

## CONEJO VALLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

# BE the BLESSING

December 5, 2021

## Welcome!

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

### Today

- 9:00am Bible Classes for all ages
- 10:00am Virtual Meet-and-Greet via YouTube Chat Box
- 10:15am Worship Service On-Site and via YouTube
- 11:30am Virtual Lobby via Zoom
- 5:00pm Family Advent Experience

### Upcoming Events

- Dec 6 Women's Bible Study
- Dec 7 Guys' Group
- Dec 8 High School Pod
- Dec 8 Hungry / Thirsty Group
- Dec 9 Conejo School Tutoring
- Dec 9 Fosters' Life Group
- Dec 10 All-Church Christmas Party at the home of Rick and Paula Marrs
- Dec 12 Carols and Candlelight
- Dec 15 Christmas Caroling
- Dec 17 Extravagodysey
- Dec 19 Christmas Celebration Service

### Birthdays This Week

- |                 |       |
|-----------------|-------|
| Mike Rivas      | 12/5  |
| Chris Gast      | 12/6  |
| Andy Wall       | 12/6  |
| Kimi Calderon   | 12/7  |
| Taylor de Bruyn | 12/7  |
| Gabe Watson     | 12/8  |
| Jackson Hinkle  | 12/9  |
| Melissa Foster  | 12/10 |
| Jerry Rushford  | 12/11 |
| Josh Budde      | 12/12 |

## Unexpected Blessings

By Jack Williamson

This has been such a long season of restrictions and inconveniences. When this pandemic first hit, none of us believed that it might go on for more than 18 months. Now that it has, I am still not sure I can see an end to this thing. Certainly, things are better than they were six months ago, but with the announcement of this new strain, and the mandates and restrictions that continue to be in place, one thing is painfully clear: we are not out of this yet – and the day when it will all finally be over is impossible to predict.

How many times have you heard someone say, "I wish we could just go back to the way things were before the pandemic!"? How many times have you felt that, or something similar? Well, before we get lost and dismayed by that thought, let me remind you of a few things that have come about, not in spite of the pandemic, but because of it.

Prior to the pandemic we had made several attempts to get reliable internet at our church building. We were told it would cost thousands of dollars to get a connection to us due to our outdated infrastructure. With the "Stay at Home" order upon us, and the need for so many churches to livestream, the ISP did not want to be seen denying service to a church in the midst of a pandemic. Suddenly, they gave us the connection we needed, and for free! Blessing number one: a reliable fiber optic connection. Before the pandemic, we had never live streamed our services. Now we do it every week. Blessing number two: a live digital connection with people anywhere. Now those far from us can record prayers, communion meditations, and scripture readings to share during our live stream. People all over the world can be part of our worship experience together. Blessing number three: more voices sharing our common bond of faith. Also, while watching from home, our children started sharing their memory verse via video with angelic voices and sweet smiles in ways that have touched and encouraged us all. Can you say, "Hi church . . . bye church!" without smiling? Blessing number four: our kids encourage us and hopefully feel more like a vital part of the body.

Thanks again, pandemic, for ushering in additional blessings. We've had a drive-through graduation, a drive-through baby shower, and Donut Sundays. We've had walk-through Trunk or Treats, Family Advent and Easter experiences outdoors. These are all blessings that the pandemic brought to us by stretching our creativity and showing us how to celebrate and shine in spite of restrictions and isolation.

***Through all of this, God has been faithful. We have learned to adapt and make things work in new ways. Many of these newfound habits and practices will stick with us, making our faith life together richer and our witness in the world more effective. I could go on with other blessings that have come out of this trial, but I will leave that reflection to you. Take some time this week, or perhaps over lunch today, to talk with your friends and family about how God has continued to be with us in this time of pandemic and trial. He is making good things come out of hard days. Reflect on that and be grateful.***

***Immanuel: God is with us.***

# What's Happening At Conejo



## Today's Sermon

In this second week of our Advent series entitled *Emmanuel: God With Us*, we turn to the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth. From the time the last prophet spoke for God to the time Zechariah was confronted in the temple was a span of 400 years. This marks the longest period of God's silence that Israel had experienced since the exodus. Can you imagine Zechariah's frustration when he exited the temple with such great news? Yet, he couldn't even speak! Think about that. Zechariah, the priest, the teacher, the preacher, bearing the greatest news anyone had heard in 400 years and he was not able to utter a word! In times like this, God shows us a seriously ironic sense of humor. He also reminds us of the importance of sharing this great news that we must never forget. Even when we think we do not hear from him, God is always with us.

