

The Gloria Dei-ly News

June 2021

1333 Beltline Road, Garland, Texas 75040

(972) 530-8555

Pastor Tom Schwolert

A Word from our Minister:

5 QUESTIONS WE NEED TO ASK

I am regularly thinking about our future together at Gloria Dei and asking lots of questions. Every once in a while I find a good book or article that asks the questions we need to be asking as a congregation. This past week I came across a blog by pastor and blogger Carey Nieuwhof (new – hoff). I loved the blog so much that I want to share an abbreviated version of it with you. I invite you to think deeply about these questions and spend some time in prayer about how you might engage in wrestling with them.

1. Is our sense of mission white-hot?

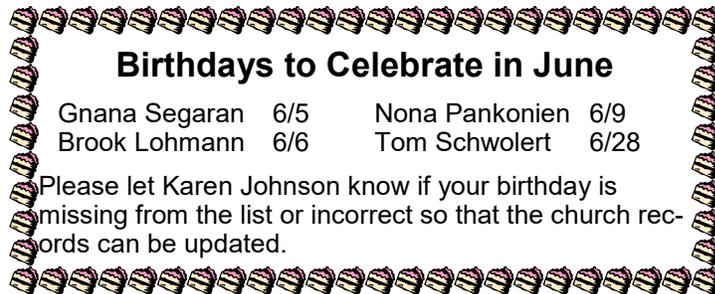
Nieuwhof says, "Leaders and congregations that are effective in accomplishing their mission are consumed by their mission. It always burns white-hot." This is the #1 question we need to ask. It may seem like an obvious one, but often congregations get pre-occupied with simply doing things that churches do rather than getting fired up about our mission. Our mission is very simple. We are *"called and sent to share Christ's love."* Is our mission "white-hot?" In other words, are we so excited about our mission that we burn with the love of Christ that sends us out to love our neighbor?

2. Are we focused on unchurched people or ourselves?

Nieuwhof says, "So there's a tendency you and I have as human beings. Our natural drift is to focus on ourselves. Not on Christ. Not on others." We need to confess, don't we? I'm sure we have all said to ourselves at one time or another, "what about me, what about my needs?" Jesus calls us to turn that question around and ask, "what about my neighbor, what are their needs?" Our constant posture needs to be thinking about the person who is not here yet. Who needs Gloria Dei? Who needs to know the love of Christ?

3. Has our strategy or approach become dated

Nieuwhof says, "In the future church, churches that love their method more than they love the mission will die." This one was a gut punch for me. I can sometimes get stuck doing the same thing over and over be-



Birthdays to Celebrate in June

Gnana Segaran	6/5	Nona Pankonien	6/9
Brook Lohmann	6/6	Tom Schwolert	6/28

Please let Karen Johnson know if your birthday is missing from the list or incorrect so that the church records can be updated.

cause it's comfortable. How about Gloria Dei? He also says, "While the mission of the church is eternal, strategy should shift from generation to generation. This day it needs to shift even faster than that." We are living in the fastest moving, changing society of our lifetimes. How do we as a congregation need to adapt, what needs to change and what methods need to be dropped? (continued on page 2)

WHAT IS A DAD?

A dad is someone who wants to catch you before you fall but instead picks you up, brushes you off, and lets you try again.

A dad is someone who wants to keep you from making mistakes but instead lets you find your own way, even though his heart breaks in silence when you get hurt.

A dad is someone who holds you when you cry, scolds you when you break the rules, shines with pride when you succeed, and has faith in you even when you fail. —Author Unknown





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June 2021

The Gloria Dei-ly News is a monthly newsletter distributed to members and friends of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 1333 Beltline Road, Garland, Texas 75040 (972) 530-8555. Worship begins at 10:15 a.m. The staff currently consists of Karen Johnson. Editor and Pastor Tom Schwolert. Articles may be submitted to the next month's edition of the newsletter by the third Sunday of the month and may be e-mailed to newsletter@gloriadeigarland.org.

www.gloriadeigarland.org

Glory to God

SPECIAL DATES IN JUNE!

