

The Christian Visitor

DECEMBER 2020 ~ VISTA LA MESA CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Advent-at-Home Kits

Our Elders & Deacons are in the process of delivering Advent-at-Home Kits to the members of each flock. We hope your kit will help you engage with the season, in unity with our congregation. Each kit includes an Advent devotional written by our General Minister & President Terri Hord Owens and an abstract (square!), paper Advent wreath with five tea lights to place on the purple, pink, and white squares. We hope you will join us for worship on Zoom each Sunday at 10:30 am and light your candles as we light the ones on the Advent wreath at church. We hope you'll enjoy the daily devotionals and join us for the candle lighting services, which are at the back of the booklet.

Covid Christmas Catharsis

Our Longest Night service is usually held to make space for people who are struggling with the holidays because of grief, job loss, family estrangement, mental health challenges or other personal reasons. This year, the holidays are hard for us all! So we have adapted this service to make space for everything we're dealing with.

On Saturday, December 5th, from 10 am till 3 pm, we will have prayer stations set up in the prayer garden to help you process all the feelings this rotten year has created. Entrance to the garden will be limited to 2-4 people at a time. Masks are required.

You probably know people who need to attend this event. Make sure they know about it! And help us spread the word by sharing the Facebook event page (shared in the weekly email).

Caroling Parties!

Since outside is the only place we can sing together right now, we're doubling down on Christmas Caroling this year! We'd love to have you join us. On Sundays, Dec. 6th & 20th, we will meet in the church parking lot at 2:00 pm. We will provide a list of destinations with addresses and directions as needed, plus a song sheet. We'll all travel in our own cars, spread out across each house's front yard, and sing! Be sure to wear your mask to keep your neighbors safe.

CHRISTMAS EVE (WE NEED YOUR HELP!)

It's sad to not be able to safely gather in our dimmed sanctuary on Christmas Eve to hear the story of Jesus' birth and how it changed the world. We've done our best to adapt our traditions in ways that will help all of us feel the wonder of the season, even though we're scattered in our own homes.

We are in the process of creating a Christmas Eve video service, which we will distribute early on the 24th, so you can watch it whenever it fits into your celebration. But we need your help with the video. In the Advent Kit you should have received, there are some "Christmas Eve" candles for each person in your household. Please dim the lights, light your candles, and take pictures of yourselves holding them. Then email those pictures to Pastor Rebecca by 12/14, so we can include you in the "Silent Night" circle!

We will also have a Christmas Eve Fellowship Zoom at 6:00 pm on 12/24, so you can wish your fellow VLMers "Merry Christmas!"

From My View at the Table

Dear Church,

And suddenly, Advent is upon us! In some ways, the past nine months have been one long Advent season; there were moments when it seemed like waiting was the only thing to do. Time got a little fuzzy, with the days running into one another. During Advent, time is also a little off, as we focus on the “not yet” nature of God-with-us, even as we know that God is already with us.

As we enter into Advent – the liturgical season rather than the life situation – still waiting for the good news we need, let’s take the opportunity to reflect on what it is that our souls are waiting for, that we also already have: Jesus, present in our lives. How has the presence of Christ made your life different than it would have been otherwise? Who would you be without that influence? Where would you be, and what would you be doing?

Advent is a time to clean out the corners of our hearts where we’ve been reluctant to let Jesus in, to ask God to help us welcome the presence of Christ into our whole lives, so that we can be restored to abundant life and wholeness. Yes, the Baby Jesus has been born before, year after year. But that doesn’t mean we don’t long for Christ to come into the world again this year – this year especially! What parts of your life need to be made ready for the arrival of the Christ Child? What are you waiting for? Good news of great joy is on the way!

grace & peace,

Pastor Rebecca

Pastor’s Schedule

Pastor Rebecca will be taking some time off after Christmas, but the schedule is TBD.

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.

WE WANT TO ZEE YOU ON ZOOM!

Now that we’re going to move worship to Zoom, it’s even more important that everyone learn how to use it! If you would like assistance getting Zoom set up on your computer, please let Pastor Rebecca know, and she or Tesa will come to your house, with safety precautions, to help you get started.

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).

There are multiple ways to connect to a Zoom gathering. Contact Pastor Rebecca for the one-click link, the Meeting ID and pass code, and/or the numbers to call in from your phone. The login information can also be found in our weekly emails.

For worship, we will be controlling the experience a little more than we do in meetings and other gatherings. Those who are not speaking will be muted, and the person speaking will be “spotlighted” so they are the focus on everyone’s screen.

Pro Tip #1: Find “Gallery View” in the top right corner, and click it to see everyone at once, instead of just the person talking at the moment.

Pro Tip #2: It is easiest to hear if we all mute ourselves when not talking. Click 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 are continuing to offer as much as we can to our Welcome Saturday guests, with careful precautions. But that means no Christmas waffle bar!

