

# The Christian Visitor

FEBRUARY 2022 ~ VISTA LA MESA CHRISTIAN CHURCH

## Interfaith Shelter

As you have heard, shortly before our rotation of hosting Interfaith Shelter was set to begin, the IS Network decided it was not prudent to house our guests in churches. All the guests will be put up in hotels instead, which as you can imagine, is much more expensive. It is our hope to raise \$3000 to help with these costs. We will be receiving these donations through Monday, February 7th. You can give with cash, check (memo line: Shelter), or online (look for "Shelter" in the drop-down gift designation menu). As of this writing, we have received \$565 so far. Thank you for your generosity!

## Bible Study Resumes 2/20

We are excited to announce our Spring Bible Study, which will kick off on Sunday, February 20. All sessions will be held in Bailey Hall and on Zoom at 9:00 am on Sundays.

Since we've now covered all four gospels on their own terms, we're going to take a look at some stories that occur across multiple gospels and see how they compare.

Our teaching team will once again include Renee & Steve Bridwell, Julie Germain, Tesa Hauser, Marianna Kirwan and Rebecca Littlejohn. Watch for more information about each session in your Weekly Emails.

## Covid Outlook & Plans

As you heard, we made some adjustments to our worship service as the Omicron surge began last month. Local covid numbers seem on the verge of subsiding, so we're hoping to be able to remove those restrictions soon.

The current plan is for choir practice to resume on Thursday, February 17th (still in the sanctuary, with masks on, of course). Then, we hope to return the choir to worship and reinstate the communion hymn on the first Sunday of March, as the season of Lent begins. If our local numbers do something unexpected, we will adjust accordingly.

## ANY WEEK CAN BE A WEEK OF COMPASSION

"Love Remains" is the Week of Compassion theme this year, based on "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love," from I Corinthians 13:13. And we've decided that Love Remains even into March!

Because of some other fundraising events currently happening, the Outreach Committee has decided to celebrate Week of Compassion March 13-20, so we can give it better attention. We will let you know what our fundraising goal is soon. Watch for information in your Weekly Emails and the March newsletter. Thank you!

## From My View at the Table

Dear Church,

The Covenant Series that we are currently doing with other District 8 congregations gets its name from a line in the Preamble (see page 3) that says “We rejoice... in God’s covenant of love which binds us to God and to one another.” As I was reflecting on this with my D8CS small group, I was reminded that without the covenantal nature of our denomination, I would quite possibly never have found my way into ministry.

I was active in my local church, but it was involvement with church beyond the congregation that led me to ministry. Church camp (nine summers in a row at Camp Walter Scott in southern Illinois), Regional youth council, Regional Assemblies, and most exciting of all, General Assemblies were what helped me understand what church and ministry could be, for the sake of all God’s creation.

So I suppose it’s fitting that, though my primary vocation is as a “local” pastor, I have always built those broader connections into my ministry. This month is particularly full with “covenantal” work for me. I will finish up facilitating the final two sessions of the D8CS, as well as convening our monthly District clergy gathering. On the 19th, I will attend (online) the first of four quarterly Regional Board meetings for 2022. And on the 20th and 27th, I will be leading the Regional Nominating Committee as we get started preparing a slate of leaders to forward to the Regional Assembly this coming October. My commitments have changed over the years, but I’ve always been clear that these “extracurriculars” are part of the job! I hope you appreciate why.

grace & peace,  
*Pastor Rebecca*

### Pastor’s Schedule

Pastor Rebecca will be on vacation March 21-31.

## 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.

## UPDATE ON TESA

Tesa Hauser joined VLM in the spring of 2019 and then became our seminary intern in September 2019. In July 2020, after she finished her internship and graduated with her Master of Divinity degree from Claremont School of Theology, she became our part-time Ministerial Assistant. During that time, she has also been going through the ordination discernment process with our Regional Committee on Ministry.

On Sunday, January 16, the Elders & Deacons met with Tesa and voted unanimously and enthusiastically to recommend her to the COM for ordination. Tesa will have her ordination interview this month, on 2/23. We expect her to be approved without any hesitation!

After that, we will get to get started on the fun process of planning an ordination service and celebration! We will also be in discussion about all the appropriate adjustments to Tesa’s role with us once she is an ordained minister. For now, the part-time position she has with us is what fits best into her life.

## Lent Starts 3/2

Lent begins the 2nd of March, with Ash Wednesday. Our theme for Lent this year is “Temptation in the Wilderness” which aims to speak to some of the ways the pandemic has made life harder. We may even schedule some group hikes! This theme also works well with the timing of Easter, which is at the beginning of the week of Earth Day. Watch for more information about how you can help develop this series.

