

The Christian Visitor

DECEMBER 2022 ~ VISTA LA MESA CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Christmas Concert 12/11

We hope you'll join us on Sunday, December 11th, at 5:30 pm, for our annual Christmas Concert! Our Choir has been working hard to prepare a beautiful and fun collection of holiday songs for you.

We would like to ask everyone to dress as festively as possible that night, because we want to take a big group picture, for inclusion in the photo directory we'll be making next year for our anniversary.

We'll also be having a bake sale that night, with the proceeds going to our 75th Anniversary Fund. Please bring your goodies in that morning, if at all possible, so we can make sure everything is labeled and priced on time.

During the "intermission" in addition to our group photo, we'll be having some fun with a Christmas trivia game.

You won't want to miss it, so mark your calendar now and be here for the holiday fun!

Christmas Eve Service

Our traditional Candlelight Christmas Eve Service will be held Saturday, December 24th at 6:00 pm in the Sanctuary and on Zoom.

This is a wonderful time to bring your whole family and even invite your neighbors who may not have a service to go to.

Our offering that night will support the Pastor's Discretionary Fund, which is used to support emergency needs for members and friends.

Caroling Party 12/17

Our re-invented Caroling Party was lots of fun last year, so we're going to do it again, on Saturday, December 17th! If you'd like to go caroling to various church members' houses, please meet at the church at 2 pm. We will car pool to our destinations.

We'll meet back at the church around 5 pm, for pizza and other goodies. Please bring some snacks or goodies to share if you can. We'll have a couple fire pits set up in the parking lot, so people can mingle inside and out. There will be holiday games as well. You don't have to go caroling to join the after-party!

If you'd like us to come caroling to your house or want to suggest a destination, please let Pastor Rebecca know by December 15th.

Christmas Day "Comfy Church"

Christmas is on a Sunday this year, so we're making special plans for worship that morning. Our "comfy church" service will be at 10:30, with no Bible study beforehand.

Instead of coffee hour, we will have a few holiday goodies set up on a table in the back of the Sanctuary. If you'd like to bring something to share, please do! You're also invited to bring your favorite hot drink with you to enjoy along with the treats during the service, or help yourself to some of the hot cider or coffee we'll have available. You can even wear your (presentable in public) pajamas if you want to!

During worship, we will be singing carols by request out of the hymnal, and Pastor Rebecca will read us a Christmas story, before we share in communion.

From My View at the Table

Dear Church,

The past two years have taught us a lot about embracing the unexpected, even if a lot of it was stuff we'd have preferred not to know. Advent is a good season to reflect on that, especially as it leads us into a new year. Every year, we go through the familiar holiday rituals, singing the songs, making special foods, and yet, at the heart of the season is something we can barely wrap our minds around.

Our theme for Advent this year is "Expecting a Mystery." And that's exactly what Advent is. We know we're anticipating something, but every year (indeed, each day) God's presence in our world shows up in unexpected ways.

We will do a lot of the same things we always do in December – singing, eating, visiting with friends. I hope you will join us in these traditions that bring such joy. Just remember that God can break through at any moment, in lovely and mysterious ways!

In our sermon series, we will be watching for the unanticipated work of God through the stories of Jesus' and John's parents, Zechariah & Elizabeth and Mary & Joseph. By looking around within their stories, we may find some hints about how to roll with the unexpected mysteries that arise in our own lives, as God's blessing is made manifest around us.

In addition to our sermon explorations, there will be other surprises to watch for. You never know when a word of Hope might burst forth! If we can keep alert, watching and waiting, the Word may take on flesh right in front of our eyes, in ways both surprising and comforting.

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.

Tesa's Take

Advent is here! Growing up, I heard about Advent, but I never knew what the word meant or what the season was about; it's a season of anticipation. A time of excitement waiting for the coming Christ, the baby Jesus, God with us, Emmanuel, waiting for Jesus to be born and the Jesus who will come once again. It is hard to remember this when this season can be stressful and not always joyful.

