

Our Vision:
To Be the Lantern to Leisure World

Our Mission:
Lighting a pathway into Community.
Growing disciples in God's Love.
Sending the Hope and Joy of Jesus into the Community.

Leisure World Community Church **in Worship *January 8, 2023***

14000 Church Place
Seal Beach, CA 90740-5307

9:50 am
(562) 431-2503

Opening Announcements - Rev. Johan Dodge

Good Morning and Welcome to Worship!
Worship is often the first place that new people come into contact with this growing community of faith. And so if you are joining us for the first time, I say to you what is said every Sunday. You are welcome here. Here is a place where all are welcome. For such is the love of God for God's Very Good Creation. And if you are enjoying this worship experience, I invite you to give to God in support of this growing faith community.

The Greeting - Rev. Johan Dodge

Leader: Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations
People: **You are the one true God who reigns forever.**

[please stand as you are able]

ORGAN CALL TO WORSHIP – “Doxology”

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Opening Prayer - Kelly Frankiewicz M.Div

Almighty God, You search our hearts and you see every part of us. All our desires are known to You, and from you no secrets are hidden. By the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit, cleanse our hearts so we may perfectly love you and glorify Your holy name. We pray this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer – Prince Pierson, Lay Leader

Leader: Now as God's dearly loved children, let us pray together:

People: **Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.**

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

ORGAN Hymn: "Come, Let Us Use the Grace Divine"

[please be seated]

SCRIPTURE: Kelly Frankiewicz M.Div

Acts 10:34-43

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. ³⁷That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; ⁴⁰but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, ⁴¹not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

Matthew 3:13-17

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

The Proclamation: "Written On the Heart" Rev. Johan Dodge, Pastor

The Confession — Prince Pearson, Lay Leader

Leader: We are those who seek to live as true disciples of Jesus Christ, but sometimes we fall short. Let us now examine ourselves before God, humbly confessing our sins and submitting our hearts so that we do not deceive ourselves and cut ourselves away from God. Let us pray:

People: Loving God, You have set forth the way of life through Your Son Jesus Christ, whom You love dearly. We shamefully confess that we have been slow to learn of Him and have been reluctant to follow Him. You have spoken and called to us but we have not listened. You have revealed Your beauty to us, but we have been blind. You have stretched out Your hands to us through our friends, but we have passed by them. We have accepted Your gifts and offered little thanks. We are unworthy of Your unchanging love.

Leader: We now confess to you our sins. Please forgive us for the poverty of our worship... for the selfishness of our prayers... for our inconsistency and unbelief... for the ways we neglect fellowship and Your grace... for our hesitation to tell others about Christ.... for the ways we deceive others...

People: Forgive us for when we waste time and when we misuse the gifts you have given us. Forgive us for when we have

made excuses for the wrong things we have done and when we have purposefully avoided responsibility.

Leader: Forgive us that we have been unwilling to overcome evil with good and that we have not been ready to carry our cross. Forgive us that we have not allowed Your love to work through us to help others and that we have not made their suffering our own. Forgive us for those times when instead of working for unity we made it hard for others to live with us because of our lack of forgiveness, inconsiderate judgment, and quick criticism.

People: Forgive us for when we have not tried to reconcile with others and when we have been slow to seek redemption.

Leader: Forgive us also for these sins that we silently confess to you now.

Words of Assurance and Pardon — Rev. Johan Dodge

God, the Source of all mercies, is faithful to cleanse us from our sins and restore us to Christ's image. Praise and glory be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! Amen.

Invitation To the Offering – Kelly Frankiewicz

God is the genesis of life and offers the new life born of repentance, forgiveness, and resurrection. Therefore, with generous hearts, let us give back a portion of what has already been given to us in our baptismal covenant with God and each other.

PIANO Offertory: "You Raise Me Up"

Jennifer Scoullar, *soprano*

The Invitation — Prince Pearson Lay Leader

Leader: Let us gathered here before the Lord now in covenant commit ourselves to Christ as his servants. Let us give ourselves to Him so that we may fully belong to Him. Jesus Christ has left us with much work to be done. Some of this work is easy and honorable, but some is difficult and disgraceful. Some lines up with our desires and interests, some is contrary to both. In some work we please both Christ and ourselves, but then there is other work where we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves. Jesus Christ, we offer You this prayer:

People: Let me be Your change agent. Let me follow your guidance and seek your way of love. I will no longer follow my own desires. I give myself completely to your will.

Leader: The power and strength to live as true followers is given to us in Christ. We accept the place and work that He gives us, acknowledging that He alone will be our reward.

