

The Christian Visitor

VISTA LA MESA CHRISTIAN CHURCH ~ JUNE 2023

Congregational Meeting – 6/11

In anticipation of our new ministry year beginning on July 1st, we will hold our annual Congregational Meeting after worship on Sunday, June 11th.

There are a couple of important business items we will address in this meeting, which have been prepared by various committees, with final oversight from our Board. We will vote on the Slate of Nominees for various positions of lay leadership. We will also vote on the proposed budget for 2023-2024.

All members will receive a packet of information for this meeting by email the first week of June, or you may pick up a hard copy on Sunday June 4th. Please review the materials carefully and contact Pastor Rebecca if you have any questions. We hope to see you on June 11th!

Ecclesi-who-stes?

We will begin a three-week study of the book of Ecclesiastes on June 4, and we would love to have you join us. We meet in Bailey Hall each Sunday at 9:00 am, and we also have the class available on Zoom. This will be our last study before a summer break. (No class on 6/25.)

Over the next few weeks, we are also going to be asking for your input on what you would like to explore in our Adult Study in the fall. Please consider what part of the Bible or other questions of faith you'd like to learn more about. You can share your ideas with our class leaders or directly with Pastor Rebecca or Pastor Tesa.

Graduation Party!

During coffee hour on June 18

Bring cards for Al Flores and Hano Gossman!

Installation & Celebration

On Sunday, June 25, we will gather for worship and install all the lay leaders who will be serving in the 2023-2024 ministry year. This is a service we hold every year, but it will be extra special this year because our former pastors, Revs. Don & Susan Gonzales Dewey will be here to preach for us that day!

After worship, we will hold a celebration potluck, when we will honor those who are completing terms of service and others. We hope you will plan to stay for lunch and bring a dish or two to share. This would be a great day to wear your VLM shirt, to add to the festive spirit.

Leadership Retreat

All Elders, Deacons, and Board Members are asked to mark your calendars now for July 14-15, when we will hold our first Leadership Retreat since the pandemic! We will have a potluck on Friday evening, and then meet again from 9-1 on Saturday.

This will be an important chance for all of us to get on the same page as the ministry year begins, so we hope you'll attend. We will spend time in prayer and conversation about how God is calling us to live out our mission at this point in our history. We will also consider new ways of carrying out our ministries.

From My View at the Table

Dear Church,

We Disciples, as a faith tradition, have long cherished liberty as a value central to the way we construct and live out the shared life of our congregations. One of the corollaries of liberty is diversity, because when we're all free to be who God has made us, we don't end up all alike. This makes for a wonderfully rich community. In these times when some churches seem intent on enforcing conformity, our message of liberty and diversity is a breath of the Spirit's fresh air. We have been working on becoming clear on the centrality of that message, so that those who need to hear it can.

Another corollary of our cherished liberty is creativity. When we are free to reflect the particular image of God that is planted within each of us, the creative nature of God blossoms. Often, our creativity is repressed when we are exhausted or fearful of expressing ourselves honestly. Jesus is right: the truth, in all its creative beauty, will set us free! It is my prayer that God's blessings of creativity will take root and blossom for us in the second half of this milestone year. A clearer vision of what God needs us to do in this place has been taking shape. Now it's time to start expressing that in every way we can.

When are the moments you've felt most creative? Does creativity intimidate you? It is my hope that we can all reconnect to the creative Spirit God has placed within us, so that we can more fully reflect God's love to all!

grace & peace,

Pastor Rebecca

Pastor's Schedule

Pastor Rebecca will be off June 20-21 to celebrate her 20th anniversary with Todd.

Tesa's Take

Dear Church,

I have some news to share this month as we prepare for our congregational meeting and installation of our lay leaders for the year. I am resigning as Associate Pastor at the end of this calendar year (December 31, 2023). After that, I will take a brief time away from Vista La Mesa to rest and close the chapter. There is no exact timeframe or date of return, but I won't stay away for too long.

I am so grateful for this community that has molded me and helped me become the minister I am today. God has been faithful, and you all have answered the call to teach, guide, and raise the next generation of leaders. Vista La Mesa is a community where people can come to feel accepted, cared for, and meet God/Jesus/Spirit/Divine in a multitude of ways. It has been an honor to serve this congregation as Associate Pastor, but please know that this doesn't mean our time together in ministry will end.

