



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 10, 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 FIFTH CANDLE OF ADVENT— "Peace"

Jenny Chang and Nancy Trujillo

Leader: This week, we find ourselves in a time of very little peace both in our own country and throughout the world. Some have suggested that in solidarity with our siblings caught in wars around the globe, we not light the candle of peace this year. Others have suggested that now more than ever we need Peace in the world. We light the candle of peace this year as a reminder that we are to be the light of Christ in the world. We are to bring the peace that we are praying for.

As you prepare your breakfast, think of others far away then think of yourself and say:

People: “If only I were a candle in the dark.”

Leader: As you conduct your wars, think of others who also seek peace then think of yourself and say:

People: “If only I were a candle in the dark.”

Leader: As you pay your water bill, think of others who are nursed by clouds then think of yourself and say:

People: “If only I were a candle in the dark.”

Leader: As you return home, to your home, think of others in camps then think of yourself and say:

People: “If only I were a candle in the dark.”

Leader: As you sleep and count the stars, think of others near and far away who have nowhere to sleep then think of yourself and say:

People: “If only I were a candle in the dark.”

Leader: As you liberate yourself in metaphor, think of others who have lost the right to speak then think of yourself and say:

People: “If only I were a candle in the dark.”

**Based on a poem by Mahmoud Darwish*

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

Hymn: “What Child Is This?”

[please be seated]

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION — Rev. Johan Dodge

As heralds of God’s good tidings, let us lift up our voices with strength this day praying to the One who comforts, restores, and heals. Let us pray for all leaders and people of the world. You have created one human family to live in righteousness and peace.

Give us the wisdom to order our common life according to your loving purposes, that your glory may be revealed and all people shall see it together.

Let us pray for your church. You have given us the gift of the Messiah so that your church may be steadfast and true.

Give us strength to follow your Son until all have come to repentance and are reconciled by his love.

Let us pray for those who are sick, who suffer need, who are exiled or in danger. You have made us for a holy purpose, to comfort and care for each other.

Give us compassion to love our neighbor and patience to care for those in need.

Let us pray for your creation. Your faithfulness springs up from the ground, and your goodness looks down from the sky.

Rid us of the laziness and greed that diminish life as you teach us to care for your creation together.

Let us remember those who have died.

Ever-living God, one day in your presence is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. Make us one with the saints, who have found their eternal home in you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Anthem: “The First Noel” Music Team

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION – Virginia Olejnik

Mighty God, send your Holy Spirit to speak peace into our hearts, that the good news of this age may be proclaimed through your word and the ways we live out your teachings. Amen.

SCRIPTURE : Virginia Olejnik

Isaiah 40:1-11

¹Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. ²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.

³A voice cries out: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” ⁶A voice says, “Cry

out!” And I said, “What shall I cry?” All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. ⁸The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

⁹Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, “Here is your God!” ¹⁰See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

Mark 1:1-8

¹The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; ³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,’”

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

Message: “Turning Over the World” Rev. Johan Dodge

Questions for Reflection: Rev. Johan Dodge

The prophet Isaiah announces good news: God comforts and strengthens a wearied and exiled people in preparation for their homeward journey. Mark’s Gospel announces the good news of God in Jesus Christ: God comes to turn the world right side up and baptize us with the Holy Spirit. As we prepare to celebrate the birth of the Messiah, what is the beginning of God’s good news in your life, and how will it change the way you approach this season of acting as God’s peace?

Reflection: “God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen...and All!”

Hannah Yi, *pianist*

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING – Virginia Olejnik

The Lord will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase.
May your righteousness go before God and prepare a pathway for
the Lord. Let us offer our lives and labor to God and fulfill our vows to
the Most High.

[Ushers, please come forward]

Offertory: “Candlelight Carol” Jennifer Scoullar, *soprano*

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING: Virginia Olejnik

**Lord, we give you thanks that in the coming of Christ your
steadfast love and faithfulness have met and your loving-
kindness and peace have kissed. May the gifts we offer this day
serve those in need and transform the world around us. Amen.**

[please stand as you able]

Hymn: “Let There Be Peace on Earth”

BLESSING: Rev. Johan Dodge

The day of the Lord is here; therefore strive to live in peace and may
faithfulness spring up from the ground and loving kindness look down
from heaven as you walk in the way of peace, and may the blessing
of God, Eternal Majesty, Living Word, and Holy Comforter, be with
you now and always.

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 Fluker/Hannah Yi,
pianist

PRAYER REQUESTS

FOR PERSEVERANCE:

- new Alvin Knowles – finished with radiation treatments and feeling good! He appreciates our prayers.
- new Gerri Seaton – after a long wait, she is finally receiving radiation therapy. The treatments will be spread out.
- new Joyce Gregg – is likely 1-2 weeks until she sees Jesus face to face. Prayers for God's perfect peace and comfort and for her and her family.
- new Phyllis Poper –is on hospice care. The Hildreths reported a very pleasant visit with her last week. Visitors are asked to set appointment with Anchie at 562-637-6628, address: 2218 Conquista, Long Beach.

Notes and Announcements:

Coffee Fellowship: Altar Flowers are provided by Joanna Matos. Refreshments are provided by Jeanette Williams. See the sign-up charts to provide refreshments or cover cost of altar flowers. Altar flowers are \$35. Sandy Walker coordinates arrangements.

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.

Poinsettias: Please pick up a special “Holiday Flower Order” envelope from the check in table if you are interested in purchasing a poinsettia in honor or memory of a loved one. Please fill out the form stapled to the envelope, insert a \$15 check or cash and drop it in the offering plate. Purchased poinsettias may be picked up after Christmas Eve worship service. The poinsettias will adorn the Sanctuary altar for December 24 service.

2024 Offering Envelopes: The monthly offering envelopes for 2024 are available for pick up in the Narthex. Please see Virginia Olejnik if you have any questions.



GROW.PRAY.STUDY

[illegible]

Prayer Journal

Use these prayers in your time with God each day.

Household Prayer: Morning

Lord, how I love this season of new beginnings, the opportunity to turn toward you and start again. Empower me to be a messenger of good news, and a leveling influence along the way, as I seek to be one with you in smoothing out the rough places I encounter. Amen.

Household Prayer: Midday

Loving God, you sent your prophet John to prepare your way among us, to call us to repentance and make our pathways straight. Strengthen me to live a life of steadfast love and faithfulness that whom I encounter may see your gift of peace. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Lord, you have comforted me throughout this day and rescued me from my exile. Where I have flourished, I give you thanks; where I have erred, I ask your forgiveness. Protect me through the night that I may rest in your realm of peace where righteousness makes a home. Amen.

My Prayers this week