

THE WITTENBERG WAY

PASTOR'S PAGE

January 2020
Volume 13, Issue 1



Dear Grace Family,

Christmas has come and gone and we now find ourselves in a new year and a new decade, which always brings a sense of promise, opportunity, and expectation. But it also brings with it an ever-increasing sense of anxiety as cultural and family pressures mount. What if...I don't lose weight....don't find my true love...don't get into that college...don't get that promotion, etc.? This new year will bring much of what the previous year delivered: Ups and downs, sin and forgiveness, profits and losses, sickness and health, grace and more grace. While our lives wax and wane, take comfort at the beginning of 2020 that "the Word of the Lord endures forever" (1 Pet 1:25), which means His promises and love for you remain steadfast no matter what happens this year.

We have entered the season of Epiphany, where the Deity of Christ is emphasized. Epiphany is a word that means "appearing." From Christmas to Epiphany the lessons focus on Jesus' Humanity, for He was indeed fully Man as completely, and even more so, than any other human. But in the lessons of Epiphany, time and again, it is the Deity of Christ that is brought out. The Deity of Christ explains the largeness of His presence. Even as a child, the Magi from the East knelt before Him and worshipped.

When we come before God on Sunday, we are driven to behave differently. We are humbled. We kneel. We become quiet. We are in the presence of no mere mortal. We are before Christ the King. And yet this is a King whose throne we can actually approach. If I could ask one thing of you as your pastor this year, it would be to make more time in your life for prayer. Adore. Confess. Give Thanks. And entreat God for those things that would benefit you, your family, our nation, and His Church. May God richly bless you in 2020.

In Christ's Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'BT' or 'Brian Thomas'.

Brian Thomas

Name Above All Names

by Denis Martindale

Every book that's in the Bible has prophecies galore.
They are there for each disciple to praise God more and more.
The angels look into these things, new wonders each proclaims.
Of Jesus Christ each angel sings... The name above all names...

The Holy Spirit grants us truth... That's what He's all about.
The Holy Scriptures count as proof, to overcome Man's doubt.
A fruitful life full of good deeds, toward this each one aims,
Yet only Jesus Christ succeeds... The name above all names...
Who else has holy blood to shed, prepared to take a stance?
Who else has risen from the dead, God's pardon in His hands

Who else shares wisdom night and day? Who else the Devil shames?
Christ is the life, the truth, the way, the name above all names...
Blessed is the heart that loves the Lord, when God's work has begun.
In Jesus, we can stand assured in what Christ's Blood has done.
Born of a virgin, undefiled, all guilt the Saviour tames...
In whose name are we reconciled? The name above all names!



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What is it about our names and how we identify with them? While my name Brian is fairly benign and easy to pronounce, some have struggled with its spelling. When I was about five, my grandmother made all of her grandchildren Snoopy dolls and on the collar she hand-stitched each of our names. On mine it read, "Brain." She was mortified; I took it as a compliment.

In the 2020 lectionary, the focus is on Matthew's Gospel. Chapter One is all about names. We get a whole family tree's worth right out of the chute, but finally we narrow down the whole chapter to one very



specific name—actually, to two very specific names—almost as a way to say that all of history has been leading up to this one point when Someone would finally come with a Name above all names, a Name that will never be forgotten, a Name that will spell Life itself.

Suppose that one day you were reading a story in which an elderly woman is talking to her pregnant granddaughter. "Now listen, my dear," the old woman says, "I would ask that you name this child after your grandfather and so give him the name Edward." The young woman agrees. "OK, Grandma, his name will be Edward." But what would you think if the narrator of the story then wrote, "And so this fulfilled a prediction once made by the pregnant woman's grandmother that her firstborn would be named Phillip."

Well, which is it: Edward or Phillip? And if it ends up being Edward, then what does Phillip have to do with anything? Well...this is what we find in the naming of Jesus: the angel says to name the baby Jesus, and Matthew turns right around and says, "That's right: he's little baby Immanuel" (Matt 1:23). And no sooner does Matthew write that and we are told that when the baby was born, Joseph did as he was told and named the boy "Jesus" (Matt 1:25).

Jesus. Immanuel. Jesus. What's going on here? How does "Jesus" relate to "Immanuel"? They are, after all, significantly different names.

