

The Christian Visitor

DECEMBER 2023 ~ VISTA LA MESA CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Christmas Concert 12/17

We hope you'll join us on Sunday, December 17th, at 5:00 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 will begin the evening in Bailey Hall, with a finger food potluck. Please bring your favorite party dishes to share, such as veggie trays, meatballs, pinwheel sandwiches, cheese & crackers, cookies and other fun finger-food desserts. It will be fun to see what everyone comes up with!

We won't have table hosts for this party, but if you have a pretty Christmas table cloth (round) you'd like to contribute to the party, please let Pastor Rebecca or Jennefer Lehton know. We will begin decorating around 3:30 pm, after the Sunday afternoon GA group is done.

Around 6:00, we will move into the Sanctuary for our concert. Our VLM Choir will be joined again this year by members of the OK Chorale, which is also led by our Music Director Deborah Wilson.

Christmas Eve Service

Our traditional Candlelight Christmas Eve Service will be held Sunday, 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. All are welcome!

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

Caroling Party 12/23

We'd love to have you join in our Caroling Party on Saturday, 12/23. We will start at the church and then carpool to our various destinations. When we are done, we will gather at Karen & Tim Cliffe's house for an after-party with pizza and hot drinks.

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.

"Comfy Church" 12/31

Comfy Church was such fun last year on Christmas Day that we decided to do it again this year, on New Year's Eve! It's also a special day because it's Pastor Tesa's last day with us as a member of our staff.

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,

You might think that after a year of celebrating a milestone anniversary, it would feel like we've done all the things and everything is settled. But that's not what it feels like, is it? For me – and I'm guessing for a lot of us – it feels like there are still things unfolding, things yet to come, things we haven't quite figured out yet. So I'm really excited to dig into Advent this year, when our theme will be "Abiding in Anticipation." When the fruits of the Spirit from Galatians 5:22-23 are brought up, a lot of people note that patience is the one they struggle with the most. We don't like waiting. And yet, so much of our lives involves waiting. So during these four weeks, as we move toward Christmas, we're going to explore some of the spiritual approaches to waiting that can make it a rich time of growth and enlightenment.

If you haven't made the effort to attend Disciples Class yet, this would be a great time to do so, as we'll be looking at these practices in more depth in our 9 am Sunday morning gatherings. But we'll also be focusing on them in worship each Sunday, in relation to the theme for each Sunday. Join us as we explore Hoping for Hope, Letting Go of Control for Peace, Preparing for Joy, and Watchfulness for Love.

I hope that you will come Abide in Anticipation with us. It will be a fruitful season of getting ready for whatever is coming next!

grace & peace,

Pastor Rebecca

Pastor's Schedule

Pastor Rebecca will be working as little as possible during the week of Christmas, and the office will barely be open. Please stay home and get some rest! :-)

Tesa's Take

Friends,

We are entering the season of Advent – a time of waiting and anticipation for the coming Christ Child. It is also a time of wondering what's next for Vista La Mesa as we enter our 76th year. I enjoyed hearing Ilene, John, and Jenny share their story and hope for the future of Vista La Mesa. Whether we've been attending for decades or only a few years, our story is important to the fabric and life of our community. Are we ready for Emmanuel – God with and among us? Are we preparing to welcome God's call for our community?

This is my last column within my official role as Associate Pastor at Vista La Mesa, and my heart is filled with gratitude. I am thankful for all the support I have received and have special thanksgiving to Karen Cliffe, Mandy Dohring, Mary Jane Fay, and Steve Bridwell for their support as my Associate Pastor Relations Committee. And to Pastor Rebecca for her nurturing and care as I stepped into my pastoral call. As I've mentioned, I am looking forward with joy and hope to what is next in store for us. The Spirit is continually at work within and among us; let us work to be ready for God's call.

Vaya con Dios,

Pastor Tesa

Elders Meeting

The Elders will meet after worship at 12:15 in the Library and on Zoom on Sunday, December 3rd. (This is technically our "November" meeting!)

We have some important things to work out before final plans are made for Pastor Rebecca's half-sabbatical that begins January 24th. Please make a point of being present that day.

Vista La Mesa Christian Church

*Celebrating 75 Years of
Sharing Christ's Welcome!*

www.vlmcc.org

Choir Christmas Party

The Choir will celebrate and rehearse at 6 pm on Thursday, December 28, at Mary Alynn Fallon'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 10th. They will arrive for worship on Sunday, December 17th

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 service or leave them for the next Sunday.

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!

IN OUR PRAYERS...

JOYS & CONCERNS ~ Please reach out to Pastor Rebecca

Gifts for El Nido

Thanks to everyone who is helping bring joy to our three El Nido families this year! Please bring your gifts in by Sunday, December 17th, wrapped with a tag including the person's name and family number. Please loosely attach the ornament tag with their information as well, so we can be sure all the gifts are brought in.

Staff Christmas Gift

Every year at Christmas, we like to show our appreciation to our dedicated staff with a special Christmas bonus. The Elders will be coordinating this, so watch for announcements after their 12/3 meeting. Some Elders will be receiving contributions in person, but you can also give online at www.vlmcc.org. Look for the Elders Fund/Staff Gift line in the drop down designation menu. Thank you for your gift!