Then I think about Mary, who is expecting something she probably never thought would happen to her; we know her song of praise, but it must have been hard to reconcile. She did not know what to expect for nine months, and then another wrench gets thrown into Mary's life: having to travel for a census while pregnant. Nothing probably happened like Mary thought or envisioned, but it seems she leaned on God to keep going. We can lean on God too when unexpected things occur, God who has promised peace, joy, love, and hope. May it be so.

Vaya con Dios,
Pastor Tesa

Christmas Baking!

You have a couple chances to share your baking skills this month, as we celebrate Advent and Christmas.

We will be having a Bake Sale at our Choir Concert on 12/11. Please bring your items in on Saturday (during Welcome Saturday) or Sunday morning, so everything can be arranged before the sale opens at 5:30 pm that night.

You could also bring some goodies to share on Christmas morning, if you'd like!

Choir Christmas Party

The Choir will celebrate and rehearse at 6 pm on Thursday, December 15, at Karen & Tim Cliffe's house. Please bring a dish to share and an inexpensive gift to exchange. Family members are welcome to attend, but might be asked to sing!

Poinsettias!

We will be taking orders for poinsettias to decorate the Sanctuary through Sunday, December 11th, when the first batch will arrive. More will come on 12/18.

The plants are \$10 each and can be dedicated to anyone or anything you like.

You may take your flowers home with you after the Christmas Eve or Christmas morning service.

Gifts for El Nido

We would love your help in providing gifts for our El Nido families this year. The sign-up is entirely online, so contact Pastor Rebecca if you need help with that. Click this link to sign up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050548a4a62caa8-vlms>

We have three families, but only six people total, so please only sign up for 1 or 2 gifts at first, so that more people can participate.

Gifts should be wrapped and tagged with the person's name and family number. Please put them in Room 4 and check your gifts off the list there, by Sunday, December 18th.

Christmas Lunch Bunch

December's Lunch Bunch (12/21 at noon) will be a Christmas party in Bailey Hall! Please bring your own lunch. Dessert will be provided.

We're also going to have an ornament exchange, so bring an ornament, new or pre-loved, to give away.

To RSVP or if you'd like to help decorate or bring dessert, contact Mary Alynn Fallon or Jennefer Lehton.

Christmas Card Tree

You are invited to bring in a Christmas card to greet your whole church family at once. If you'd like to donate the money saved on postage, you may put a donation in the Santa box under the tree. All those gifts will go to the Christmas Special Offering. Thank you!

Staff Christmas Gift

Every year at Christmas, we like to show our appreciation to our dedicated staff with a special Christmas bonus. Elders Chair Steve Bridwell will coordinate the collection and distribution of these gifts, so contact him if you have any questions.

Happy Birthday!

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

Dec. 31 - Laura McCreanor

Happy Anniversary!

DEC. 28

Skip & Susan Peterson

IN OUR PRAYERS...

JOYS ~ For prayer concerns please contact the office at 619-463-9909.

Board Approves 75th Plan

At the November meeting, the Board of VLMCC approved a general timeline & plan for celebrating our 75th anniversary in 2023. We hope you will be involved!

Love Letters to VLM – if you would like to write a short piece about why VLM matters to you, please let Pastor Rebecca know. We will be including one in this newsletter each month in 2023.

Outdoor Banner – a banner with a new logo & slogan will be hung after worship on January 1st!

Celebration Day – Regional Minister Richie Sanchez will preach for us on 1/29, followed by a luncheon and tree dedication. We hope to open orders for anniversary t-shirts, hats & aprons that day as well.

There are many other plans for the rest of the year, including additional guest preachers, parties, capital projects, and commemorations.

The Board also approved purchasing some upgraded tech equipment for worship and delayed withdrawing funds from the MEF, to see if end-of-year giving eliminates our 10/31 deficit of ~\$5000.

75th Anniversary Fund

As part of our celebration plan, the Board approved a fundraising goal for our 75th Anniversary Fund of \$20,000, aimed at the following goals:

\$3000 for a “sharing the joy” donation to Interfaith Shelter

~\$9,500 for two capital projects, replacing the light fixtures in Bailey Hall with LED fixtures and overhauling the website so its security can be assured

~\$7,500 for celebration projects, including guest preachers, meals, trees, an outdoor banner, publishing a history, commemorative pens and Christmas ornaments, and new liturgical banners for the Sanctuary.

