



GLORIA DEI

LUTHERAN CHURCH

GATHERING IN CHRIST ✝ SHARING HIS LOVE

THE GLORION
OCTOBER 2026

www.gloriadeielca.com

IN CASE OF PASTORAL EMERGENCY
Contact the office during regular office hours:
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. – Monday thru Friday
After office hours contact:
Rev. Tony VanCura, Pastor via phone:
407-765-2822

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 9:00-2:00

PASTOR: REV. TONY VANCURA

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC: LEONARD CREMISIO

AFTER WORSHIP SEC. : JANET BRAUN

(In order to assist the Pastor, if you need the Pastor to contact someone or address something.)

OFFICE MANAGER: EVELYN ROLLINS

SEXTON: TINA JANOSA

SUNDAY WORSHIP – 9:30 A.M



October 2026

Memories We Make in Christ

Memories are created all the time and, in every place, for almost everyone. Psychologists tell us that memories are strengthened when emotion and sensory elements are part of an experience. Each time we gather in the name of the Lord, we create a unique memory—one formed within a community of faith.

Some of my earliest memories are from Easter Sunday at First Lutheran Church in Pipestone, Minnesota. The fragrance of Easter lilies, the sight of the sanctuary lights becoming brighter as the beautifully decorated sanctuary was revealed, the sound of the pipe organ, and finally, the taste of caramel rolls all remain part of those early memories. Even today, I can recall them as though they happened yesterday.

Our memories are strengthened by the emotions and senses connected to them. When we gather in the presence of the Holy Spirit, however, those memories can become something even more meaningful: a bond we share as a family of faith. Our fellowship and worship experiences strengthen the bonds of our church family. The sights, sounds, and feelings we experience when we gather in the name of the Lord bring us joy in the moment and can provide strength, peace, and comfort in the years to come.

We are blessed to have these warm and precious memories through the church. They can nourish us in the Spirit, especially during times of difficulty. And yet, consider those who have never known an Easter Sunday in a church; who have never experienced the fragrance of lilies, the joy of the organ or piano, or the simple fellowship of a humble church breakfast. Where do people without a “family of faith” turn when life becomes difficult? What memories will nourish them when they walk through seasons of darkness?

We can make amends for many mistakes in life, but we cannot make up for memories that were never made. What a blessing it is that we have one another, and that God continues to give us opportunities to create memories together in His presence.

Thank you for the wonderful memories we continue to make each Sunday and each time we gather together. Let us pray that God will guide new lives into the care of our church family, where memories rooted in faith and formed in the Spirit may begin to grow. May we continue creating beautiful memories together, so that our children—and all of us—may one day look back upon our time at **Gloria Dei Lutheran Church** with gratitude and joy, remembering not only the moments we shared, but the presence of Christ among us.

We always have something to remember, something for which to give thanks, and something to celebrate in Christ: **“Do this, for the remembrance of Me.”**

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Tony

PRAYERS

We will pray for the joys, sorrows, and concerns of the following members in **October:**

- 10/4** Carla Hoback, Irvin and Susan Johnson, MaryJean Kancel, Nancy Kancel, Shirley Kelley.
- 10/11** John and Arlene Kelly, Bess King, Byron and Crystal Kirkpatrick, Helga La Cava, Barb Lias.
- 10/18** Sylvia Mackey, Gail Madson, Dianne and Dennis Marcotte, Carol Marshall, James, Quiana and Julian Menchaca.
- 10/25** Andy and Taeko Mincer, Rita Moritz, Brian and Karen Mundy, Vaike O'Grady, Lillian Ostrander.

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

- | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| 10/10 | Carla Hoback | 10/18 | Rita Moritz |
| 10/16 | C.J. Clarke | 10/23 | Art Zerbel |

OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

- | | | |
|-------|----------------------------|---------|
| 10/04 | James and Jayne Gable | 57 yrs. |
| 10/21 | Dennis and Dianne Marcotte | 26 yrs. |
| 10/22 | Milton and Carolyn DeLong | 25 yrs. |

THANK YOU LETTERS

Karen and I extend our thanks and gratitude for all your kind words, cards, gifts, and the wonderful cake that helped us celebrate our 40th Wedding Anniversary! Forty years is a milestone, and we will always remember who we shared it with: **our Family of Faith at Gloria Dei.** May God continue to richly bless our ministry, members, and friends for the sake of others and to the glory of God!

