



What Do You Have To Lose ?

Ash Wednesday, February 14

7:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m.

Service of Holy Communion and the Imposition of Ashes

Note New Time at 7:00 a.m.

5:00 p.m. 30-Minute Service for children and families

Wednesdays in Lent

5:30 p.m. Soup Suppers \$7.00 for adults; \$5.00 for children

6:00 p.m. "What Do You Have to Lose?"

Discussion with Gloria Dei Staff

7:00 p.m. Holden Evening Prayer

Reflections on the Lent theme by Gloria Dei Members

Lent, 2018: What Do You Have to Lose?

by Pastor Lois Pallmeyer

Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. John 12:24-25

Planting seeds in the ground is one of the most counter-intuitively hopeful signs of spring we engage in. Taking something which looks dull and lifeless, we bury it into dirt, dust the soil from our hands, and optimistically envision a summertime garden to arise.

Jesus uses the image of planting seeds as he tries to prepare his disciples for his death, inviting them to imagine his burial as a step toward new life for the world. What a strange invitation for them to receive.

This year at Gloria Dei, we're using the image of planting a seed in the ground as a symbol of all that Lent invites us to lose. Like burying seeds in the ground, the Lenten traditions of confession, prayer, fasting, alms-giving, and acts of love all invite us to give away something of ourselves, to offer time, treasure, control, and self-righteousness. Jesus invites us give away our lives as we follow in discipleship and service.

What do we have to lose this year? What do we need to let go of in order to follow Christ more faithfully and to live a more abundant life? What are our barriers and burdens that we can put down? In a similar way, what can we give ourselves over to? How do we embrace our freedom in Christ and the new life that it promises? What has been stirring in our soul that it's finally time to unleash?

Throughout the season of Lent, we'll be asking, "What do we have to lose?" and will

be gathering to consider that question together.

Thoughts from the Water Tower

by Deacon Pat Derry

February Rotation for 1st – 4th Graders:
A Lost Son says: God loves my bad brother?

Luke tells us that "tax collectors and sinners" were drawn to Jesus. How could someone who is drowning in the consequences of wrong choices, experience such gracious acceptance and not feel loved! By contrast, the "church leaders" of the time, Pharisees and scribes, couldn't stand the sight of it! They were theologically trained, models of upright behavior, and certain that God could not accept a sinner who willfully broke the law of God. Jesus attempted to teach them through short stories, often with a surprising turn!

Jesus taught 3 short stories about the lost - a lost sheep, a lost coin, and a lost son. People have called the last story, the "Prodigal Son." I wonder if we shouldn't rename this parable, "The Loving Father." As Jesus tells it, a father had two sons, the elder who worked the farm dutifully and the younger who wanted to see the world. The father gives the younger his inheritance and the boy travels to a distant country where he wastes all his money on extravagant living. When a famine hits, he is starving! He finds work feeding unclean pigs, and eating alongside them. The boy finally comes to his senses and returns home a humble and repentant sinner. Surprisingly the father welcomes him with open arms and celebrates his return with a feast!

In the retelling, Jesus' story often ends here, but Jesus does not. Jesus

continues. The elder son hears the festivities and refuses to enter the party. He is angry! "All these years I have been working like a slave for you," and you never gave me a party! The father pleads with him, "All that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found" (Luke 15:32) Jesus ends the story here. We don't know the reaction of the older brother. Did he understand and join the party, or did he walk away in anger?

Last month we recognized the connection of the Reformation to Jonah with these words: **God's free gift of mercy is for everyone and everything! It's Grace Alone! (For the good and the evil, people and cattle; no payment required, no behavior gives extra credit!)** The younger son threw himself into the arms of his father's mercy. Will the older son recognize that his work gives him no extra credit? Will he understand that God loves him, just as God loves everyone and forgives every humble heart? The next question is more difficult. Do you see yourself as the younger son, the older son, or maybe both?

When in Our Music God is Glorified! February 2018 Update from the Organ Committee

by Lois Wattman and Tim Strand

The 2017 Advent/Christmas season was a wonderfully rich worship and spiritual experience for the Gloria Dei community. We were so blessed and grateful.

As the Organ Committee has articulated to the congregation over the last three-plus years, our aging instrument is extremely challenged and is not sustainable for the long-term ministry of Gloria Dei.

Fortunately, the organ behaved well during this season and we were again blessed with the wonder and majesty of the music of Advent and Christmas.

For the past many months, the Committee has been in conversation with a number of excellent organ builders to help review and evaluate options that can ultimately be formulated into a recommendation for review by the congregation.

During Advent, representatives from Dobson and Casavant, two internationally recognized organ builders, were on-site to evaluate the instrument and will develop proposals from their findings. A representative from Dobson, located in Lake City, Iowa, spent an entire day here in December evaluating the organ in preparation for a report to the Committee. Dobson is currently installing a new instrument at Christ Church Lutheran in South Minneapolis. On the 2nd Sunday in Advent, a representative from Casavant, an organ company located in Quebec, was able to be present at morning worship and Lessons and Carols to more fully appreciate the role the instrument plays in our worship experience. Casavant has installed and rebuilt several instruments in the Twin Cities including neighboring Nativity Catholic Church in St. Paul and Central Lutheran in Minneapolis. Again, a report will be prepared for the committee.

The committee did not expend any funds for these on-site visits. At the Annual Meeting on February 11th, the Organ Committee will present a brief update to the congregation on the process to date and next steps for moving forward. On March 4th, the Committee will provide an Adult Forum presentation in the sanctuary. While providing additional information and updates, this will also allow an opportunity for the congregation to more fully hear and visualize the opportunities a rebuilt

instrument can bring to the worship and outreach ministries of Gloria Dei.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Music Director [Tim Strand](#) or co-chairs, David Soli or Gordon Braatz.

