



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 24, 2023

9:50 am

Seal Beach, CA 90740-5307

(562) 431-2503

PRELUDE: "Christmas Medley" Hannah Yi, *pianist*

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]

LIGHTING OF THE SEVENTH CANDLE OF ADVENT— "Love"

Phyllis Spencer & Carol Olsen

Leader: Today, we come seeking Wisdom, Wonder, Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love; and we find these things in a child, God made flesh as a baby in a manger. To a people working in hope the prophet Isaiah declared, The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness on them light has shined...For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

People: We live as people of the in-between who celebrate the arrival of the Light that shines in lost and broken places as we work to overcome the darkness and live in the fullness of God's kin-dom.

Leader: May the Light burning in our hearts guide us, comfort us, protect us, and tend us in all seasons and circumstances, reminding

us that day and night, in the light and in the darkness, God is with us.
Our salvation has come! Amen.

Light all Seven candles on the Advent wreath.

CAROL: “Adeste Fideles” / “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

[please be seated]

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION – Phyllis Spencer

Holy One, giver of life and light, as your word is read and proclaimed,
illumine our hearts and minds, that by the power of the Holy Spirit,
our lives may reflect God’s glory. Amen.

FIRST LESSON: Luke 1:26-35, 38 – Sandy Walker, *Angel*

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary.

²⁸And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

³⁰The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David.

³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” ³⁴Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” ³⁵The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁸Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

CAROL: “The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came”

SECOND LESSON: Luke 2:1-7 – Alvin Knowles, *Joseph*, Virginia Olejnik, *Mary*

Phyllis Spencer:

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth

in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

CAROL: “The First Noel”

THIRD LESSON: Luke 2:8-16 – Mary Lee Thomsen, Patty Jo Schmitz, *Shepherds*

MaryLee Thomsen:

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

Patty Jo Schmitz:

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

CAROL: “In the Bleak Midwinter”

FOURTH LESSON: Matthew 2:1-11 – Lewis Hildreth, Steve Martinez, Prince Pierson, *Wisemen*

Lewis Hildreth:

¹In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his

star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

Steve Martinez:

⁵They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ⁶‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’” ⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.”

Prince Pierson:

⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

CAROL: “We Three Kings”

FIFTH LESSON: John 1:1-14 – Rev. Johan Dodge

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become

children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

CAROL: "O Holy Night"

HOMILY: "Down and Out for Christmas" Rev. Johan Dodge

Questions for Reflection: Rev. Johan Dodge

In Isaiah's prophecy in chapter 9 and the birth narrative in Luke 2, the glory of God is described as a light shining in the darkness. On this eve of Christmas, where is there a deep need for God's light to shine with love, with hope, or with peace in your life; in the life of someone you love; or in a troubled part of the world? What is your prayer for light in this darkness?

Reflection: "Who Would Imagine A King?" Hannah Yi, *pianist*

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING – Phyllis Spencer

Because God so loved the world, God sent the Son into the world. In response to this good news of great joy, we offer songs of praise, tithes and offerings, and acts of service.

[Ushers, please come forward]

Offertory: "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" Lisa Margaroli, *alto*

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING: Phyllis Spencer

Great God, accept these gifts we offer — indeed use all that we have and all that we are as you bring light in every darkness, ease heavy burdens, and turn our endless warring into your endless peace. In Christ's name, we ask it. Amen.

[please stand as you able]

CAROL: "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen... and ALL!"

BLESSING: Rev. Johan Dodge

May the Christ who by his Incarnation gathered into One things earthly and heavenly, fill you with the sweetness of inward peace and

goodwill; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always. Amen. Go forth in peace and joy.

CAROL: "Silent Night"

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

PRAYER REQUESTS
FOR PERSEVERANCE: new Cindy Pierskalla – father, Sherman– heart surgery went well. Three stints replaced. Prayers for a thorough and quick recovery. New Nancy Wescott – dear friend, Esther, prayers for new work opportunities.

Notes and Announcements:

Coffee Fellowship: Altar Flowers are provided by Fred and Willma Wind. Refreshments are provided by the Fellowship Team. See the sign-up charts to provide refreshments or cover cost of altar flowers. Altar flowers are \$35. Sandy Walker coordinates arrangements.

Poinsettias: If you purchased a poinsettia, you may pick yours up after the 12/24 morning service.

Kelly Frankiewicz M.Div: Will lead Sunay Worship and deliver the message on Sunday, December 31.

Church Conference on January 14: Adjourned Charge Conference will be held January 14th to approve the budget for 2024. Conference will be Officiated by Pastor Johan during fellowship following morning worship.

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.

Poinsettias Given With Love

Donated By

Korean Community Church
Gerri Seaton
Steve Martinez
Marylee Thomsen
Phyllis Spencer
Patty Jo Schmitz
Mo Ashley
Jeanette Williams

Joanna Matos

In Memory/Honor of

Friendship with Community Church
Memory of parents

The Thomsens gone before me.
Memory of Lee
Memory of Son, BC Keller
Memory of Don & Rosie
Memory of Ivy, Odell, Edna,
Gary Williams, my Parents and
Brother

The Music Team, the Fellowship
Team, the Worship Team, the
Office and Stewardship Team,
the Korean Congregation



Notes from the Service

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

My Prayers this week

Prayer Journal

Use these prayers in your time with God each day.

Household Prayer: Morning

God of hope, peace, joy, and love, this day is so full! For children, this day is one of excitement and anticipation; for others, this day is filled with responsibilities and activity. Some are traveling this day to be with family or friends, while others spend the day quietly and alone. Be with us in all our varied circumstances and moods. I pray that I, and all those within my circles of care, will be especially attentive to the angels' good news: that you have come to dwell among us in Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth. In this is our great joy. Amen.

Household Prayer: Midday

God of Love Incarnate, I confess that, with the shepherds, I am terrified of your glory; for in glory's light I see plainly all that is wrong in the world: how oppression still enslaves; how garments of war are still stained with blood; how those seeking refuge still find no place of safety. I also see what is wrong in me: how passionately I pursue the things of this world, but forget to ponder the mystery of faith; how I do not practice the peace you intend in my relationships, my community, or even in the church. Forgive me, I pray, and help me not to be afraid. Like the shepherds, I want to follow and find you. In the Savior's name I pray. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Loving God, this night holds so much for me— people and places from long ago are brought near in memories redeemed; my present companions, as well as present cares, are held in tenderness. Lord, I would hold the whole world in my hands, turning it round and round, so that your light would shine everywhere on everyone with hope and peace. As it is, I utter this prayer instead— my little light in the shades of night: Hold those I love and all the world in your sure and tender hands, as a mother holds her newborn child. Let your face shine upon us with peace. Gather up the past, the present, and the future into your eternity, where all is reconciled and you are all in all. In the name of him who was born this night, Jesus, who is Christ the Lord. Amen.