CONEJO VALLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

BE the BLESSING

April 4, 2021

Welcome!

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

Today

6:30am	In-person Easter Sunrise Service in CVCC back yard
10:00am	In-person Worship Service (registration required)
10:00am	Virtual Meet-and-Greet via YouTube Chat Box
10:15am	Virtual Easter Celebration Service via YouTube
11:15am	Virtual Lobby via Zoom

Upcoming Events

Apr 5	Women's Bible Study (Zoom)
Apr 6	Guys' Group (Zoom)
Apr 6	"First Fruits" Group (Zoom)
Apr 7	Hungry / Thirsty Group (Zoom)
Apr 7	High School Pod
Apr 8	T.O. Life Group (Zoom)
Apr 8	Book Club

Birthdays This Week

Michele Davis	4/4
Jorge Guevara	4/5
Shirlene Watson	4/5
Miranda Brawner	4/7
Ashlyn Thomas	4/8
Vincent Chambers	4/9
Linda Antonio	4/10
Jan Willis	4/11

Why I Love Easter

by Andy Wall

What's your favorite holiday? The one you love coming back to year after year? For me, it's the one we're celebrating this week. Easter is, hands down, my favorite holiday of the year. And I deeply love Advent and Christmas!

So why Easter? One reason is related to my childhood experience of growing up in a country that goes all out for Easter, even taking two weeks off from school to celebrate it. This same country gave us the Easter acclamation, "Xristos anesti!" "Alethos anesti!" Or if you prefer, "He is risen!" "Risen indeed!"

But even deeper than my childhood memories of Greek Easter celebrations is the message of Easter. I love what Easter orients us toward, what Easter creates the possibility of, what Easter introduces into our human metanarrative. Here are three great ideas in Easter that I find compelling.

1) God brings new life! The timing of Easter each year connects with the annual transition (at least for Northern Hemisphere dwellers) from the dark, cold, dormant winter months into the brightening, warmer, budding season of spring. As we see vibrant flowers emerge from the soil, fresh leaves from bony tree branches, and green hills from brown, we're reminded that our Creator is the Lord of life. This new life is evident not only in the renewal of nature but in human transformations that the Gospel message brings about. As Luther wrote, "Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in the books alone, but in every leaf in springtime."

2) The worst is not the last. Easter does not downplay the reality of suffering, injustice, or death—Jesus experienced each of these. That Easter follows hard on the heels of Good Friday means that the gritty hardships of life cannot be eliminated, but they can be transcended. Entering into life with Jesus is not some magical amulet against grief or disappointment. However, the resurrection is God's promise that the worst thing is never the last thing.

3) There is life after death. Death is the inescapable reality of our human existence. It's one of the only things that is guaranteed on Earth: you will die. Ben Franklin quipped, "In this world, nothing is certain except death and taxes." While death comes for all of us, Easter introduces a huge plot twist in our "inescapable" ending. Death may indeed be guaranteed for us, but Easter declares that it is not the final word. There is something beyond death. The Gospel message includes the beautiful promise that by faith in Jesus, we will not perish (ultimately) but have everlasting life!

The upshot of all this is Easter's message: He is risen! We live by hope. Hallelujah!

What's Happening at Conejo

Jesus, A Friend of Sinners

This week's Easter message is titled "When Your Back's Against The Wall."

The story of the two thieves is a stunning vignette in Luke's Gospel, illustrating, as Luke often does, the possibility of dual responses to Jesus. One thief rails and rages in his pain, speaking in self-serving ways. The other confesses his guilt for his crimes and Jesus' innocence and humbly asks Jesus to "remember him." True to form as a "friend of sinners," Jesus responds with a promise of hope, pointing powerfully to God's resurrection power: "Today, you will be with me in Paradise."

The thief's story points to the utter graciousness and generosity of God, for this man has no time in which to "repay" God for this gift. So what does it look like for Jesus to be a friend of sinners in light of Easter Sunday? It looks an awful lot like Jesus' promise to a penitent thief! Even when your back is pressed hard up against the wall, Jesus hears and remembers you! Even (or especially!) when you're at the end of yourself, Jesus' word of hope is an open door to a different future. Even when you're facing life's inescapable enemy (death), Jesus' resurrection presence helps overcome the despair that suggests your story is somehow over.