- ◆ LGBT Pride Month. *June*
- ◆ **Men's First Monday Breakfast Restart, June 7, 2021**
- ◆ Flag Day, *June 14, 2021*
- ◆ Juneteenth/Emancipation Day, *June 19, 2021*
- ◆ Father's Day, *June 20, 2021*
- ◆ Summer Solstice, *June 20, 2021*
- ◆ Women's Dinner Group, *June 24, 2021*
- ◆ **Meet and Greet for Intern JJ, June 27, 2021**

5 Questions (continued from page 1)

4. Are we on top of the constant change in our culture?

This is the next natural question after #3. Nieuwhof writes, "Change is hard. But irrelevance is even harder. Unimplemented change becomes regret." This past year due to the pandemic we had to change the way we live. We had no choice. But we also proved to ourselves that we can adapt and still thrive. As come out of this year of isolation we need to be asking this hard question. What do we need to change in order to accomplish our mission? Remember the white-hot mission?

5. When was the last time I personally invited someone to church?

"Jesus had no problem loving people who didn't yet love him," says Nieuwhof. I know, I know, you may be thinking, "there goes pastor again lecturing us about inviting people to church." But the reality is that most (some say 80-90%) of people attend a church because someone invited them. Very few people are brave enough to walk into a church without knowing anyone. They need an invitation. Part of being "called and sent" is regularly inviting others. How can you and I do that? Who needs a faith community?

These 5 questions might be a lot to take in, but they are very important for us to ask if we want to be a thriving church both now and in the future. So will you wonder with me? We you spend some time wrestling with these questions? Answer them both for you and think as a congregation. I'm going to keep asking these questions. Questions are how we grow and work through change. If you read the gospels you will see that Jesus asked a lot of questions. Let's wonder together with Christ as our focus.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Tom

TESTING THE WATERS TO SAY WELCOME!

On Sunday, June 29, Gloria Dei will have our first in-person church-wide event since the shut-down in March 2020. Although our main building is not ready for occupation yet, we will meet in Johnson Hall to have a "Meet and Greet" to welcome our new intern JJ Godwin. We will be following guidance from the CDC, which was discussed in a blog by Bishop Gronberg (a copy of which is included at the end of this newsletter). Please read this and plan on bringing a mask. As of the newsletter publication, the event is scheduled to begin at 1 pm (after the first in-person council meeting); however, details are still being worked on. Look for more information via email later in the month of June.

—Karen Johnson

JUNE IS PRIDE MONTH, LET'S LEARN TOGETHER

As we celebrate the inclusion of our LGBTQIA+ community I invite you to challenge yourself to do some learning. As a Reconciling in Christ congregation we have leaned heavily on the direction of Reconciling Works. I invite you to go to their website and look around at all the wonderful resources for congregations and individuals (www.reconcilingworks.org). I also invite you to attend one of these workshops on September 25th or October 16th about "Building an Inclusive Church." You can find out more here: <https://www.reconcilingworks.org/trainings/bic/>

—Pastor Tom



JUNE BIBLE READINGS				
June	First Lesson	Psalm	Second Lesson	Gospel
6	Genesis 3:8-15	130	2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1	Mark 3:20-35
13	Ezekiel 17:22-24	92:1-4, 12-15	2 Corinthians 5:6-10, (11-13), 14-17	Mark 4:26-34
20	Job 38:1-11	107:1-3, 23-32	2 Corinthians 6:1-13	Mark 4:35-41
27	Lamentations 3:22-33	30	2 Corinthians 8:7-15	Mark 5:21-43