People: I am not my own. I am Yours alone. Make me into what You will. Rank me with those You will. Put me to use for You. Put me to suffering for You. Let me be employed for You. Let me be laid aside for You. Let me be lifted high for You. Let me be brought low for You. Let me be full or let me be empty. Let me have all things or let me have nothing. With a willing heart, I freely give everything to Your pleasure and disposal.

Leader: Christ is Savior to those who are His true servants. He is the source of all salvation to those who obey. To be His servant is to consent fully to His will. Christ accepts nothing less. Christ will be all in all, or he will be nothing. Now confirm this truth in holy covenant. Make it a reality in your life in these three ways:

First examine your heart, set apart time in your day, more than once, to be spent alone with the Lord. Seek to perceive God's special care for you and gracious acceptance of you. Carefully think through the words of this covenant and its conditions.

Second, claim God's covenant. Do not trust in your own strength and power but rely upon God's promise of giving grace and strength. Be prepared to renew your covenant with God. Lift your heart. Open your hands.

Third, be determined to be faithful. You have given your heart and life to God. You have opened your mouth to dedicate yourself to the Lord. With God's power, never go back to your former way of living.

The Covenant Prayer — Rev. Johan Dodge

Leader: Let us pray together:

People: My righteous God, for the sake of Your Son Jesus Christ, see me now as I fall down before You. Forgive my

unfaithfulness when I have not done your will. You promise mercy if I turn to You with my whole heart.

Leader: God requires that you rid yourself of every idol in your life.

People: From the bottom of my heart, I here and now renounce every idol in my life, covenanting with You that I will not commit any known sin. By turning against Your will I have turned my love toward the world. In Your power I will watch for any temptation that will lead me away from You.

Leader: Through Jesus Christ, God offers to be your God again, if you allow Him to be.

People: Before all heaven and earth, I here and now acknowledge You, God, Christ, and Holy Spirit, as my Lord and God. I vow to give all of myself, body and soul, to be Your servant and to serve You in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.

Leader: Jesus Christ is the only way and means to God. God has given us Jesus as the way and means to salvation.

People: Jesus, I here and now accept You as the only new and living Way. I join myself in covenant with You. I come to You hungry, sinful, miserable, blind, and naked, unworthy even to wash the feet of Your servants. With all my power, I accept You as my Lord and Head. I renounce my own unworthiness, and vow that You are the Lord, my righteousness. I renounce my own wisdom and take You for my only guide. I renounce my own will and take Your will as my law.

Leader: Christ has told you that you must suffer with him.

People: Jesus, I here and now make this covenant with You and accept whatever comes in life. Through Your grace I promise that neither life nor death will separate me from You.

Leader: God has given holy laws as the rule of your life.

People: I here and now willingly take on Your yoke and burden. All Your laws are holy, just, and good. I accept them as the rule for my words, thoughts, and actions, promising I will strive to order my whole life around your direction. I will not allow myself to neglect anything I know to be my duty.

Leader: The Almighty God searches and knows you, even the thoughts of your heart.

People: O God, You know that we have made this covenant today in sincerity, without deceit or reluctance. If You find anything false in us, guide us and help us to set it right. And now, glory be to You loving God. From this day forward, I shall look upon You as my God. Glory be to You, God the Son. You have loved me and shown me how to live for more than myself. From this day forward, I shall look upon You as my Savior and Redeemer. Glory be to You, O God the Holy Spirit. By Your almighty power, You have turned my heart from self to God. From this day forward I shall look upon You as my Comforter and Guide. O mighty God, Son, and Holy Spirit, you have now become my Covenant Guide. And I, through Your infinite grace, have become Your covenant member. You are mine and I am Yours. So be it. May this covenant that I have made here on earth be ratified in heaven. Amen.

You are advised to make this covenant not only in your heart, but in word; not only in word, but in writing. Therefore, with all reverence, lay the service before the Lord as your act and deed. And when you have done this, sign it.

Signed: _____
This Day: _____

Then keep it as a reminder of the holy agreement between God and you that you may remember it during doubts and temptations.

Please Note:

The Date has been intentionally left empty. If you are not yet prepared to sign this covenant please don't sign it yet.

ORGAN Song For Illumination: "Every Time I Feel the Spirit"

THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION:

We are pleased to offer both white and red grape juice. If you are afraid of spilling red grape juice, a limited number of cups with white grape juice are provided.

Invitation to Communion - Pastor Johan Dodge

Here at Community Church we celebrate "Open Communion".

