

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 World.

Leisure World Community Church in Worship *March 5, 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 I say 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.

[please stand as you are able]

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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY – Phyllis Spencer

**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.

Hymn: "Lift High the Cross"

[please be seated]

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION — Rev. Johan Dodge

God our Helper, we thank you for keeping our lives always in your care and protection and pray for any and all who are in harm's way. We pray together: **God our helper, our shade, our protector, we trust in your power to make all things new.**

For those walking in the midst of danger...

God our helper, our shade, our protector, we trust in your power to make all things new

For those who are treading a slippery path...

God our helper, our shade, our protector, we trust in your power to make all things new

For those exhausted and seeking relief...

God our helper, our shade, our protector, we trust in your power to make all things new

For those who face a mountain of worry or debt or any other obstacles....

God our helper, our shade, our protector, we trust in your power to make all things new

We pray for those who are struggling with a new challenge or call...

God our helper, our shade, our protector, we trust in your power to make all things new

We pray for those who are dealing with a major transition in life or livelihood...

God our helper, our shade, our protector, we trust in your power to make all things new

We pray for those who are dealing with their faith and understanding...

God our helper, our shade, our protector, we trust in your power to make all things new

We pray for those who are dealing with grief, ancient or new...

God our helper, our shade, our protector, we trust in your power to make all things new

Keep in your tender care and mercy, O God, those who are sick in mind, body, or spirit...

God our helper, our shade, our protector, we trust in your power to make all things new

We pray for those weighed down by depression or pain...

God our helper, our shade, our protector, we trust in your power to make all things new

We pray for those recuperating from surgery or accident....

God our helper, our shade, our protector, we trust in your power to make all things new

Protect not only us and those we love, but also the whole wide world you so love.

In places of war, bring peace... in places beset by natural disaster, bring calm and restoration... where there is unrest and injustice, make justice our aim. Where hope has grown tired and thin, lift our sights, so that we may see hope beyond hope, life beyond death, and you, lifted up before us. In the name of Christ, who gave himself for our sake, we pray. Amen.

Anthem: "On Eagle's Wings" Music Team

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION – Phyllis Spencer

O God of signs and wonders, we come to your word again and again, seeking understanding and the new life it offers. By the power of your Holy Spirit, illumine our hearts and minds so that we may believe this testimony and have eternal life. In the name of Jesus Christ, our teacher and Savior, we pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Phyllis Spencer

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

¹What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? ²For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³For what does the scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." ⁴Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. ⁵But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

¹³For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to

Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. ¹⁶For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, ¹⁷as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations") —in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

John 3:1-17

¹Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ²He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." ³Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." ⁴Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" ⁵Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' ⁸The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." ⁹Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" ¹⁰Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? ¹¹"Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. ¹⁷"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to

condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Message: “Responsibility Leads to Freedom” Rev. Johan Dodge

Questions for Reflection: Rev. Johan Dodge

Consider a time when you felt uncertain. Can you see how God was at work in your life at that time? What from Nicodemus’s story, is a help to you as you look for evidence of God’s presence in your own life?

Reflection: “Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross” Hannah Yi, *pianist*

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.

[Ushers, please come forward to collect and distribute the elements]

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. You brought all things into being and called them good. From the dust of the earth you formed us into your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away, and our love for you, one another and your creation failed, your love for us remained steadfast. When rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights, you bore up the ark on the waters, saved Noah and his family, and made covenant with every living creature on earth. When you led your people to Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights, you gave us your commandments and made us your covenant people. When your people forsook your covenant, your prophet Elijah fasted for forty days and forty nights; and on your holy mountain, he heard your still small voice. 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. When you gave him to save us from our sin, your Spirit led him into the wilderness, where he fasted forty days and forty nights to prepare for his ministry. When he suffered and died on a cross for our sin, you raised him to life, presented him alive to the apostles during forty days, and exalted him at your right hand.

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.

Now, when we your people prepare for the yearly feast of Easter, you lead us to reflect upon our lives and the times we have hardened our hearts when you have asked us to be your hands and feet, that during these forty days of Lent we may be gifted and graced to reaffirm the covenant you made with us through Christ.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, 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 he 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.

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.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING – Phyllis Spencer

All that we have is a gift from God. Rom. 4:4 In faith and gratitude, we return now a portion of what we have so abundantly received, as grateful heirs of the promises of God.

[Ushers, please come forward]

Offertory: “Hold On” Chris Wade, *baritone*

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING – Phyllis Spencer

Gracious God, we dedicate to you not only these gifts, but also ourselves, in deep gratitude— for your call on our lives, your guidance in the baptismal journey, and for blessing us that we may be a blessing to others. Accept what we bring for your own good purposes. In Christ we pray. Amen.

[please stand as you able]

Hymn: “Let There Be Peace on Earth”

BLESSING: Rev. Johan Dodge

As you go out and come in, may God keep you by sunlight and moonlight; may Christ encompass you with love; and may the Holy Spirit empower you with new life; now and forever.

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.

*Music Team: Jennifer Scoullar, *soprano*; Lisa Margaroli, *alto*;
Dave Albulario, *tenor*; Chris Wade, *bass*; John Fluker/Hannah Yi, *pianist*

Notes and Announcements:

Coffee Fellowship: Flowers and Refreshments are provided by Jenny Chang.

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

Important Banking Notice: Our bank no longer accepts checks written to "Community Church". Checks now must be written to "Leisure World Community Church". No abbreviations.

March Lantern Newsletter: Available at the check in table if you did not receive yours by email or mail.

Lenten Journey: The six-week series includes a "Bowl and a Roll" lunch. Please join us on March 8 at 11am for the second week of the Lenten video series, "In the Footsteps of the Savior", with pastor and author, Max Lucado. No need to have attended the first session. Join us any week you are able.

LBCC Symphony Orchestra Concert TODAY: Sunday, March 5 at 3:00pm in the Sanctuary. The concert features our own accompanist, Hannah Yi. Please invite your friends and neighbors. A donation is suggested at the door.