



**COMMUNITY
CHURCH** LEISURE
WORLD

LIGHTING
A pathway into community

GROWING
Disciples in God's Love

SENDING
The Hope and Joy of Jesus

Our Vision: To Be Love to Leisure World

14000 Church Place

February 25, 2024

9:50 am

Seal Beach, CA 90740-5307

(562) 431-2503

Expect it
to be
different

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Rev. Johan Dodge

**COMMUNITY
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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]

OPENING WORDS – Rev. Johan Dodge

From water to wilderness: **God's covenant continues; God's kingdom comes near.**

On stone and in hearts: **God's covenant continues; God's kingdom comes near.**

From the ancestor of nations to the Son lifted up:

God's covenant continues; God's kingdom comes near.

We follow Jesus on the Lenten path, for where he is, we would be also.

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 CONFESSION – Taylor White

Merciful God, we confess that we have not always been sincere in our faith. We claim to follow Jesus but have not always taken his path of sacrificial love. We profess to be disciples, but we are not willing to bear the cost of discipleship. We affirm the virtue of self-denial, but we indulge our selfish desires and seek earthly gain. Forgive us, we pray. Free us for sincere transformation through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS — Rev. Johan Dodge

Hear the good news: God judges with loving kindness and God's judgment of you and everyone else is love. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are loved. Thanks be to God.

Hymn: “Step By Step”

[please be seated]

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION — Rev. Johan Dodge

God, you blessed Abraham and Sarah and promised to make them the ancestors of many nations. In Jesus Christ you have opened your covenant to everyone who lives by faith in you. For all the descendants of Abraham and Sarah, both Jews and Christians, that they may trust in your promise, dwell together in peace, and be a sign of your abiding love, Holy God, hear our prayer. God,

**Jesus your Son called disciples to follow his way of sacrificial love. For all pastors and teachers, that they lead the church by humble example, take up their cross in faithful service, and live for the sake of the gospel,
Holy God, hear our prayer.**

**God, your reign encompasses all the earth, though many do not remember your gracious sovereignty. For peace among the nations and for integrity within governments, that your will be done on earth as in heaven,
Holy God, hear our prayer.**

**God, you hear the cry of the poor, and you satisfy the hungry with good things. For the poor and the oppressed, that they may find deliverance, and for all who voluntarily take up the cross of self-denial to serve the poor and alleviate human misery,
Holy God, hear our prayer.**

**God, you know the needs of the afflicted and you hear their cries. For those who suffer illness of mind or body, that they may find relief from suffering and be restored to wholeness,
Holy God, hear our prayer.**

Grant these prayers, Holy God, by your grace. Stir up in us the will to seek out and build your kin-dom with the dedication of our lives in ministry to the world, for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ, through whom we pray. **Amen.**

Hymn: "Be Still, My Soul"

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION – Taylor White

Holy Spirit, open our hearts to receive your Word, reveal to us the good news, and enable us to trust in the promise of salvation in Jesus Christ. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Taylor White

Mark 8:31-38

³¹Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³²He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and

said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

³⁴He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Message: "Expect it to be Difficult — Do It Anyway" Rev. Johan Dodge

Questions for Reflection: Rev. Johan Dodge

Jesus asks his disciples to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him. How do you practice self-denial for the sake of the gospel? Is every instance of self-denial an act of obedience to Jesus? Can some forms of self-denial foster oppression?

Reflection: "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child"

John Flucker, *pianist*

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING – Taylor White

What will it profit us to gain the whole world and forfeit our life? With all humility let us make our offering to God, trusting not in worldly gain, but in God's sustaining grace.

[Ushers, please come forward]

Offertory: "Always" Jennifer Scoullar, *soprano*

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING – Taylor White

Almighty God, we thank you for the covenant you established with Abraham and Sarah, which you have opened to us through Jesus Christ our Lord. Accept these offerings with the dedication of our lives, that we may be for the world a sign of your abiding love and a testament to your enduring promise. In Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory are yours, Almighty God, now and forever. Amen.

[please stand as you able]

Hymn: “Let There Be Peace on Earth”

BLESSING: Rev. Johan Dodge

May the blessing of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, uphold you on the way to your cross and encourage you to follow wherever our Lord may lead.

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*; Dave Albulario, *tenor*; John Fluker/Hannah Yi, *pianist*

PRAYER REQUESTS

FOR PERSEVERANCE:

new Mara Williams – upcoming cataract surgery, first one on 3-5-24, second on 3-19-24.

new Friends and family of member, Mary Jean Tusha, she passed away earlier this month.

Notes and Announcements:

Coffee Fellowship: Altar Flowers and refreshments are provided by Joanna Matos.

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

Upper Room: Copies of the Upper Room daily devotional are available at the check in table, in the Narthec racks and church office.

Lent Study. This Lenten Season we are pleased to offer an in-depth look at the Journey of Discipleship. Pastor Johan is leading 6-week Lent Study Thursday mornings at 11:00 on Zoom. Please join at any time.

Meeting ID: 834 7260 6096
Passcode: 205414

2024 Church Directory: Copies of the church phone directory are available for pick up this Sunday. If you have any corrections or additions, please contact the church office.



Notes from the Service

Prayer Journal

Use these prayers in your time with God each day.

Household Prayer: Morning

Lord Jesus, help me walk with you this day. If you lead me where I fear to go, give me courage and keep me true, that I may bear my cross without shame and live in the promise of life eternal. Amen.

Household Prayer: Midday

God, your Son Jesus Christ bore the cross for my salvation and was raised from the dead for the redemption of the world. Give me the courage to take up my cross and follow him, that through his grace I may accept the cost of faithful discipleship and receive the joy of everlasting life with Christ, who lives with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Jesus, if I stray, show me my fault, forgive my sin, and set me rightly on your path. Keep me on the way of the cross, and lead me to the eternal joy of Easter. Amen.

My Prayers this week

