

The Christian Visitor

FEBRUARY 2025 ~ VISTA LA MESA CHRISTIAN CHURCH

FUTURES PART 2

We had a good conversation with some folks from other congregations that had gone through creative transformations on January 11. We will have Part 2 on Saturday, February 1, at 10 AM, with two new sets of guests! We will meet on Zoom, but if you'd rather, you can join us in Room 4.

These conversations are not intended to tell us what to do, but to open up our imaginations to different possibilities. We will need to take inspiration from their stories and see how that creative energy might manifest in the constellation of community needs and partnerships that exist in our context.

Week of Compassion

We will be celebrating our denominational relief, refugee and development mission fund, Week of Compassion, on February 16 & 23, with a special worship emphasis and a special offering, plus a special guest!

The Week of Compassion theme this year is "Heard and Seen," from Philippians 4:8-9. One of the simplest actions of compassion we can offer is to truly hear and see others and then respond to them with Christ's love.

Our goal is to raise at least \$500 for this special fund. You can give in worship or online at www.vlmcc.org.

On the 23rd, we will welcome Paul Svenson for a musical service in celebration of Week of Compassion. You won't want to miss it!

Special Guest - Paul Svenson!

Open & Affirming Discernment Process

At the January meeting, our Board reviewed the feedback from our survey asking the congregation for input about starting a discernment process to become an intentionally Open & Affirming congregation, meaning we would clearly communicate that everyone is welcome at VLM, including people within the LGBTQ+ community.

As reported in January, the responses were overwhelmingly positive, so the Board has decided to move forward in two ways. A small group has been appointed to draft a Welcoming Statement, which will be used to explain and clarify the intentionality of our welcome. This group includes Renee Bridwell, Cheryl Davis-Plotts, Tesa Hauser, Cathy Mullican, and Gary Wilhite. Once they have a draft, we will share it with everyone for a brief

comment period, after which it will go to the Board for discussion and a vote. That will be the "official" vote to become an Open & Affirming Congregation. Of course, if any issues arise during this process, we will slow down and address them as needed.

Alongside that process, we will also have VLMers sharing stories about how these issues have impacted them personally. If you have a story you would like to share, please let Pastor Rebecca know. They will be run in the March newsletter and in weekly emails, plus we may have some folks share their stories in worship. We will all be blessed by learning from one another how taking this step can open our congregation up to all sorts of new ways to share the joy of Christ's welcome!

From My View at the Table

Dear Church,

Do you have a favorite gospel? I ask because we're now a couple months into Year C of the Revised Common Lectionary, which primarily draws from Luke for its gospel passages. If you made me pick a favorite, it would probably be Luke. I love Luke's version of the Christmas story. I love how Luke often pairs two stories together, usually one about a man and one about a woman, but with noticeable similarities between the two. Some of the best stories are in Luke: the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan, and Zaccheaus.

But if we only had Luke, we wouldn't have the sheep and goats learning about the importance of seeing the face of Christ in everyone we meet. We wouldn't have the beautiful light imagery from the prologue of John. We wouldn't have the Magi or the Syrophenician woman who helped Jesus begin to understand how much wider his ministry could reach.

The beautiful thing is that we don't have to pick just one. Just as each of us brings unique gifts and graces to contribute to the ministries of our congregation, the different gospels, along with the other books of the Bible, all offer us their own important stories and perspectives.

We can learn from the example of the different gospels how important it is to listen to one another. No one of us has the only perspective that matters. No one of us has the definitive experience of what it means to follow Jesus. We each notice and ponder different details of the same worship service or mission project. Just imagine how much richer our faith can grow if we listen to one another's stories about how God has guided us and worked in our lives!

grace & peace,

Pastor Rebecca

Pastor's Schedule

Pastor Rebecca will have her father visiting Feb. 9-13, so she will be in the office less on those days.

In Memoriam

We offer our sympathy to the Penny & Stockdall family, on the passing of Dick Penny on Monday, January 6th.

