

Dear Friends and Members of Gloria Dei Church,

*We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3*

Like St. Paul, we thank you for all your faithfulness, labors of love, and steadfast hope, especially during 2018.

**Your generous giving to Gloria Dei allows the following ministry to happen:**

Ministry to those in need There are many ways Gloria Dei and you do labors of love that help the neediest in our community. These are a few that have happened recently:

Shining Star Over 320 families were delighted to receive easy-to-prepare Christmas meals on December 22. Thanks to the many who contributed, purchased, sorted, packed, and delivered those boxes.

OHAAT (One House At A Time) Many of you participate in this ministry, delivering new beds and bedding to children in the area who have been sleeping on the floor in many cases. In 2018, 1,100 beds were delivered. That's 1,100 kids thankful to have a bed of their own!

Direct help to individuals Gloria Dei maintains a "Pastors' Discretionary Fund" as well as gift cards to local groceries for persons in financial need. We can't help everyone with all of their financial needs, but we do make a difference, in Jesus' name.

Ministry to Our Community A regular feature at Gloria Dei in 2018 was our Tuesday evening Community Meal. Both members and neighbors of Gloria Dei share a warm meal and conversation. Almost 3,000 meals were served in 2018! Thanks to all the participants!

Ministry to Seniors Director Betsy Maier reports that "*between the 9 services each month and individual communion visits, we bring GDC to at least 150 people each month.*" In early December, Betsy wrote: "*We spent this morning at Chelsea in Jenkintown leading a group communion service. Although it is early in the month, the residents were delighted to sing Christmas carols. This enthusiastic group blesses us as much as we bless them. This afternoon we had our service at PowerBack. New residents were thrilled that they could 'go to church.'*"

Space for Vital Community Groups GDC hosts eight 12 step groups, including Alcoholics Anonymous, Debtors Anonymous, Adult Children of Alcoholics, and Al-Anon. We also provide space for grief counseling and Growth Opportunity Center.

Impacting the Lives of Families Children and Family Director Dana Harrison organized a family Advent Paint Night in mid-December. The painters numbered 78, while 115 enjoyed watching while family members and friends painted. Dana is planning other events for the winter and spring. Chris Frank has planned a variety of activities for youth on Friday nights (FNL). The Gloria Dei Discovery Preschool, Sunday School and Affirmation programs, and the Tuesday night Community Meal also impact the lives of families in positive ways.

Spiritual Growth During our GDC New Year's Retreat, 10 participants explored how their Star word impacted their lives in 2018.

**Here are some ministry plans for 2019:**

- Affirmation Study has begun with 4 students and 6 adult leaders. They will affirm their faith on Pentecost Sunday, June 9.
- Transition Events will target what has not been covered by recent consultants and interims, but learnings that will be important to Gloria Dei and pastoral staff going forward. First event, "Tell Your Gloria Dei Story" will be Sunday, Feb. 3, following one worship service at 10 a.m. We will be done by 1:30 (lunch provided).
- New member classes will be offered quarterly. First is Saturday morning, Feb. 9, 9-11 a.m. Several groups are working on welcoming and providing opportunities for deeper involvement to newcomers.
- Lenten Journey through Grief and Loss Both the Tuesday night Growing in Grace series and Sunday worship in Lent will deal with Grief and Loss. This theme will help to deepen our Lenten reflection on Jesus' death and resurrection. Ash Wednesday is March 6; Easter April 21.
- Vacation Bible School will be August 5-9, another opportunity to share God's love with families.
- Live Streaming Thanks to a generous gift of \$25,000 and a tremendous amount of hard work by key members of our Tech Team, we have the equipment in place to live stream worship. This has made a difference in the spiritual life of our own members who are not able physically to get to GDC – plus we have had viewers from 15 different states!

**Your 2018 and 2019 Giving**

Of course, there are many other ministries that happen only because of your generous gifts to Gloria Dei. We hope you will continue to give generously throughout 2019. Enclosed with this letter are two other papers. One is the record of your giving for 2018. Please review it, and if you notice a discrepancy from your records, please contact Joan MacGregor in the church office. The second is an "Intent to Give" page that lists the amount you gave in 2018, as well as a blank space for you to indicate how much you intend to give in 2019. Of course, we hope you will increase that amount, at least by the cost of living increase that we all have to deal with. (2.8% for 2019, according to AARP.) You may return your "Intent to Give" sheet any time in February, either in the offering or the box at the back of the sanctuary. Those of you who filled out a similar card last June, we would still appreciate having this information for all of 2019.

One other note: if you are a Thrivent member, you have two other ways to be generous: direct your Thrivent Choice dollars to Gloria Dei and/or apply for a \$250 Action Team grant. Deadline for directing your 2018 Thrivent Choice dollars is March 31. Each Thrivent member can sponsor two Action Teams during the calendar year. Rick Graber can answer questions.

God continue to bless you.

Your friends in Christ,

Pastors Karyn and Donna, the Generosity Team, and your Congregational Council