

# The Christian Visitor

MARCH 2023 ~ VISTA LA MESA CHRISTIAN CHURCH

## Lent 2023 ~ Almost

Lent has begun. We **almost** had an Ash Wednesday service, but events conspired to make that too much. We hope you'll join us for the season, as we move through our "Almost" Lenten sermon series. We are blessed to have a few guest preachers who will be with us through the next few weeks.

Feb. 26 – "Only Almost" – Pastor Rebecca

Mar. 5 – "Almost Enough" – Pastor Tesa

Mar. 12 – "Almost Ready" – Rev. Brian McCreanor

Mar. 19 – "Almost Perfect" – Rev. Sadie Cullumber

Mar. 26 – "Almost Surely" – Pastor Rebecca

Apr. 2 – "Almost There" – Pastor Rebecca

Sometimes almost is adequate; sometimes it isn't. But blessedly, our constant state of almost-but-not-quite is held within the arms of God's all-sufficient grace. That is where we will be finding our rest and hope during this season of preparation.

## Sunday Morning Study

We would love to have you join the conversation in our Sunday Morning Study, which meets at 9 am in Bailey Hall and on Zoom. This month, we will be looking at scriptures that speak to relations between church folks and non-churchgoers and discussing how the issues these passages raise can help us learn to connect with people outside our congregation more effectively. This is an important conversation for the moment we're in as a church, and the conversation will be richer with you involved, so please come study, pray, and reflect with us!

## 75th Anniversary Fund

We have made a great start on our 75th Anniversary Fund! Thanks to numerous donors, we have already received almost \$7000! Our goal is \$20,000, and we hope to have most of that collected by Easter.

The funds we are raising are for three primary categories. You will hear more about each of these three during Moments for Mission later this month. We hope you will make a contribution to this effort. You can give in person or online. Thanks!

We are continuing the celebration this month, with one of our 75th Anniversary guest preachers, Rev. Sadie Cullumber, who grew up and was ordained here at Vista La Mesa Christian Church. Sadie will be preaching for us on March 19th, as part of our Lenten "Almost" Series. You won't want to miss it!

## 1948 Movie Event

On Friday, March 31, we will be hosting the community for a viewing of "1948: Creation & Catastrophe" at 6 pm. This film explores the events of that year, which Israelis celebrate as the creation of their nation and Palestinians mourn as the "Nakba" or catastrophe that made them refugees. Film producer Andy Trimlett and featured political scientist Dr. Farid Abdel-Nour from SDSU will be with us for a Q&A following the film.

We hope you will join us and invite your friends. You can learn more and RSVP at this Facebook event link: <https://www.facebook.com/events/527741912836857/?ref=newsfeed>

## From My View at the Table

Dear Church,

Because of the spiritual practices traditionally associated with Lent – fasting, confession, repentance, reflection and so on – we often think of it as a solemn and even difficult season. But it's also true that the name, the word "Lent" comes from the same root as "lengthen" and refers to the fact that (in the Northern hemisphere), the days are getting longer again. Lent is, at some level, Christian spring.

And yet, the season is clearly not about flowers blooming or birds singing. We'll have plenty of time for all that during Eastertide. The "springtime" of Lent is more about the work that the seed is doing while it's still underground.

Paul writes in First Corinthians 15:36 that "what you sow does not come to life unless it dies." The little seed is buried under the dirt and must allow its seed pod to be broken open before the tiniest little stem can begin to work its way to the surface.

Such an understanding of Lent feels like it speaks to where we are at VLM these days. Things are pressing in from all directions – grief, clean-up from the break-in, concerns about who will answer the calls of the Nominating Committee, and honest anxieties about our future. But the dirt that surrounds a seed is not just a barrier, but also the grounding that will nourish the plant as it grows. The pain of the seed pod breaking open is part of growth. The rain that threatens to wash us away is also one of the things that keep us alive.

For Lent this year, perhaps we can pray with the imagery of a seed ALMOST about to break through to where the sun shines.

grace & peace,

*Pastor Rebecca*

### Pastor's Schedule

Pastor Rebecca will be on vacation March 1-14, visiting family in Iowa and Michigan.

## Tesa's Take

Waking up early is not easy for me; I prefer to stay up late and then sleep in. I am jealous of people who can wake up early and start their day when it is still dark outside, moving about in the stillness and calmness of the morning before the hustle and bustle. On days when I wake up early on the weekends, I like to make an effort to go to the beach. Even though San Diego is known for our sunsets, there is something about a sunrise that fills me with possibilities and hope. As the light grows on the sand and shore, I think of Psalm 113:2-4: "Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time on and forevermore. From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised. The Lord is high above all nations and his glory above the heavens."

