



CONEJO VALLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

BE the BLESSING

December 17, 2023

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
- 10:15am On-Site and Virtual Service via YouTube
- 2:00pm Caroling, Cards, and Cookies for senior members
- 5:00pm All-Church Christmas Party at the Marrs'

Upcoming Events

- Dec 18 Men's Bible Study
- Dec 23 Saturday Guys Golf Outing

Birthdays This Week

Janie Condley	12/19
Susan Giboney	12/19
Eleanor Overton	12/19
Staci Daringer	12/21
Tyler Scott	12/21
Calleigh Hunnicutt	12/22
Gwen Hunnicutt	12/22



Choose Your Hard

Andy Wall

"We have to choose our hard:
Relationships are hard, being lonely is hard.
Marriage is hard, divorce is hard.
Being financially responsible is hard, being broke is hard.
Communication is hard, not communicating is hard.
Getting an education is hard, living without an education is hard.
Doing what is right is hard, living with bad choices is hard.
Being in shape is hard, being unhealthy is hard.
What needs to be done is hard, regret for what is left undone is hard.
Choose your hard..."

I recently came across this anonymous piece above that reminded me that either side of our choices can bring about a difficult result; sometimes, our real choice is simply between two types of challenge, though one type of difficulty may well be preferable in the long run.

As we think about the annunciation of the Lord today, I'm reflecting on the choice put before Mary, a young, poor, betrothed virgin living in a land occupied by foreign powers. Her life is already hard! God's messenger Gabriel invites her to participate in a miraculous birth that bears great promise ("you will... bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High...") but also great challenge ("...and a sword will pierce your own soul too.") What Gabriel calls Mary to accept requires guts, courage, and endurance—small wonder he tells her, "Do not be afraid, Mary." Mary seems to realize that God rarely sends a messenger with an easy calling. Nevertheless, she chooses to accept God's calling and in so doing, a peculiar brand of hard.

But imagine if Mary had said "no." I believe she had that choice. She could have continued through her life with Joseph, eking out a suboptimal living in a society rigged against her people. But what would she have missed out on? The witness of Elizabeth at her baby leaping at the sound of Mary's voice. The testimonies of Simeon and Anna at the dedication of baby Jesus. Jesus' first miracle of water to wine at the wedding feast of Cana. The heartbreaking crucifixion of her son, followed by the astounding news of his resurrection. The praying community of the faithful following Jesus' ascension. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the upper room on Pentecost.

If Mary says "no" to Gabriel's invitation, then a whole host of future scenarios melt away into nothingness. I'm reminded of Dallas Willard's observation that while saying "yes" to following Jesus (i.e., pursuing discipleship) brings many costs, so does saying "no." Willard observes that, "Non-discipleship costs abiding peace, a life penetrated throughout by love, faith that sees everything in the light of God's overriding governance for good, hopefulness that stands firm in the most discouraging of circumstances, power to do what is right and withstand the forces of evil. In short, it costs exactly that abundance of life Jesus said he came to bring (John 10:10)."

May we remember that each choice we make involves a form of hard, and may we seek to find that abundant life Jesus promises.

What's Happening At Conejo

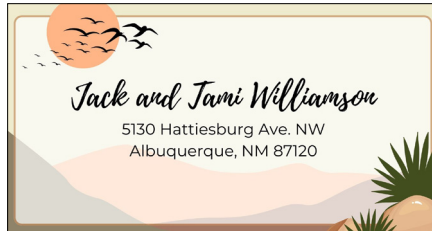
Welcome to the World!



Brandon and Flora Starkey welcomed Mila Luisa Starkey into their family on Tuesday, December 12. She weighed 6 pounds, 12 ounces and was 20.5 inches long. Our prayer is that Mila will grow in wisdom, stature, and in love and devotion to God and to God's beautiful creation.

Changes of Address

It's never fun to say good-bye to those we love, but sometimes we must. Please update your files for the Norris family and the Williamson family and pray for them as they set out on new adventures in the new year.



Advent Sermon Series: "Tell It Slant"

During the third week of Advent, we're turning our attention to Mary's story in Luke 1. Mary barely registers in Matthew and Mark's gospels. But Luke's gospel presents Mary as a model for Christian discipleship: one who hears God's call, overcomes her fears, and responds with faithful trust. Gabriel's initial greeting to Mary, "Do not be afraid," suggests that what Mary is being called to do will require courage and fortitude. Mary's response to the angel Gabriel, "Let it be with me according to your word," anticipates Jesus' faithful prayer in the garden, "Not my will but yours be done." Mary combines humble trust and obedient service in Luke's gospel.