Furthermore, if you look at Isaiah 7 (which Matthew is drawing from), you will see that there is nothing in that

text that even hints at the name of "Jesus." So what was the connection in Matthew's mind between these two very different names? From here on out in Matthew's gospel, Mary's son will be called "Jesus."

He will never again be referred to as "Immanuel" in the entire narrative of Matthew. In fact, you can read Mark, Luke, John, and the rest of the New Testament and you will never again run across this Name! It occurs ONLY here. So where did this come from and what does it mean?

The first step in answering these questions is to read that wildly boring-looking genealogy that opens the chapter. That extended family tree of Jesus was included by Matthew for several key reasons.

First, it helps to establish Jesus as a true descendant of David. But Matthew also uses that genealogy to say that Jesus was finally more than his ancestry could produce. His importance went beyond the Jews alone, which is why Matthew was clever enough to insert the names of four women. Women did not typically appear in Jewish family trees at all, so if you ran across a woman's name in such a thing, you'd know it was put there intentionally. In the case of Matthew 1, all of the women mentioned were significant not only because they represented some of the skeletons in Jesus' family closet, but also because some of them were non-Jewish, foreign-born (and it includes a well known prostitute to boot). It was Matthew's way of telling his readers that Jesus as God's Christ would go on to embrace the whole world and not only one small ethnic nation. He would break down long-standing ethnic, gender, and social barriers.

But Matthew pulls another surprise in 1:16 when he breaks the standard pattern of a genealogy by failing to identify Joseph as Jesus' father. After fifteen whole verses that repeated the line "the father of, the father of, the father of," suddenly Joseph is "the father of" no one but is instead listed as "the husband of Mary." That is an irregularity but it is a holy irregularity that points to the profound mystery of Jesus' birth.

But we still don't have any clue where "Immanuel" enters the picture.

Perhaps that is because in Matthew's mind, "Immanuel" sums up everything there is to say about this one known as Jesus. All of Jesus' other names and titles add up to the reality of Immanuel, of God-with-us. None of Jesus' other credentials matter unless it is somehow true that in this man dwells the fullness of God.

If God is not with us through Jesus, then God cannot save us through Him. If God is not bound up with this person, then God remains aloof from the very misery and sin from which we need rescue.

You see if God is with us, then God is for us! And that's the point.

CAN YOU FIND THE SON OF DAVID WINDOW?



The aisle windows around the church tell the whole story of the Bible in a unique way. Each window has two related sections. The lower section contains the Old Testament character or story, while the upper contains the New Testament fulfillment.

God had promised David, the first rightful king of Israel, that his throne would be established forever.

When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever (2 Samuel 7:12-13).

This caused the people to long to see David's greater son—the one who would rule forever. Jesus was called the "Son of David" while he was here on the earth. The gospel of Matthew records that various people, on six different occasions, acknowledged Jesus as the Son of David. This is a messianic title. In fact, on Palm Sunday he received the praise and worship of the people:

The crowds going ahead of him, and those who followed, were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!" (Matthew 21:9).

You are invited to dinner at

italgo



Saturday Feb 1st - 5:30pm

Italgo catered the GLORIA Gala and we are looking forward to another delicious meal from Chef Alexandro!

Everyone is invited to enjoy his delectable creations from the regular menu or his special dinner board.

Pay for your own dinner!

There are only 65 seats available so you must RSVP with the Church Office.

Located at 635 Broadway (between I and Halsey St)
Chula Vista. www.italgopastabar.com



Pr. Brian and Rachel Thomas worked with the children in our preschool during Advent chapel sessions to learn three Christmas Carols, which they performed during our last mid-week Advent Service.



William Theodore was born on 1/4/2020 to Karen and Michael Parker. Karen is a member of our GLC Preschool board and their son Nathaniel attends the preschool.



Our 2 year old class enjoyed a New Year's Celebration by creating horns and hats and helping hands with all their classmates. After a ten-day Christmas/New Year vacation everyone was ready to come back to school.





