



LA JOLLA
UNITED METHODIST

RECKLESS
LOVE

Lavish Love

Sunday, April 26, 2026
Fourth Sunday of Easter
www.lajollaunitedmethodist.org

WE GATHER IN THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST

Gathering Music

Jesus Loves Me

Arr. Bill Wolaver
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Call to Worship

One: Jesus teaches us, “Do to others as you would have them do to you.” But who are the others?

All: Our enemies and friends, family and strangers.

One: Jesus teaches us, “Be merciful as your Father is merciful.” But what is mercy?

All: To act with compassion, to help without expecting anything in return.

One: Jesus teaches us, “Forgive, and you will be forgiven.” But how do we forgive?

All: By recognizing enemies, friends, family, strangers, and ourselves as people in need of compassion.

One: Let us worship God, who loves us and empowers us to love one another with mercy and compassion.

All: Come, let us worship! Thanks be to God! Amen.

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

† Opening Hymn

For the Healing of the Nations

UMH 428

1. For the healing of the nations, Lord, we pray with one accord;
for a just and equal sharing of the things that earth affords;
to a life of love in action help us rise and pledge our word,
help us rise and pledge our word.
2. Lead us forward into freedom; from despair your world release,
that, redeemed from war and hatred, all may come and go in peace.
Show us how through care and goodness fear will die and hope increase,
fear will die and hope increase.

3. All that kills abundant living, let it from the earth be banned;
pride of status, race, or schooling, dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice may we hallow life's brief span,
may we hallow life's brief span.
4. You, Creator God, have written your great name on human kind;
for our growing in your likeness bring the life of Christ to mind,
that by our response and service earth its destiny may find,
earth its destiny may find.

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

Psalm 103:1-14 (NRSVue)

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name.
Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and do not forget all his benefits—
who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the Pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,

who satisfies you with good as long as you live
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
The Lord works vindication
and justice for all who are oppressed.
He made known his ways to Moses,
his acts to the people of Israel.
The Lord is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
He will not always accuse,
nor will he keep his anger forever.
He does not deal with us according to our sins
nor repay us according to our iniquities.
For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;
as far as the east is from the west,
so far he removes our transgressions from us.
As a father has compassion for his children,
so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him.
For he knows how we were made;
he remembers that we are dust.

Luke 6:27-38 (NRSVue)

“But I say to you who are listening: Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you; bless those who curse you; pray for those who mistreat you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who asks of you, and if anyone takes away what is yours, do not ask for it back again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive payment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. Instead, love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

“Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap, for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

Scriptural Response

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

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

Anthem

Make Me an Instrument

Craig Courtney
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Message

Lavish Love

Rev. Bob Rhodes

WE RESPOND TO THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST

Response to the Word

Last week's message was titled, "Expand the Circle." As a reminder to expand the circle, write the letter E on a post-it note and add it next to your B from the first week. Each week of this series we'll add a letter to help us live out these commandments.

This week, set aside a few minutes each day to watch and listen for signs of love in unexpected places. It might be a stranger holding a door, a coworker checking in on someone who's been quiet, or a moment of patience in a conversation that could have gone sideways. Write down what you notice on a notepad or in a note app on your phone/computer. At the end of the week, look back at your list and pray. Ask God to help you look for small acts of love, and to show you where your own expressions of love might grow.

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

What a Wonderful World

Arr. Tony Esposito
©1967 Road Range Music
©1995 Quartet Music

† **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: Teacher of hard truths, you call us to love our enemies, to do good to those who hate us, to give without expecting return. We confess it is easier to nurse our anger than to extend mercy, easier to forgive those who have earned our trust than those who have not. We measure our generosity. We withhold our kindness from the ungrateful. We yearn for the day when all people will treat one another as they wish to be treated, but we hesitate to begin that work, in ourselves. Help us love lavishly, Holy One, even when it costs us, that your love might shine like the sun through our lives and our ministries. Amen.

One: When we treat others as we would have them treat us, Jesus calls us beloved children of the Most High. If God is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked, how much more will God be kind to those who love the Lord and seek to live the Golden Rule? Rest in this assurance and be at peace. 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

Pass It On

UMH 572

1. In only takes a spark to get a fire going,
and soon all those around can warm up in its glowing.
That's how it is with God's love once you've experienced it;
you spread his love to everyone; you want to pass it on.
2. What a wondrous time is spring, when all the trees are budding;
the birds begin to sing, the flowers start their blooming.
That's how it is with God's love, once you've experienced it;
you want to sing, it's fresh like spring, you want to pass it on.
3. I wish for you, my friend, this happiness that I've found;
you can depend on him, it matters not where you're bound.
I'll shout it from the mountaintop; I want my world to know;
the Lord of love has come to me, I want to pass it on.

† Benediction

Postlude

One Love

U2

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Liturgical elements from *Discipleship Ministries (UMC)* and *The Abingdon Worship Annual*.

Flowers: In recognition of first-time guests and new ongoing worshipers

Liturgist: Sal Butera

Organist: Robert Wuertz

Pianist: Rebecca Cosford

Ushers: Beau Brandon, Don Lincoln, Dan Martin, Peter McCreight

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 Wyr, NS Executive Director