

# The Christian Visitor

APRIL 2025 - VISTA LA MESA CHRISTIAN CHURCH

## Easter Sunday is April 20

Come and bring a friend as we celebrate the Resurrection on Sunday, April 20! When we gather to sing our Alleluias together, a joyful noise will rise!

After worship, we will move into Bailey Hall for a Celebration Potluck. We would love to have you come and bring a dish or two to share.

Easter Sunday is the most important holiday in the Christian calendar and an important time for our church family to gather together. We hope you'll be part of it!

But remember, Easter is not just one day; it's a season! The joy and power of Christ arising is something that is continually changing and renewing us. Let us all join together to practice resurrection in our individual lives and together as a church!

## Holy Week Service

We hope you will join us for our Holy Week Service on Thursday, April 17 at 6 PM. This is an important time to journey through the story of the crucifixion together so we can more fully appreciate the blessings of Easter. We have invited our friends from MissionGathering for this service.

The service will be held at tables in the Sanctuary and will begin with a simple meal which will include communion. We will then read through the rest of the passion story, as we extinguish candles. Please join us!

## It's Official! Let's Celebrate!

After a six-month discernment period, the General Board of Vista La Mesa Christian Church approved a Open & Affirming Statement, prepared by the drafting team they had appointed earlier this year. This vote represents the official declaration of our church as an Open & Affirming Congregation. You can read through the final version of the statement on page four.

We will be celebrating this milestone on Sunday, March 30, with some special guests and other festivities. We hope you will join us! We will updating our website and other publications in the coming weeks.

Our thanks to the drafting team – Renee Bridwell, Cheryl Davis-Plotts, Tesa Hauser, Cathy Mullican, and Gary Wilhite – as well as Hélène Sisneros and Jessica Fallon for sharing their testimonies with us, and everyone who shared their thoughts in the survey we collected in December.

## Tis the Season!

Our 2025-2026 Stewardship Campaign, "Unrevealed Until Its Season," will kick off on Sunday, April 27. Our campaign this year reflects where we are in our journey of considering the future of our congregation. Our prayerful commitments are part of putting our trust in God.

Please be present with us on April 27, and then again for Consecration Sunday on May 4, when we will bless our Intention Offerings!

## From My View at the Table

Dear Church,

How do you pray when you don't know what to pray for? When someone is ill or injured, we have something specific to pray for – healing – and doing so feels like a concrete act of compassion we can offer. But we are living in times of deep uncertainty and confusion, and that can make it hard to even know what to hope for.

We can learn a lot from when Jesus taught his disciples to pray. The first lesson of what we now call “the Lord's Prayer” is that prayer takes our focus off ourselves. The first part of the prayer isn't about us; it's about God. And that is one of the best lessons of prayer: keeping God front and center is the best guide to faithfulness.

But our faith is a relational one, and the prayer doesn't linger in heaven too long. Rather, it invites us to remember that God doesn't stay in heaven but is present with us, inasmuch as we can open ourselves to that Presence. The question is what our motive is when we invite God into our lives. Are we asking God to come and fix things just to our liking? That's not what Jesus taught. And it's not when he did. The most poignant moment of the Lord's Prayer is the one Jesus himself repeated when he was in turmoil in the Garden of Gethsemane: “not my will, but yours be done.”

Our faith is also incarnational, and Jesus doesn't leave that part out either. It's okay to pray for our needs to be met, as long as we do it with humility and gratitude, rather than greedy grasping for more. Praying for “our daily bread” evokes a life of “enough,” with a big helping of trusting in God. Spiritual strength to stay faithful and rely on God for protection helps us remain in right relationship to God.

One of the best lessons of prayer is the reminder that God is God and we are not. That is something we can hold onto even in times of confusion and anxiety.

grace & peace,

*Pastor Rebecca*

## Vista La Mesa Christian Church

*A Movement for Wholeness*

*in a Fragmented World*

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

## Update on Futures Process

At our most recent Futures meeting, we de-briefed previous sessions and re-grouped for the process as a whole. That led us to two next steps.

We want to intentionally pursue deeper and closer partnership with our fellow Disciples at MissionGathering Christian Church across town. (They meet in the shopping center where La Mesa Bistro and the Thrift Corral are.) You will see announcements and invitations for ways you can get involved in these activities.

We also want to commit to a variety of prayer practices focused on this process. Pastor Rebecca is developing some tools for people to engage with this prayer effort. Watch for more information as it becomes available!

## Easter Special Offering

We will be receiving our annual Easter Special Offering on April 13 & 20. This over-and-above offering goes entirely and directly to support the general ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.

Our general ministries include things like Global Ministries, Disciples Home Missions, Christian Unity & Interfaith Ministry, the Disciples of Christ Historical Society, and more! (They are called “general” rather than “national” because our denomination spans two countries!)

Our goal is to collect \$500. There will be special offering envelopes in the bulletins on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. You can also give online at [www.vlmcc.org](http://www.vlmcc.org). Thanks for your contributions!

## *Bridwells 50th Anniversary*

We hope you will join us in surrounding the Bridwell family with our love as they celebrate Renee & Steve's 50th wedding anniversary!

We will have a reception after worship on Sunday, April 6th. Please bring a card to share your well wishes and congratulations!

**FOOD DRIVE in April  
will be the  
Second Sunday,  
April 13,  
to avoid overlapping  
with Easter.  
Thank you!**

**Lunch Bunch  
Wednesday,  
4/16, 12 pm**

**Marie Callender's  
Marianna Kirwan &  
Mike Lewis hosting**

## **Cooking with Chef Claudette**

All kids are invited to join Chef Claudette Toland on Palm Sunday, April 13, to make Charoset Crowns and Hot Cross Buns. These are just some of the treats associated with Holy Week. Please encourage your young ones to come, and let Pastor Rebecca or Claudette know if you are coming or not. Thank you!