I think of those who came before me who may have had these verses on their lips watching a sunrise years before me, who praised God and were also filled with the hope of knowing our loving and gracious God. This God thought to be "above all nations and his glory above the heaven" is Emmanuel – God with us. Even in the unknown of the day, in the "almost" of the day, we praise the God whose grace and mercies are new every day!

Vaya con Dios,

*Pastor Tesa*

## Elders Meeting 3/18

The Elders are trying something new for our meetings. We will meet on Saturday, March 18, from 10 am till 12:30 pm. Please bring a snack to share. We will be building on the conversation we began at our meeting in February, so bring your ears, your mind, your heart and your soul.

## 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.

## MEMORIAL SERVICES

Plans are being made for a memorial service for Lace Watkins, tentatively scheduled for Saturday, March 25, at 1:00 pm. Other remembrances may also be held; we will share information as details are finalized.

We hope to hold a memorial service for Gene Blumenfeld, most likely in early April.

We hope you will join us in remembering these two beloved VLMers.

## *Easter is April 9th!*

Lent is Lent. But Lent also means that Easter is ALMOST here! Let's be ready!

Orders for Easter lilies, sponsored in honor or memory of loved ones, will open on March 19. Plants are \$10 each.

Also, make plans now to be here for worship on Resurrection Sunday and join us for a potluck celebration afterwards!

**Don't forget to set your clocks an hour ahead before you go to bed on March 11th!**

## *Novels Tea*

Novels Tea will meet on Zoom at 3 pm on Sunday, April 16, to discuss "The Actual Star" by Monica Byrne. Because we have seven weeks this time, we're reading a longer book!

**Thank you for your contributions to our Week of Compassion Special Offering! All donations over the first \$300 will be designated for earthquake relief in Turkey & Syria. Our total will be announced soon.**

## **Kids + Pretzels = Fun!**

In February, our resident Pastry Chef, Claudette Toland led our kids through a morning of making fancy treats out of Oreo cookies, for Mardi Gras. Everyone had a great time, and our kids carried home their yummy creations!

Chef Claudette is at it again this month, with pretzel making for St. Joseph's Day on March 19th. Parents, please mark the date and make sure to have your young ones here!

**Lunch Bunch  
Wednesday,  
March 15, 12 pm  
Claim Jumper  
Jerry & Norma  
Bailey, hosts**

## **In Our PRAYERS...**

JOYS & THANKSGIVINGS ~ Contact the Pastor for prayer updates.  
CONCERNS ~

## *Happy Birthday!*

- Mar. 1 - Micah Cliffe
- Mar. 3 - Brenda Rorie-Baety,  
Ruth Tiffany
- Mar. 4 - Julie Germain
- Mar. 5 - Susan Peterson
- Mar. 14 - Andy Cliffe
- Mar. 26 - Daniel Cliffe
- Mar. 31 - Amanda Dohring

## *Happy Anniversary!*

- Mar. 6 - Sara & Troy Gurling

## A LOVE LETTER TO VLM

FROM RAY ADSIT

Why do I belong to Vista La Mesa Christian Church? The same reason that many of you do. Someone took me, invited me, or when I visited, welcomed me. Mom took us kids to the church at a very early age. I have a picture of me with my class mates at age 7 or so in front of Myrtle Creek Christian Church. I went to church camp at age 12 or so.

When I started college I received a hand-written invitation to a party for the college students at Oregon State. I met some nice people (including cute girls) so I became involved. After I got married we took our children to church. A large one in Evanston while I was at Northwestern University and a small one in West Allis, Wisconsin. When I came to San Diego in 1965, we joined a start-up church, but I had to leave after the divorce.

I was welcomed at University CC and was very involved in Sunday school class and scholarship programs (even though I am not a professional educator). As with all activities I became less involved, and then I was asked to play golf with the minister and friends at VLMCC. At that point Victoria and I decided to join VLMCC.

Over the years I have had a number of ministers that I have worked with on various programs. I also have had a couple of very distinguished bible scholars to teach me. The Christian Church is my church and I continue to work in it.

## VLM Shirts & Hats

It's time to get your order in for VLM shirts and hats! They are all dark green with our anniversary logo and slogan "Sharing Christ's Welcome!" Short-sleeve t-shirts are \$18, long-sleeve shirts are \$20, and hats are \$15.