COUNCIL CORNER

Minutes of Gloria Dei Church Council Meeting of Sunday, August 23, 2026

1. Call to order and Invocation at 11:01 a.m.

Pastor Tony Van Cura	✓	Linda Hide, Treasurer	✓
Dick Healy, President	✓	James Menchaca	✓
Kathy Bush, Vice President	✓	Rich Cassem	✓
Vaika O'Grady, Secretary	✓	John Braun	✓
Chris Carlson	✓	Leone Goding	✓

2. Roll call

3. Promise: We, elected in trust as leaders of this household of faith, are thankful for grace first given us through Jesus Christ. We agree to diligently pray for the Holy Spirit to empower us to use our gifts in mission with God to grow disciples for Christ. May all our words and deeds in this assembly and in our daily lives be examples of love, faith and peace that bear witness to God's love for this community, the larger Church, and the world.

4. Adoption of today's agenda – moved and approved

5. Approval of July 26, 2026 minutes – moved and approved

6. Correspondence -- none

7. Pastor's report – distributed and reviewed; volunteers needed for All Saint's Sunday on November 1

8. Treasurer's report -- distributed and reviewed

9. Any Committee reports – none

10. Old Business

a. Electronic entry system - Receipt of an estimate from ASI – given the \$8,000 estimate the decision was made to defer until 2027 budget. Reminder to make sure the doors are shut fully in order to set the alarm. Also to ensure the list of keyholders is accurate.

b. Council Liaisons with committees- anyone else? Below is the most recent table listing committees and liaisons. Obviously in need of updates. Committee Worship

Committee	Council Liaison(s)
Worship Committee	Crystal Kirkpatrick
Finance	John Braun
Education Committee	Christine Carlson
Property & Building	Linda Hide
Fellowship	Vaike O'Grady
Stewardship Committee	Allen Francis
Congregational Care	Vaike O'Grady
Communications	Loraine Van Haecke
Joining Hands	Joel Weinhardt

c. Disaster Planning - Safety and Security Team developing a disaster plan – Church Mutual Insurance Policy provided by the Synod needs to be reviewed; Pastor Tony will follow up with the Synod to see if we need other insurances. Linda will provide the copy of the current policy to Dick to review. We do not have wind insurance.

d. God's Work, Our Hands (9/13/2026) Leader – Vaike to liaise with Dianne to get specifics communicated

e. Pet blessing confirmed for 10/2/2026 from 4-6 P.M.—Vaike to liaise with James, Chris and Kathy as well as other volunteers this week

f. Trust & Estates atty presentation at GDLC in late Fall – in process; expand to cover wills, advanced directives, etc. John to pursue with his connection

g. Calendar Committee – Kathy and Marie (Hospitality) to meet with Loraine and Dianne next week to clarify

h. Other old business

11. New business

a. New computer needed (Linda) – motion made and approved to purchase a for Gloria Dei finance/accounting use at a cost of \$600 or less. Linda to pursue.

b. Accounting for specific money in general accounts (John). Motion made to close the 1108 account and create a new account with the funds from columbarium. Approved. Related: if we sell the church, it is our responsibility to manage the columbarium. If GDLC ceases to exist and the Columbarium needs to move, the Synod is responsible.

c. Strategic Planning Team- Request for separate line item and initial funding for \$1,000.00. Linda will add a separate item for the 2028 budget discussion that will be held in September.

d. Proposal beginning in 2027 to suspend f2f Council meetings in July and August or June/July/August. ExCom will handle routine items and Council may meet in special session or by Zoom/email for certain purposes. Motion made and approved to suspend meetings in July and August 2027.

e. Other new business – None.

