

The Christian Visitor

VISTA LA MESA CHRISTIAN CHURCH ~ AUGUST 2020

Worship in the Park!

We haven't seen each other in so very long! We know how much you miss your VLM friends. But it's going to be a while still before we can gather back in our beloved sanctuary. So in the meantime, we're going to have a worship service outdoors on **Sunday, August 30th**.

We will gather in Harry Griffin Park (9550 Milden St., La Mesa), just around the corner from Grossmont High School at 10:30 am. Another church is using in the amphitheater near the entrance; just keep driving all the way to the end of the parking lot to find us. We will be in a small pine grove on the right.

We will still need to observe all the regular virus precautions, as per County regulations. Everyone will need to wear a mask, and each household group will need to stay distant from others. Please bring a chair(s) or blanket for yourself & your family. There is a fair amount of available shade, but you might want to bring an umbrella or pop-up canopy as well. You are also asked to bring something to use for communion. We will not be providing elements. You may also choose to use hand motions, rather than removing your mask to partake.

The service will be slightly different than our regular service, and we hope to broadcast on Facebook Live. We will also send out a Worship Kit that weekend for those who can't come.

COFFEE HOUR ON ZOOM

We will be holding another VLM Coffee Hour on Zoom, on **Sunday, August 2nd at 12:30 pm**. The first time we tried this, it was a little awkward because everyone was sitting at the same "table". So we're going to structure this one a little more by breaking up the group into smaller groups, so you can speak more freely. We will also provide discussion starter questions, which your small group can use or ignore as you choose. We'll divide up a few times, with new groups each time, so you'll have a chance to talk to a number of different people. We hope you'll join us! (See page 2 for login information.)

How Long, O Lord? And How?

This summer has been one long roller coaster, as we've moved from thinking we might be able to resume gathering for worship soon to realizing we may need to stay scattered for longer than we'd anticipated. In June, we had a timeline for figuring out what it would look like to return to the sanctuary. Then COVID numbers spiked, and timelines went out the window.

The Administrative Committee sent multiple protocol and procedure documents to the Elders & Deacons on July 12. Their discussion resulted in some revisions. The final protocols draft went to the Board on July 22 and was approved. You can find those protocols as an insert in this newsletter. They will help give you a picture of what church will be like when we first resume gatherings.

The Board also discussed how we will know when it's time to do so. Thus far, our leaders are split about 50/50 between those planning to come back when we open and those who will likely wait longer. We decided that, for now, we do not have enough information to set standards for opening. When things are a little clearer, we will do a congregational poll, to see who's up for returning, and then re-assess. In the meantime, we will continue seeking out ways to help keep the congregation connected and thriving!

From My View at the Table

Dear Church,

I'm running out of ways to say "Life is really weird right now, and we have no idea what's next." I do think it's important to keep saying it though, so we don't forget this isn't normal and will some day finally be over. It's vital that we stay in touch with one another so we can help each other maintain perspective and hope. Whether we do that with humor, creativity, or by sending cards or sharing happy memories from "the before times," it's a gift we can give to one another.

Blessedly, scripture offers us a multitude of ways to say the other thing it's most important for us to remember right now: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult." (Psalm 46:1-3) "From everlasting to everlasting you are God. ... For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night." (Psalm 90:2b, 4)

The words we share with one another shape our lives, and right now, when we can't hug or even just sit quietly next to someone, it's even more important that we share words, our own or those from scripture, with others to "build up the body in love." As a church, we try to offer words of comfort and grounding in multiple ways. Michael's twice-weekly Bible thoughts are a great way to stay immersed in scripture. And the emails I send three days a week offer connection to the rest of your church family. Please feel free to write back and share your words!

grace & peace,

Pastor Rebecca

Pastor's Schedule

Pastor Rebecca will be doing an online continuing education course this month through Luther Seminary. It is led by Susan Beaumont and focuses on her book "How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going: Leading in a Liminal Season." The course requires 90 minutes of prep time each week and then a 60-minute online seminar each Thursday in August. Pastor Rebecca will be doing her prep work on Tuesdays or Wednesdays throughout this month.

OUR MISSION

To share the joy of God's love.

To nurture one another to wholeness.

To motivate each other to Christian witness.

To effect healing in a hurting world.

ZOOM TIPS

You can use Zoom from a computer or from your telephone. From your phone, you will only be able to hear people. From your computer, you'll be able to see people (but you can choose not to have your video on, if you're "not fit for public" at the moment). If you haven't tried it yet, we hope you will, as it is proving very helpful in keeping our community connected!

There are multiple ways to connect to a Zoom gathering, either from a computer or other screened device, or from a regular phone line. Contact Pastor Rebecca if you need the login or call-in information.

Pro Tip #1: Find "Gallery View" in the top right corner, and use it instead of "Speaker View". You'll see everyone at once, instead of just the person talking at the moment.

