

# The Christian Visitor

VISTA LA MESA CHRISTIAN CHURCH ~ AUGUST 2025  
*An Open & Affirming Congregation*

## First Day Ice Cream!

We've been trying out new ways to serve our community over the past few years, and one thing that was a big hit last year was when we offered free ice cream treats to Helix High School students after their first day of school. With your help, we're planning to do it again!

Please bring a box or two of your favorite frozen treats to worship on Sunday, August 3, and put them in the freezer. If you'd like to sign up to help pass them out, we'll have a clipboard for that.

We will set up around 2:30 on Thursday, August 7, and go till about 4:30. It's a blast, so come on out and join us!

## Work (aka, Order from Chaos) Day

We would love to have you join us on Saturday, August 16 when we're going to tackle the chaos that has accumulated since the last time we had a good "tidy-up." We will be primarily focused on the kitchen, but we have plenty of stuff that is taking up space in classrooms as well. If we have enough people, we might even do some clothes-sorting in the Welcome Saturday storage room. The point is, there will be plenty to do, and probably donuts to fuel the work!

We will begin around 9 AM and go until our steam runs out. If you have any questions, ask Pastor Rebecca or Fellowship Committee Chair Vicky Wilhite. See you then!

## Saturday Forums

On Saturday, August 30, we will be launching a limited series we're calling Saturday Forums, which will give us an opportunity to learn more about issues that were raised at the recent Disciples General Assembly. This month, we will be exploring Disability Justice, reading through the resolution that was passed about it and considering how VLM is doing with regard to these issues. [Click here](#) to read the resolution. We will meet on Zoom at 10 AM.

In future sessions, we will explore the Disciples' relationship with Canada and what we can learn by listening to indigenous voices better in the church. For those two, we hope to have special guest speakers!

## Pray for Peace

At the end of June, we started a new service. It is very simple. On Thursdays, the Sanctuary is open and folks are invited to come in at 12:15 to Pray for Peace. We have had a few VLMers show up, but also people from the wider community.

It is mostly a time of silent prayer (with soft music playing). We "officially open" at 12:15 with a simple song. (Folks often show up early, so the music is already playing by about noon.) At 12:30, we share a brief scripture reading. And then at 12:45, we close by singing "Let There Be Peace on Earth." There is a prayer table, where you can light a candle and/or sprinkle some salt into a bowl of water, if you like. Come try it out!

## From My View at the Table

Dear Church,

We have only just started to have the super hot days I associate with actual summer, but it seems school is about to start back up somehow! Life seems to move faster than it used to, with things smushed together, one after another, with little space left to breathe. The thing is, we've got to breathe. It's literally required for living.

That's why I think you could benefit from joining us on Thursdays at 12:15, as we Pray for Peace. Most of that half hour we spend just sitting. Praying, yes, but also just being still, being quiet, breathing. How does one pray for peace anyway, if not by seeking that peace of God that surpasses our understanding?

The world is a scary mess these days, in ways that deeply challenge our capacity for hope. Sometimes prayer is what we do when we can't think of anything else to do. But prayer also sometimes leads us to new paths of action. At the very least, it can provide the rest needed to grasp hold of our hope a little tighter.

If life seems like it's moving too fast, if the horrors are threatening to overwhelm you, come and sit with us on a Thursday and breathe in the peace of God.

grace & peace,

*Pastor Rebecca*

### Pastor Rebecca's Schedule

Pastor Rebecca will be representing the Disciples at a Christian Peacebuilding Strategic Gathering focused on advocacy for Palestine organized by Churches for Middle East Peace at The Carter Center in Atlanta, July 28-30. She will be back in the office Thursday, July 1.

## Partnership Conversations

As you may have heard, the pastor of Missiongathering, Rev. Braeden Størkersen, who preached for us in June for our pulpit swap, has taken a new position closer to where he lives in Temecula. We wish him the best, and we remain committed to conversations with Missiongathering about what a shared future could look like.

We have a number of possibilities for upcoming events we can do together, but we are taking a brief pause, to give the folks in leadership at MG time to get their feet underneath them as they seek out interim leadership and adjust to a new chapter in their congregational life.

Stay tuned for what happens next! In the meantime, we're so grateful for the MG volunteers who have been helping out with Welcome Saturday!

## REGIONAL GATHERING

You are invited to the 2025 Gathering of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Pacific Southwest Region. It will be held at the Disciples Ministry Center in Fullerton, Saturday, October 18.

The theme this year is "Unbreakable Hope: God's Power in Clay Jars" from 2 Corinthians 4. [Click here](#) to learn more.

