

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
Seal Beach, CA 90740-5307

Sunday Service: 9:50 AM
562-431-2503

January 5, 2025

Epiphany



Rev. Johan Dodge



Seeing Stars



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 ("O Tannenbaum" / "O Christmas Tree")

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, in ev-'ry gen - er -

a - tion. Praise God, all crea - tures here be - low, the

bless - ed in - car - na - tion. Praise God a - bove, ye

heav'n - ly host, Cre - a - tor, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. Let

all cre - a - tion praise the Lord with love and ad - or - a - tion.

PRAYER OF THE DAY — Lois Dimos

O cosmic Birther of all radiance and vibration, soften the ground of our being and carve out a space within us where your Presence can abide. Fill us with your creativity so that we may be empowered to bear the fruit of your mission. Let each of our actions bear fruit in accordance with our desire. Endow us with the wisdom to produce and share what each being needs to grow and flourish. Untie the tangled threads of destiny that bind us, as we release others from the entanglement of past mistakes. Do not let us be seduced by that which would divert us from our true purpose, but illuminate the opportunities of the present moment. For you are the ground and the fruitful vision, the birth, power, and fulfillment, as all is gathered and made whole once again. And So It Is! Amen.

HYMN: "We Three Kings"

We three kings of O - ri - ent are bear - ing
Born a King on Beth - le - hem's plain, gold we
Glo - rious now be - hold him a - rise; King and

6
gifts we tra - verse a - far, field and foun - tain,
bring to crown him a - gain, King for - ev - er,
God and sac - ri - fice: Heav'n sings, "Al - le -

11
moor and moun - tain, fol - low - ing yon - der star. _____
ceas - ing nev - er, o - ver us all to reign. _____
lu - ia," "Al - le - lu - ia," Earth re - plies. _____

17

O star of won - der, star of night, star with roy - al beau - ty bright,

27

west - ward lead - ing, still pro - ceed - ing, guide us to thy per - fect light.

[please be seated]

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION — Rev. Johan Dodge

[A time of silence is kept after each petition.]

Loving God, Through Christ you call us all into your covenant with Abraham and Sarah. For your church throughout the world, that it may be a faithful witness, declaring your wisdom to all authorities.

The wise men came to King Herod in trust, but he betrayed their trust and perpetrated unspeakable evil. For the leaders of the government, that they reject the way of Herod and exercise their authority in truth, justice, and mercy.

Joseph, Mary, and Jesus fled before the wrath of Herod and became refugees in Egypt. For all those who suffer from political oppression, injustice, or war, and especially for refugees.

Joseph dreamed a future for his son and obeyed your will for his family. For all families that they may live in peace according to your will.

The Holy Family lived with neighbors and received help from strangers. For our neighborhoods, that they may be communities of human flourishing, offering kindness to strangers.

Hear our prayers, Gracious God, and grant us to live as heirs of your promise, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

[please stand as you are able]

HYMN: "There's a Song in the Air"

There's a song in that air! There's a star in the sky!
There's a tumult of joy o'er the wonder-ful birth,
In the light of that star lie the a-ges im-pearled;
We re-joice in the light, and we ech-o the song

There's a moth-er's deep pray'r and a ba-by's low cry!
for the vir-gin's sweet boy is the Lord of the earth.
and that song from a-far has swept o-ver the world.
that comes down through the night from the heav-en-ly throng.

And the star rains its fire while the beau-ti-ful sing,
Ay! the star rains its fire while the beau-ti-ful sing,
Ev-'ry hearth is a-flame, and the beau-ti-ful sing
Ay! we shout to the love-ly e-van-gel they bring,

for the man-ger of Beth-le-hem cra-dles a King!
for the man-ger of Beth-le-hem cra-dles a King!
of the love and the joy that sweet Je-sus will bring!
for the babe in the man-ger, our prais-es we sing!

[please be seated]

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION — Lois Dimos

Spirit of God, in the proclamation of your Word, reveal to us the hidden mystery of your love in Christ, and strengthen our faith that we may approach you with boldness. **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE — Lois Dimos

Matthew 2:1-12

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. 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.”

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.

¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

MESSAGE: “Seeing Stars” — Rev. Johan Dodge

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION — Rev. Johan Dodge

In Epiphany when the magi make their great journey to see the Christ Child, we see Jesus drawing all creation to the divine life revealed in him, and we see the realization of God’s dream of reconciled creation. In our own way, we are each endowed by the Spirit with unique and precious gifts for sharing God’s healing love in a good but often divided world. What spiritual practices do you engage in that allow you to stay peaceful, courteous, and develop a respectful regard for difference? How do you stay present and create openness for finding, revealing, and activating God’s reconciling love in the world?

REFLECTION: “O Little Town of Bethlehem” — Hannah Yi, *pianist*

THE LORD'S SUPPER | HOLY COMMUNION | THE EUCHARIST:

We 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 — Rev. Johan Dodge

Here at Community Church, we celebrate “Open Communion.” Anyone who wishes to commune may come to God’s Table. You do not have to be sinless; God forgives you. You do not have to be perfect; God encourages you to grow. You need not belong to any church; God invites all people to this meal. It is enough to love and follow God with all your heart. This is what God asks us to do. Come to God’s Table in faith this day. Go from this place to live, and never be the same again. Let us commune as siblings in Christ.

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
 It is right to give our thanks and praise.

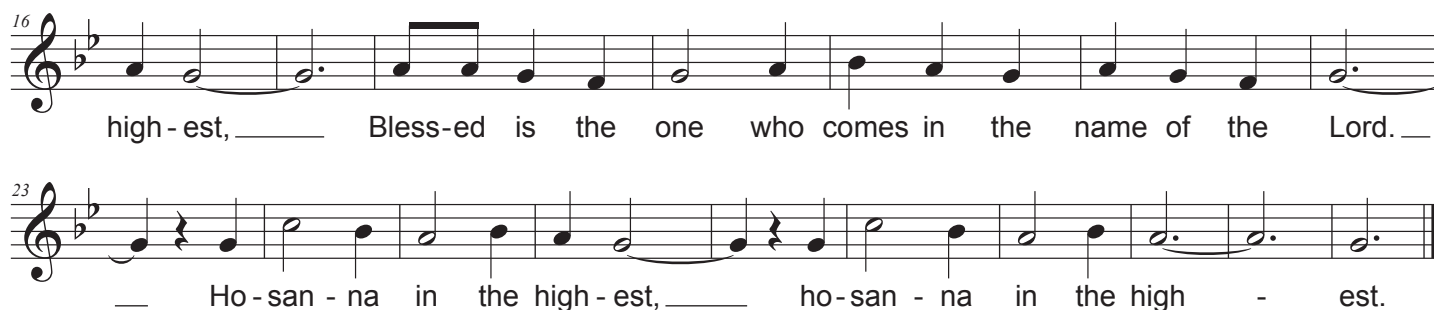
[Ushers, please come forward and distribute the elements]

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.

Before the mountains were brought forth, or you had formed the earth, from everlasting to everlasting, you alone are God. You created light out of darkness and brought forth life on the 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.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:





Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. Your Spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to announce that the time had come when you would save your people.

He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

He prayed that we might be one, as he is one with you, and he asked that we might be known by the love we have for one another.

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.

Repeat after Cantor:



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, together as a new creation and a new community around the globe may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit help the body of Christ be one. Help the left hand and the right hand work as one in ministry to all the world. Help the eyes and the ears sense your present and coming kingdom. Bring the blessing of the diversity of the body to bear fruit 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. 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 — Lois Dimos

God intends to unite all creation, so that all may share in the promises of God's new reign. Therefore with gratitude and joy, let us render tributes and bring gifts, for we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in Christ. **Amen.**

[Ushers, please come forward]

OFFERTORY: "Come to the Table" — Dave Albulario, *tenor*

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING — Lois Dimos

Glorious God, you led the Magi to seek Jesus, your Holy Child, born of Mary. Overjoyed in the presence of his radiant light, they knelt down at the infant's crib and offered him precious gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. We, too, offer our gifts in gratitude, reverence, and thanksgiving for the birth of your child, whom you called to lead the world into fullness of life. Receive and bless this offering as a joyful sign of the boundless love and abundant life we are called to share in Christ. Amen.