## **Thursday Night Study at MissionGathering**

You are invited to join our friends at MissionGathering for their Thursday Night Study, which begins with a potluck each week at 7 PM. They are currently working through a series called "Practicing the Way" that explores spiritual practices.

It's okay to come just whichever nights you can make it. If you can bring a dish to share, that's great, but don't let it be a barrier.

## **Novels Tea**

Novels Tea will meet on Zoom at 4 pm on Sunday, May 4, to discuss "Tom Lake" by Ann Patchett. Chat with Pastor Rebecca if you are interested.

## **IN OUR PRAYERS...**

JOYS & CONCERNS ~ Please contact Pastor Rebecca for prayers.

## *Happy Birthday!*

- Apr. 2 – Jessica Fallon,
- Apr. 4 – Michaela Stockdall
- Apr. 5 – Grace Van Winkle
- Apr. 12 – Skip Peterson
- Apr. 15 – Tennyson McCreanor
- Apr. 16 – John Neely
- Apr. 21 – Elysia Hauser,  
Jennings McCreanor
- Apr. 22 – Embrilly Lopez, Sam  
Rorie
- Apr. 27 – Larry Knight,  
Bill Kwon,  
Todd Lesh

## *Happy Anniversary!*

- Apr. 26 – Renee & Steve  
Bridwell

## Church Camp 2025 at Loch Leven

June 22-25 – Wee Camp (Ages 3-Kinder)

June 22-25 – Mini Camp (Grades 1-3)

June 22-27 – Junior Camp (Grades 4-5)

June 29 - July 4 – Chi Rho Camp  
(Grades 6-8)

July 6-11 – CYF Camp (Grades 6-12)

**Registration is OPEN!**

Click this link for more information and registration:

<http://www.disciplespswr.org/camp>

Please be in touch with Pastor Rebecca about VLM  
scholarships from our Camp Fund!

**Decorating for Easter!**  
**Saturday, April 19**  
**11:00 AM**

## News from the Board

At their meeting in March, the General Board covered much business. They voted to approve our Open & Affirming Statement, declaring VLMCC an officially Open & Affirming Congregation. (See page 1 and below for more information.) They appointed a Nominating Committee for 2025, consisting of Jenny Angione, Mary Alynn Fallon, Mary Jane Fay, and Michael Lewis.

The Board voted to request funds from the Memorial Endowment Fund to help cover the costs of work required by the City to clear out the creek on the north side of Boulevard Drive. They also discussed recent vandalism that required replacing three windows (two in the upper chapel).

The Stewardship & Finance Committee reported that we ended February with a deficit just over \$3K. The Board agreed with the recommendation to hold off on pulling funds from the Memorial Endowment Fund for operating expenses at this time. So far this year, we have pulled \$10,000 of the total \$20,000 authorized for the 2024-2025 year.

## Our Open & Affirming Statement

*(This is the final version of the Open & Affirming Statement approved by the Board on March 26, 2025.)*

As members and friends of Vista La Mesa Christian Church, called to share the joy of Christ's welcome, we strive to follow Christ's example of unconditional love and inclusion of all God's children.

As an Open & Affirming congregation, we humbly acknowledge that many have known the pain of exclusion and discrimination by the church and society. Our community is formed by God's life-giving, life-changing grace. In turn, we work to become a living expression of God's unconditional love. We joyously welcome the LGBTQIA+ community – created by God and equal in worth and dignity.

We welcome all persons into full participation, membership, and leadership, without regard to race, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, educational status, immigration status, physical or mental ability, family status, or faith history. Christ's table is open to all. We welcome any and all marginalized persons seeking acceptance and the freedom to discover the wholeness of God in a safe and loving community.

The Holy Spirit moves among us to create a sense of belonging and encourage love and acceptance of one another. We share the joys and challenges of what it means to grow in our love for God and our service to others. We embrace everyone, wherever you are on your spiritual journey, as we discern God's word together and open our hearts to the Spirit's guidance to discover who God is calling each of us to become.

# April 2025 Worship Participants

	April 6	April 13	April 20	April 27
<b>Worship Leader</b>	Mary Jane Fay	Larry Knight	Tesa Hauser	Steve Bridwell
<b>Lay Reader</b>	Cheryl Davis-Plotts	Mary Jane Fay	Jerry Bailey	Michelle Tolvo-Chan
<b>Offering Invitation</b>	Marianna Kirwan	Rebecca Littlejohn	Rebecca Littlejohn	Rebecca Littlejohn
<b>Elders</b>	Mary Jane Fay Michael Lewis	Larry Knight (Marianna) Renee Bridwell	Tesa Hauser Karen Cliffe	Steve Bridwell Cheryl Davis-Plotts
<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
<b>Comm Set-up</b>	Tracy Stockdall	Tracy Stockdall	Tracy Stockdall	Lyn Van Winkle
<b>AV Tech Zoom Tech</b>	Tracy Stockdall Karen Cliffe	Jenny Angione Karen Cliffe	Mary Alynn Fallon Michaela Stockdall	Tracy Stockdall Michaela Stockdall
<b>Greeters</b>	Michael Lewis Daphne Flores	Vicky & Gary Wilhite	Marianna Kirwan John Lehton	Mary Jane Fay Michael Lewis
<b>Counters</b>	John Lehton Lyn Van Winkle	Tracy Stockdall Renee Bridwell	Andy Cliffe Michelle Tolvo-Chan	Steve Bridwell Jenny Angione

## 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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