Extending a Welcome to Homeless Neighbors

by Pastor Javen Swanson

In our mission statement, we proclaim: “By God’s grace, we are called to be a caring, healing and welcoming community who proclaim and celebrate the love of Jesus Christ, live as God’s servants and seek justice for all people.” In the month of December—during Advent, the season of waiting and giving—Gloria Dei lives into our mission by opening our doors to homeless families in transition to long-term housing and hosts overnight guests of Project Home, a program of Interfaith Action of Greater Saint Paul

Project Home engages area faith communities to provide emergency shelter space and volunteer support for Ramsey County families facing homelessness. Each month, two different area faith communities host 20 emergency shelter beds. Gloria Dei is one of the congregations that houses families each year in the month of December. For the many families served by Project Home, church fellowship halls, synagogue classrooms, and school cafeterias become “home” for a short period of time in their lives. Before entering emergency shelter, these families all struggled with choosing to pay the rent or put food on the table. Last December, we sheltered eight different families at Gloria Dei, including nine parents with 17 children who ranged

in age from two months to 16 years old. Over 110 members of Gloria Dei volunteered every evening and overnight of the month, preparing a simple meal, providing fellowship, supervising play time in the gym, and most importantly, extending God’s love to families in need. Leslie Kallas, one of the coordinators of Gloria Dei’s Project Home team, says, “Every year we worry, will we have enough volunteers? But every year, people come through. It’s such an amazing range of people, from newcomers to people who have been doing this every year for a long time. The church embodies this service so completely for the month of December.”

Sometimes we are fortunate enough to see Project Home guests find permanent housing and transition out of the program, said Kathy Killeen, one of Gloria Dei’s Project Home weekly coordinators. “A couple families found permanent housing while they were here, and it lifts up the whole community. We’re always sad to see them go, and sad when we don’t get an opportunity to say goodbye, but it’s so uplifting to see them find housing.”

Lorna Pain, another Gloria Dei Project Home weekly coordinator, says Project Home is something her family has done together since her children were small. “The Christmas season is always fun, but you can get so wrapped up in gift giving and the craziness of getting here and there. Volunteering with Project Home almost feels like a purging.” We look forward to hosting Project Home here at Gloria Dei again in December 2018. Perhaps Project Home will become part of your family’s Christmas tradition, too.

Gloria Dei “Strikes the Match”!

by Kate Ostrem

Thank you to everyone who responded so generously to the Strike the Match Challenge. We met – and exceeded – the challenge!

What happens next with the Strike the Match dollars?

\$70,000 is contributed to our endowment, growing our investment for the future of the church. \$30,000 goes out the church doors into the community, supporting the good work done by our outreach partners.



Who gets the \$30,000?

The \$30,000 will be split among all the organizations that we support with our second offering on the third Sunday of the month. How much each organization receives will be decided at the annual meeting on February 11. Each member of the congregation will cast three votes. The \$30,000 will then be divided proportionally among the organizations in order to reflect the percentage of votes each one received.

Remember: in order to vote, you must be present at the Annual Meeting on February 11 at noon.

Curious to see the organizations that will be included? Check out the [list](#) on Gloria Dei’s website.

Here are the results of the 2018 Stewardship Campaign:

Operating Fund

2017	341 pledges	\$858,015.00
2018	317 pledges	\$877,142.00

Of the 2018 pledges, 52 were new and 167 increased their giving – this net increase was \$133,513, surpassing the \$100,000 needed to meet the Strike the Match challenge.

While the amount of money pledged to the Operating Fund increased, you’ll notice that the number of pledges is down. We still haven’t heard from a number of people who pledged in 2017. If this describes you, it’s not too late to let us know what your plans are for 2018!

Pledge [online](#) today!

Capital Fund

2017	257 pledges	\$338,593.00
2018	238 pledges	\$286,838.00

Hopefully, the 2018 pledges to the Capital Fund we have not yet received will make up the difference between the amount pledged last year versus this year. This fund allows us to not only pay the mortgage but also accomplish projects that help us maintain our building. If you have any questions about the results of the stewardship campaign, please contact the church office or [Kate Ostrem](#), Stewardship Chair.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING & STRIKE THE MATCH

The congregation meets to adopt its annual mission budget. Come and see our priorities and dreams for God's work at Gloria Dei in 2018.

It's a Potluck!

If your last name begins with:

A-C, Bring desserts or fruits

D-K, Bring main dishes, meats, cheeses

L-S, Bring salads, vegetables, side dishes

T-Z, Bring bread, rolls, spreads or condiments

All confirmed members and prospective members are invited to join the Annual Meeting in Fellowship Hall beginning at 11:45 a.m. We will discuss plans for the upcoming year, review the past year, and set our budget. Children's activities and day care are available during the meeting. Advanced copies of the Annual reports are available in the church office.



Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

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we are called to be a
caring, healing and
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Capital Fund Information

Contributions Year to Date	\$ 407,240
Monthly mortgage payments	\$ 18,752
Capital Improvement Costs Year-to-Date	\$ 117,100
Balance in Capital Accounts December 31, 2017	\$ 329,994
Mortgage Balance December 31, 2017	\$ 2,863,612

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Operating Information

December 31, 2017

Total offerings	\$ 114,506
Ahead (Behind)	(\$ 907)
Total Income	\$ 130,459
Total Expenses	\$ 128,735
Net for Month	\$ 1,724
Total YTD Offerings	\$ 1,130,926
Ahead (Behind)	(\$ 13,474)
Total YTD Income	\$ 1,358,182
Total YTD Expenses	\$ 1,348,817
Net for Current Year	\$ 9,365

Financial Update Submitted by Jeanne Hanson, Administrator