## District 8 Covenant Series

A number of folks from VLM have been participating in our District 8 Covenant Series that began last month and concludes on 2/9. The focus of this series is the Preamble to the Design, which is our unofficial Affirmation of Faith. You can find it at #355 in the Chalice Hymnal. Here's what some folks shared about their experience in this partnership study.

**Beckie Neely:** It is interesting to me how we all come from various backgrounds, and yet we all ended up as Disciples! Some are "baby" Disciples, and others have been Disciples forever!! We can all work together!

**Steve Bridwell:** The Covenant Series has given us newcomers to California a greater sense of camaraderie with other Disciples. We are steadily chipping away at the isolation caused by the constraints of the pandemic!

**Mary Jane Fay:** I knew the Disciples were a unity movement but had not realized how radically inclusive the denomination has been as reflected in the Preamble to the Design.

**Renee Bridwell:** I've really enjoyed getting to know people from other churches, by talking deeply about the nature of being Disciples. Important questions bring about deep sharing.

**Novels Tea**  
**Sunday, March 6**  
**3 pm, on Zoom**  
**Discussing**  
**"The Vanishing Half"**  
**by Brit Bennet.**

## Zoom Info

If you want to join us for any Zoom event, the easiest way to get there is to click the red link, just under the picture of the church in the Weekly Email.

But if you need to put in the Meeting ID, it is 619 463 9909 and our Passcode is VLMCC4210.

If you need to call in, dial 720-707-2699 and then enter the Meeting ID.

## Welcome Saturday

We will be welcoming our neighbors without shelter on Saturday, February 12th, this month. Every month, we offer a substantial hot breakfast, packed lunches, showers with toiletries and towels, and clothes. Our fund has been depleted, as food costs have gone up over the past few months. We greatly appreciate your financial support for this life-giving ministry! We can also use donations of sturdy, casual clothing. Thank you!

**Women's Lunch**  
**Wed., 2/2, 12 pm**  
**Olive Garden**  
**Beckie N, hosting**

**Lunch Bunch**  
**Wed., 1/16, 12 pm**  
**Location & Host**  
**TBA**

## IN OUR PRAYERS...

**JOYS** ~ Lots of our folks have gotten through covid with only minor symptoms, thanks to vaccines and booster shots! The Neelys accepted a great offer on their house! Brian McCreanor's ship is headed back toward San Diego now. The blessings shared at Welcome Saturday!

**CONCERNS** ~ Sympathy to Katie Yoder, whose brother Bill passed on 1/26 in OK. Many folks quarantining and recovering from covid and winter colds. Brenda Rorie-Baety, continuing immunotherapy for cancer. Sandy Hanna's sister Sue, in ICU in IL with new brain tumors, prognosis not good. Sally Johnston, diverticulitis. Todd Lesh's niece, Angela, diagnosed with MS. Our health care workers and teachers. Our Jewish siblings traumatized by the hostage situation at the synagogue in TX. Those impacted by the volcano in Tonga. Those impacted by the threat of a Russian invasion of Ukraine. People living in the midst of civil unrest in Sudan, Burkina Faso, Burma, Mali, Syria, and so many other places. Those impacted by the killings of journalists in Mexico.

## Happy Birthday!

- Feb. 9 ~ Jason Sisneros, Sr.
- Feb. 11 ~ Scott Tiemann
- Feb. 13 ~ Sandy Hanna
- Feb. 14 ~ RJ Lucchesi
- Feb. 21 ~ Amy Cliffe
- Feb. 22 ~ Jayden Sisneros
- Feb. 23 ~ Tim Cliffe
- Feb. 25 ~ Beckie Neely

## YOUTH NEWS

We will have a Partnership Youth Group Zoom on Sunday, February 6th at 3:00 pm. This will be a low-key, keep-your-video-off, retreat-like gathering, aimed at helping you decompress and find some space for spiritual peace.

We hope you'll join us. Same Zoom link as always. Feel free to invite a friend!

## ASL Class Offered

My SupaNatural Life, an organization our former intern RJ Lucchesi works with, is offering a free online class in American Sign Language, every Thursday in February, from 4:30-5:15 pm, for individuals and churches. If you would like to register, visit this link:

<http://www.tinyurl.com/ASLwithMSNL>

If you'd like to watch a video of an earlier event they held about the importance of improving access to church events for those who are deaf and hard of hearing, click this link: <https://youtu.be/9c24T2j3ayo>

## News from the Board

At their regular meeting on January 18th, the Board received financial reports for the first half of our fiscal year, indicating a 12/31/21 surplus of over \$9000. Thank you to all of our generous and faithful donors! It was also noted that the Welcome Saturday designated fund is almost completely depleted.