WOMEN TO DINE AT UNCLE JULIO'S



This month, the Women's Dinner Group will meet the fourth Thursday of the month, June 24, at 6:30 p.m. at Uncle Julio's Mexican restaurant on the northbound feeder to US 75 just south of Stacy Road in Allen. For reservation purposes, contact Julie Pancake, either leave a message at 972-633-9967 or text her at 214-533-2178, if you plan to attend. All women are invited to join in this evening of fun

FIRST MONDAY BREAKFAST RESTARTS JUNE 7



The Men of Gloria Dei **WILL MEET** for breakfast the first Monday of June, at 7:30 a.m. at **Judy's Café** in Garland, located at 3443 W. Campbell Road in the strip mall on the northeast corner of the intersection of Jupiter and Campbell roads, next to Depserado's Mexican Restaurant. All men are invited to start the day/week/month out right with good food and fellowship. Contact Steve Maziarz if you have questions.

FLY YOUR FLAG HIGH

Flag Day is celebrated each year on June 14. Fly your flag high! Every time you put a flag out, you're saying, "I'm an American and proud of what this flag represents." The flag stands for "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," for religious freedom, and for other rights that many nations lack. The flag represents our history and our goals for a better future for all.



JUNE FINANCIAL FOCUS*

	General Fund	Damage Fund
Income (April)	\$9,220	
Expenses (April)	\$11,461	
Monthly Net	(\$2,241)	
Year to Date Income through 4/30/21	\$38,495	\$ 12,816
Year to Date Expenses through 4/30/21	\$43,479	\$ 5,850
Yearly Net	(\$4,984)	\$ 6,966
Mortgage Balance as of 5/7/21	\$ 111,291	

*prepared for the May Council Meeting

June Anniversary Celebrations

Kelly and Kim McDermott 6/25
 Alan and Barbara Heuser 6/28

Please let Karen Johnson know if your anniversary is missing from the list so that the church records can be updated.—*Karen Johnson*

PRAYER REQUESTS

If you have a prayer request, use the link below to submit your request. Pastor Tom compiles the list and sends it out to the congregation on Mondays so we can pray all week. He can then send prayers that he has collected to those putting together the worship service to list during the service. —*Pastor Tom*

Use this link to send your prayer request:
<https://gdlc.churchtrac.com/card/4>

Prayer is not about changing God, but being willing to let God change us. ~ Richard Rohr

A FATHER'S DAY PRAYER

God whom Jesus knew as Father: Thank you for earthly fathers — biological or not — who nurture children in love and teach them to love others.

—*Newsletter Newsletter*

YOU'LL NEVER MISS IT

Frustrated that income never covered expenses, a longtime church treasurer resigned. Another member, who owned the town's grain elevator, volunteered to take over with one stipulation: He wouldn't submit a report for the first year.

The puzzled board members agreed because they knew he was an honest man. After all, they trusted him to process their grain.

By year's end, the new treasurer gave a glowing report. The church's building debt had been erased. Staff salaries had increased 15 percent. And the budget showed a healthy balance.

When the shocked but delighted congregation asked for an explanation, the treasurer said, "Most of you bring your grain to my elevator. When I paid you, I simply withheld 10 percent on your behalf and gave it to the church in your name. You never missed it!"

Imagine what we could do for God if we willingly returned the first tenth of his gifts back to him.

—*Newsletter Newsletter*



ALL ARE WELCOME AT GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH!

As Lutherans, we believe that God's grace is given to all, regardless of color, age, marital status, gender identity, sexual orientation, economic status, mental or physical health status, culture, or faith tradition. We strive to live up to the example of unconditional love and acceptance that Jesus has taught, and welcome all to join us.

We are a congregation that is active in care of God's creation, taking part in various ministries, including serving the differently abled, pet therapy providers, animal rescue, social justice, and music.

In the Book of Romans, Paul writes that we "are one body," and that "we all have gifts that differ, according to the grace given to us." We invite ALL to share with us the gifts and grace that we are given, as we are:



"Called and sent to share Christ 's love."

