

The Christian Visitor

JANUARY 2026 ~ VISTA LA MESA CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Sabbatical Plans

Pastor Rebecca will be taking seven weeks of sabbatical leave, beginning January 21 and returning March 11. This is the “second half” of the sabbatical she began in the late winter of 2024. Traditionally, a sabbatical is three months and taken every five years or so, but because of covid, her second sabbatical leave was split into two segments.

Karen Cliffe and Renee Bridwell will be taking care of things, along with everyone’s help while Rebecca is off. Rebecca will also be working from home some earlier in January, while she has her follow-up dental work done (first appointment on 1/6). Thank you for your understanding and patience during this time!

Big Thanks to Those Who Made Christmas Happen!

Thanks to everyone who...

- Helped decorate the church for the season!
- Sent or brought in a Christmas card!
- Spread JOY at the Farmers Market!
- Helped with Advent & Christmas worship!
- Stocked the waffle bar!
- Exchanged ornaments at Lunch Bunch!
- Sponsored poinsettias!
- Sang carols at neighbors’ houses!
- Gave to the Christmas Special Offering!
- Practiced and performed choir songs!

The VLM ???????? Garden

The pocket/neighborhood/park/pollinator/corner/native plant garden on our triangle lot north of Boulevard Drive is about to start emerging! Hardscaping (paths, etc) will begin soon, and plants and trees will be planted this month. We are so grateful to Busy Bees Garden Co-op and Wild Ones San Diego for all the work they have put into planning and grant applications!

But what are we going to call this revitalized space? We need a name, and we’re hoping you can help! It will be the “Vista La Mesa something something,” but what is the best way to finish that phrase? (Vista La Mesa Park is already taken.) We want to make clear that it has native plants designed to attract pollinators like butterflies and bees. What do you think the name should be? Let Pastor Rebecca know if you have any good ideas!

JOY! at the Farmers Market!

We visited the Farmers Market two Fridays before Thanksgiving and three Friday before Christmas. We were inviting people to fill out and wear stickers. In November the stickers said “Grateful for ___” and in December they said “_____ give(s) me joy”.

People young and old had such a good time collaborating with us to spread gratitude and joy! We heard beautiful stories about family, surviving cancer, food, and lots of dogs!

This project was funded by the Share The Joy Fund, which you can support with a designated donation. We’ll be spreading HOPE right before Easter this spring! Don’t miss your chance to participate!

From My View at the Table

Dear Church,

There are many ways in which ministry has become much more complicated than it was when I started 25 years ago. Pastors are expected to have all the usual skills, but also the ability to parse the fine print in contracts, the capacity to manage vendors and contractors, not to mention tech savvy and the equivalent of a BA in marketing. The internet has had a lot to do with that. But in one vital and positive way, ministry is a totally different calling because of the internet: because of social media, I have support and friendship with clergy all across the country and even around the world. Ministry can be a very lonely vocation, because the community you spend most of your time with is also the one you need to be most care-full with, since you are literally charged with caring for them. Having colleagues, especially those who aren't invested in your particular situation, to help reflect on your challenges and celebrate the joys is a blessing.

One of the other things these colleagues relationships provide is perspective. I am very aware of how blessed I am to serve a congregation that appreciates its pastor and makes the effort to support me with just compensation, respect for my time, and yes, time away for rest and renewal. I want you to know that while such things should be the norm, I do not take them for granted, because I know that many churches are not as gracious. Thank you for being you, Vista La Mesa!

grace & peace,

Pastor Rebecca

Pastor's Schedule

Pastor Rebecca will return from visiting family for Christmas on January 4. See page one for more details on her schedule after that.

Elders & Preachers

During Pastor Rebecca's sabbatical leave, our Elders will be taking turns being the primary person responsible for responding to pastoral/emergency situations. Karen Cliffe will be the "dispatcher" and the keeper of the prayer list, so you are invited to contact her first and she will make sure you're taken care of.

Renee Bridwell is scheduling preachers for the seven weeks Rebecca will be off. Watch your weekly email to see who will kick us off on 1/25. If you'd like to nominate a preacher, be in touch with Renee.

Disciples Class

January is a great time to add Bible study into your life! Disciples Class will resume on Sunday, January 18 at 9 AM in Bailey Hall. You can also join on Zoom.

The class is currently making its way through the gospel of Matthew. Each session begins with sharing prayer concerns and joys. Once we turn to scripture, we use a variety of translations and commentaries to deepen our perspectives on the passages we read. See Christian Ed Chair Cheryl Davis-Plotts for more info.

Christmas Special Offering

Thank you for your contributions to our Christmas Special Offering, which goes entirely to support the Christian Church in the Pacific Southwest Region! We collected \$617, exceeding our \$500 goal! You are a blessing!

Vista La Mesa Christian Church

*Feeding Your Soul Without
Disconnecting Your Mind!*

www.vlmcc.org

VLM Staff Says Thank You!

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the Christmas Gift for the VLM Staff! We are grateful for your support and love!

Pastor Rebecca Littlejohn

Secretary Krista Trimlett Music Director Deborah Wilson

Nursery Attendant Stephanie Cadiero Custodian Scott Tiemann

Novels Tea

We will be discussing "The Ogress and the Orphans" by Kelly Barnhill on Sunday, January 18 at 3pm on Zoom. Anyone who has read the book is welcome to join us!