As of this writing, we’ve already collected close to \$2500, from our preliminary gifts. We will be sending an official appeal in January, in hopes of having most of the funds collected by Easter. Thank you for your support!

YOUTH SKATING PARTY

All youth and children are invited to join us for a holiday skating party on Sunday, December 4th. We plan to leave from the church around 12:45, and head toward Liberty Station, where we will find some pizza and then go skating.

Lunch and skating admission (including skates) will be covered by the church for all youth and kids. Parents are welcome to come with, especially with our younger children, and expenses can be covered as needed.

WELCOME SATURDAY

Our Welcome Saturday Fund is doing really well, thanks to you, our generous donors! There are few other kinds of donations we’re in need of right now, including men’s pants (all sizes), towels and wash cloths, and reusable grocery bags. Please put your donations in the Welcome Saturday storage room. See H  l  ne or Pastor Rebecca if you have questions.

We will be providing gift bags to our guests for Christmas this month, thanks to our generous volunteers!

Christmas Special Offering

Our Christmas Special Offering goes to support the ministries of the Pacific Southwest Region, including camps, Regional staff supporting our congregations and so much more! We will receive this over-and-above offering on December 11 & 18 in worship, and you can also give online at www.vlmcc.org. Any donations given in the Santa box at the Card Tree will also be part of this special offering.

Worship Flowers for 2023

We’d love to have you help us fill in the Worship Flower Sponsor Sign-up for 2023, as fast as we can. You can sign up on the new poster that’s up in Bailey Hall, or follow this link to sign up online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e094ba5ac23abf58-vlmsunday1>.

The arrangements are \$40, payable to the church. You can dedicate your flowers to anyone or anything you like. You can take them home with you after worship, or send them home with someone else who needs a little cheer.

December 2022 Worship Participants

	December 4	December 11	December 18	December 25
Worship Leader	Mary Jane Fay	Julie Germain	Larry Knight	Marianna Kirwan
Lay Reader	Jennefer Lehton	Brenda Rorie-Baety	Cheryl Davis-Plotts	N/A
Offering Invitation	Rebecca Littlejohn	Lace Watkins	Rebecca Littlejohn	Rebecca Littlejohn
Elders	Marianna Kirwan Mandy Dohring	Karen Cliffe Renee Bridwell	Brenda Rorie-Baety Tim Cliffe	Michael Lewis Steve Bridwell
Deacons	Hélène Sisneros Lyn Van Winkle Lace Watkins	Jenny Angione Mary Alynn Fallon Susan Peterson	Patrice Hill Jennefer Lehton John Lehton	Al Flores Daphne Flores Tracy Stockdall
Comm Prep & Clean up	Mary Alynn, Jenny, Susan	Mary Alynn, Jenny, Susan	Mary Alynn, Jenny, Susan	Mary Alynn, Jenny, Susan
Greeters	Jerry & Norma Bailey	John Lehton Ray Adsit	Jennefer Lehton Larry Knight	Mary Jane Fay Michael Lewis
AV Tech Zoom Tech	Jenny Angione Julie Germain	Karen Cliffe Rebecca Littlejohn	Mary Alynn Fallon Karen Cliffe	Julie Germain Tesa Hauser
Counters	Mary Alynn Fallon Jerry Bailey	Renee Bridwell Lace Watkins	John Lehton Jenny Angione	Lyn Van Winkle Steve Bridwell
Flowers	Brenda Rorie-Baety	Sara & Troy Gurling	Tracy Stockdall	Beckie & Bob Neely

Coffee Hour Hosts: Team 1 (Lyn Van Winkle, Hélène Sisneros, 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, between Interstate 8 and the 94 Freeway, and very near the #852 bus line.

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

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

CHURCH STAFF

Senior Pastor: **Rev. Rebecca Littlejohn**
 Associate Pastor: **Rev. Tesa Hauser**
 Admin & Comm Coord.: **Alicia M. Gervasi**
 Music Director: **Deborah Wilson**
 Nursery: **Stephanie Cadiero**
 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