Fellow Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As 2020 kicks off and I accept the honor of another year as your President, I'm reflecting on how blessed both the faithful and the seeker are here at GLC. About 10 years ago, before my family and I joined this church, our long-time and beloved pastor Ivor Kraft resigned and we began the search for a new place of high worship where the Word was the foundation and Divine Liturgy moved and breathed. Instead, we encountered golf analogies about Jesus, prayers for Dolphins, services devoid of creeds and confession, custom creeds with pleasant aversion to the mention of *sin*, even a pastor who literally fled dinner when we asked if he'd marry a gay couple. Now, I don't have any particular hostility for marine mammals and the like, but that doesn't make such things the business of the church. And Golf? With respect to certain clergy and Miss Lily, I'll confess that I side with those who say it's a good walk *spoiled*, but I digress.

I think we saw every Lutheran church in San Diego County in the year and a half it took before we happened upon GLC in a web search one Saturday night. I was not convinced that GLC could become our church; it was a long drive and we didn't know about the extraordinary leadership and groundedness of Pastor Bombaro and Pastor Brian. We couldn't have known about the composition of the congregants; the blessedly wide range of ages and the wonderful families and church leaders that grace our house of worship. But it seemed like the church was doing the Liturgy and that was, to put it mildly, rare. But it told us that there was some chance that the congregation at GLC was serious about the faith and its practices. Thank God it turned out to be just that. And make no mistake, it tells the world the same thing it told Valda and I that first Sunday morning and that it continues to tell each of us every time we hit our knees. To paraphrase Isaiah 55, God's word accomplishes that which God purposes; man's purposes and designs are dust in comparison.

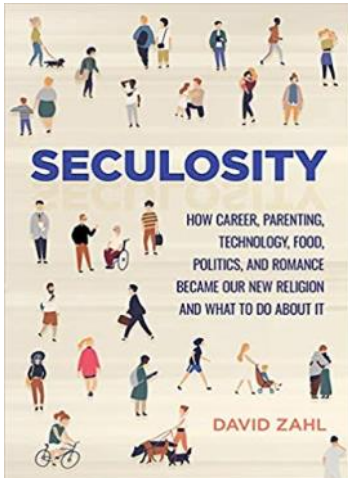
Our high practices at GLC may cause some lookee-loo's to halt partway through the Creedal recitals or to remain seated while we commune, but the message of truth and transcendence is palpable. An unflinching sermon about abortion might make folks wiggle in their seats, but it shouldn't be surprising in a church that espouses the Commandments rather than man's understandable, but rather unbridled interest the passions, a good career path, and convenience. I for one thank Pastor Brian for the reminder that life is sometimes inconvenient. Everyone won't fall in step, but they'll have no doubt where we stand...on the rock of Jesus Christ. I think that's saying quite a bit, because so many churches and faiths seem, for want of a better term, Hell-bent on becoming instruments of charity, inclusion, and social justice. And that's really not the first order of business for the church.

There's a great deal to accomplish this year, because the organ and the campus continue to demand attention. We'll be looking at installing some security cameras and improving locking systems around the church. We've got some long-term fundraising to plan for the organ renovation and I hope, completion of the first phase. We'd like to do a limited expansion of the pre-school and weave it into our mission a little more purposefully. We need to gather regularly; to sup and to greet. The Constitution needs an update. I'd like to look at bringing back the children's musical at Christmastime, given the demographics and if there's interest. There's much to do and I'll be trying my best, with the assistance of new and continuing counsel officers, to get to it all in the year I have left as your President.

So let's stand tall when Michael kicks in the pipes of the old organ and sing with whatever voice God gave you. It's all beautiful music to the Lord. Let's be the living, breathing, body of Christ as we celebrate the eternal, beautiful words and movements of the Divine Liturgy, the place where we can always find God waiting for us.