Choir Schedule

Choir will meet for practice on Thursday, January 8 and then again on January 15. We will sing in worship Jan. 11 & 18.

After January 18, we will be on break until Thursday, March 5, when we will prepare to return to worship on March 15 and get ready for Palm Sunday and Easter.

If you would like to provide special music one of those other Sundays, be in touch with Deborah Wilson.

Welcome Saturday Updates

Our guests were so touched by our Christmas Waffle Bar on 12/13! Some of them said it had been years since they'd had "a waffle like this". Thanks to everyone who provided toppings!

We are so grateful to all our regular donors who have brought this ministry into financial stability! Thank you!

Joanna Phipps and Helen Christensen of Missiongathering, along with Gary Wilhite, will be running things while Rebecca is off, so we'll be in good hands!

We were also pleased to receive a big donation of new undies from Salt Church San Diego in December!

Lunch Bunch

January 21 @ 12pm

Hosted by the

Karen Cliffe

Location TBA

Happy Birthday!

- Jan. 5 - Ray Adsit
- Jan. 15 - Himston Flores
- Jan. 16 - Troy Gurling
- Jan. 23 - Jackie Hahn
- Krista Trimlett
- Jan. 24 - Tracy Stockdall
- Jan. 27 - Mary Jane Fay

Happy Anniversary!

Jan. 6

Ray & Victoria Adsit

Jan. 24

Bob & Beckie Neely

IN OUR PRAYERS...

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



The Board of VLMCC

VLMCC's General Board will meet on **Tuesday, January 20th** at 6 pm, on Zoom and in the office. **Board reports are due** to Pastor Rebecca by **Friday, January 9th**. The Administrative Committee will meet on Tuesday, January 14th at 6 pm on Zoom and in the office.

We will review our current financial situation to see if withdrawals need to be made, but it seems unlikely at the moment. We will also review coverage plans for Pastor Rebecca's sabbatical leave and the progress on the north lot garden.

End-of-Year Giving Reports

We are so grateful for all our faithful and generous donors! We will be sending out giving reports for 2025 to all those who gave over \$250. As usual, we will include a review of the first half of this fiscal year and a reminder of where you are in relation to your estimate of giving (if you share one), so everyone can be on top of your stewardship practice. Remember that you can always set up automatic giving on our website if that would help you meet your stewardship goals.

Christmas Greetings!

We received Christmas cards for our Card tree from the following folks: Jerry & Norma Bailey; Glenda Cliffe; Tim & Karen Cliffe; Daniel, Mark, & Stephen Cliffe; Cheryl Davis-Plotts; Mary Alynn & Jim Fallon; Mary Jane Fay; Ilene Kiser and Roy Jenkins; Pastor Rebecca Littlejohn & Todd Lesh; Betty Sullivan and Bill Kwon; Michelle Tolvo-Chan; Gary & Vicky Wilhite; Nae, a grateful member of GA; Marilyn Fiddmont of Christian Church Foundation; and Welcome Saturday friends. Merry Christmas to us all!

Volunteer Roles for 2026

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 2026. 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 know if you're interested and we will make sure you are fully trained.

January 2026 Worship Participants

	January 4	January 11	January 18	January 25
Worship Leader	Mary Jane Fay	Michael Lewis	Tesa Hauser	Steve Bridwell
Lay Reader	Cheryl Davis-Plotts	Mary Jane Fay	Tracy Stockdall	Michelle Tolvo-Chan
Offering Invitation	Tesa Hauser	Rebecca Littlejohn	Rebecca Littlejohn	Renee Bridwell
Elders	Mary Jane Fay Jennefer Lehton	Michael Lewis Renee Bridwell	Tesa Hauser Karen Cliffe	Steve Bridwell Cheryl Davis-Plotts
Deacons	Mary Alynn Fallon Tracy Stockdall	Daphne Flores John Lehton Lyn Van Winkle	Susan Peterson Michaela Stockdall Claudette Toland	Jenny Angione Vicky Wilhite
Comm Prep & Clean up	Mary Alynn Fallon	Mary Jane Fay	Susan Peterson	Vicky Wilhite
Greeters	John Lehton Mary Jane Fay	Vicky & Gary Wilhite	John Lehton Marianna Kirwan	Daphne Flores Michael Lewis
AV Tech Zoom Tech	Mary Alynn Fallon Karen Cliffe	Tracy Stockdall Vicky Wilhite	Jenny Angione Michaela Stockdall	Tracy Stockdall Michaela Stockdall
Counters	John Lehton Tracy Stockdall	Jenny Angione Renee Bridwell	John Lehton Mary Alynn Fallon	Andy Cliffe Steve Bridwell
Elder On-Call	Karen Cliffe/Rebecca	(Rebecca here)	Gary Wilhite	Tim Cliffe

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: Bible Study @ 9:00 – Worship @ 10:30

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

CHURCH STAFF

Senior Pastor: **Rev. Rebecca Littlejohn**

Secretary: **Krista Trimlett**

Music Director: **Deborah Wilson**

Nursery: **Stephanie Cadiero**

Custodian: **Scott Tiemann**

Church Tel. (619) 463-9909

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Pastor's E-mail: pastor@vlmcc.org

Church website: www.vlmcc.org