



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



December 14, 2025

*6th Sunday of Advent:
Desert Will Rejoice*



*Blooming
in the
Desert*



**COMMUNITY
CHURCH LEISURE
WORLD**

Rev. Johan Dodge

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.

Advent Week 6: Desert Will Rejoice — Virginia Olejnik

As our nights grow longer and our days grow short, we look on these earthly signs — light and green branches — and remember God's promise to our world: **Christ, our Light and our Hope, will come.**



Candle Reader — Jeanette Williams

Listen to the words of Isaiah, the prophet:

¹ The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus ² it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and shouting. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. ³ Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God."

— Isaiah 35:1-4

Candle Lighter — Fred Reker

[As the candle is lit, all stand as you are able, and sing]



CALL TO WORSHIP: Doxology for Advent

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise

God, all creatures here be low. Praise God above, ye

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

Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el shall

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come to thee, O Is - ra - el. A - men.



Candle Prayer — Rev. Johan Dodge

Let us pray:

Holy God, your prophets have long spoken of the one who comes to lead us into your way of life. Now the promise is fulfilled; now your kin-dom is at hand and in our hands. Send us as messengers of your way, to go and tell all the world of the wonders we have seen and the good news we have heard; through Jesus and your Holy Spirit. **Amen.**



HYMN CAROL: "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"

It came up - on — a mid - night clear, that glo - rious song of old, from
 Still through the clo - ven skies they come, with peace - ful wings un - furled, and
 And ye, be - neath life's crush - ing load whose forms are bend - ing low, who
 For lo, the days are hast - 'ning on, by pro - phet bards fore - told, when

an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold. "Peace
 still their heav - en - ly mus - ic floats o'er all the wea - ry world. A -
 toil a - long — the climb - ing way, with pain - ful steps and slow, look
 with the ev - er cir - cling years comes round the age — of gold when

10

on the earth, good will to all, from heav - en's all gra - cious
bove its sad and low - ly plains they bend on hov - 'ring
now, for glad and gol - den hours come swift - ly on the
peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen - dors

13

king." The world in sol - emn still - ness lay to hear the an - gels sing.
wing, and ev - er o'er its Ba - bels sounds the bles - sed an - gels sing.
wing. O rest be - side the wea - ry road, and hear the an - gels sing!
fling, and the whole world send back the song which now the an - gels sing.

[please be seated]

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION — Rev. Johan Dodge

Waters break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert; the burning sand has become a pool and the thirsty ground springs of water.
The time has come, near and in hand, for us to be your way of love.

Show the strength of your hand, O God, and lift the burdens of the poor.
The time has come, near and in hand, for us to be your way of love.

Work wonders for the humble, and scatter the plans of the proud.
The time has come, near and in hand, for us to be your way of love.

Look with favor upon the lovely, and cast down tyrants from their thrones.
The time has come, near and in hand, for us to be your way of love.

Fill the hungry with good things, and empty the hands of the greedy.
The time has come, near and in hand, for us to be your way of love.

Then we will sing out with joy and glorify you forever, through Jesus the Christ. **Amen.**



[please stand as you are able]

HYMN CAROL: "Joy to the World"

Joy to the world! The Lord is come. Let earth re-ceive her king.—
Joy to the earth! The Sav - ior reigns. Let all our songs em - ploy,—
He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the na - tions prove—

— Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him room, and
— while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains re -
— the glo - ries of his right - eous - ness, and

heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his
and heav'n and na - ture sing, and
re - peat the sound - ing joy, re -
and won - ders of his love, and

sing, and hea - ven, and hea - ven and na - ture sing.
joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
love, and won - ders, and won - ders of his love.
heav'n and na - ture sing,
peat the sound - ing joy,
won - ders of his love,

[please be seated]

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION — Virginia Olejnik

Loving God, in this dry and dusty place, pour out the power of your Spirit so that your Word may blossom in our lives; through Jesus the Christ, our way in the wilderness. **Amen.**



SCRIPTURE — Virginia Olejnik

Matthew 11: 2-11

² When John heard in prison what the Christ was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to Jesus, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” ⁴ Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind?

⁸ What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written, ‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’ ¹¹ “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kin-dom of heaven is greater than he.



MESSAGE: “Blooming in the Desert” — Rev. Johan Dodge



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION — Rev. Johan Dodge

The signs of the kin-dom continue today — “The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. Where do you see these signs, find the positive, and stay focused on the love of God? Where do you struggle against the darkness of this world? Who might help you to bloom in the desert of this world?

