

# The Christian Visitor

DECEMBER 2024 ~ VISTA LA MESA CHRISTIAN CHURCH

## "Come and Worship!"

We will be ushering in the Season of Advent on Sunday, December 1st with a carol sing! We hope you will join us for this opportunity to sing some of your favorites. [Click on this link](#) to invite your Facebook friends to join us.

Our theme for Advent this year is based on the carol "Angels, from the Realms of Glory," with its chorus urging us to "come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King." Each week, we will explore the role of the characters in one verse, from the angels to the shepherds to the sages, to the "saints" (that's us!)

If you would like to help prepare the Sanctuary for Advent & Christmas, please come help us decorate on Saturday, November 30 at 11 AM. You can also sponsor a poinsettia to brighten things up. The plants are \$10 each and will arrive on 12/15. You can order through 12/8. You can take yours home after the Christmas Eve service.

## Caroling Party

We would love to have you come caroling with us on Saturday, December 21, as we bring Christmas cheer to some of our church friends! We will meet in the parking lot at 2 PM to divide into as few cars as possible and then set out. When we're done, everyone is invited to Karen & Tim Cliffe's house for pizza and goodies! Feel free to bring a dish to share if you can. [Click here](#) to RSVP or invite friends on Facebook.

## Christmas Party & Concert

The biggest "do" of the season will be happening on Sunday, December 8, starting at 5:30. We will begin in Bailey Hall, with a festive "party food" potluck. (What is party food? Anything easy to eat that makes you happy!)

There is a sign-up sheet out now so you can let us know what you're planning to bring (and check what others are bringing to avoid duplications). If you would like to help set-up, let Jennefer Lehton know.

Around 6:30, we will move into the Sanctuary for our Christmas Concert, featuring the VLM Choir and the OK Chorale, both directed by Deborah Wilson. They will be sharing a variety of Christmas songs, sacred and secular, representing cultures from all around the world.

This is a great opportunity to bring a friend to get to know the VLM community a little better. RSVP and invite friends on Facebook by [clicking on this link](#).

## Christmas Eve Service

We hope you will join us for one of the holiest nights of the year, as we celebrate Christmas Eve with our Candlelight Communion Service. We will gather in the Sanctuary at 6:00 PM, to sing carols and hear the Christmas story.

This is a wonderful chance to bring family & friends to experience the wonder of the Incarnation in community. All are welcome to join us!

A (non-passed) offering will be received for the Pastor's Discretionary Fund, which is used to assist members and neighbors with emergency needs.

## From My View at the Table

Dear Church,

The season of Advent is when the church year (sometimes called the liturgical year) begins, so first of all: Happy New Year! (You heard it here first!) Sometimes, as a new year is beginning, you'll see people making predictions about what will happen. Some folks will imagine dramatic shifts in the way we live, while others will try to connect all the dots they can see into elaborate theories.

But when the beginning of the liturgical year arrives, we are reminded that our times are in God's hands, and that sometimes the first thing we have to do is wait. We are reminded that we don't know what is going to happen. In these days of deep uncertainty and high anxiety, that may not seem particularly comforting.

But the other thing Advent reminds us of is that no matter what happens, God is with us. No matter what threats arise, we can still seek Christ. No matter how long the night, the dawn will eventually break from on high and bring light to all of us who had been sitting in darkness.

There are some things we can predict about the times that are coming. Jesus will still be calling us to love our neighbors. Faithfulness will still require courage. Truthfulness will always be the right choice. Mercy will continue to be the thing that keeps us human. As we prepare to welcome Emmanuel – God-with-us – let us ground our trust in the One who was and is and ever shall be, world without end.

grace & peace,

*Pastor Rebecca*

### Pastor's Schedule

Pastor Rebecca will be working less between Christmas and New Year's and mostly from home.