A special "Thank You!" to my Committee, Karen Cliffe (chair), Mary Jane Fay, Amanda Dohring, and Steve Bridwell, for their support and guidance. And a special "Thank You!" to Pastor Rebecca for her mentorship and leadership; I could not have done it without her. I would love to talk if you have any questions as we go through this transition together.

Vaya con Dios,

Pastor Tesa

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.

Deacon Training

Sunday, June 4th,
after worship.

For all new deacons and
anyone wanting a refresher!

Pen Pals for Our Church Campers!

We have three kids going to camp this month, so it's time to dig out your stationery and brush up on your pen-pal skills. Edward Gurling and Jennings McCreanor will be at Chi Rho Camp, June 18-23. Tennyson McCreanor will be at Mini Camp June 18-20. The address for mail is Camper's Name/Camp Name (Chi Rho or Mini), Loch Leven Camp, 36910 Mill Creek Road, Mentone, CA 92359. Make sure to send it early enough to they'll get it while they're there. Thanks for making camp special!

Novels Tea

will meet on
Sunday, July 9
on Zoom at 3 pm
to discuss "Go Tell It
on the Mountain" by
James Baldwin.

Sharing the Joy!

As part of our 75th Anniversary Campaign, we made a donation to Interfaith Shelter Network. We recently received this note.

Dear Congregation Members,

I was very pleasantly surprised to receive a check today in the amount of \$3000 in acknowledgement of your 75th Anniversary "Sharing the Joy" initiative. What a thoughtful and generous way to celebrate such a notable milestone. Be assured that your contribution will serve many homeless individuals who live on the fringes of life.

We thank you for this generous donation and honor you in your 75th Anniversary celebration.

With sincere gratitude,

Judy Mantle, Executive Director, Interfaith Shelter Network

OFFERING ENVELOPES

We hope to have your personalized offering envelopes here before the start of the new ministry year in July. We are only getting monthly envelopes now, but extras are always available. Watch for info!

Lunch Bunch

**Wed., June 21
12:00 pm
Omelette Factory
(Santee)
Mary Alynn
Fallon, host**

**We will be hosting the
East County Homeless
Task Force for their
General Meeting on
Wednesday, June
28th, in the morning.**

Happy Birthday!

- 6/1 - Teannah Townsend
- 6/5 - Marianna Kirwan
- 6/9 - Coral Yoder
- 6/14 - Mary Ann E'Golf
- 6/17 - Jason Sisneros, Jr.
- 6/19 - Christi Neely Carlson
- 6/23 - Jim Fallon
- 6/28 - Marley Ramirez
- 6/29 - Heather Morey
- 6/30 - Rebekah Morey

Happy Anniversary!

JUNE 20
Jim & Mary Alynn Fallon

JUNE 21
Dick & Noralea Penny
Rebecca & Todd
Littlejohn-Lesh

JUNE 22
Tim & Karen Cliffe

In Our Prayers...

JOYS & CONCERNS - Please contact Rebecca for prayers.

A LOVE LETTER TO VLM

FROM KAREN CLIFFE

What are the first words that come to mind when you think about VLM? For me, that is an easy question – FAMILY.

My family first came to VLM in the late 1970's, when my parents went through a "church phase." My dad had been involved with a Disciples church in college (where he met Dick and Noralea Penny!!), so choosing VLM wasn't difficult. Though my parents moved out of the church phase pretty quickly, my two older sisters kept on attending. At the time, I was attending an Episcopal church with my best friend. The Episcopal church did not have a youth group, and so at some point I started going to beach days with the youth group at VLM. Ultimately, I ended up at VLM with my sisters. This is, of course, where I first met the Cliffe family, including my future husband, Tim. But back to the word FAMILY. In 1985, Tim and I were married here at VLM, and in 1993 we brought our first child, Brittany, into the world and into the church FAMILY. In 1996, our son Micah joined us, and the rest is history.