The Fellowship Committee reported that the Tenison family has offered to subsidize a project in memory of their parents, to provide new chairs for Bailey Hall. Tesa Hauser will be taking the lead on this project, and we hope to have the new chairs later this spring. If you have ideas about good new homes for the old chairs, please let us know.

The Board also approved appointments to the 2022 Nominating Committee: Cheryl Davis-Plotts (chair), Larry Knight, Jennefer Lehton, Beckie Neely, and Walter Rorie-Baety. They will begin their work in the coming weeks. Please hold this process in your prayers as we all discern how God is calling us to serve within this beloved congregation we call Vista La Mesa!

## Staff Assessments

We will be doing "annual" staff reviews over the next couple months. The goal of these reviews is to help each member of our staff understand and fulfill their role within our ministry better. If you have feedback about any staff member's work, please be in contact with Personnel Chair Mary Jane Fay, who can direct you to the appropriate person to talk to. All non-ministerial staff are evaluated by their Supervisory Teams, which include Mary Jane, Pastor Rebecca, and the relevant Ministry Committee Chair. Ministerial staff are evaluated by the members of their support committee and an equal number of non-committee lay leaders.

**SAVE YOUR  
STUFF!  
RUMMAGE SALE  
SATURDAY, MAY 7  
To support our  
Camp Fund.  
Please let Pastor  
Rebecca know if  
you can help out!  
Thanks!**

## *Flowers for Worship*

Every week, our worship space is beautified with a special fresh bouquet, sponsored by someone in celebration or memory of a loved one or special occasion. You could be that sponsor! Please check out the poster in Bailey Hall or our online sign-up at this link to sign up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e094ba5ac23abf58-vlmsunday>

When it's your turn, you are asked to transfer the flowers into a vase from the church cupboard before taking them home (or given them away), and then put the original vase under the cloth hanging over the display table. Please return the "church vase" when your flowers are done.

The cost is \$40, payable to VLM, check or online ("Flowers"). Thanks!

# February 2022 Worship Participants

	February 6	February 13	February 20	February 27
<b>Worship Leader</b>	Mary Jane Fay	Julie Germain	Marianna Kirwan	Larry Knight
<b>Lay Reader</b>	Walter Rorie-Baety	Beckie Neely	Mike Lewis	Patrice Hill
<b>Offering Invitation</b>	Tim Cliffe	Lace Watkins	Rebecca Littlejohn	Julie Germain
<b>Elders</b>	Beckie Neely Jerry Bailey	Bob Neely Karen Cliffe	Brenda Rorie-Baety Tim Cliffe	Walter Rorie-Baety Cheryl Davis-Plotts
<b>Deacons</b>	Al Flores Daphne Flores Susan Peterson	Patrice Hill Dick Penny Eliseo Sisneros Lyn Van Winkle	Jennefer Lehton John Lehton Lace Watkins	Ray Adsit Mary Allyn Fallon Tracy Stockdall
<b>Comm Set-up Comm Cln-up</b>	Tracy Stockdall & Team 4	Tracy Stockdall & Team 4	Tracy Stockdall & Team 4	Tracy Stockdall & Team 4
<b>CWW</b>	Nursery available	Nursery available	Nursery available	Nursery available
<b>Greeters</b>	Jerry & Norma Bailey	John Lehton Ray Adsit	Jennefer Lehton Larry Knight	Ray Adsit Bob Neely
<b>Counters</b>	1 Lyn Van Winkle 2 Jerry Bailey	1 Lace Watkins 2 Jenny Angione	1 John Lehton 2 Donna Morey	1 Walter Rorie-Baety 2 Mary Alynn Fallon
<b>Flowers</b>	OPEN	Karen Cliffe	Ilene Kiser	Walter Rorie-Baety

**Coffee Hour Hosts:** Flock 3 (Jennefer Lehton, John Lehton, Lace Watkins)

## 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/Fri 10-1

## CHURCH STAFF

Ministers: **The Members of VLMCC**

Pastor: **Rev. Rebecca Littlejohn**

Ministerial Assistant: **Tesa Hauser**

Admin & Comm Coor.: **Alicia M. Gervasi**

Music Director: **Deborah Wilson**

Nursery: **Stephanie Cadiero**

Custodian: **Scott Tiemann**

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