CONEJO VALLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

BE the BLESSING

December 6, 2020

Welcome!

Thank you for joining us for virtual worship. We pray you will encounter God as we worship together.

Today

10:00am	Virtual Meet-and-Greet via YouTube Chat Box
10:15am	Virtual Worship Service via YouTube
11:15am	Virtual Lobby via Zoom
3:00pm	Family Advent Experience

Upcoming Events

Dec 8	Guys' Group (Zoom)
Dec 9	Hungry / Thirsty Group (Zoom)
Dec 9	Combined HS Pod
Dec 10	TO Life Group
Dec 13	Carols and Candlelight

Birthdays This Week

Kimi Calderon	12/7
Taylor de Bruyn	12/7
Gabe Watson	12/8
Jackson Hinkle	12/9
Jerry Rushford	12/11
Josh Budde	12/12

Welcome and Response

Please call, text, or e-mail the office, ministers, or elders if there are ways that the ministry team can pray for you or those you love.

Blessed are the Cheesemakers

By Jack Williamson

Blessed are the cheesemakers.

When I was in college, my friends and I found the British comedy troupe Monty Python to be pretty close to the height of comedy. Their movie, The Life of Brian, is one that I cannot really recommend. It skirts the edge of blasphemy and at times jumps right off the edge into the abyss. However, one bit from the film that I still find amusing has several characters listening in to Jesus at the Sermon on the Mount. God is the inventor of humor and I feel like He probably finds this shtick funny as well. Someone in the crowd misunderstands Jesus when he says "blessed are the peacemakers." They think he said "blessed are the cheesemakers." This immediately launches the characters into an explanation and debate over what Jesus might mean: 'Well, perhaps he means blessed are the producers of all dairy products…" The bit is, I believe, meant to say more about the characters in the movie than about the teaching of Jesus. They are so caught up in their own little squabbles and priorities that they are not even paying attention to what Jesus is saying. It is no wonder they get it wrong.

I sometimes wonder if we are the same way. What seems to be a simple teaching from the Sermon on the Mount is so ordinary and normal to us that we can forget it or even get it completely wrong as life roars on around us. Some days we can get so caught up in our squabbles over work or status or political priorities that we forget the deeply profound truth that sits at the heart of what seems to be a very simplistic teaching: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

This week, at the end of a year that has been difficult in many ways, during this second week of Advent, we ask you to focus on this tiny word and giant concept: PEACE. What does it mean to be people of peace in times like these? How do we as the people of God bring the rule of the Prince of Peace to bear on our lives, our loves and our relationships? What does it mean to be a peacemaker during a divisive political season? How would a peacemaker, one that looks like what Jesus intended, react to our current pandemic and political climate? In short, what does it look like to act as children of God in the midst of these trouble-ridden days?

> ***As we celebrate the Christmas season, may we reorient our lives toward peace. As we look forward to remembering this most important birth together, may we ponder how to share good tidings of great joy which shall be for all people. In so doing, may we bring peace. May our actions and our attitudes love first, build bridges and connections second, and put divisiveness aside.***

Together, let's slow down and pray. I will pray for you. Please pray for me. Let's pray that you and I are seen as children of God. May we be seen as sons and daughters of God who bring peace, not just as cheesy people who spout platitudes like clichéd cheesemakers.

What's Happening at Conejo

Advent Sermon Series

The four weeks of Advent traditionally begin with reflection on the first and second comings of Jesus the Messiah. During this season, we enter the anticipation of Israel, longing for the coming of the Messiah. As Christians living in expectation of the second coming, we share this sense of longing, expectation, and anticipation that the Lord will return and put things right once for all. We look expectantly toward the future, when Christ creates the new heavens and the new earth.

In our second week of Advent, we focus on the word PEACE. Throughout Scripture God is the author of peace and can grant it to creation, a nation, or an individual. It is more than a lack of conflict. Biblical peace is the idea that all things are right, therefore one can rest easy and feel secure. In short peace comes as a result of knowing that all is well. Pulling from Isaiah 9:6 and the Gospel writers, Jesus is our Prince of Peace. We are called to carry on his work as peacemakers. This year has been a season of difficulty and conflict in our world. During this season, let us consider how we might bring peace into places of stress and strife.

Carols and Candlelight / December 13

Make plans to join us for an outdoor version of one of our beloved holiday traditions, Carols and Candlelight, next Sunday, December 13 at 6pm in the backyard of our church building. This special service features the singing of favorite holiday carols, the reading of the birth narratives of Jesus, and the renewing experience of the wonder of Christ's radiant coming as we share in the "passing of the light."

Please plan to dress warmly, bring folding chairs or blankets to sit on, and download the song lyrics we send out to your smart phones to facilitate singing along. We'll be sending out an email asking for you to make an online reservation. Except for program participants when they are speaking, everyone is asked to wear masks. We'll observe social distancing between households. While we won't be able to provide desserts as in years past, you're invited to bring a thermos of hot chocolate or mulled cider to help keep warm.