12. Next Executive Committee meeting - Thursday, 9/24/2026 at 11:00 on Zoom

13. Next Council meeting - Sunday, 9/27/2026 at 11:00 in downstairs meeting room

14. Who does what?

15. Benediction

16. Motion to adjourn – Adjourned at 12:15 pm.

BIBLE STUDY/EDUCATION

Zoom Bible Study

Please join us on Monday Evenings at 7pm for a Bible Study that focuses on the Lectionary Texts in a structured format provided by the ELCA (Daily Discipleship). The meeting is hosted on Zoom and can be joined with **Meeting ID:8732742912 and the Password: 12345** We look forward to gathering in Word and Spirit with you!

WELCA

The WELCA Board will meet October 6 @ 10:30am in the Church. We will discuss plans for the new year. Every woman in Gloria Dei is welcome. We will decide whether we can still continue as a board to monitor the projects of the Circles and decide if we can still continue to have fashion shows and support various charities in our community.

RUTH CIRCLE

The next Ruth Circle meeting will be held on Thursday, October 1, 2026 at 10:30 am. All women of the church are invited.

MARY MARTHA CIRCLE

OCTOBER

Mary Martha Circle will meet on the 2nd Tuesday, October 13. 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, Session two. We will have copies of the lesson for anyone who needs one. We will also be Mission Quilting on the 4th Friday which is October 23 at 9am. Please come and join us for fun & fellowship. Please continue to find in the cabinet by TV those rolls of fabric to make tops for us. You'll see them on the pews on January 31.

Leone Goding for Carol Marshall, Leader Phone 352-787-0435

STEWARDSHIP

Blessed to Be a Blessing

As we enter the month of October, it is good to pause and reflect on just how blessed we are. Each of us has received gifts from God—gifts of family and friendship, abilities and talents, time and resources, and opportunities to serve. Our blessings may look different from one person to another, but they all have something in common: **They are gifts from God, and they give us opportunities to bless others.**

God does not bless us simply so that we can keep His blessings for ourselves. He calls us to become channels through which His love and generosity can

reach others. When we give, we participate in His work and help continue the mission of our church in both our congregation and our community.

Generosity is about much more than money. Certainly, our financial gifts are important and help provide for the ministries and needs of the church. But God also asks us to give something equally valuable—**ourselves**. We can give our time to someone who is lonely. We can share a skill that can help our church or neighbors. We can offer a listening ear, a helping hand, a word of encouragement, or a simple act of kindness.

The Holy Spirit works within us to create generous hearts. When we allow the Spirit to lead us, giving becomes more than an obligation; it becomes an expression of gratitude. We give because we recognize that everything we have ultimately comes from God.

The apostle Paul reminds us, **“You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion”** (2 Corinthians 9:11).

What a beautiful thought: God enriches us **so that we can be generous**.

This October, may we look around with new eyes and ask, “How can I use what God has given me to bless someone else?” Perhaps there is a ministry that needs our help, a church project that needs our skills, a neighbor who needs our time, or someone who simply needs to know that they are loved.

We are blessed—not merely for our own benefit, but so that we might become a blessing.

May our church continue to be a place where God’s generosity is seen in the way we worship, serve, give, encourage, and care for one another. And may the Holy Spirit guide each of us to discover new ways to share the blessings God has entrusted to us.

We have been blessed to be a blessing. May we faithfully share what we have received.

Stewardship Committee

NOURISH TO FLOURISH

Now that the school year is back in session, a large delivery of food generously donated by Joining Hands in Food Ministry has been delivered to the school.

Beginning October 1 through November 1, the collection bin for Nourish to Flourish will be back in the narthex. Please consider donating any of the following items as you are able:

- Peanut butter
- Juice drinks
- Oatmeal
- Individual boxes of cereal
- Macaroni and cheese
- Cheese and crackers
- Pop-top canned items (e.g., tuna, beef stew)
- Cookies, fruit roll-ups, and other snacks

Your generosity is deeply appreciated and always welcome. Additionally, Florence Katzenberger has retired, and we will soon have a new family liaison contact. We look forward to working with the individual hired for this role. Gloria Dei will continue to support Leesburg Elementary School children and their families, as our community has done for many years.