Regional Gathering is a great opportunity to learn more about the Disciples and get to know new friends. With the structural changes that are coming to General Assembly, connecting at the Regional level will become even more important. There will be informative workshops, invigorating fellowship, and vibrant worship! All are welcome!

## Vista La Mesa Christian Church

*Feeding Your Soul  
Without Disconnecting  
Your Mind!*

## Choir Party

The Choir will kick off the fall singing season with a potluck rehearsal on Thursday, August 28, at 6 pm.

Mary Alynn Fallon will be hosting at the Shadowhill house. Plan to bring a dish to share. If you've ever considered joining the choir, this is a great time to check it out!

## Kids Cooking

Chef Claudette will be cooking with the kids on Sunday, August 17, making Pecan Bars in celebration of the Cane Ridge Revival! They will also make Stone Campbell Circuit Boards.

Our denomination was partially born at the Cane Ridge Revival in Kentucky in 1801, and this will be a fun way to mark the occasion!

## New Directories

Our new VLMCC directories for the 2024-2025 ministry year will be coming out this month. Please take just one per household at first, so we can make sure everyone gets the updated information. If you would like an electronic copy, please let Pastor Rebecca know once the paper copies are out.

We want to make sure our info is up-to-date, so please make sure to check your name off and/or make corrections on the clipboard at church before August 11.

## Novels Tea

Novels Tea will meet on Sunday, August 31, at 2:30 pm on Zoom, to discuss "The Book Club for Troublesome Women" by Marie Bostwick.

## Lunch Bunch

Wed., Aug 20

at noon

Ilene Kiser, hosting  
Black Bear Diner  
in El Cajon

## THANK YOU!

Thanks to all our donors to our inaugural Open & Affirming special offering! We have already received \$736, exceeding our goal! This offering will be split evenly between Disciples Alliance Q+ and San Diego Pride. It will be held every year on the third weekend of July.

## Happy Birthday!

Aug. 7 - Eliseo Sisneros

Aug. 7 - Steve Bridwell

Aug. 11 - Allan Flores

Aug. 15 - Kaitlin Yoder

Aug. 22 - Glenda Cliffe

Julian Ballo Cliffe

Aug. 25 - Paul Epler

Aug 25 - Harley Hanna

Aug 30 - Michelle Tolvo-Chan

## Happy Anniversary!

Aug. 9 - John & Jennefer

Lehton

Aug. 16 - Jerry & Norma Bailey

Aug. 17 - Allan & Daphne

Flores

Aug. 18 - Jeffrey & Berna Cliffe

Aug. 30 - Mike & Lisa Martin

## In Our Prayers...

JOYS & CONCERNS~ Contact Pastor Rebecca for prayers.

## Report from the Board

Our 2025-2026 General Board met on July 23 for their first meeting of the ministry year. The Board this year consists of Karen Cliffe, Board Chair; Tracy Stockdall, Vice Chair; Gary Wilhite, Secretary; Larry Knight, Stewardship & Finance Chair; Helene Sisneros, Trustee; Amy Cliffe, Personnel Chair; Steve Bridwell, Elders Chair; Lyn Van Winkle, Deacons Chair; Mary Alynn Fallon, Worship Chair; Cheryl Davis-Plotts, Christian Education Chair; Mary Jane Fay, Outreach Chair; Vicky Wilhite, Fellowship Chair; John Lehton, Property Chair; Andy Cliffe, MEC Chair; and Rebecca Littlejohn, Pastor.

Beyond dealing with the year-end financial situation (see Stewardship News), the Board cleared up some authorization issues with our bank. Tracy Stockdall was appointed to the Memorial Endowment Committee.

The Board also received various updates including details on our new communion practice, the upcoming Saturday Forums, and some possible partnership activities with our friends at Missiongathering.

## FACILITY UPDATES

Quite a number of projects have been completed over the past few months, as more folks have gotten involved in the ongoing maintenance of our facility. Graffiti was cleaned up, the electronic sign fixed, and a new mailbox installed. The old built-in coffee maker was removed so it's no longer taking up space, and new grab bars installed on the kitchen window cover so it's easier to raise and lower. The squeakiest door ever was fixed, and the gate chain was replaced. Lighting was fixed in the custodian's storage room and in Bailey Hall. Thanks to John, Gary, Andy, Bill, Jim, Steve, and everyone else who helped with all these projects! We'll meet again to re-group on Wednesday, August 13 at 9:30 AM in the Library.