## In Memoriam

After a long decline, our dear friend Brenda Rorie-Baety passed away on the evening of Monday, November 11, at Stanford Court Skilled Nursing Center in Santee. We extend our deepest sympathy to all of Brenda's family and friends. We are grateful for the care she received at Stanford Court, as well as from Apreva Hospice who supported her in her last few months.

We will be holding a Memorial Service on Saturday, December 14 at 4 PM in the Sanctuary. Prior to the service, a time of visiting will be held in the back of the Sanctuary from 3:00-3:50.

If you can bring some cookies for the visitation time, please let Jennefer Lehton know. If you cannot be present, but would like to share a memory, you may email that to Pastor Rebecca at [pastor@vlmcc.org](mailto:pastor@vlmcc.org), and we will read it during the service.

Gifts in memory of Brenda may be given to the church, designated for Welcome Saturday, a ministry that was dear to Brenda's heart.

## Christmas 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 15 & 22 in worship, and you can also give online at [www.vlmcc.org](http://www.vlmcc.org). Any donations given in the Santa box at the Card Tree will also be part of this special offering.

## Vista La Mesa Christian Church

*Celebrating the Joy of  
Sharing Christ's Welcome!*

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

## Novels Tea

Novels Tea will meet at 2:30 on Sunday, December 15 on Zoom to discuss "The Sentence" by Louise Erdrich. Anyone who has read the book is welcome to join the conversation.

## Poinsettias!

We will be taking orders for poinsettias to decorate the Sanctuary through Sunday, 12/8. They will arrive for worship on Sunday, December 15th

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 it for the next couple Sundays.

## 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. Happy Holidays!

## IN OUR PRAYERS...

JOYS & CONCERNS~ Please reach out to Pastor Rebecca for prayers.

## El Nido

We will not be adopting families from El Nido for Christmas this year, but you can contribute to the shelter by [clicking this link](#).

You could also give a donation to our Welcome Saturday Fund to help with the costs of the gifts we will be handing out this month.

We give thanks for your generous and kind spirits!

## 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. Some Elders will be receiving contributions in person, but you can also give online at [www.vlmcc.org](http://www.vlmcc.org). Look for the Elders Fund/Staff Gift line in the drop down designation menu. Thank you for your contribution!

## Christmas Lunch Bunch

December's Lunch Bunch (12/18 at noon) will be a Christmas party in Bailey Hall! It's "brown bag", so please bring your own lunch. If you can bring a dessert to share, please do, but we will have plenty so don't worry about it, if that is a challenge.

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

## 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

## Futures Process Update

The Futures process that we have embarked upon is about both the immediate future and the longterm future of our congregation and ministries. At our meeting in November, we focused primarily on the near future, because we are entering into the season when people are often the most open to an invitation to join in activities at a church.

You have many opportunities to invite family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, acquaintances, or even strangers to events at VLM over the next few weeks. You can do that just by inviting them, in person. You could use the paper invitation that was in the 11/24 bulletin. (Let us know if you want more.) You can invite people to our 12/1, 12/8, and 12/21 events through our Facebook page.

The truth is that the way most people decide to visit a church is because someone invites them. That someone could be you! We hope to offer some trainings on how to do this soon.

Our next Futures meeting isn't scheduled yet, but we are planning a session with some guests from other congregations who have been through a variety of transformation processes, so we can hear their stories.

## Open & Affirming Discernment Process

At the October Futures meeting, the group assigned the Board the task of deciding how to move into a process of discernment about declaring VLM an Open & Affirming congregation. While Disciples do not have "hard and fast" rules, the Open & Affirming status is generally understood to mean that we are clearly proclaiming that we welcome persons of all gender expressions and sexual orientations to Christ's table and into the full life and leadership of our congregation. You can learn more about what all this could entail at the [Disciples Alliance Q+ website](#).

We want to get a sense of where everyone is with regard to these questions, so we will be asking for your input with a special flyer on Sunday, Dec. 15th. The flyer will be in the bulletin, but it will also be made available in the Sunday afternoon email that day, so those worshipping online can participate as well. We will be asking about your openness to and/or concerns with beginning this process, and we will also be asking about your personal level of exposure to and investment in these questions through the relationships in your life.