Pro Tip #2: It is easiest for everyone to hear if people keep themselves muted when not talking. You can mute yourself by clicking on the microphone icon till there's a red line through it. Clicking again will unmute you. Sometimes the host mutes you if necessary as well.

WELCOME SATURDAY

We have had good success with modifying Welcome Saturday so that we can serve breakfast and provide lunches for our guests, with a very bare bones volunteer team. We also have hygiene items & some clothes available.

We appreciate your continued prayers for this ministry. We are still thinking on how to resume offering showers again, as they are so needed by our guests.

Novels Tea

Our Novels Tea is thriving on Zoom, even though we can't share our "fancy snacks" with each other. Our next book is "Pride" by Ibi Zoboi, a Brooklyn remix of "Pride and Prejudice". Anyone who wants to read and discuss the book is welcome to join us!

We will meet on Zoom to discuss the book on Sunday, September 6th, at 3:30 pm. Bring your own tea and fancy snacks!

**Senior Men's Coffee
(Wed @ 8am),
Women's Lunch
(1st Wed @ 11:30am)
& Lunch Bunch
(3rd Wed @ 11:30 am)
will meet on Zoom
again this month.
Please join us!
Anyone is welcome
to these times of
online fellowship.**

BIBLE STUDY RESUMING NEXT MONTH!

We are excited to announce that Bible study will be back in September, adapted for corona times! Michael Kinnamon will begin a study of the book of Hebrews, on Sunday, Sept. 13th, at 9:00 am on Zoom. We are keeping it at the "regular" time, on the chance we might be able to resume some form of worship gathering this fall.

We will also be offering "catch-up" sessions, led by Tesa Hauser, once or twice a month on Wednesdays at 6:00 pm, for those for whom the Sunday classes don't work as well. Tesa will lead the first of these sessions on Wednesday, Sept. 30th, and then again Oct. 14th & 28th (also on Zoom).

This is a great opportunity to re-connect with your VLM friends and with scripture! If you haven't participated in Bible study before, consider this your personal invitation. You will be blessed!

In Our Prayers...

JOYS & CONCERNS ~ Check with the church office or Pastor Rebecca to make a prayer request or find our most recent list.

Happy Birthday!

- Aug. 7 - Eliseo Sisneros
- Aug. 11 - Allan Flores
- Aug. 15 - Kaitlin Yoder
- Aug. 17 - George Grimm,
Brittany Yoder
- Aug. 19 - Lace Watkins
- Aug. 22 - Glenda Cliffe
- Aug. 25 - Paul Epler
- Aug. 28 - Sally Johnston
- Aug. 31 - Patrice Hill

Happy Anniversary!

- Aug. 9 - John & Jennefer
Lehton
- Aug. 16 - Jerry & Norma Bailey
- Aug. 17 - Allan & Daphne
Flores
- Aug. 18 - Jeffrey & Berna Cliffe
- Aug. 30 - Mike & Lisa Martin

WE ♥ CAMP!

As you may imagine, with no campers this summer, our beloved church camp, Loch Leven, is struggling financially. Along with other churches across our Region, our Board decided in July to send a donation of \$1600 from our Camp Fund to help out. This is amount represents \$200 each for 8 campers, which is about half of the regular camp fee. We encourage individuals to send in your own gift to add to ours!

August 2020 Worship Participants

	August 2	August 9	August 16	August 23	August 30
Worship Leader	Bob Neely	Ruth Tiffany	Walter Rorie-Baety	Katie Yoder	Karen Cliffe
Kids' Moment	Tim Cliffe	Rebecca Littlejohn	Karen Cliffe	Tesa Hauser	Mandy Dohring
Offering Invitation	Mandy Dohring	Jerry Bailey	Cheryl Davis-Plotts	Rebecca Littlejohn	Larry Knight
Offering Elder	Jerry Bailey	Cheryl Davis-Plotts	Tim Cliffe	Mary Jane Fay	Michael Kinnamon
Comm. Elder	Julie Germain	Larry Knight	Beckie Neely	Mike Martin	Brenda Rorie-Baety

VLMCC BOARD UPDATES

In addition to the Loch Leven gift noted above, our General Board took some other actions at their July 22nd meeting, including: reception of the names of the 2020-2021 Pastoral Relations Committee (Cheryl Davis-Plotts, Chair, Julie Germain, Jennefer Lehton, Bob Neely, Brenda Rorie-Baety, & Tim Tiffany); approval of \$1200 from the Scholarship Fund for Pastor Rebecca to participate in a vocational formation program called Flourishing in Ministry; reception of a report from Ministerial Assistant Tesa Hauser noting the upcoming creation of social media guidelines; approval of appointment of Jennefer Lehton to the Memorial Endowment Committee (2020-2023); and approval of preliminary coronavirus precautions.

Elders & Deacons in August

Michael Kinnamon will be leading a training for Elders on Sunday, August 9th at 1:00 pm, to discuss how Elders' duties have changed with remote worship and how to grow into this new role.