Blessings in Chris Jesus,

Randy Houts

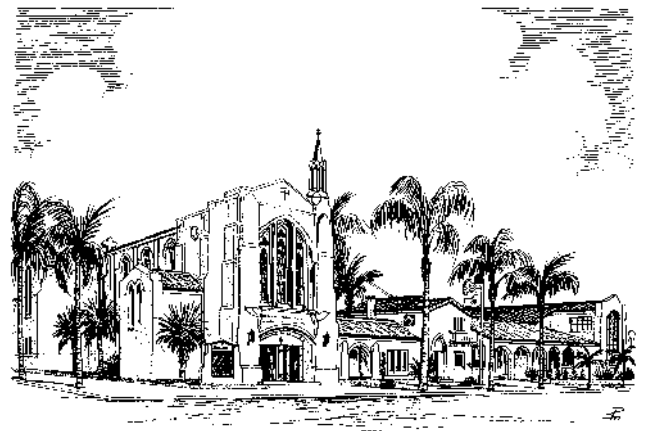


Seculosity: How Career, Parenting, Technology, Food, Politics, and Romance Became Our New Religion And What To Do About It by David Zahl

At the heart of our current moment lies a universal yearning, writes David Zahl, not to be happy or respected so much as enough—what religions call “righteous.” To fill the void left by religion, we look to all sorts of everyday activities—from eating and parenting to dating and voting—for the meaning once provided on Sunday morning. *Seculosity* takes a thoughtful yet entertaining tour of American “performancism.” Ultimately, Zahl brings us to a fresh appreciation for the grace of God in all its countercultural wonder.

IMPORTANT DATES IN GRACE HISTORY

On May 25, 1930, at a cost of \$80,000 (around \$1,230,000 today) Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church new sanctuary, fellowship hall, and parsonage was dedicated to the Glory of God. So rich in symbolism and so outstanding in its architectural merit, that it stands as a memorial to its members. The dedication brought 727 worshippers together to pray and sing of God's grace and mercy. At the time of the dedication, major furnishings and landscaping were provided by members in addition to their building fund pledges, even at the time of the Great Depression. July saw the installation of the 3-manual, 13-rank Spence Organ a gift from Agnes Frisius as a memorial to her Mom. The hand carved pulpit was placed in the sanctuary at the same time.



Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church San Diego, California

The Angel Baptismal Font were many have come to be baptized, arrived July 27, 1931. It was sculptured in Italy from a block of Carrara marble, by renowned sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen after the angel font in the Church of Our Lady in Copenhagen, Denmark.

The American Institute of Architects awarded Grace Lutheran Church one of two out of 100 nominations a Certificate of Honor for excellence in church design for 1933. Especially cited were the "Te Deum Laudamus" and the "Sunset Glory" stained glass windows installed by Frederick Wilson formerly of Tiffany's.

Easter Sunday, March 18, 1937, Grace Lutheran conducted its first Sunrise Divine Service at the Organ Pavilion in Balboa Park, becoming a annual event until the Navy took over the Park in 1942. In much praise to God the congregation celebrated their Silver Jubilee in 1938 with a theme of "Looking Forward". The Great Depression almost over, World War 1, now a memory the church is looking forward to Peace and Growth yet in a few years their faith will be tested again.

Lorna Winterstein
Harold Nichols

GRACE 2020 COUNCIL & ELDERS

Randy Houts, Council President
 Daniel Hill, Treasurer
 Robin Segarra, Secretary
 Paul Himmelberger, Trustee
 Matt Rall, School Board President
 Harold Nichols, Fellowship
 Jeremy Fullam, At-Large
 Andrew Burke, At-Large
 Open, Stewardship

Ted Nilsen, Head Elder
 Steve Hollman
 Travis Wheeler
 Paris Brown
 John Moore
 Daryl Newton
 Jason Huntley

CAN YOU GIVE YOUR TIME OR TALENT?

ALTAR GUILD

Have you thought about finding a way to serve the church through your time and talents? Consider the Altar Guild! This ministry is vital to the Divine Service and involves preparing the sanctuary and altar for worship and Holy Communion. We are currently seeking two additional individuals, groups, or families to join the rotation, preferably at the 10:30AM service. It's very easy to learn, and all training/orientation will be provided by the pastoral staff and current Altar Guild members. Time commitment is usually once every few weeks for 20 minutes before and after the Divine Service. Please prayerfully consider serving in this essential and rewarding ministry. If interested, please contact Pastor Brian or the church office.

USHERS

Our group of ushers are the first persons people meet when arriving to Grace. The ushers work in teams of two and serve one Sunday a month at the service they attend. The ushers make sure the everyone has a place to sit, give directions around the property, collect the offerings, and guide us to communion. If you are interested in serving as an usher (training will be provided), please talk to Pr. Brian or Harold Nichols.