It is very important that we hear from everyone and that all of us participate in this conversation. If you have any questions or concerns, please be in touch with Pastor Rebecca or Board Chair Karen Cliffe.

## Is It I, Lord?

The new year is a great time to try something new! Let Pastor Rebecca know if you're interested in serving in any of the following roles:

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

**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; once or twice a month.

**Offering Counter** – with a partner, count and log the offering; currently once or twice a month.

## Thanks, Chef Claudette!

We are so grateful to Chef Claudette Toland, who has hosted "liturgical cooking" sessions for our kids all year long! There have been pizzas and cheesecakes and edible crayons.

The final session will be on Sunday, December 8, making donuts for the Feast of St. Nicholas. You won't want to miss it, and we love it when you bring friends!

If you haven't seen it yet, you should check out the space Claudette arranged in Room 4 for our older kids and youth, as well as the display on the wall in Bailey Hall. We are so appreciative of your efforts to grow our children's & youth ministries!



# December 2024 Worship Participants

	December 1	December 8	December 15	December 22	December 29
<b>Worship Leader</b>	Jennefer Lehton	Karen Cliffe	Ray Adsit	Steve Bridwell	Cheryl Davis-Plotts
<b>Lay Reader</b>	Michael Lewis	Jennefer Lehton	Deborah Wilson	Cheryl Davis-Plotts	Mary Jane Fay
<b>Offering Invitation</b>	Rebecca Littlejohn	Rebecca Littlejohn	Rebecca Littlejohn	Renee Bridwell	Rebecca Littlejohn
<b>Elders</b>	Jennefer Lehton Tim Cliffe	Karen Cliffe Mary Jane Fay	Ray Adsit Tesa Hauser	Steve Bridwell Larry Knight (Ray)	Cheryl Davis-Plotts Marianna Kirwan
<b>Deacons</b>	Mary Alynn Fallon John Lehton Lyn Van Winkle	Al Flores Daphne Flores Tracy Stockdall	Michaela Stockdall Claudette Toland	Jenny Angione Bill Kwon Susan Peterson	Bill Kwon Susan Peterson Lyn Van Winkle
<b>Comm Prep &amp; Clean up</b>	Daphne Flores	Susan Peterson	Tracy Stockdall	Daphne Flores	Tracy Stockdall
<b>Greeters</b>	Ray Adsit Daphne Flores	Vicky & Gary Wilhite	Marianna Kirwan John Lehton	Ray Adsit Michael Lewis	Mary Jane Fay John Lehton
<b>AV Tech Zoom Tech</b>	Tracy Stockdall Karen Cliffe	Jenny Angione Tesa Hauser	Jenny Angione Karen Cliffe	Tracy Stockdall Michaela Stockdall	Tracy Stockdall Michaela Stockdall
<b>Counters</b>	Lyn Van Winkle Tracy Stockdall	Steve Bridwell Michelle Tolvo-Chan	Andy Cliffe John Lehton	Renee Bridwell Lyn Van Winkle	Andy Cliffe John Lehton

## 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: Disciples Class @ 9:00  
Worship @ 10:30**

**Secretary's Hours:** Tues/Thur/Fri 8:30-11:30

## CHURCH STAFF

Pastor: **Rev. Rebecca Littlejohn**  
Secretary: **Krista Trimlett**  
Music Director: **Deborah Wilson**  
Nursery: **Stephanie Cadiero**  
Custodian: **Scott Tiemann**

Church Tel. (619) 463-9909  
Office E-mail: [admin@vlmcc.org](mailto:admin@vlmcc.org)  
Pastor's E-mail: [pastor@vlmcc.org](mailto:pastor@vlmcc.org)  
Church website: [www.vlmcc.org](http://www.vlmcc.org)