## Advent Bible Class Series

Our adult auditorium class is on week two of an Advent series titled "Songs of the Season." Each week, different teachers will reflect on favorite Christmas carols, discussing the history of their writing/composing (insofar as it is known), the theology of their lyrics, and their significance in the life of the Church. Christina Eng is teaching today's class, exploring that much-beloved Christmas carol, "O Holy Night."

## All-Church Christmas Party / December 10



The congregation is invited to a very special Conejo holiday gathering on Friday, December 10, beginning at 7pm at the home of Rick and Paula Marrs. Make plans now to come share in a delightful evening filled with warm holiday fellowship, Christmas carols, and tasty treats. Please bring substantial hors d'oeuvres or a favorite dessert to share. While party-goers are welcome to go without a mask while outside, please be sure to wear a mask indoors.

## Carols and Candlelight / December 12

At 6pm on Sunday, December 12, you are invited to our annual Carols and Candlelight Service. This special service will feature the singing of favorite holiday carols, the reading of the birth narratives of Christ, and the renewing experience of the wonder of Christ's radiant coming as we share in the lighting of candles. We will enjoy cookies and fellowship on the entry patio following the service. We ask that members who are able bring cookies or finger desserts to share. Please invite friends and loved ones to this favorite holiday tradition as we enjoy the season of Advent together.



## Amazon Non-Profit Program

Amazon.com has a program to support nonprofits based on certain product sales. We've registered with Amazon to allow the Conejo Church to participate in this program. For this to work to our benefit, simply shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and designate the Conejo Valley Church of Christ as your chosen charity. Amazon will send the Conejo Church 0.5% of sales on certain products.

## Power for Today

Please pick up your copy of "Power for Today" from the entry table. These booklets are purchased by the church to aid members in their personal readings and times of devotion.

## Meeting and Masking

Due to strong recommendations by Ventura and Los Angeles county health officials, we **expect** everyone to wear a mask while indoors, regardless of your vaccination status. Please do this for the well-being of others. We have a small supply of disposable masks available.

## CVCC Small Groups

Our small group program is in progress with groups meeting around the Conejo Valley and beyond—some in person, some via Zoom. These groups meet for a variety of purposes including prayer, Bible study, fellowship, service, mentoring, and outreach. Some groups include children, some are for teens, some are for adults, and some include all generations. Please [click here](#) for a detailed listing of our 2021 small groups. If you have questions, please contact Andy Wall or Jack Williamson.



# High School + Middle School

## Sunday Morning Bible Class

Our high school and middle school groups are meeting together in the back yard on Sunday mornings at 9am for a time of Bible study together. Come encourage one another and be encouraged by one another!

## Youth Group Pods



Throughout the month of December, YG pods will be studying a series called "Merry Christmas to Me." [Click here](#) to learn more about meeting times and this month's theme. Please encourage your students to participate regularly in our gatherings to strengthen their relationship with God and with one another.

## Christmas Caroling / December 15

During a normal year, we usually head down the street to carol to our neighbors at the Thousand Oaks Royale retirement home. Due to Covid restrictions, we are still unable to visit TO Royale, but we wanted to spread the cheer in another way. On Wednesday night, December 15, we will meet at Conejo at 6pm, carpool



to a few of our own Conejo members, and bless them with caroling. We will conclude the evening by heading to Starbucks together at the corner of TO Boulevard and Duesenberg. Anyone is invited to join us; the more the merrier!

## Extravagodysey 2021 / December 17

Friday night, December 17, the youth group will gather for an all-nighter of epic proportions! The middle school and high school groups are invited to Conejo for an all-nighter that will host a few other local youth groups as we look back on 2021 and make a charge toward deeper faith in 2022. The night will include games, worship, a devotional, the new Spiderman movie, and bowling. The cost per person is \$40. The event starts at 8pm Friday night and ends at 8am Saturday morning. **RSVP no later than this Friday, December 10!**



# Children's Ministry

## Family Advent Experience / December 5

**FAMILY ADVENT EXPERIENCE**

# God is With Us

— DECEMBER 5 —

Join us for a walk-through experience of Emmanuel. Families will travel to six different stations where Bible characters and storytellers will share the story leading up to the birth of Jesus. The experience concludes at our celebration station for ornament making and hot chocolate.