The Deacons will not meet this month. We invite you to come to the Outreach/Christian Education Committee meeting which has taken over your Wednesday night meeting slot instead!

**VLM-Connected Young Adults
Zoom Gathering
Tuesday, August 11, 7 pm
(See page 2 for login info.)**

WHO AND WHERE WE ARE

We are a congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). We are part of the Christian Church in the Pacific Southwest Region.

We are located at 4210 Massachusetts Ave. (at Boulevard Dr.), one block South of University Ave. in La Mesa, conveniently situated between Interstate 8 (exit at 70th St.) and the 94 Freeway (exit at Massachusetts), and very near the #852 bus line.

Sundays: Bible Study @ 9:00 – Worship @ 10:30

Admin & Comm Coord Hours: M/T/Th 10-1, F 9-1

CHURCH STAFF

Ministers: **The Members of VLM**

Pastor: **Rev. Rebecca Littlejohn**

Ministerial Assistant: **Tesa Hauser**

Admin & Comm Coord: **Alicia Gervasi**

Music Director: **Deborah Wilson**

Nursery: **Stephanie Cadiero & Francia Berry**

Custodian: **Scott Tiemann**

Church Tel. (619) 463-9909

Office E-mail: admin@vlmcc.com

Pastor's E-mail: pastor@vlmcc.com

Church website: www.vlmcc.org

Coronavirus Safety Precaution Protocols for VLMCC

1. Those over 65 years of age and/or with health conditions¹ that increase the risk associated with COVID-19 are strongly encouraged to continue worshiping from home, rather than attending worship gatherings. (See list of health conditions in footnote.)
2. Anyone experiencing symptoms of coronavirus SHOULD NOT attend worship in person. These symptoms include dry cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of senses of taste or smell.
3. All those attending worship gatherings will be screened before entering. This will include a touchless temperature check and questions about symptoms. Clear signage with the required protocols will be posted at all entrances. Touchless hand sanitizer dispensers will be placed at both entrances. Those arriving should maintain physical distance from other households, if a line forms at the entrance for screening.
4. All persons, except those under age 2, will be required to wear masks the entire time they are on church property outside their cars. There will be periodic reminders throughout the service for everyone to ensure their mask is covering their nose and mouth. Disposable masks will be available for those who arrive without one.
5. Those attending worship gatherings should enter through the main sanctuary doors and proceed directly to their seat. No one should walk around the sanctuary or other parts of the facility, unless absolutely necessary. Greetings should be limited to gestures and verbal greetings from your seat.
6. Those needing the restrooms should go through the hallway or outside (whichever is closer) and walk through Bailey Hall without touching anything unnecessarily. The doors to the restrooms will stay propped open, and only one person should be in the restroom at a time. Those waiting should stay in Bailey hall, six feet apart from anyone else until it is their turn.

¹ “People of any age with the following conditions **are at increased risk** of severe illness from COVID-19: chronic kidney disease; COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease); immunocompromised state (weakened immune systems) from solid organ transplant; obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 or higher); serious heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies; sickle cell disease; Type 2 diabetes mellitus. People with the following conditions **might be at an increased risk** for severe illness from COVID-19: asthma (moderate-to-severe); cerebrovascular disease (affects blood vessels and blood supply to the brain); cystic fibrosis; hypertension or high blood pressure; immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from blood or bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV, use of corticosteroids, or use of other immune weakening medicines; neurologic conditions, such as dementia; liver disease; pregnancy; pulmonary fibrosis (having damaged or scarred lung tissue); smoking; thalassemia (a type of blood disorder); Type 1 diabetes mellitus.”
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fneed-extra-precautions%2Fgroups-at-higher-risk.html

7. The chairs in the sanctuary should not be moved from their positions. Persons should only share a row with other members of their household.
8. No one should have physical contact with anyone who is not part of their household.
9. Children will be required to stay with the adult(s) from their household the entire time.
10. The service will aim to last under 45 minutes. (See sample order of worship.) Paper bulletins will not be used; all necessary information will be on the screen.
11. There will be no singing inside the building. In the places where we normally would have a hymn, one verse will be played on the piano, while the words are shown on the screens (with no one singing).
12. If communion elements are being used, congregants will be invited to bring their own elements, if they prefer not to use the elements provided. The option to partake in your car after the service will also be encouraged. (See Protocols for Elders & Deacons.)
13. When the service is over, the congregation will be dismissed by row, starting from the back. All participants are asked to go directly to their cars, unless using the restroom. There will be no coffee hour.
14. When everyone is at their cars and out of the sanctuary, the pastor will lead the sung benediction, which should be sung only with masks on.
17. If it becomes clear that the congregation cannot follow these protocols, worship gatherings will be paused while the Board determines next steps.
18. The Board will determine standards for how we will decide to resume gathering for worship and for potential pauses in gathering for worship.