Best regards,
Dianne Marcotte

A LITTLE SOMETHING TO ENJOY

Looking for a new puzzle? A selection is available on the shelf in the narthex—please feel free to take as many as you want and enjoy.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS
2026 First Impressions Task Force Report
Meeting Wednesday, September 23, 2026, at 9 AM

In attendance: Pat Bressler, Kathleen Birdsall, Arlene Kelly & Pastor Tony

- 1.** Arlene led us in prayer, reminding us of our commitment to keep God's house welcoming and open—a visible symbol of stability, refuge, and shared hope and identity for the community.
- 2.** The first item of business was to address several unfinished issues from last year's exterior building refresh. Arlene will inform John Kelly, who oversees building and grounds, that the church needs a carpenter to repair wood rot in several doorframes and the base collars of older columns. The new paint color is available for use once the repairs are complete. Because this is a maintenance issue, the cost should be covered by the building and grounds budget.
- 3.** We discussed how the Building and Grounds Committee and the First Impressions Task Force are closely connected but serve different purposes. Kathleen will speak with Council President Dick Healy to obtain a clearer description of the Building and Grounds Committee's responsibilities.
- 4.** No one has expressed interest in serving on this committee.
- 5.** The remainder of the meeting focused on the building's safety environment and its existing blind spots. Over the next several months, the committee will research the types of vulnerabilities churches may face in 2026.

Pastor Tony led us in closing prayer.

Next Meeting: October 14th

Respectfully submitted, Kathleen Birdsall

OCTOBER CALENDAR

Thurs.	10/1	10:30 a.m.	Ruth Circle
Sun.	10/4	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Service/ Brief Order for Healing
Mon.	10/5	7:00 p.m.	Zoom Bible Study
Tues.	10/6	9:30 a.m.	Strategic Planning Meeting
		10:00 a.m.	Morning Prayer
		10:30 a.m.	WELCA Board Meeting
		4:00 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal
Fri.	10/9	8:30 a.m.	Joining Hands in Food Ministry
Sun.	10/11	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Service
Mon.	10/12	7:00 p.m.	Zoom Bible Study
Tues.	10/13	9:00 a.m.	Quilting
		9:00 a.m.	First Impressions
		10:00 a.m.	Morning Prayer
		4:00 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal
Sun.	10/18	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Service/ Hunger Offering
Mon.	10/19	7:00 p.m.	Zoom Bible Study
Tues.	10/20	9:00 a.m.	Strategic Planning Meeting
		10:00 a.m.	Morning Prayer
		4:00 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal
Fri.	10/23	9:00 a.m.	Quilting
Sun.	10/25	9:30 a.m.	Sunday Service
Mon.	10/26	7:00 p.m.	Zoom Bible Study
Tues.	10/27	10:00 a.m.	Morning Prayer
		4:00 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal

FINANCIAL CORNER

GENERAL FUND					
		August 31, 2026		Year to date 2026	
Donations		13,196.63		142,374.09	
Expenditures		24,051.07		151,866.32	
2026 Restricted Funds					
	Beg 1/1/26	Donations	Expenditures	Ending 8/31/26	
Altar wine/bread	377.90	45.00	67.89	355.01	
AV Equipment	138.33	-	-	138.33	
Choir/Music	-	140.00	-	140.00	
Eternal Light	785.00	-	-	785.00	
Evangelism	720.00	-	-	720.00	
Fellowship	336.27	1,048.28	1,194.57	189.98	
First Impressions Phase 3	7,938.58	-	-	7,938.58	
First Impressions Phase 4	4,463.86	25.00	-	4,488.86	
Flowers	1,271.42	739.06	943.33	1,067.15	
JHIF	-	5,500.00	5,500.00	-	
Leesburg Elementary School	14.69	-	-	14.69	
Misc Ministries	-	553.52	553.52	-	
Quilting	300.00	-	300.00	-	
Thrivent Choice \$	665.64	873.00	88.96	1,449.68	
Trees & Landscaping	1,850.00		-	1,850.00	
World Hunger	-	493.13	493.13	-	
	18,861.69	9,416.99	9,141.40	19,137.28	

OCTOBER WORSHIP LEADERS

Assistant Ministers

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

9:30 a.m.