[please stand as you are able]

HYMN: "Let There Be Peace on Earth"

Let there be peace on Earth, and let it be - gin with me._____

Let there be peace on Earth, the peace that was meant to be._____

With God, our Cre - a - tor,_____ we are fam - i - ly._____

Let us walk with each oth - er_____ in per - fect har - mo - ny._____

Let peace be - gin with me, let this be the mo - ment now;_____

With ev - 'ry step I take, let this be my sol - emn vow:_____ To

take each mo - ment and live each mo - ment in peace e - ter - nal - ly;_____

Let there be peace on Earth, and let it be - gin with me._____

BLESSING — Rev. Johan Dodge

May the love of Christ that shines in you shine brightly in the world wherever you go. And the blessing of God, Divine Giver, Radiant Light, and Fountain of Life bless you and keep you always. **Amen.**

SENDING FORTH: "Blest Be the Tie that Binds"

Blest be the tie that binds Our hearts in Chris - tian love: The
fel - low - ship of kin - dred minds Is like to that a - bove. A - men.

Music Team: Dave Albulario, *Tenor / Music Dir.*
Hannah Yi, *Pianist*

Jennifer Scoullar, *Soprano*
John Fluker, *Pianist*

Christmas Doxology (*O, Tannenbaum*)
Traditional German Carol, Words by Thomas
Ken; adapt. Dale A. Schoening

"We Three Kings"
Words and Music by John Henry Hopkins
based on Matthew 2:1

"There's a Song in the Air"
Music by Karl P. Harrington, 1904;
Words by Josiah G. Holland, 1874

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"
Tune: *ST LOUIS* by Lewis Redner
Piano Arrangement by Melody Bober

"Come to the Table"
Music & Words by Ben McDonald, Ben Glover,
and Dave Frey; Adapted for LWCC by David
Albulario

"Let There Be Peace on Earth"
Music & Words by Sy Miller & Jill Jackson
© 1955, 1983; Arr. Copyright © 1991 by Jan
Lee Music, Beverly Hills, California

"Blest Be the Tie That Binds" (Dennis SM)
Music by Johann G. Nægeli, 1768-1836
Words by John Fawcett, 1740-1817
Arr. by Lowell Mason, 1792-1872

*All music herein transcribed & adapted by
D. Albulario for Leisure World Community
Church, Seal Beach, California.*

LEISURE WORLD COMMUNITY CHURCH
14000 Church Pl, Seal Beach, CA 90740
562-431-2503
CCLI License No. 187225

PRAYER REQUESTS

Nancy Trujillo – Nancy passed away Sunday morning, December 22, 2024. Prayers of comfort and strength for her family, and peaceful rest for Nancy.
Her funeral will take place on Friday, January 10 at 10:30 AM at Mariners Church Chapel, 5001 Newport Coast Drive, Irvine CA.

Rev. Don Roe – Former LWCC pastor, Rev. Don Roe passed away Tuesday, December 3, 2024. He served Community Church from 2014 to 2018. Prayers of comfort for his family, and peaceful rest for Pastor Don.
*His memorial will take place on Saturday, February 2, 2025 at 10:30 AM, at St. Matthew's UMC, 15653 Newton St, Hacienda Heights 91745. Attire: **Dodger Blue**.*

NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

FLOWERS and FELLOWSHIP: Flowers and Fellowship Refreshments are provided today by Sandy Walker. See the sign-up charts to provide refreshments or cover the cost of altar flowers for future services. Altar flowers are \$35. Sandy Walker coordinates arrangements.

LITURGISTS: Each Sunday our Liturgists read aloud our scripture readings for Worship Service. As we prepare the schedule for the coming year, if you are interested in becoming a Liturgist, you are invited to speak with Phyllis Spencer, who will lead this ministry in 2025.

COFFEE WITH THE PASTOR: Resuming this Thursday, January 9th at 10 AM, you are invited to join Pastor Johan for a weekly time of fellowship and check-in over coffee, and perhaps a little conversation around the book cultivating Christlikeness: loving as Jesus loved.



January 5, 2025



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

Glorious God, each day provides opportunity to awaken to the radiance of your presence, and to welcome your blessing into my life. How often I forget that I am your home! Help me to draw more closely to you, that I may manifest your love more deeply in the world. May every bright place and darkened corner grow ever more luminous as I bear your light this day. Amen.

Household Prayer: Midday

Where have you experienced the presence of God's love so far today? Where has God felt distant? Was it God or you that created the distance?

Household Prayer: Evening

Holy Jesus, I thank you for sharing your life with me today. As darkness comes and blankets the earth, be with all who suffer from sickness, hunger, or lack of shelter. Kindle in them the warmth of your presence, and surround them with your steadfast care. I am grateful for the blessings of this day. And in the light of your love I rest this night. Amen.