We will be sending in the order at the beginning of April. Any items not paid for by then will not be ordered. We will check back with you before submitting our order, if you haven't paid yet, to see if you still want your items. Watch for Mary Alynn Fallon during coffee hour to place your order!

## The Board of VLMCC

The General Board will meet on Wednesday, March 29th at 6:00 pm on Zoom. Board members, please turn in your reports by Friday, March 17th. The Administrative Committee will meet on Tuesday, March 21st at 6:00 pm on Zoom to prepare the agenda for the Board meeting.

Please keep the work of the 2023 Nominating Committee in your prayers as well. They have begun their process of discernment and calling, to see who God is inviting into service here at VLM. It's probably a good idea to pray, as well, for openness to what God is inviting you to do! Members of the committee include Cheryl Davis-Plotts (chair), Jennefer Lehton, Michael Lewis, Cathy Mullican, and Brenda Rorie-Baety.

## Security Updates

As you have likely heard by now, our church office was broken into the night of February 19th. As far as anyone could tell, the intruders did not enter any other part of the building. It appears they gained entry by picking the lock on the outside office door. Some of our electronic equipment was stolen, along with the locked box containing all our keys. Because of this, we are in the process of having all the outside doors re-keyed and/or upgraded. The outside office door is currently bolted shut, pending an upgrade to its latching system. All doors that were opened with the outdoor master have already been re-keyed. If you need a key to the building, please see Pastor Rebecca or our secretary Krista Trimlett. Supplies are limited so distribution will be prioritized, but we will make copies as needed.

Later this month, the Board will be discussing our security measures and deciding what sorts of additional precautions we want to take. As you can imagine, there are numerous expenses involved in the recovery from this break-in. Unfortunately, they are likely to come in just under our insurance deductible. However, we are blessed to have investment funds that will make it possible to cover these costs without taking away from our ministry.

# March 2023 Worship Participants

	March 5	March 12	March 19	March 26
<b>Worship Leader</b>	Mary Jane Fay	Julie Germain	Larry Knight	Marianna Kirwan
<b>Lay Reader</b>	Jerry Bailey	Deborah Wilson	Tracy Stockdall	Michael Lewis
<b>Offering Invitation</b>	Julie Germain	Tesa Hauser	Rebecca Littlejohn	Rebecca Littlejohn
<b>Elders</b>	Larry Knight Ray Adsit	Marianna Kirwan Renee Bridwell	Michael Lewis Mandy Dohring	Brenda Rorie-Baety Steve Bridwell
<b>Deacons</b>	Helene Sisneros Lyn Van Winkle	Jenny Angione Mary Alynn Fallon Susan Peterson	Patrice Hill Jennefer Lehton John Lehton	Al Flores Daphne Flores Tracy Stockdall
<b>Comm Set-up Comm Cln-up</b>	Lyn Van Winkle Helene Sisneros	Lyn Van Winkle Helene Sisneros	Lyn Van Winkle Helene Sisneros	Lyn Van Winkle Helene Sisneros
<b>AV Tech Zoom Tech</b>	Jenny Angione Mary Alynn Fallon	Karen Cliffe Julie Germain	Karen Cliffe Tesa Hauser	Jenny Angione Julie Germain
<b>Greeters</b>	Jerry & Norma Bailey	John Lehton Ray Adsit	Jennefer Lehton Larry Knight	Ray Adsit
<b>Counters</b>	Mary Alynn Fallon Jerry Bailey	Steve Bridwell John Lehton	Renee Bridwell Donna Morey	Lyn Van Winkle Jenny Angione
<b>Flowers</b>	Brenda Rorie-Baety	Lyn Van Winkle	Open	Amy Cliffe

**Coffee Hour Hosts:** Al Flores, Daphne Flores, Tracy Stockdall

## 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:** Tues/Thur/Fri 9-12

## CHURCH STAFF

Ministers: **The Members of VLMCC**

Pastor: **Rev. Rebecca Littlejohn**

Ministerial Assistant: **Tesa Hauser**

Secretary: **Krista Trimlett**

Music Director: **Deborah Wilson**

Nursery: **Stephanie Cadiero**

Custodian: **Scott Tiemann**

Church Tel. (619) 463-9909

Office E-mail: [admin@vlmcc.com](mailto:admin@vlmcc.com)

Pastor's E-mail: [pastor@vlmcc.com](mailto:pastor@vlmcc.com)

Church website: [www.vlmcc.org](http://www.vlmcc.org)