WORDS TO PONDER

"Always laugh when you can. It is cheap medicine."

—Lord Byron

* * *

"Solutions are not found by pointing fingers; they are reached by extending hands."

—Aysha Taryam

* * *

"You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty."

—Mahatma Gandhi

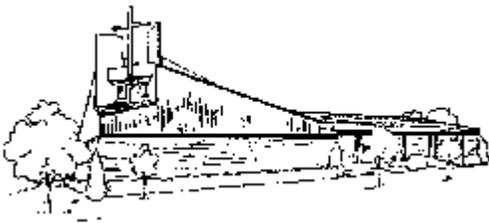
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Attitude is the mind's paintbrush. It can color a situation gloomy and gray, or cheerful and gay. In fact, attitudes are more important than facts.

—Mary C. Crowley

—*The Newsletter Newsletter*

**Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
1333 Beltline Road
Garland, Texas 75040-3267**



Return Service Requested



CDC: New Guidelines on Vaccinated Individuals and Masks

May 13, 2021 | [Bishop Gronberg's Blog](#) By The Rev. Erik K.J. Gronberg, Ph.D.

Partners in Mission:

On Thursday May 13th the CDC issued new guidance related to mask wearing and individuals who had been fully vaccinated. In short this states it is safe for vaccinated individuals (who have received full doses of vaccine and the appropriate delay time) to not wear masks or observe social distancing outdoors and indoors. This advice was based on scientific research demonstrating the exceptionally low cases of individuals who had been vaccinated being infected with (and therefore able to transmit) Covid-19.

Throughout this pandemic I have consistently urged congregational leaders to be proactive, follow the science, and always put the health and safety of neighbor ahead of personal convenience or privilege. In that guidance I have not wavered and that includes this current new information. It is important also to note that a person's vaccination status is private health information that can only be voluntarily disclosed.

Each context is of course unique so as you discern your decisions some considerations are...

- What is the vaccination rate (of fully vaccinated persons) in your county and within your congregation? Given that in Texas/Louisiana currently less than half the population has received a first dose of the vaccine that means it is highly likely individuals around you, and in worship with you, are not vaccinated. As such I recommend...
 - Choosing to wear masks indoors as a sign of solidarity with those not yet vaccinated or are immuno-compromised.
 - Requiring masks for singing. This would apply to either the congregation or choirs.
 - Continue to provide adequate space for worshipers to be comfortable.
 - Online worship should continue into the foreseeable future as we live into hybrid church reality.
- We are commanded to care for the vulnerable in our midst which includes children and those with health concerns.
 - The CDC is clear that individuals with underlying health conditions or vulnerability should still mask as should those around them.

- Beginning this week children 12-16 can receive a dose of the vaccine. That means we are still 5-6 weeks away from full immunity for the first in that cohort.
- No children under 12 will be receiving the vaccine currently and as such all children, within practicality, should wear masks.
- There is still a great deal we do not know about variants. So continue to monitor case numbers in your county and community and change protocols to match.

While a desire to get “back to normal” is understandable we must acknowledge we will never go fully back to our previous reality. We have suffered too many losses: lives, jobs, significant life events, the list goes on. If your family or community have not experienced these losses then please be aware of those who have. It takes the body and psyche time to catch up with what the mind comprehends and this will happen at different rates for individuals in your community. Understand their hesitance to embrace, respect their desire for space both physical and mental, and show Christian compassion by prioritizing the neighbor over self.

The work of the church will continue to be the proclamation of the gospel. In this we live the gospel by caring for our neighbors and subordinating our wants over the needs of others. In this past year+ we have seen divisiveness and partisan rancor grow. We have also seen amazing acts of selflessness and personal sacrifice. As we continue to move through 2021 it is imperative that we live the gospel message through our love and care for one another. I trust our leaders, lay and ordained, will do so with thoughtful considerations. If I can be of any assistance please call.

In Christ,

Bishop Gronberg