



Leisure World Community Church

Lighting A pathway into community

Growing Disciples in God's Love

Sending the Hope and Joy of Jesus into Leisure World

Our Vision: To Be the Lantern to Leisure World

14000 Church Place

December 3, 2023

9:50 am

Seal Beach, CA 90740-5307

(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.

[please stand as you are able]

CALL TO WORSHIP – “Christmas Doxology”

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow, in every generation.

Praise God, all creatures here below, the blessed incarnation.

Praise God above, ye heavenly host, Creator, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Let all creation praise the Lord with love and adoration.

LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH CANDLE OF ADVENT– “Hope”

Lewis and Linda Hildreth

Leader: In the days of exile and uncertainty, the prophet Isaiah cried out: O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence. As when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil, come down to make your name known to your enemies and cause the nations to quake before you! For when you did awesome things that we did not expect, you came down, and the mountains trembled before you.

People: God of power unexpected, we want you to tear open the heavens and come down; to make mountains quake, water boil, and stars to fall until all nations tremble at your presence! But

you, you will not perform according to our wants and whims. Instead you are born among us as an infant. Instead you show us how love can turn our world upside-down. And invite us to participate in the turning.

Leader: We light this candle as the Candle of Hope.

Hymn: "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

[please be seated]

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION — Rev. Johan Dodge

God of power and glory, we remember your awesome deeds across the ages — the times you saved us and brought us home. Yet, we also remember times when we felt alone and afraid.

O God, we are your people, the work of your hand. Look upon us with your shining face, and guide us to be your hope in the world.

We pray for those who look to you for healing ... those who are sick or recuperating from illness and injury ... those who are lonely and need companionship and care ... those for whom the holidays bring sorrow or pain ... those whose deep sadness overshadows joy. Let your face shine upon us,

O God, we are your people, the work of your hand. Look upon us with your shining face, and guide us to be your hope in the world.

We pray for people in need of restoration and reconciliation: for those battling addictions and those in recovery ... for people estranged from those they love ... for someone lost in grief ... for someone far from home. Let your face shine upon us,

O God, we are your people, the work of your hand. Look upon us with your shining face, and guide us to be your hope in the world.

Renew the spirit of a world grown weary with waiting and hoping. Especially we pray for wars to end, for hunger and poverty to be crowded out by abundance. And we pray, too, for the church because we also grow weary in our waiting and watching for your power and glory to be made known. Grant us clarity, passion, and true fellowship

so that we are awake to your presence. Let your face shine upon the church and all this weary world, we pray; in the name of the One born in a manger and coming again on clouds of glory. **Amen.**

Anthem: “Fum, Fum, Fum” Music Team

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION – Kelly Frankiewicz

Gracious God, heaven and earth will pass away, but your words will not pass away: Your Word stands forever. May our generation be attentive so that, by the power of your Holy Spirit, we remember your ways and gladly do right, meeting you wherever and whenever you appear. In Christ’s name we pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE : Kelly Frankiewicz

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—⁶just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—⁷so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁸He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Mark 13:24-37

²⁴“But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light,

²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

²⁶Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. ²⁷Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

²⁸“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass

away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³²“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch.

³⁵Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly.

³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

Message: “Heaven is in God’s Hands” Rev. Johan Dodge

Questions for Reflection: Rev. Johan Dodge

The reading from Mark counsels us to be awake to, to pay attention to, what is most needful for our well-being and the well-being of the world: God’s presence, God’s appearing among us. Here at the beginning of Advent, how will you “keep alert” for God in the midst of so many responsibilities and distractions? Where might you see the Kindom of God in the community around you? How might you be the hands of Jesus to bring the kindom into being?

Reflection: “Christmas Time Is Here” John Fluker, *pianist*

THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION: World Communion Sunday

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. 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, who looked for that day when justice shall roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream, when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

People: (Sung Response)

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er, God of might,
Heav - en and Earth are full of your glo - ry. _____ Ho - san - na in the
high - est, _____ Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. _____
_____ Ho - san - na in the high - est, _____ ho - san - na in the high - est.