Raising our children here at VLM has been one of our greatest joys. Here at VLM our children learned what I had learned – that the word FAMILY means more than just mother, father, sister, brother, aunt, uncle, grandma, grandpa, etc. FAMILY can be so much more expansive and inclusive. The relationships my children developed with folks like Paul & Lavina Epler, Ed & Anita Gurling, Jerry & Norma Bailey, George & Elaine Bailey, Grace & Al Van Winkle (and the list goes on...) demonstrated to them that making real, long term connections with folks who are different from you (in age, in experience, in so many ways) enriches your life in ways you may not even recognize at the time. This has been the case not just for my children, but of course for me as well.

Now, to be clear, just like relationships within the nuclear family, relationships with the church family are not always easy or comfortable. There have been tensions, times of difficulty and pain, but way more times of joy and love. And so I will end my love letter here – with the emphasis on love. This church FAMILY has given my family so much – and it is a joy and honor to be part of this community. Love you all!

Report from the Board

The General Board met on May 24th, primarily to prepare for the annual Congregational Meeting on June 11th. The Board approved the proposed budget for 2023-2024 and received the report from the 2023 Nominating Committee. Both will be sent to the members of the congregation soon.

The Board also received reports from our pastors, committee chairs, and others. Pastor Tesa Hauser has officially announced her impending resignation at the end of 2023. (See page 2 for more.) Personnel Chair Mary Jane Fay reported on the review process that happened this spring and ongoing efforts at state-required trainings. The Worship Committee reported that, due to decreased participation, the weekly worship flower arrangements will only continue through the rest of 2023. Special arrangements will be encouraged, as desired.

Is It I, Lord?

Have you been feeling like you might be ready to get more involved at VLM? As the new ministry year begins, this is a great time to try out a new role. Let Pastor Rebecca know if you're interested in any of the following:

Worship Greeter – hands out bulletins & welcome packets 10-10:30 on Sunday mornings, usually serves one particular Sunday each month

Lay Reader – reads the first scripture reading in worship, on a rotation with variable frequency (usually no more than once every two months).

AV Tech – wakes up the AV system on Sunday mornings (9:45 or so) and gets everything ready, flips the slides during worship, and then puts everything away; currently once or twice a month.

Zoom Tech – hosts our Zoom congregation, including letting people in, recording the service, monitoring the chat box, sharing prayer concerns, and shifting the camera angles; currently once or twice a month.

Offering Counter – work with a partner to log and count the Sunday offering; once a month (must be approved).

June 2023 Worship Participants

	June 4	June 11	June 18	June 25
Worship Leader	Tim Cliffe	Mary Jane Fay	Bob Neely	Larry Knight
Lay Reader	Tracy Stockdall	Michael Lewis	Daphne Flores	Jennefer Lehton
Offering Invitation	Rebecca Littlejohn	Steve Bridwell	Tesa Hauser	Rebecca Littlejohn
Elders	Julie Germain Ray Adsit	Beckie Neely Renee Bridwell	Marianna Kirwan Mandy Dohring	Michael Lewis Steve Bridwell
Deacons	Helene Sisneros Lyn Van Winkle	Jenny Angione Mary Alynn Fallon Susan Peterson	Patrice Hill Ilene Kiser Jennefer Lehton John Lehton	Al Flores Daphne Flores Tracy Stockdall
Communion Prep	Tracy Stockdall	Tracy Stockdall	Daphne Flores	Daphne Flores
AV Tech Zoom Tech	Karen Cliffe Julie Germain	Mary Alynn Fallon Tesa Hauser	Mary Alynn Fallon Julie Germain	Karen Cliffe Tesa Hauser
Greeters	Jerry & Norma Bailey	John Lehton Ray Adsit	Daphne Flores Michael Lewis	Mary Jane Fay Jerry Bailey
Counters	Lyn Van Winkle John Lehton	Steve Bridwell Donna Morey	Mary Alynn Fallon Tracy Stockdall	Jerry Bailey Jenny Angione
Flowers	Michael Lewis Marianna Kirwan	Mary Alynn Fallon	Tracy Stockdall	Michael Gurling

Coffee Hour Hosts: Jennefer & John Lehton, Patrice Hill, Ilene Kiser

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**
 Associate Pastor: **Tesa Hauser**
 Secretary: **Krista Trimlett**
 Music Director: **Deborah Wilson**
 Nursery: **Stephanie Cadiero**
 Custodian: **Scott Tiemann**

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 Church website: www.vlmcc.org