Our fellowship needs families to help each Sunday to provide set-up, food and clean-up. Donuts, muffins, bagels, brunch items or lunches are some ideas. Or choose a theme like Mexican, Italian, sandwiches, salads, chili, hot dogs (we have a grill), cookies & ice cream, pita pockets or whatever you'd like!

If you have any questions, contact Harold Nichols or Gretchen Jordan.

UPCOMING FELLOWSHIP

January 12th

The Old Youth Group Parents have hosted the second Sunday for quit awhile and they always have a great choice of lunch/brunch foods!

January 19th

Egg-cettera Day—Please bring egg dishes to share for fellowship. Casseroles, quiches, frittata, etc. Or stay and help clean up!

January 26th

Muffin Sunday—Please share your favorite recipe for muffins, healthy ones, too.

February 1st

Dinner at Italgo Italian Pasta Bar. Please RSVP.

February 2nd

Souper Bowl Sunday—Stop in and enjoy a bowl of fresh soup or chili before the big game.

February 9th

OYGP—see January 12th

We can always use your help by hosting or helping set-up and clean-up for fellowship. It's easy and always fun, plus you might get leftovers!



3967 Park Blvd.
San Diego, CA 92103
619.299.2890
gracesandiego.com

The Reverend
Brian W. Thomas

The Reverend
Gleason Snashall

Deaconess
Doris Snashall

Music Director
Michael Burke

Office Manager
Gretchen Jordan

Preschool Director
Rexanna Blas

Divine Service
8:00 am & 10:30 am

Augsburg Academy
9:30 am

Nursery available

It's easy to donate to GLC. Scan the QR code below with your phone or text a dollar amount to 84321 to donate. Give through your online banking, use your giving envelopes or just drop your donation in the offering plate. Thank you!



PRAYERS

Today and every day include some time for prayer . . . for yourself, for your church family, and for those in need.

Prayers for strength: Bill, David, Ingrid Flor, Rev. Dr. Mueller, Barbara, Dee, Andrew and for our military and first responders.

Prayers for our missionaries: Rev. James May (Kenya), Daniel Conrad (Central America), Rev. Dr. Ron and Mary Anne Rall (Papua New Guinea), Rev. Dr. John Bombaro (Latvia)

Prayers for the military: Thomas Abbott, Nathaniel Beaver, Andrew Bund, Andrew Burke, Alex Cavins, Gaby Cavins, Christian Cole, Jon Feazel, Jonathan Fisch, Brenda Fonseca, Tajy George, Jack Lynn George, Jr., Joseph Jindrich, Jack Ogden, Dave Miceli, Matthew Morgan, Eric Mitchell, Jacob Neuberg, Heath Russert, and Andrew Warren

Prayers awaiting the arrival of a child of God: Bo & Lyndi

Prayers for those unable to come to services: Lorna Winterstein, Mary Jane Robinson and Dottie Allen

BIRTHDAYS

13- Travis Wheeler
19- Jennifer Gertz
19- Carmen Robillard
21- Katharina Hass
24- Jennifer Hass
30- Eleanor Yow

31- Kelsey Bonilla
31- Sara Lindsey
FEBRUARY
1- Carly Milligan
7- Zuri Rall
7- Elle Hansen

If we missed your birthday
call or email the church office
at:
gjordan@gracesandiego.com
or 619-299.2890.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sun. Jan. 19	Egg-cettera Day for Fellowship. Please bring an egg dish, quiche or casserole to share.
Sat. Feb 1 @ 5:30 pm	Dinner at Italgo restaurant in Chula Vista. RSVP to church office, everyone is invited but limited space.
Sat. Feb. 8 @ Noon	Marriage of Christine McElhinny and RJ Smith
Wed. Feb. 26 @ Noon & 6 pm	Ash Wednesday
Sun. Mar 1 @ 8 & 10:30 am	First Sunday in Lent

MEMBER INFO

2020 Offering envelopes are in your mailboxes. End of Year giving statements will be distributed to your mailbox for Sunday January 12. If there is any discrepancy with your statement, please contact Gretchen in the church office for a revised statement.

CHILDREN'S OFFERINGS

Envelopes are available on the desk in the hallway. Please take one for all your children or one for each child.