Pastor: Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ, whom you sent in the fullness of time to be a light to the nations. You scatter the proud in the imagination of their hearts and have mercy on those

who follow you from generation to generation. You guide us in turning over the tables of the mighty that we might feed the hungry with good things. Your own Son came among us as a servant, to be Emmanuel, your presence with us. He humbled himself in obedience to your will and freely accepted birth into a world of darkness. By the light of his life and teaching you gave birth to this your Church, you delivered us from slavery to to a world bent toward darkness and prejudice, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

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 together the mystery of faith.

People: (Sung Response)



Pastor: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. 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 for ever. Amen.

[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.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING – Kelly Frankiewicz

God has enriched us in every way— in speech, knowledge, and spiritual gifts. From the fellowship of Jesus Christ, we are sent out to share with thanksgiving what we have received.

[Ushers, please come forward]

Offertory: “Gesù Bambino” Chris Wade, *baritone*

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING: Kelly Frankiewicz

Faithful God, we thank you that Christ has been and is being revealed in every time and place. Strengthen our testimony and spiritual gifts; increase our generosity, as we wait for the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

[please stand as you able]

Hymn: “Let There Be Peace on Earth”

BLESSING: Rev. Johan Dodge

God is doing awesome things we do not expect. And Christ is here with great power, glory, and tenderness. May God strengthen us to the end; Christ draw near to our very gates; and the Holy Spirit awaken our spirits; until, with eager longing, we greet the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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, *baritone*; John Flucker/Hannah Yi, *pianist*

PRAYER REQUESTS

FOR PERSEVERANCE:

- new Alvin Knowles – the third of 5 radiation treatments was on Nov. 29. He is wiped out the day of the treatments but feels good the following day. He appreciates our prayers.
- new Amelia – lovely woman attendant at the St. Andrews gate – awaiting further tests and biopsy results.
- new Sandy Walker – Son in law, Jeff, had double hernia surgery on 11/28. He is doing well.
- new Mo Ashley – Is feeling much better, recovering from heart surgery/Aneurism surgery. She is thankful for our prayers.

Notes and Announcements:

Coffee Fellowship: Altar Flowers are provided by Joanna Matos. Refreshments are provided by Betty Ku.

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

Thank you!!!: Thank you to the many helping hands that worked together to present an incredibly successful Christmas Bazaar. This would not have been possible without the generous sacrifice of time and energy given by our faithful volunteers.

Advent Study: The weekly study "Advent is for Action", led by Pastor Johan, meets on Thursday mornings at 11:00 am in the Fellowship Hall. Everyone is welcome.

December Lantern: Copies of the December Lantern Newsletter are available in the Narthex if you did not receive your copy by mail or email.

Community Church Christmas Party: Join in on the festivities of Christmas at the annual Christmas Party on Tuesday, December 12 at 12:00 noon in the Fellowship Hall. Entertainment and a traditional Christmas dinner will be served with all the fixings. Feel free to wear your favorite Christmas outfit. This is a no charge event, presented by our Fellowship Team.

Charge Conference booklet: Copies of the annual Charge Conference meeting booklets are available for pick up in the Narthex for those who were unable to attend the meeting on November 17.



Dec 3, 2023

GROW.PRAY.STUDY

Notes from the Service

My Prayers this week

Prayer Journal

Use these prayers in your time with God each day.

Household Prayer: Morning

Thank you, God, for the gift of life today. I give thanks that your face shines upon me— for you are my salvation. Lead me like a shepherd through this day. Strengthen me for whatever lies ahead. Grant me the spiritual gifts of peace, patience, kindness, and gentleness, for I want to show your love, in word and deed, to others. In Christ's name. Amen.

Household Prayer: Midday

Merciful God, I confess that I become distracted as I go through my day, I let the little things get under my skin and then I keep thinking about them. Help me to remain alert to your divine presence in my life, in the church, and in the world. Awaken me to your surprising power and glory and peace, so I do not miss how near you are to me even now this day. Be gracious toward me, I pray, until I am drawn into your embrace. I pray in the name of Christ, who was, and is, and is to come. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Though you have told us to keep awake, O God, you have also blessed us with rest and sleep. Grant me such rest in the hours ahead that I awaken with eager longing for a new day, ready for you to be revealed in mundane moments and ordinary encounters. By your grace prepare me, whether awake or asleep, to greet you: in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn. All times are in your hands, and I, too, am in your hands, faithful God. In Jesus' name I rest and pray. Amen.