In-Person Worship Services

Following the movement of Ventura County to the red tier of the state of California's COVID-19 restrictions, we have re-launched a limited in-person worship on **Sundays at 10am.** At this point, the service will simply be an opportunity to watch the pre-recorded YouTube video together in the auditorium. You will also be able to view the service at home on YouTube, as usual. The service at the building will include singing with masks as well as individually wrapped communion.

An RSVP is required and will be first-come, first-served and limited to 70 people. If you have any health concerns, or if you have any COVID-19 symptoms, please enjoy the service from the comfort of your residence. Here are our guidelines for all who will join us at the building.

1) Masks and temperature scans are required.
2) In the auditorium, please leave 3 empty seats between households; families with children/teens must stay together throughout the entire service.
3) Fellowship will take place outside in the upper parking lot; please exit the building immediately following the end of the service and enjoy visiting outside.
4) Bathrooms will be limited to two people at a time and the drinking fountain is not in service.

Welcome to the World, Eliza Jane Norris

Eliza Jane Norris was born to Carlton and Sarah Jane Norris on Friday, March 26. She weighed in at 7 pounds 5 ounces. Our prayer is that Eliza Jane will grow in wisdom, stature, and in love and devotion to God and God's creation. We welcome this precious little one to the world.

Lauren Kliest-Blankfein is coordinating meals for the Norris family as they adjust to life with little Eliza. Details about meal delivery will be shared via e-mail soon.

Easter Sunrise Service / April 4, 6:30am

"But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb..." Join us on Sunday, April 4, at 6:30am in the Conejo Church backyard for a Sunrise Easter Service. We will sing resurrection songs (**click here** to access song lyrics for your mobile device) and share together in the Lord's Supper as we celebrate the Easter message, "He is not here; he has risen!" Masks and social distancing protocols will be observed. Please bring lawn chairs or blankets to sit on.

Easter Celebration Service / April 4, 10am

If our 6:30am sunrise service feels a bit early, join us indoors at 10am for a shared viewing of our Easter Celebration YouTube service. Masks and social distancing protocols will be observed and you will need to RSVP via the BookWhen link which was sent out midweek. If you did not reply to that e-mail, please **click here** to pre-register for the 10am in-person service. We look forward to celebrating the resurrection of Jesus together, whether in person or virtually!

"First Fruits" Group / April 6, 7pm

Stu and Co Warford are hosting a small group to help and encourage all who are interested to grow their own food right where they live. This small group, "First Fruits," offers very practical tips and information and meets virtually via Zoom on the first Tuesday of each month at 7pm. Topics such as planting schedules, soil preparation, seasonal fruits and vegetables, and a variety of other related topics are discussed as we reflect on how we can work together with God's creation. This small group is applicable for gardeners at all levels and gardens of all sizes. **Zoom Meeting Link.**

Church of Christ Foundation Scholarships

Conejo members, will you be attending a university or college affiliated with the Churches of Christ in the Fall of 2021? If so, we invite you to apply for a scholarship from the Church of Christ Foundation by visiting www.churchofchristfoundation.com. Scholarships often range from $1,500 - $2,000 and can generally be renewed for up to four years. Applications are due by April 30, 2021. Should you have any questions, please contact Keith Hinkle at (310) 283-5007.

High School + Middle School

Summer Camps—Save the Dates!
We are hopeful and very much looking forward to having camps this summer. The dates reserved for the camps are:

So Cal Teen Camp: "Tangible"
Sunday, July 11 through Saturday, July 17

King's Kamp: "Run to Win"
Sunday, July 25 through Saturday, July 31

Once registration opens, you will be able to register your child for Teen Camp at www.socalteencamp.org and for King's Kamp at www.kingskamp.org. Teen Camp is for students graduating from grades 8-12th and King's Kamp is for students entering into grades 4-8th in the fall of 2021.

King's Kamp Counselors Needed: If you are 16 years of age or older and interested in being a counselor, you may print an application form from www.kingskamp.org, fill it out and mail it in or email it to king.skamp.camp@gmail.com. Counselor applications must be postmarked or emailed by May 1.