A Memorial Service will be held at 11 AM on Saturday, February 15th, at the church. Some kind of gathering will likely be held after the service, but details are still being worked out. Please be in touch with Jennefer Lehton or Karen Cliffe if you can assist with hosting.

Disciples Class

Did you know that you can start attending Disciples Class even if you've never been before? And even if nobody has personally invited you? And even if you've never read the Bible that much? It's true!

All you have to do is show up on Sunday morning at 9 AM, in Bailey Hall or on Zoom, and you can join in the conversation! Right now, Disciples Class is using a format that includes prayer and Bible study. Each person shares one joy and one concern, which are written on small paper leaves. As we share them around the circle, we use the prayer responses from our regular worship service. After class, the prayer leaves are added to our tree.

Right now, we are making our way through First Corinthians, the first letter the Apostle Paul sent to the church in Corinth. We read from different translations and check notes from a variety of study bibles and commentaries, while adding our own thoughts into the mix. Join us!

Vista La Mesa Christian Church

*Celebrating the Unity and
Diversity of the Body of Christ!*

www.vlmcc.org

Welcome Saturday

We are so grateful for all our regular donors who keep our Welcome Saturday Fund healthy! On these cold winter mornings, a cup of coffee and a hot breakfast can truly make someone feel human again.

We are having a great time with a team of regular volunteers and a bunch of Helix students rotating through (lots of repeats!). Why not stop by this month and say Hi?

Supper of Substance – 2/21

We will be resuming our new practice of Suppers of Substance on **Friday, February 21, at 6 PM** in Bailey Hall. Bring a dish to share and an open mind! Our topic this month is “Being Brave.” We will talk about what to do if you find yourself in a situation where your faith calls you to intervene and speak up on someone else’s behalf, in response to bullying or harassment. It can feel easier to “mind your own business,” but loving our neighbors requires having their backs when they are being threatened.

We will discuss some strategies for interrupting negative interactions and also talk about why it can be difficult to work up the courage to get involved. As you prepare to join the conversation, you might want to spend some time thinking about times when you did or didn’t risk speaking up to defend someone or defuse a hostile situation. Why did you do what you did? What do you wish you’d done differently?

Cooking with Chef Claudette

Children are invited to join Chef Claudette Toland on Sunday, February 2, for another session of “liturgical cooking.” We will be making orange candles and creamsicle cake to mark Candlemas, which is an old holiday commemorating the presentation of the Baby Jesus at the temple.

All children are invited to participate and bring friends. Please let Pastor Rebecca know if you’re coming or not and if you’re bringing anyone else, so we can plan appropriately.

We are so grateful for Chef Claudette, who is incorporating science experiments into our Cooking Sundays this year!

Lunch Bunch Wednesday, 2/19

Noon
hosted by
The Lehtons

Novels Tea

Novels Tea will meet on Sunday, February 9, at 2:30 pm, on Zoom to discuss “The Lacuna” by Barbara Kingsolver.

IN OUR PRAYERS...

JOYS & CONCERNS ~ Please contact Pastor Rebecca for prayers.

Happy Birthday!

Feb. 9 ~ Jason Sisneros, Sr.

Feb. 11 ~ Scott Tiemann

Feb. 13 ~ Sandy Hanna

Feb. 14 ~ RJ Lucchesi

Feb. 21 ~ Amy Cliffe

Feb. 22 ~ Jayden Tacon
(Sisneros)

Feb. 23 ~ Tim Cliffe

Feb. 25 ~ Beckie Neely

Volunteer Roles for 2025

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 2025. We really need some more greeters for before worship and some more offering counters for after worship. We could use a couple more tech volunteers in worship, to help with AV and/or Zoom. Let Pastor Rebecca or Karen Cliffe know if you're interested, and we will make sure you are fully trained.

Church Camp Is Coming!

It's never too early to start planning for Church Camp at Loch Leven! Here are the dates for 2025:

CYF Camp – July 6-11 – For those entering 9-12 grades and recent HS grads.