Many Mansions Holiday Gift Program / Thank You!

A hearty "thank you" to all who participated in this year's Many Mansions holiday gift program! This has been a tough year for Many Mansions, so your support of community children and teens, especially during the holiday season, is much appreciated. Our thanks to Kellie Van Atta and Suzanne Reynolds for helping us connect with and participate in this opportunity to love our neighbors.

Service Outreach Opportunities

There are many opportunities to help and encourage others in the neighborhood and nearby community. Please see the Service Opportunities spotlight item on the homepage of the CVCC website for details about how to participate in the following ongoing or upcoming community outreach efforts:

Helping Hands Food Distribution

Family Service Group

Conejo Elementary Tutoring Program

Current Small Groups at Conejo

Several of our small groups gather via Zoom to share in life, to study the Word, to check in with each other, and to encourage and pray for one another. Those not meeting virtually meet in an outdoor and/or socially distanced setting.

MS Pod on Sundays with Travis at 4pm
Virtual Monday Night Women's Bible Study at 7pm (will resume in January 2021)
Virtual Tuesday Night Guys' Group at 7pm
HS Pod on Wednesdays with Travis at 6pm
Virtual Hungry/Thirsty Group on Wednesdays at 6:45pm
TO Thursday Night Group with Fosters at TO parks at 7pm

High School + Middle School

Youth Group Pods

The youth group is meeting weekly in "pods." We are prayerful that this format will better meet our needs for building relationships. Pods are small groups that meet outdoors, keeping in accordance with state safety protocols and our youth group wellness policy. Please help our middle school and high school students stay connected by encouraging them to attend a pod.

Middle School Pod — NOT MEETING DECEMBER 6
Pod Leader(s) – Travis & Amy Moore
When – Sunday Nights from 4-5:30pm
Where – 12904 Sleepy Wind St., Moorpark, CA 93021

Combined High School Pod
Pod Leader – Travis Moore
When – Wednesday Nights from 6:00-7:30pm
Where – CVCC Backyard (2525 E. Hillcrest Dr., Thousand Oaks, CA 91362)

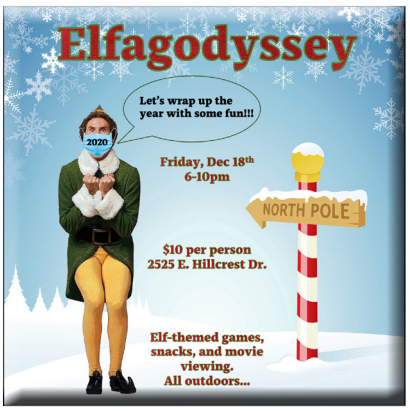
"Over It" Devotional Thought

The power of forgiveness changes not only others, but also ourselves...

No matter who you are or what you've done, it's important to remember that we all need forgiveness. We all need to receive it, and we all need to give it. But the good news is, because of Jesus, forgiveness is always ours to give and take. He has made a way for us to receive the ultimate forgiveness, and because of that, we can extend that same grace to others. Today, ask yourself if there is someone you need to forgive or if you need to ask for forgiveness yourself. Then pray that God would help you as you give or receive forgiveness.

"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." **Matthew 6:14**

Extravagodyssey 2020 Edition / December 18



On Friday, December 18th, from 6-10pm the Conejo Valley Youth Group will celebrate this year's Extravagodyssey 2020 edition. The event will be all outdoors and adhere to current Ventura County gathering restrictions. The middle school and high school groups will gather and engage in 4 or 5 stations that will bring to life scenes from the Christmas movie *Elf* and end the night with viewing the movie in the church backyard. The cost is $10 per person and will help offset the cost for games and snacks. You must RSVP with Travis via email for this event and the deadline to RSVP is Wednesday, December 16th.

Children's Ministry

Scripture Memory

But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus."

Luke 1:30-31 NIV

Family Advent Experience / Tonight

Tonight is the night for our Family Advent Experience, "Do Not Be Afraid." Families will experience the story of the birth of Jesus through a walk-through journey of five stations featuring a storyteller in period costume and a Bible times setting. Each family will receive a gift designed to help remember Jesus throughout the Christmas season. We will also offer an opportunity to share hot chocolate and cookies outside. (Families may alternatively choose prepackaged 'to go' refreshments to enjoy at home.)

Families, please text or call me at (818) 857-6213 if your plans have changed or if you are running late for your start time. We have a full event and we want to honor the time set aside for each family and be good stewards for our volunteers.

