

A Brief History of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church first met for worship on February 1, 1998, just over 28 years ago, at the Holiday Inn at Butler Hill Road and I-55. Later that month, the church began meeting regularly at Kennerly Elementary School, continuing there for over 14 years, until November 4, 2012, when the church moved to this facility, the Freedom Temple Masonic Lodge.

The first pianist was Delores Zupan for about a year, until Ruth Bartholomew began playing sometime in 1999. She played faithfully until her illness in March of 2017. Yuri Huang and the current pastor then began sharing accompanist duties, continuing until the present.

The church bulletins were produced from the beginning for 12 years until Easter, 2010 by Dave Berg, at which point Olive Sanburn began making them. She continued until her own ill health made it difficult, at the end of August, 2021, when the pastor began making them.

Preaching was initially done by lay persons, but in the church's second month, March of 1998, the Rev. Billy Secoy came to serve. He continued on until he retired in the early 2010s. Rev. Chuck Herr then became our new pastor, serving until his untimely passing on March 8, 2013. Rev. Secoy then graciously returned from retirement to serve in the pulpit until Feb-

ruary 16, 2014, when Rev. Wesley M. Cummins officially began ministry here on March 2, 2014, continuing to the present. Two assistant, adjunct pastors also served here in recent years, both doctoral students at Concordia Theological Seminary. The first was Rev. Nathan Olson, who began on August 23, 2015, until his departure on August 13, 2017. Rev. Andrew Kneeland's first Sunday here was August 23, 2020, staying until his last Sunday on April 30, 2023.

Over the years, Gloria Dei helped the needy by frequent offerings of food items, while the Sandwich Crew regularly made bologna and cheese sandwiches, as the photograph in the bulletin will attest. The Fellowship group helped support the then fledging Christian movie industry, attending many opening weekend screenings starting in mid 2014. In 2017, we began annually assembling Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes for distribution around the world by Samaritan's Purse.

Truly, for a tiny church, Gloria Dei Lutheran has really got around, and punched far above its weight. We supported AFLC missionaries and mission outreach. We were faithful in helping advance the Kingdom of God on earth, maintaining weekly services of worship of Almighty God, for these nearly three decades. To God be all the glory!