Christmas Lunch Bunch

December's Lunch Bunch (12/6 at noon) will be a Christmas party in Bailey Hall! Please bring your own lunch. Desserts will be shared.

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 Pastor Rebecca or Jennefer Lehton.

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

A LOVE LETTER TO VLM

FROM BECKIE NEELY

I came to VLM as a young girl of 21. I was living with Bob's family, and they were the only ones I knew. I started going to church with them and soon met people. Norma & Jerry, Glenda & Walter, and many others.

When we got married in January of 1976, I was sitting in the Sanctuary alone and crying. Glenda was the wedding hostess, and she sat down and talked to me. I was all my myself! (We got married in the chapel.) Glenda told me that everything would be O.K. and that the church people would become my family. Little did I know how very true that would be!

VLM very quickly become my family. Over the 47-48 years I was at VLM, my "family" never ceased to amaze me! I grew in my love for God and began to teach. No matter what we went through over the years, our VLM family was always there to love and support us, and we loved and supported them.

When Bob and I decided to move to Missouri 17 months ago, the hardest thing was leaving our VLM family!! You will never know how much I love and miss you all. Stay wonderful, VLM family!! I love and miss you!!

Stewardship Note

At the November Board meeting, we learned that we ended the month of October with a General Fund deficit of just over \$16,000. This is a rather bleak financial situation, and one we haven't been in for some time, even at this point in the year.

We have the sense that it is getting better, so the Board voted to withdraw only the pre-approved \$2500 from the Memorial Endowment Fund for now. We will check the numbers again after December 10th and see if it is necessary to withdraw more money at that point.

If you are behind in your intended giving for this fiscal year, this would be a great time to get caught up. Our offerings as of 10/31 were only at 65% of projections. Expenses are slightly over-budget, mostly because of timing issues. Thank you for your generous and faithful contributions!

Novels Tea

Novels Tea will meet on Sunday, December 10 at 3 pm on Zoom to discuss "Remarkable Creatures" by Tracy Chevalier.

MEET PASTOR RACHEL

Rev. Rachel Cooley Shawler, who will be covering for Pastor Rebecca's half-sabbatical, will be with us in worship (and after) on December 10th, to get to know us a little better. Come meet her!

Volunteer Roles for 2024

If you're looking for a way to deepen your spirituality through service, there are some volunteer roles we could use some help with going into 2024. We really need a couple more tech volunteers in worship, to help with AV and/or Zoom. We could also use some more greeters for before worship and some more offering counters for after worship. Let Pastor Rebecca know if you're interested and we will make sure you are fully trained.

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 10 & 17 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 going forward

As you have hopefully heard, we are discontinuing our weekly flower arrangements after this month.

If you have a special occasion or memory you would like to mark on a certain Sunday going forward, you are invited to let the office know about the dedication and bring in an arrangement to share with the congregation during worship. Please let us know no later than Thursday of the week you will be bringing the flowers, so we can properly acknowledge them in the bulletin and on the slides.

December 2023 Worship Participants

	December 3	December 10	December 17	December 24	December 31
Worship Leader	Brian McCreanor	Marianna Kirwan	Michael Lewis	Brenda Rorie-Baety	Karen Cliffe
Lay Reader	Deborah Wilson	Jennefer Lehton	Cheryl Davis-Plotts	Michael Lewis	Ilene Kiser
Offering Invitation	Steve Bridwell	Rebecca Littlejohn	Julie Germain	Tesa Hauser	Rebecca Littlejohn
Elders	Karen Cliffe Tim Cliffe	Ray Adsit Mary Jane Fay	Cheryl Davis-Plotts Larry Knight	Steve Bridwell Julie Germain	Mandy Dohring Michael Lewis
Deacons	Mary Alynn Fallon Ilene Kiser Susan Peterson	Jennefer Lehton John Lehton	Jenny Angione Claudette Toland Lyn Van Winkle	Al Flores Daphne Flores Tracy Stockdall Michelle Tolvo-Chan	John Lehton Tracy Stockdall Lyn Van Winkle
Comm Prep & Clean up	Jennefer Lehton	Tracy Stockdall	Susan Peterson	Tracy Stockdall	Jennefer Lehton
Greeters	Ilene Kiser John Lehton	John Lehton Ray Adsit	Mary Jane Fay Daphne Flores	Ray Adsit Michael Lewis	Ilene Kiser Mary Jane Fay
AV Tech Zoom Tech	Karen Cliffe Julie Germain	Jenny Angione Tesa Hauser	Julie Germain Tesa Hauser	Mary Alynn Fallon Karen Cliffe	Mary Alynn F Julie Germain
Counters	Steve Bridwell Jenny Angione	Ilene Kiser John Lehton	Tracy Stockdall John Lehton	Mary Alynn Ilene Kiser	Steve Bridwell Tracy Stockdall
Flowers	Daphne Flores	Tracy Stockdall	Ilene Kiser	Susan Peterson	VLMCC

Coffee Hour Hosts: Mary Alynn Fallon, Ilene Kiser, Susan Peterson

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: Tues/Thur/Fri 8:30-11:30

CHURCH STAFF

Senior Pastor: **Rev. Rebecca Littlejohn**
 Associate Pastor: **Rev. Tesa Hauser**
 Admin & Comm Coord.: **Krista Trimlett**
 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