Prayer Corner

Devote yourself to prayer being watchful and thankful. Colossians 4:2

PRAISES

PREGNANCY: **Sarah Jane Norris** (March)

NEW MEMBERS: **Arlene Leedy, Lynn Nasca**

THOSE GRIEVING

Guy Patenaude – loss of aunt, Chris De La Rosa

Burch and Long families – loss of Jack Burch

Maribel Guevara – loss of nephew, Julian Hernandez

Matt Joyner – loss of grandfather, Steve Eckstein

Tim Horton – loss of brother-in-law, John Lamm

Andy Caldwell – loss of mother, Margie Caldwell

Bob Falletta – loss of mother, Ida Falletta

Kathy Cocke – loss of brother, Alan Burgner

Kay Falletta – loss of sister, Mary McQuillan

Rick Marrs – loss of mother, Vivian Marrs

Jack Williamson – loss of mother, Melva Williamson

Erin Opdahl – loss of infant daughter, Maelyn; loss of husband, Silas

Darlene Rivas – loss of father, Harry Hodges

George de Bruyn – loss of mother, Veronica de Bruyn

Neil Socquet – loss of brothers, Scott and Ben

FIGHTING CANCER

Marilyn Aurand – neuro-endocrine cancer; undergoing radiation then chemotherapy treatments

Carlos Hermandez (uncle of Maribel Guevara) – diagnosed with inoperable cancer

Nan Fox (aunt of Matt Joyner) – undergoing chemotherapy

Joella Michael – mucosal melanoma in liver and lymph node; undergoing immunotherapy

Shera Miner (mother of Rachel Miner) – new treatments for aggressive cancer

Barbara Sanders (mother of Ed Sanders) – colon cancer

Deb Schultz (neighbor of Christina Eng) – stage IV breast cancer; undergoing chemo

Ted McAllister (former member) – chemo following successful stem cell transplant

Lucinda Hodges (sister-in-law of Darlene Rivas) – multiple myeloma and cardiac amyloidosis

Iesha Moreno (niece of Mike Rivas) – on hospice care with stomach cancer

Kurt Krebs (friend of Ed and Sheryl Sanders) – multiple myeloma

Marlene Michaels (friend of Lisa Scott) – stage IV cancer

Justice Howard (cousin of Yashica Budde) – thyroid cancer

VARIOUS CONCERNS

Stu Hardman – (former member) – at Los Robles; fighting bacterial infections, sepsis, and stomach ulcers

Kathy Cocke – recovering at home from acute respiratory failure and pneumonia

Martha Condley (daughter of Janie Condley) – recently diagnosed with lupus

Billy Bacca (uncle of Katie Charles) – recovering at home from pneumonia; receiving 24-hour care

Scheri Lamm (sister of Tim Horton) – improving following hospitalization with blood clots; grieving loss of husband

Natalie Ditmore (daughter-in-law of Michael and Tammy Ditmore) – for a safe and healthy delivery; due on November 29

Sara Hodges (mother of Darlene Rivas) – navigating serious health issues; grieving loss of husband

Linemen and firefighters as they work to serve the community during extreme conditions

Teachers, students, parents, and **administrators** during this unusual academic year

Healing, peace, and **justice** in our nation and communities

Researchers, doctors, nurses, and **patients** battling COVID-19

Mildred Eckstein (grandmother of Matt Joyner) – recovering from COVID-19; grieving loss of her husband

Roscoe Marrs (father of Rick Marrs) – recently suffered mild heart attack; grieving loss of wife

Pat Tudor – will be undergoing a stem cell transplant soon

Marilyn Aurand – spinal stenosis

Darlene Fielder (mother of Tammy Ditmore) – recent stroke

Mary Zollman (friend of Lisa Scott) – multiple sclerosis

Lani Shearn (sister of Joy Rhoades) – inoperable brain tumor; also, for Lani's husband, **Steve**, as he cares for her

Ashlyn Thomas – continued health issues; pray for answers and successful treatments

Sarah and Adria Ballard – relief from chronic pain

Harriet Nutter (mother of Daphne Green) – depression and loneliness

Betty Brown – pain relief, healing, and regaining of strength

Carol McNutt – neuropathy

Caleb Rodriguez (son of Marcus and Julia) – ongoing seizures

MISSION EFFORTS

Raul & Betty Alvarado – mission efforts in Panama

Tom Bonner – mission work in Albania

Julie Broyles – Bible English Study Center in Cambodia

Ryan Campbell – mission work in Philippines

Charles & Darlene Coulston – mission work in Kenya

Megan Randolph – teaching in Thailand

David & Danna Willis – mission work in Samoa

MILITARY SERVICE

Tyler Scott – stationed in HI with the Navy

Michael Warford – stationed in FL with the Navy

Attendance + Giving

November 29 Attendance	
Online Service	96

November 29 Giving	$25,474
Weekly Giving Average	$12,859
Weekly Giving Budget	$12,812
Be the Blessing Giving (To Date)	$1,563,479
Property Settlement	$225,000

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