

# The Christian Visitor

MARCH 2025 ~ VISTA LA MESA CHRISTIAN CHURCH

## Samedi Gras! Waffles & Games!

Join us on Saturday, March 1 in Bailey Hall for a “Fat Saturday” party, with a waffle bar and games! This is a chance to just spend time with your fellow VLMers and have fun before the season of Lent begins the next Wednesday. (We’re doing it on Saturday instead of Tuesday so more people can come.)

We will have lots of toppings for the waffles, and we’re hoping everyone will bring the table games you most enjoy. We’ll eat and play till we’re ready to go! This is a great time to bring a friend!

## Open & Affirming Process

Our Welcome Statement Drafting Team has worked hard over the past month and come up with a draft of a Welcome Statement. It will be released Friday, February 28, for a two-week comment period. Between 2/28 and 3/14, you are invited to send your comments, questions, thoughts and responses to the Team at [vlmcc1948@gmail.com](mailto:vlmcc1948@gmail.com). All responses will be reviewed, and any changes suggested will be discussed. The Statement will then go to the Board for approval at their 3/26 meeting. That will be the final vote on becoming an officially Open & Affirming Congregation. We hope you will review and participate in this feedback process! Many thanks to the Drafting Team for your hard work!

## Entering into Lent

The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on March 5 (see below). We will prepare for Lent’s arrival in our Transfiguration Sunday worship on March 2, and then enter in more deeply the next Sunday. Over those two Sundays, we will have a project that invites us “safeguard one another’s alleluias,” as a way of committing to being church together.

Throughout the season, we will make our way through the lectionary scriptures, focusing on what they show us about how to faithfully follow Jesus, together as church. We will also have an added responsive psalm in our service, as part of our prayer time.

## Futures Process

Our next Futures conversation will be held on Ash Wednesday, March 5, at 6 PM, on Zoom (or in Room 4 as needed). All Elders & Board Members are asked to participate, and others are welcome to join us as well. We will begin by marking the day with a brief Ash Wednesday video reflection.

Our main conversation will be de-briefing and re-grouping. Pastor Rebecca will be sending out the videos from our last two sessions with outside guests, in case you want to review them. We will discuss what we learned and review the broader picture of this process and the various possibilities in front of us, to determine next steps.

## From My View at the Table

Dear Church,

It used to be that you could tell when it's a "slow news" month by how many pictures are in this newsletter. By that standard, you would think there wasn't much going on at VLM right now, given how many photos we've shared here. I'm guessing some of you prefer the pictures to "news" anyway, as our brains are all full to the brim at the moment.

But the truth is, the abundance of photos here doesn't mean that there isn't a lot going on. It's just that the things that are happening at VLM right now are not easily summed up in newsletter articles. We are in the midst of some really important conversations. And if you want to be up on that "news," you need to show up and participate.

The Open & Affirming Discernment Process that was launched last fall is coming into its final stages. I hope you will take seriously the invitation to review the draft of our welcoming statement and respond. We want this to be something we can all take ownership of. Meanwhile, you will have the chance to hear personal stories from your fellow VLMers, and consider how these issues have touched your life. It's a blessing to be able to learn from one another.

We are also in a discernment process about the future of our congregation. Our conversation so far has been wide-ranging and mostly about stretching our imaginations to consider all sorts of possibilities. We are holding things together for the time being, but it's important to think and talk about what ministry may look like in the years to come.

We have also been having some interesting conversations at occasional Suppers of Substance. Stay tuned for the next time we'll schedule one of those. There's never been a better or more important time to join in the conversation!

grace & peace,  
*Pastor Rebecca*

## Vista La Mesa Christian Church

Sharing the Joy  
of Christ's Welcome!

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

## Disciples Class

Is it time to add more Bible study into your life? It just might be! If so, you are cordially invited to check out Disciples Class, which meets every Sunday at 9 AM in Bailey Hall and on Zoom.

Right, we are using a format of prayer and Bible study. We each share one joy and one concern at the beginning of class and respond together as each person speaks their prayers.

Our Bible study uses multiple different translations, including The Message, the First Nations Version, and the Inclusive Bible, along with numerous study notes and commentaries. We work our way through a passage, comparing notes and sharing our reflections. We have recently begun studying Second Corinthians, and we would love to have you join us!



It was great to have Special Musical Guest Paul Svenson with us to celebrate the ministry of Week of Compassion last month!

Thanks so much for your  
generous contributions to our  
Week of Compassion Special  
Offering!

We collected \$1,002.56!



## Novels Tea

Novels Tea will meet on Sunday, March 23, at 2:30 pm, on Zoom to discuss "Blanche on the Lam" by Barbara Neely. Anyone who has read the book is welcome to join the group. It's BYOFS (Bring Your Own Fancy Snacks)!

## Cooking (and more!) with Chef Claudette

All kids are invited to join Chef Claudette twice this month for cooking and other fun activities! On Sunday, March 2, we will be making masks for Mardi Gras, along with King Cake. On Sunday, March 16, we'll celebrate St. Patrick's Day with Lucky Charms Bars and a Pot 'O Gold Challenge. Please have your young folks come and invite their friends! (Let us know how many you have coming, so we can plan.)

**It's time to Save Your Daylight!**

**Don't forget to set your clock ahead Saturday night, March 8th!**

## Welcome Saturday – Blessings Abound!

We still have great volunteers coming from Helix High School to help out with Welcome Saturday! Last month, we had enthusiastic new volunteers from MissionGathering!