Chi Rho Camp – June 29- July 4 – For those entering grades 6-8.

Junior Camp – June 22-27 – For those entering grades 4-5.

Mini Camp – June 22-25 – For those entering grades 1-3.

Wee Camp – June 22-25 – For kids age 3 through kindergarten attending with a parent/guardian.

You can find more information at www.disciplespswr.org/camp. VLM offers scholarship funds for our campers, as needed and available.

*We join with
University Christian Church
in celebrating the Ordination
into Christian Ministry
of Sandra Lee Roberts
Saturday, February 8, 2025*

News from the Board

The Board met on January 14. The main business item was discussing next steps for our Open & Affirming Discernment Process, which is covered on page 1. The Board also gratefully blessed a proposal from Daniel Cliffe to replace the lighting fixtures in Bailey Hall with LED bulbs. That project will get underway later this spring. Thanks, Daniel!

The Treasurer's Report was shared. As of the end of December, we had an operating deficit of just under \$4,500. That is basically the same deficit we had at the end of October, thanks to our generous and faithful donors! It is not where we would like to be, but so much better than where we were at the end of August. The Board decided to hold off until March to see if the next authorized withdrawal from the MEF is needed.

The appointment of the 2025 Nominating Committee was postponed till March, given the early date of this meeting.

Lent is coming... but not very soon!

The start of a new year is a great time to get more involved with the ministries of your congregation. Did you know the Worship Committee has regular meetings, and you are welcome to join in the conversation? This month, we will be discussing some exciting plans for worship in the season of Lent. It's later than usual this year, so we have a little extra time to plan. Why not get in on the dreaming and visioning?

The Fellowship Committee also meets regularly, and would love some new folks to bring fresh ideas for ways to draw the congregation together.

If you'd like to be more involved with Christian Education or Outreach, contact the chairs of those ministries – Cheryl Davis-Plotts (CE) or Mary Jane Fay (Outreach) – to talk about how you can add your gifts into the mix.

John Lehton is always happy to have folks pitch in with the Property Committee's work as well!

February 2025 Worship Participants

	February 2	February 9	February 16	February 23
Worship Leader	Larry Knight	Marianna Kirwan	Jennefer Lehton	Steve Bridwell
Lay Reader	Michael Lewis	Jennefer Lehton	Mary Jane Fay	Cheryl Davis-Plotts
Offering Invitation	Rebecca Littlejohn	Steve Bridwell	Rebecca Littlejohn	Rebecca Littlejohn
Elders	Larry Knight (Tim) Cheryl Davis-Plotts	Marianna Kirwan Renee Bridwell	Jennefer Lehton Tim Cliffe	Steve Bridwell Mary Jane Fay
Deacons	Mary Alynn Fallon John Lehton Lyn Van Winkle	Al Flores Daphne Flores Tracy Stockdall	Michaela Stockdall Claudette Toland	Jenny Angione Bill Kwon Susan Peterson
Comm Prep & Clean up	Susan Peterson	Lyn Van Winkle/ Jenny Angione	Lyn Van Winkle	Bill Kwon
Greeters	Michael Lewis Daphne Flores	Vicky & Gary Wilhite	Marianna Kirwan John Lehton	Mary Jane Fay Michael Lewis
AV Tech Zoom Tech	Tracy Stockdall Michaela Stockdall	Jenny Angione Karen Cliffe	Tracy Stockdall Karen Cliffe	Jenny Angione Michaela Stockdall
Counters	John Lehton Lyn Van Winkle	Tracy Stockdall Renee Bridwell	Andy Cliffe Michelle Tolvo-Chan	Steve Bridwell 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, 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 8:30-11:30 am

CHURCH STAFF

Ministers: **The Members of VLMCC**
 Senior Pastor: **Rev. Rebecca Littlejohn**
 Secretary.: **Krista Trimlett**
 Music Director: **Deborah Wilson**
 Nursery: **Stephanie Cadiero**
 Custodian: **Scott Tiemann**

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