual Report was presented to the congregation along with the 2009 budget. Because of the financial uncertainty Gloria Dei is facing, the finance committee decided with the approval of the congregation council, to present a three-month operating budget. Copies of the Annual Report are available in the church office.



There was an in-depth discussion about the pending property sale, as well as the possibility of having a two-point ministry partnership (not merger) with another area ELCA congregations.

Three members were elected for three-year terms on the council: Roxanne Alfsen, Sebastian Chilkott (youth member), and Steve Firman. Scott Johnson was re-elected for a three year term as well. Following the annual meeting, the council held a brief meeting to elect officers. Gene Steensma was elected president; Ray Lucas - vice president; Scott Johnson - secretary; and Al Nelson - treasurer.

Mostly about people: *We thank Gene and Delores Steensma for their help organizing the fun SuperBowl party on February 1!.....We also thank Dorothy Chilkott, Mike Newsock and Pastor Mary for providing music leadership on February 1.....Thanks goes to Eleanor Beaver, who leads our music on so many Sundays and special occasions!.....Lenten Services will begin on March 4 at 6:00 PM (potluck) followed by Evening Prayer..... Pastor Mary is looking for volunteers willing to take part in some skits during the Lenten season. Please let her know if you're willing to help out.....Join us for an evening of fun, food and fellowship at Dining Out With Gloria; we'll be eating at Buddy's Pizza on Walton (at Squirrel Rd) in Auburn Hills on Thursday, February 19 at 7:00 PM. Please either sign up via the attendance sheet on a Sunday or call the church office (248-373-5222) so we can save you a spot! Bring a friend!.....*

GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH

Congregational Information

Sunday Worship with Holy Communion: 10:30 AM
Sunday School: 10:30 AM • Adult Bible Study/Conf. Class: 9:15 AM

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church of Auburn Hills
 A part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 2600 Pontiac Road ■ Auburn Hills, Michigan 48326
 Office Phone: 248-373-5222 ■ Fax: 248-373-1198
 Office eMail: office@gloriadei.cc Online: www.gloriadei.cc

Rev. Mary T. Duerksen, Pastor

Home: 810-245-1798 Email: pastor@gloriadei.cc

Office Assistant:

Terry Rajala.....248-884-6803

Communications Manager – Newsletter and Webmaster:

Scott Johnson248-652-6578scott.johnson@gloriadei.cc

Custodian:

Terry Rajala.....248-884-6803

Congregation Council

President:

Gene Steensma248-332-9647gene.steensma@gloriadei.cc

Vice President:

Ray Lucas248-321-5643ray.lucas@gloriadei.cc

Secretary:

Scott Johnson248-652-6578scott.johnson@gloriadei.cc

Treasurer:

Al Nelson248-628-5625al.nelson@gloriadei.cc

Trustees:

Roxanne Alfsen248-652-0067roxanne.alfsen@gloriadei.cc

Sebastian Chilkott*248-636-9705

Steve Firman248-515-6282steve.firman@gloriadei.cc

Gordon Green248-666-1188gordongreen@ameritech.net

Barb Lucas248-321-5653barb.lucas@gloriadei.cc

Lynette Morris810-678-2917lynette.morris@gloriadei.cc

Rick Rajala248-673-8721rick.rajala@gloriadei.cc

Bruce Robertson248-623-6946bruce.robertson@gloriadei.cc

Delores Steensma248-332-9647delores.steensma@gloriadei.cc

*Youth member

The congregation council meets each month on the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM.

If you are interested in becoming a member of Gloria Dei, please contact Pastor Mary Duerksen at 810-245-1798 or email heatherbrae@att.net