## Creek Report

We are grateful to announce that the City of La Mesa will be carrying out a creek clean-out project on our lot on the north side of Boulevard Drive, on August 12-13. This is a complicated job because of the extreme slope of the ground leading down to the creek.

They will be leaving us with an ongoing maintenance check-list once they have completed the project, so that we can avoid the need for major work in the future.

Later this year, the Busy Bees Garden Co-op of Lemon Grove is planning to transform that lot into a pollinator garden!

## STEWARDSHIP NEWS

Our General Board is responsible for ensuring the financial stability of our congregation, but that doesn't mean they are the only ones with a stake in that conversation! We want everyone to be fully informed about what it takes to keep this ministry going.

We have good news and bad news. The bad news is that we ended the fiscal year with a deficit around \$7000. The good news is that is \$3000 less than our deficits from the past two years! Also, our offering numbers were better than projected, which is fantastic. (Thank you!) In addition, if we hadn't paid more than expected for utilities because our solar malfunctioned, our expenses would have been well under-budget.

The bigger picture, however, exposes another weakness. We have had year-end deficits over several years now, and we have not taken measures to counteract them. That means that as of 6/30/25, our year-end Equity (the money in our checking account for operating expenses) was in negative territory for the first time. We are essentially borrowing from our designated funds to pay our bills. The Board felt this is not acceptable, so they voted to withdraw an additional \$7K from the Memorial Endowment Fund to cover the 24-25 deficit and bring our Equity into the black. The MEC is currently considering this plan. Fortunately, our ME Fund currently has almost \$8K more than it did a year ago, despite our \$20K withdrawals throughout this past year.

We are so grateful for our faithful and generous donors! We are slowly moving toward sustainability!

# August 2025 Worship Participants

|                              | <b>August 3</b>                                | <b>August 10</b>                               | <b>August 17</b>   | <b>August 24</b>               | <b>August 31</b>                            |
|------------------------------|--|--|--|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Worship Leader</b>        | Michael Lewis                                  | Gary Wilhite                                   | Tesa Hauser  | Marianna Kirwan                | Gary Wilhite                                |
| <b>Lay Reader</b>            | Tracy Stockdall                                | Jerry Bailey                                   | Cheryl Davis-Plotts                                      | Michelle T-C                   | Jennefer Lehton                             |
| <b>Offering Invitation</b>   | Rebecca Littlejohn                             | Rebecca Littlejohn                             | Rebecca Littlejohn                                       | Rebecca Littlejohn             | Rebecca Littlejohn                          |
| <b>Elders</b>                | Michael Lewis<br>Karen Cliffe                  | Gary Wilhite<br>Cheryl D-P                     | Tesa Hauser<br>Tim Cliffe                                | Marianna K<br>Jennefer Lehton  | Gary Wilhite<br>Mary Jane Fay               |
| <b>Deacons</b>               | Mary Alynn F<br>Ilene Kiser<br>Tracy Stockdall | Daphne Flores<br>John Lehton<br>Lyn Van Winkle | Susan Peterson<br>Michaela Stockdall<br>Claudette Toland | Jenny Angione<br>Vicky Wilhite | John L, Susan P,<br>Claudette T,<br>Vicky W |
| <b>Communion Prep/Clean</b>  | Lyn Van Winkle                                 | Lyn Van Winkle                                 | Lyn Van Winkle   | Daphne Flores                  | Daphne Flores                               |
| <b>AV Tech<br/>Zoom Tech</b> | Jenny Angione<br>Michaela S                    | Tracy Stockdall<br>Karen Cliffe                | Tracy Stockdall<br>Vicky Wilhite                         | Tracy Stockdall<br>Michaela S  | Mary Allyn F<br>Karen Cliffe                |
| <b>Greeters</b>              | Michael Lewis<br>Daphne Flores                 | Vicky & Gary<br>Wilhite                        | Marianna Kirwan<br>John Lehton                           | Ilene Kiser<br>Michael Lewis   | Mary Jane Fay<br>John Lehton                |
| <b>Counters</b>              | John Lehton<br>May Alynn F                     | Tracy Stockdall<br>Ilene Kiser                 | Lyn Van Winkle<br>Andy Cliffe                            | Ilene Kiser<br>Michelle T-C    | Jenny Angione<br>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

## CHURCH STAFF

Ministers: **The Members of VLMCC**

Pastor: **Rev. Rebecca Littlejohn**

Secretary: **Krista Trimlett**

Music Director: **Deborah Wilson**

Nursery: **Stephanie Cadiero**

Custodian: **Scott Tiemann**

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Pastor's E-mail: [pastor@vlmcc.org](mailto:pastor@vlmcc.org)

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