Anyone who wishes to commune may come to our Lord's Table. You do not have to be sinless; God forgives you. You do not have to be perfect; but God is encouraging you to grow. You need not belong to this or any church; God Invites all people to this meal. It is enough to love the Lord and follow Him with all your heart. This is what God asks us to do. Come to our Lord's Table in faith this day. Go from this place to live, and never be the same again. Let us commune as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Pastor: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth. Before the mountains were brought forth, or you had formed the earth, from everlasting to everlasting, you alone are God. You created light out of darkness and brought forth life on the earth. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through your prophets. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

People: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Pastor: Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ, in whom you have revealed yourself, our light and our salvation. In his baptism

and in table fellowship Jesus took his place with sinners. Your Spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to announce that the time had come when you would save your people. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to this your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, Jesus took bread, gave thanks to you O God, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over Jesus took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

People: Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pastor: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and fruit of the vine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

PIANO MUSIC FOR COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

Hannah Yi, pianist

[Ushers, please distribute the elements]

The Sharing of the Bread

Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

The Sharing of the Cup

The bread which we have eaten is a sharing in the bread of Christ.
The cup over which we give thanks is the sharing in the cup of Christ.

Unison Prayer

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ORGAN Anthem: "Down to the River to Pray"

Remembrance of Baptism: Rev. Johan Dodge

[please stand as you able]

Thanksgiving over the Water

Pastor: The Lord be with you. And also with you. Let us pray.

People: Eternal God: When nothing existed but chaos, you swept across the dark waters and brought forth light. In the days of Noah you saved those on the ark through water. After the flood you set in the clouds a rainbow. When you saw your people as slaves in Egypt, you led them to freedom through the sea. Their children you brought through the Jordan to the land which you promised. In the fullness of time you sent Jesus, nurtured in the water of a womb. He was baptized by John and anointed by your Spirit. He called his disciples to share in the baptism of his death and resurrection and to make disciples of all nations.

Pastor: Pour out your Holy Spirit, and by this gift of water call to our remembrance the grace declared to us in our baptism. For you have washed away our sins, and you clothe us with righteousness throughout our lives, that dying and rising with Christ we may share in his final victory.

People: Amen.

At the conclusion of the service this morning Pastor Johan will be standing in the back with the Baptismal bowl. Please come and touch the water as a remembrance of your Baptism. If you have not been baptized, please come as a sign of your willingness to explore the idea of baptism. In the bowl will be silver stars. Please take a star as a remembrance or a sign of exploration.

ORGAN Hymn: “Let There Be Peace on Earth”

BLESSING: Rev. Johan Dodge

Leader: May our God, who establishes covenant relationship with those who seek to enter the Kingdom, be with you always. May Jesus Christ, who seals the new covenant with his blood on the cross, bring you peace. May the Holy Spirit guide your life both now and for ever. Go in peace to serve the Lord!

People: Amen.

ORGAN Blessed Be the Tie that Binds

Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love. The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above. Amen.

PIANO MUSIC - RECESSIONAL

Hannah Yi, pianist

A Note about this Service:

In 1775, John Wesley introduced a covenant service as an important part of spiritual life in the Methodist Societies. This renewal service was a time for the Methodists to gather annually in a time of self-examination, reflection, and dedication, wholly giving up themselves and renewing covenant with God. Repentance through confession and commitment was a key focus of the service, demanding humility from those willing to submit themselves to the dynamic words stated within the liturgy.

According to Wesley's journal, though the covenant renewal service was held on various occasions throughout the year, by the end of his life, the service was observed typically on or the Sunday nearest January 1st. The covenant renewal service is a practice that continues in churches and Christian communities today, often near the beginning of the new year. It has undergone many revisions and adaptations, but its purpose as an evocative ceremony of commitment to ongoing discipleship and Christ-like character has always remained intact.

Presented here is a modern liturgical adaptation of the covenant service. The vocabulary and syntax have been updated to what would be more familiar in the world today. Our prayer is for this resource to be a means of grace for the church, bringing renewal in the hearts and lives of God's children, freely giving everything to God's pleasure and disposal.

Notes and Announcements:

Note: Coffee Fellowship following Sunday Worship is on hold until further notice. “Grab & Go” refreshments will be provided.

See the sign up charts to provide refreshments or cover cost of altar flowers. Altar flowers are \$35. Sandy Walker coordinates arrangements.

2023 Offering Envelopes: 2023 offering envelope packets are available in the Narthex. Please contact Virginia Olejnik if you have any questions.

January Lantern Newsletter: If you did not receive your copy by mail or email, please pick up your January Lantern at the sign in table in the Narthex.