10/4	R= Kathy Bush += Leone Goding A= Patricia Bressler	10/11	R= Arlene Kelly += James Menchaca A= Kathy Bush
10/18	R= Dianne Marcotte += Leone Goding A= Vaike O'Grady	10/25	R= MaryJean Kancel += Julian Menchaca A= Patricia Bressler

Ushers

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

9:30 a.m.

9/6	Byron Kirkpatrick Ritch Cassem John Kelly Craig Carlson	9/13	Byron Kirkpatrick Ritch Cassem John Kelly Craig Carlson
9/20	Byron Kirkpatrick Ritch Cassem John Kelly Craig Carlson	9/27	Byron Kirkpatrick Ritch Cassem John Kelly Craig Carlson

Altar Guild for October: Crystal & Byron Kirkpatrick

Post Worship Secretary for October: Janet Braun

Fellowship

10/4 Janet and John Braun

10/11 Dianne Marcotte, Marie Davids, Helen and Don Jr. Ames

10/18

10/25

Counters – Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m.

10/4 Jeanne Talts

10/11 Linda Steege & Patricia Bressler

10/18 Arlene Kelly & Lillian Ostrander

10/25 Arlene Kelly & Lillian Ostrander

THE BELIEVE THE BEST PRINCIPLES

The Basics:

Every relationship has spoken and unspoken expectations. And then there are the actual experiences within the relationship. Sometimes the expectations and experiences match up, and sometimes they don't. When they don't it creates a gap:



EXPECTATION

EXPERIENCE

gap

When a gap occurs between what we expect and what we experience, we can choose to fill the gap with one of two things:

BELIEVING THE BEST or **ASSUMING THE WORST**

Believing the Best is based on trust and goodwill

Assuming the Worst is based on distrust and suspicion.

Five Principles for being a “Believe the Best” community:

1. When there is a gap that forms between what I expect and what I experience, I will BELIEVE the best. *(We will start with trust and goodwill).*
2. When other people assume the worst about you, I will come to your DEFENSE.
(Gossip is not permitted; we will put the best construction on what our neighbor does- the Eighth Commandment).
3. If what I experience begins to erode my TRUST, I will come directly to you about it.
(We won't let issues fester or be shared with others, nor will we ignore them).
4. When I'm convinced I will not be able to deliver on a promise, I will inform you AHEAD of time.
(We will keep our commitments to one another).
5. When you confront me about the gaps I've created, I will tell you the TRUTH.
(We will be open to hearing others' concerns and respond to them with integrity).

Adapted from Celebration Lutheran Church- Cypress, Texas.

2026 CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS

Pastor	Rev. Tony VanCura	407-765-2822
President	Richard Healy	352-223-4800
Vice President	Kathy Bush	610-657-1168
Secretary	Vaike O'Grady	512-827-6344
Treasurer	Linda Hide	253-740-3063
Financial Secretary	Jeanne Talts	352-530-6865

Members:

John Braun	412-926-3381
Christine Carlson	516-458-7355
James Menchaca	210-913-6224
Ritch Cassem	352-406-3339
Leone Goding	352-223-1925

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Worship & Music	Rev. Tony VanCura, Pastor	352-249-8533
Evangelism/Technology/ Communications	Bill Birdsall	732-773-2680
Property	John Kelly	352-399-6253
Fellowship	Kathy Bush	610-657-1168
Strategic Planning Team	Rev. Nancy Vogel	352-682-6838
Stewardship	Dianne Marcotte	352-933-5517
WELCA	Patricia Bressler	352-406-4896
Christian Education	Christine Carlson	516-458-7355
Finance	John Braun	412-926-3381
	Joel Weinhardt	330-936-8451