Participants will travel in groups of 8 or less.

**SIGN UP REQUIRED FOR A START TIME**

Start Times from 5:00 pm to 7:40 pm

Link for Start Time Sign Up:  
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0b4daca62aabf58-family>

CONEJO VALLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST  
2525 E. HILLCREST DR. THOUSAND OAKS, CA 91362

## Previous Year's Family Advent Experience



## Advent Scripture Memory Verse

"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign:

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel - which means 'God with us.'"

**Isaiah 7:14 NIV**

When you RSVP for a start time, please sign up each family member who will be attending. Participants will travel in groups of 8 or fewer. Please [click here](#) to sign up for your start time.

# Prayer Corner

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

## PRAISES

**PREGNANCY:** **Kellie Thiel** (January), **Elaine Overton** (March)  
**Researchers, doctors, nurses, caregivers,** and **patients** who persevere through COVID-19  
**BAPTISM:** **Alyssa Hunnicutt**

## THOSE GRIEVING

**Judy Tapper** – loss of sister, Muriel meador  
**Lisa Scott** – loss of cousin, Margi Dalmas  
**Lauren Kliet-Blankfein** – loss of grandmother, Marylee Illiff  
**Mark and Suzanne Scarberry** – loss of daughter, Caitlin; loss of Mark's brother, Dan  
**Marlene Hallack** (friend of McNutt family) – loss of brother, John  
**Sue Ann Meador** - loss of father, Joe Burroughs  
**Darlene Rivas** – loss of mother, Sara Hodges  
**Ron MacPhee** – loss of sister, Linda Clark  
**Lindy Spicer and Family** (former Conejo members) – loss of husband / father Ken Spicer  
**David Gibson** – loss of wife, Pat  
**Kay Falletta** – loss of brother, B.J. Reckman  
**Jacqueline Dillion** – loss of father, Roger Dillion  
**Rachel Miner** – loss of mother, Shera Miner  
**Joe Cocke** – loss of wife, Kathy  
**Joy Rhoades** – loss of sister, Lani Shearn

## FIGHTING CANCER

**Joella Michael** – latest pet scan shows cancer has returned with a spot on liver; surgery scheduled for December 10  
**Clifton Tuggle** (uncle of Rene Heard) – battling cancer and additional complications with COVID-19  
**Patricia Sparks** (sister-in-law of Shannon Latson) – recurrence of uterine sarcoma carcinoma following treatment; immunotherapy  
**Karen Kennedy** (friend of Lisa Scott) – stage IV kidney cancer  
**Ted McAllister** (former member) – test results showing worrisome increase in cancer numbers  
**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

**Teachers, students, parents, and administrators** – as they finish the fall semester with both excitement and uncertainty  
**Michael Jenkins** (son of Kevin and Nelda) – struggling with numerous issues and declining health

**Marvin Shipley** (father of Michelle Hagemann) – in rehabilitation following stroke  
**Calleigh Hunnicutt** – difficulty standing and walking; some improvements  
**Pat Tudor** – tolerating immunotherapy  
**Eileen Charles** (step-mother of Robert Charles) – suffered stroke  
**Martha Condley** (daughter of Janie Condley) – lupus  
**Al Odenath** (father of Nick Odenath) – dealing with anxiety and confusion in memory care unit

**Family and friends** who have battled with COVID-19 or lost someone during the pandemic  
**Marilyn Aurand** – physical therapy for spinal stenosis and to improve mobility  
**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  
**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  
**Made In The Streets** – ministry to street kids in Nairobi, 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

November 28 Attendance	
On-Site Service	98
Online Viewing	67

November 28 Giving		\$9,188
Weekly Giving Average		\$13,530
Weekly Giving Budget		\$13,410
Be the Blessing Giving (To Date)		\$1,618,355
Property Settlement		\$225,000

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