



LA JOLLA
UNITED METHODIST

RECKLESS
LOVE

Begin With Love

Sunday, April 12, 2026
Second Sunday of Easter
www.lajollaunitedmethodist.org

WE GATHER IN THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST

Gathering Music

Oh the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus

Mark Hayes

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Call to Worship

One: We are people of God, created to love

All: We will love our neighbors and treat them as we would be treated.

One: We are people of God, determined to love.

All: We will love the Lord our God with heart, soul, mind, and strength.

One: We love neither from a sense of obligation nor to gain popularity or favor.

All: We choose to love beyond the expectations of the world because love imitates God's nature. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Congregational Introit

Celebrate Love

TFWS 2073

Celebrate love, love, love. Celebrate love, love, love.

Celebrate love so amazing. He's creating his wonderful love in you.

We can celebrate his love today. Jesus loves everyone.

We can celebrate new life today. Jesus loves everyone.

Welcome – (*Welcome, attendance cards & prayer requests, flowers from Virginia Cohen, in honor of her parents Spence & Helen McCrae's wedding anniversary*)

† Opening Hymn

More Love to Thee, O Christ

UMH 453

1. More love to thee, O Christ, more love to thee!
Hear thou the prayer I make on bended knee.
This is my earnest plea: More love, O Christ, to thee;
more love to thee, more love to thee!
2. Once earthly joy I craved, sought peace and rest;
now thee alone I seek; give what is best.
This all my prayer shall be: More love, O Christ, to thee;
more love to thee, more love to thee!
3. Let sorrow do its work, come grief and pain;
sweet are thy messengers, sweet their refrain,

when they can sing with me: More love, O Christ, to thee;
more love to thee, more love to thee!

4. Then shall my latest breath whisper thy praise;
this be the parting cry my heart shall raise;
this still its prayer shall be: More love, O Christ, to thee;
more love to thee, more love to thee!

Blessing for Young Hearts

Prayers of the People

*A Pastor will begin a time of prayer and name those for whom our congregation is praying.
Online Worshipers may type prayer requests in the Live Chat, taking care for privacy.*

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us, not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Prayer Response

I Love You Lord

TFWS 2068

WE HEAR OF THE LOVE OF CHRIST

Scripture

Mark 12:28-34 (NRSVue)

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." Then the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that 'he is one, and besides him there is no other'; and 'to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength' and 'to love one's neighbor as oneself'—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that no one dared to ask him any question.

Galatians 5:16-26 (NRVue)

Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.

Scriptural Response

One: The Word of God for the People of God.

All: **Thanks be to God! Amen**

Anthem

The Gift of Love

Arr. Hal H. Hopson
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Message

Begin with Love

Rev. Bob Rhodes

WE RESPOND TO THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST

Response to the Word

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

Peaceful Piano #4

Mark Hayes
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† **Doxology**

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

UMH 94

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures here below;
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise God, the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!

Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

† Prayer of Confession

All: Loving God, you call us to love without calculation, to love our neighbor as a path to loving you. Even so, we confess that we have loved cautiously. We have measured who deserves our compassion. We have stayed in our comfort zones and told ourselves it was enough. We have treated love as a scarce resource to be managed instead of a gift to be given recklessly. Forgive us, we pray. Inspire us to bear the fruit of your Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, as the harvest of lives poured out for others. Give us the courage to love fully and recklessly. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

One: Beloved children of God: hear and believe the good news. God's love for you has never been cautious or calculated. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

All: In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God! Amen.

WE FOLLOW CHRIST INTO THE WORLD

† Closing Hymn

They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love

TFWS 2223

1. We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord;
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord;
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored.
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.
2. We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand;
We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand;
And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land.
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.
3. We will work with each other, we will work side by side;
We will work with each other, we will work side by side;
And we'll guard human dignity and save each human pride.
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.
4. All praise to the Father, from whom all things come;
And all praise to Christ Jesus, God's only Son.
And all praise to the Spirit who makes us one.

And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

† **Benediction**

Postlude

Alleluia

W.A. Mozart/Arr Hopson
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Liturgical elements from *Discipleship Ministries (UMC)* and *The Abingdon Worship Annual*.

Flowers: from Virginia Cohen, in honor of her parents Spence & Helen McCrae's wedding anniversary
Liturgist: Joyce Theilacker
Organist: Robert Wuertz
Pianist: Rebecca Cosford
Ushers: Beau Brandon, Don Lincoln, Peter McCreight, Russell Toppi
Tech Team: AJ Prat, Cam Rhodes

LJUMC Ministry Team

Pastor Bob Rhodes, Lead Pastor; Pastor Rob Shearer, Director of Children & Youth Ministries
Bob Wuertz, Music Ministries Director; Theresa Erb, Office Manager;
Emilio Valente, Information Technology Director; Erin Wyer, NS Executive Director