REFLECTION: “Some Children See Him”— Chris Wade, *pianist*



INVITATION TO THE OFFERING — Virginia Olejnik

As a farmer plants the seeds and waits for the rains to come, let us entrust our gifts to God as we prepare for the harvest of love. **Amen.**

[Ushers, please come forward]

OFFERTORY: “Bright, Bright the Holly Berries” — Jennifer Rudy, *soprano*

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING — Virginia Olejnik



Thanks be to you, O God, maker of heaven and earth — giver of justice, lover of kindness, hope of the afflicted, and friend of the poor. Take and use these gifts we offer to further your purpose in the world and to fulfill the promise of the world to come; in the name of Jesus, we pray. 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 your hearts be strong and your way of service be clear, and may the blessing of God be with you as you bloom in the world around us. **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: Jennifer Rudy, *Soprano*
Chris Wade, *Pianist Emeritus*

Dave Albulario, *Tenor / Music Dir.*
Hannah Yi, *Pianist*
John Fluker, *Pianist*

Doxology for Advent (*Veni, Immanuel*)
15th C. French Hymn, Words by Thomas Ken,
Text and Tune adapted by Dean McIntyre

“It Came Upon a Midnight Clear”
Music by Richard S. Willis;
Words by Edmund H. Sears; Public Domain;
Source: ChristmasCarolMusic.org

“Joy to the World”
Tune: *ANTIOCH* by Georg Friedrich Händel;
adapt. & arr. by Lowell Mason; Words by
Isaac Watts, alt.

“Some Children See Him”
Music by Alfred Burt; Words by Wihla Hutson;
Piano arrangement by Chris Wade

“Bright, Bright the Holly Berries”
Music by Alfred Burt; Words by Wihla Hutson;
Add'l lyrics 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
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562-431-2503 /// CCLI License No. 187225

PRAYER REQUESTS

new Carol Olsen – Carol is at home recovering well from a surgical procedure she had on December 8th. Her daughter is caring for her during recovery. She is grateful for all the prayers and thoughts, and absolutely loves the Prayer Shawl she was blessed with by our LWCC Prayer Shawl Team.

Taylor White – Taylor passed away peacefully on December 3rd. Her daughter, Hilary has scheduled *A Celebration of Taylor's Life* **TOMORROW, Monday, December 15, 2025, at 11 AM, here at LW Community Church, followed immediately by a Reception in Edgar Fellowship Hall. The Belmont 4 and The LW Theater Club will present tributes to Taylor. All are welcome.**

Linda & Lewis Hildreth – Linda & Lewis are content, grateful, and welcome visitors. Cared for in separate rooms, they share meals together, & Lewis visits Linda in his wheelchair. They can't accepting phone calls, but if you wish to arrange a visit, call caregivers Josie or Jesús at 714-373-1218. Cards may be sent to *Home on Cascade, 15311 Cascade Lane, Huntington Beach, CA 92647*. Prayers for comfort, continued progress, and general health.

NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

FLOWERS and **FELLOWSHIP**: 🌸 Today's flowers are provided by Fred and Wilma Wind. 🍪 Fellowship refreshments are provided by Jeanette Williams. See the sign-up charts to provide refreshments or cover the cost of altar flowers for future services. Altar flowers are \$35. See Sandy Walker to coordinate the arrangements.

PRECIOUS LIFE OPEN HOUSE: **Today**, December 14, 2025, from 2 to 5 pm, Precious Life Shelter will hold their annual Open House, featuring Santa Claus, photo ops, holiday sweet treats, and opportunity baskets. Our LWCC Missions Team through the "Change for Change" program supports Precious Life Shelter, which provides residential and supportive services for homeless pregnant women and their children, and is located at 10881 Reagan St., Los Alamitos, CA 90720.

MEMORIAL FOR TAYLOR WHITE: **Tomorrow**, December 15, 2025, at 11 am, a *Celebration of Life* will be held here at LWCC to honor **Taylor White**, who passed away on December 3rd. Taylor's family, friends, The Belmont 4, and The LW Theater Club will present tributes to Taylor. A reception will follow in Edgar Fellowship Hall. All are welcome. In lieu of flowers, please make donations to LW Community Church and/or LW Theater Club. Cards may be sent to:

*Hilary, James & Kate Bell
6132 Avalon Court
Long Beach, CA 90803*

ANNUAL CHARGE CONFERENCE: This Thursday, December 18th, at **10:00 AM** (*this is the new correct time*), the annual all-church Charge Conference is scheduled in-person in Edgar Fellowship Hall. Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend.

POINSETTIAS: You can still pick up a special *Holiday Flower Order* envelope from the check-in table in the narthex if you are interested in purchasing a **poinsettia** in honor or memory of a loved one. 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 24th service.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE: Our annual Christmas Worship Service will take place at 4:00 pm, on Wednesday, December 24, 2025, Christmas Eve. There is no service Christmas Day. The following Sunday, December 28th will be "Hymn-Sing Sunday."

PLEDGE CARDS: Please place your completed pledge cards into the collection plate, or hand to any LWCC Staff Member.

RECENT LWCC WORSHIP ATTENDANCE:

November 16th: 37 | November 23rd: 36 | November 30th: 33 | December 7th: 35

Advent



December 14, 2025



GROW PRAY STUDY

Notes from the Service

My Prayers this week:

Prayer Journal

Use this prayer in your time with God each day.

Household Prayer: Morning

Loving God, at the dawning of this day new life blossoms like the crocus, and fresh promise wells up like a spring. As I go forth in your presence, confirm my resolve to be your love, strengthen my hands to serve your people, and keep me always in your holy way; through Jesus Christ. Amen.

*Consider The Upper Room Daily Devotional
as a resource for Midday Prayer.*

Household Prayer: Evening

Mighty God, my soul rejoices at the great things you have done this day — bless and keep me this night and may I arise refreshed, renewed, and ready to be your love in the world again. Amen.