This month, we will be blessed with the fruits of an Undies Drive held by our friends at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church!

**Lunch Bunch**  
**Wed., 3/19, 12 pm**  
**at Marie Callender's**  
**Hosted by**  
**Mary Alynn Fallon**

## In Our PRAYERS...

JOYS & CONCERNS ~ Please contact Pastor Rebecca for prayers.

### *Happy Birthday!*

Mar. 1 - Micah Cliffe

Mar. 5 - Susan Peterson

Mar. 14 - Andy Cliffe

Mar. 26 - Daniel Cliffe

### *Happy Anniversary!*

Mar. 6 - Sara & Troy Gurling

Mar. 16 - Vicky & Gary Wilhite

## Open & Affirming Faith Stories

As we move to the culmination of our Open & Affirming Discernment Process at the Board meeting later this month, we will be hearing Faith Stories from some of the folks in our congregation. This one, from H el ene Sisneros, will also be shared in worship on March 16. Additional stories will be shared in the Friday e-newsletters, so watch for them there.

*Written by H el ene Sisneros*

The proposal that our church officially become an Open and Affirming church for the LGBTQ+ community is something very close to my heart. One of my sisters is gay, and the adult child of one of my other sisters is trans.

My gay sister came out as gay during our college years. At first my mom had a hard time accepting this because it was not approved of by our Catholic religion. Mom told my sister not to tell our grandmother. This was very hurtful to my sister because she was very emotionally close to grandma. As the years rolled on and all of us 5 siblings got partners and had kids, my gay sister also had a partner (via a state-sanctioned domestic partnership before gay marriage was allowed) as well as several kids. We had family gatherings where everyone gathered, so grandma must have figured it out because she wasn't stupid, but it was never talked about. Kind of sad I think. After grandma died, mom felt more comfortable and my sister's gayness was happily out in the open and even celebrated, until it just became as normal as being straight. This is a wonderful thing for a family to experience.

By the time my niece (at age 22) came out as trans, all the family readily embraced her new identity. I don't really know much about the emotions her parents felt when their son became their daughter. One day maybe I will ask my sister about this, or maybe not. Anyway, I was happy to have another young woman in the family. At first I did not realize all the painful emotions that can occur in a trans person (things like deep depression and anxiety). I am happy to report that after quite a few years of working through things with the assistance of health professionals, my niece is thriving as a beautiful transwoman. And my sister gave me a tip on how to practice thinking of, and referring to, my niece as "she" instead of "he" -- that is, in my mind, tell myself a story with my niece as the main character, referring to her with female pronouns and using her new female name. Like, "She got up and washed her face. She made herself a delicious breakfast of scrambled eggs." Slowly, my niece transformed in my mind to become who she is...herself.

Thank you everyone at VLM for the plans to affirm the beauty of each member of my family!

## Board News

The General Board will meet on Wednesday, March 26th at 6:00 pm on Zoom and in Room 4. Board members, please turn in your reports by Friday, March 7th to Pastor Rebecca. The Administrative Committee will meet on Tuesday, March 11th at 6:00 pm to prepare the agenda for the Board meeting.

The main item on the agenda will be the Open & Affirming Welcoming Statement. (See page 1 and other emails for more information.) The Board will also be reviewing our financial situation and appointing a Nominating Committee for 2025. Anyone is welcome to attend our Board meetings.



The first lupine of the season!

# March 2025 Worship Participants

	<b>March 2</b>	<b>March 9</b>	<b>March 16</b>	<b>March 23</b>	<b>March 30</b>
<b>Worship Leader</b>	Michael Lewis	Mary Jane Fay	Karen Cliffe	Cheryl Davis-Plotts	Tim Cliffe
<b>Lay Reader</b>	Jerry Bailey	Michelle Tolvo-Chan	Tracy Stockdall	Jennefer Lehton	Michael Lewis
<b>Offering Invitation</b>	Rebecca Littlejohn	Marianna Kirwan	Rebecca Littlejohn	Rebecca Littlejohn	Rebecca Littlejohn
<b>Elders</b>	Michael Lewis Tesa Hauser	Mary Jane Fay Larry Knight (Karen)	Karen Cliffe Marianna Kirwan	Cheryl Davis-Plotts Michael Lewis	Tim Cliffe Jennefer Lehton
<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 Set-up</b>	Mary Alynn Fallon	Mary Alynn Fallon	Lyn Van Winkle	Lyn Van Winkle	Lyn Van Winkle
<b>AV Tech Zoom Tech</b>	Tracy Stockdall Karen Cliffe	Mary Alynn Fallon Michaela Stockdall	Jenny Angione Michaela Stockdall	Jenny Angione Karen Cliffe	Tracy Stockdall Karen Cliffe
<b>Greeters</b>	Michael Lewis Daphne Flores	Vicky & Gary Wilhite	Marianna Kirwan John Lehton	Mary Jane Fay Michael Lewis	Marianna Kirwan John Lehton
<b>Counters</b>	John Lehton Lyn Van Winkle	Tracy Stockdall Jenny Angione	Andy Cliffe Michelle Tolvo-Chan	Tracy Stockdall John Lehton	Andy Cliffe Michelle Tolvo-Chan

## 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**

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