We're hoping you'll help us create a little holiday cheer by bringing in homemade cookies the week of Dec. 6th. Please have them here by Thursday the 10th at noon, so we can get them bagged up before Saturday.

If you don't have a key, call the office at 619-463-9909 to make sure someone is here to let you in.

CHRISTMAS FOR EL NIDO

We have adopted three families from Interfaith Shelter Network's El Nido Shelter for Christmas this year. We have an online sign-up for the gifts. Follow this link to claim one of the remaining gifts:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050548a4a62caa8-vmelnido>

We are asking that you bring the gifts in by Dec. 15th. Please bring them wrapped with a gift tag that has the person's name and the family number (noted in the sign-up). If you can also put a sticky note saying which gift it is, that will be helpful as we make sure we've got everything. We are collecting the gifts in Classroom 3.

Novels Tea

Our Novels Tea will meet on Zoom on Sunday, Dec. 13th at 3:00 pm, to discuss "Hiddensee: A Tale of the Once and Future Nutcracker" by Gregory Maguire. You are welcome to read the book or listen to an audio book. All are welcome to join the conversation! Bring your own tea & "fancy snacks"!

Sunday Flowers

We are continuing to support our florist during remote worship by having the Sunday flower arrangement delivered to the sponsors' homes. If you would like to sign up to sponsor flowers in 2021, follow this link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a0b4cada72ea1fe3-vlmsunday>

Bible Study during Advent

Michael Kinnamon will lead us in a study of seasonal texts during the four weeks of Advent (Nov. 29 and Dec. 6, 13, & 20). We will not have Bible study on December 27. Everyone is cordially invited to take part! These weekly conversations are a great way to interact with friends while learning more about the scriptural foundation of our faith. We meet on Zoom each Sunday at 9:00 am.

Happy Birthday!

- Dec. 1 - Geraldyn Berry
- Dec. 6 - Vivian McKinney
- Dec. 20 - Stephanie Cadiero
- Dec. 22- Ginny Hanna
- Dec. 24- Christine Lind
- Dec. 29 - Ryan Hanna
- Dec. 29 - Wavalea McKee
- Dec. 30 - Lois Lyford, Abe Sisneros, Christian Tiffany

Happy Anniversary!

DEC. 6

Walter & Brenda
Rorie-Baety

DEC. 28

Skip & Susan Peterson

IN OUR PRAYERS...

CONTACT THE OFFICE FOR CURRENT PRAYER CONCERNS.

YOUTH NEWS

We won't be having Youth Group Zooms this month, but we hope you'll join us on 12/6 and 12/20 for our Caroling Parties! We will meet in the church parking lot at 2:00 both days, and then we'll drive in our own cars (so you have to bring your drivers!) to a series of church members' houses. When we're there, we'll spread out across the front yard and sing some carols (with masks on!).

It will be lots more fun if you can join us! Song sheets and addresses/directions will be provided.

December 2020 Worship Participants

	Dec. 6	Dec. 13	Dec. 20	Dec. 27
Worship Leader	Katie Yoder	Karen Cliffe	Jerry Bailey	Cheryl Davis-Plotts
Kids' Moment	Julie Germain	Rebecca Littlejohn	Karen Cliffe	Rebecca Littlejohn
Lay Reader	Cathy Mullican	Jennefer Lehton	Tim Tiffany	Dick Penny
Offering Invitation	Mandy Dohring	Cheryl Davis-Plotts	Rebecca Littlejohn	Tesa Hauser
Offering Elder	Mary Jane Fay	Michael Kinnamon	Julie Germain	Larry Knight
Comm. Elder	Mike Martin	Brenda Rorie-Baety	Bob Neely	Ruth Tiffany

Worship in the Park

We will be having our next service at Harry Griffen Park on Sunday, January 24th, when we would normally be having our annual Welcome Potluck for new members and friends. You are invited to bring a sack lunch to enjoy within hollering distance of your friends after the service. This is a great time to bring someone you know who might be looking for a church.

Interfaith Shelter

We will be hosting Interfaith Shelter Jan. 16-30. We are trying to use fewer volunteers this year, to avoid more exposure. We will have more information about how you can help soon, but we are looking for people to help provide meals. Thanks!

You can sign up at this link:
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050548a4a62caa8-interfaith4>

Contact Amy Cliffe or Pastor Rebecca if you have any questions.

Stewardship

Given the circumstances, it's not surprising we're having trouble making our budget. In November, the Board voted to pull \$7000 (of the authorized \$10,000) from our Memorial Fund to help meet expenses. We are hoping that giving will improve this month, so we can end 2020 in the black and not have to pull more money. Thanks for your donations!

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

Secretary's Hours: Mon/Tues/Thur 10-1, Fri 9-1

CHURCH STAFF

Ministers: **The Members of VLMCC**

Pastor: **Rev. Rebecca Littlejohn**

Ministerial Asst: **Tesa Hauser**

Admin/Comm Coord.: **Alicia M. 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