Youth Group Pods
The youth group is meeting weekly in small groups, "pods," that meet outdoors, keeping in accordance with state safety protocols and our youth group wellness policy.

Middle School Pod – **NOT MEETING ON EASTER SUNDAY**
Pod Leader – Travis Moore
Location – Conejo Valley Church Children's Playground Patio

High School Pod – Wednesdays from 6 to 7:30pm
Pod Leader – Travis Moore
Location – Conejo Valley Church Backyard

Children's Ministry

Scripture Memory
For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;
As far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.
Psalm 103:11-12 NIV

Thank You, Good Friday Volunteers
Our wonderful Good Friday volunteers transformed our traditional Good Friday Family Experience to an outdoor event. Thank you Jack Williamson, David and Leslie Stephens, Kemba MacPhee, and Paula Marrs for your hard work and creativity! And, a special thanks to Tami Williamson, our event photographer.

Previous Family Good Friday Experiences

Prayer Corner

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

PRAISES

BIRTHS: **Sloane Reynolds**, born to Scott and Claire on March 28, 2021. Proud grandparents TJ and Suzanne Reynolds

Eliza Jane Norris, born to Carlton and Sarah Jane Norris on March 26, 2021

Stan and Lorna Thomas and **Tim and Connie Horton** celebrate their coming grandchild

THOSE GRIEVING

Matt Joyner – loss of his aunt, Nan Fox

Christina Eng – loss of her aunt, Cathy Littlefield

Sharon Mitchell and family – loss of mother, Lacreta Scott

Scarberry family – loss of Frances Scarberry, mother of Shirley, stepmother of Mark

Joe Cocke – loss of wife, Kathy

Maribel Guevara – loss of uncle, Carlos Hernandez

Mary Jo Hardman and family – loss of husband, Stu Hardman

Joy Rhoades – loss of sister, Lani Shearn

Mike Rivas – loss of niece, Iesha Moreno

Guy Patenaude – loss of aunt, Chris De La Rosa

Matt Joyner – loss of grandfather, Steve Eckstein

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

Andy Caldwell – loss of mother, Margie Caldwell

Rick Marrs – loss of mother, Vivian Marrs

FIGHTING CANCER

Joella Michael – recovering from liver surgery related to mucosal melanoma; immunotherapy

Marilyn Aurand – neuro-endocrine cancer; chemotherapy treatments in process

Karen Kennedy (friend of Lisa Scott) – Stage IV kidney cancer

Steve Hallman (brother-in-law of Larry McNutt) – having difficulty with treatment for rare melanoma in lungs

Shera Miner (mother of Rachel Miner) – aggressive cancer

Barbara Sanders (mother of Ed Sanders) – colon cancer

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

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

Jim Bishop (friend of Lisa Scott) – cardiac issues and leukemia

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

Calleigh Hunnicutt – having difficulty standing and walking; in constant pain

Larenda Roberts – recovering from recent surgery

Pam Isaac – home recovering after recent hospitalization

Vi Schultz (friend of Christina Eng) – 91-year-old neighbor grieving loss of daughter, Debbie

Pat Tudor – working with doctors regarding immunotherapy

Eileen Charles (step-mother of Robert Charles) – suffered recent stroke

Roger Dillion (father of Jacqueline Dillion-Wiens) – suffered recent strokes

Martha Condley (daughter of Janie Condley) – lupus

Sara Hodges (mother of Darlene Rivas) – navigating serious health issues

Al Odenath (father of Nick Odenath) – on hospice dealing with anxiety and confusion in memory care unit

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

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

CVCC FRIENDS WITH COVID-19

Andrea Thomas Carter (friend of Lisa Scott) – several medical issues and COVID-19

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

Roscoe Marrs (father of Rick Marrs) – grieving loss of wife

Marilyn Aurand – spinal stenosis

Mary Zollman (friend of Lisa Scott) – multiple sclerosis

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

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

Derek Willis (nephew of Tim Willis) – serving in PA in the Army

Attendance + Giving

March 28 Attendance	
Online Viewing	83
In-Person Service	34
Evening Devotional	21

March 28 Giving	$15,206
Weekly Giving Average	$14,188
Weekly Giving Budget	$12,812
Be the Blessing Giving (To Date)	$1,582,141
Property Settlement	$225,000

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