Advent Auditorium Class - Your Kingdom Come

Christians traditionally celebrate Advent as a time of hopeful expectation for the birth of Christ the king. There have also been other times and places where God's people waited anxiously for God's reign to be manifested in their lives, often in times of distress. In our Bible class series "Your Kingdom Come," we'll check in with God's people at various key historical moments, as they watched for signs of God's kingdom to come. Subject to change, we anticipate five classes in this series.

12/17/23: Anticipating God's Kingdom under Greek Rule

12/24/23: Anticipating God's Kingdom under Roman Rule

12/31/23: Jesus's Vision of God's Kingdom

Welcome to Conejo!

We're delighted to welcome Joel, Tiffany, Josiah (Joey), and Alexey Ornelas to Conejo. We pray that each of you may be encouraged and nurtured in your journey of following and growing in Jesus Christ.

388 Sapphire Dragon Street
Thousand Oaks, CA 91320

Joel's contact information:
(805) 216-7424
caesarjoel@gmail.com

Tiffany's contact information:
(310) 570-8400
tiffany.a.ornelas@gmail.com

All-Church Christmas Party / Today at 5pm

The congregation is invited to a very special Conejo holiday gathering this evening beginning at 5pm at the home of Rick and Paula Marris which is at 11234 Crenshaw Street in Moorpark. We hope that you can 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. Let's make this one of our multi-generational thick community events!



Carols and Candlelight

Last week's Carols and Candlelight service was a beautiful celebration of the coming of Jesus into our world. Thank you to all of our sweet candlelighters, the magnificent praise team, our thoughtful readers, and to our many faithful members who brought cookies and helped with set up and clean up.



High School + Middle School

Youth Group Bible Class and Activities / Today



On Sunday mornings in December we are doing a series called "Halo" centering on the birth of Jesus. Please help our students participate, learn, grow, and encourage one another by taking part in our weekly times together. The combined group (middle and high school) gathers at 9am each Sunday with tasty treats at the beginning of each class. December youth group memory verse: *"He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth."* Luke 1:14

There are no other additional Sunday afternoon / evening meetings for our teens during the month of December due to all-church parties, Christmas events, and the holiday break. Our next youth group dinner and devo will be Sunday night, January 7 from 5:30-7pm.

YG Calendar

Teens, there are many opportunities for us to share life, build deeper friendships, and grow in our faith. Please [click here](#) to see the calendar of events for the coming weeks.

Service Project: Caroling, Cards, & Cookies / Today

Today, at 2pm, the youth group will meet to carol to a few of our own Conejo members and then go to the all-church Christmas party at the Marrs. We will bless a few of our members with carols, homemade Christmas cards, cookies, and soft chocolates. Help us make this a special day for them!

Dave & Busters New Friends Night / January 12

This night is focused on celebrating, welcoming, and getting to know some new faces at Conejo. We seek to be a thick intergenerational community of faith and these gatherings give us an opportunity for special fellowship and fun together. Dinner & game cards provided for each family that attends. More details coming soon.

2023 Youth Group Christmas Party



Children's Ministry

Children's Class Offerings

Bible Classes This Week

Nursery - Noel T.
2s/3s/4s - Leslie S. and Sarah G.
Elementary - Paula M. and Lynn B.

Worship Classes are available for children during the sermon.

Nursery - Katie C.
2s/3s/4s - Kari O. and Sarah G.
Elementary - Haylie D.



Jesus' Birthday Party

Thank you to everyone who joined us for Jesus' Birthday Party! We had such a blast on the bounce house, making nativity sets and ornaments, and reading stories. Thank you to everyone who brought a gift for Raising Hope and to the many that helped prepare, set up, and clean up!



Memory Verse

"The Word became a human being.
He made his home with us.
We have seen his glory.
It is the glory of the one and only Son."
John 1:14

Prayer Corner

Devote yourself to prayer being watchful and thankful. Colossians

PRAISES

PREGNANCIES: **Jodi Davis** (February); **Eliza Erickson** (March); **Cassie Horton** (March); **Chloe Sutherland** (April)

ENGAGEMENT: **Matt Williams** and **Lyrice Blankfein** are engaged to be married!

BIRTHS: **Mila Luisa Starkey** (great granddaughter of Marilyn Aurand) was born to Brandon and Flora Starkey on December 12

Nolan Reynolds (grandson of TJ and Suzanne) was born to Scott and Claire Reynolds

Josephine "Josie" Marie West was born to **Rob and Alyssa West** on November 14

THOSE GRIEVING

Rockey and Roby Families – loss of Jerry Roby, father of Brett Roby; grandfather of Bonnie Rocky

Rodney and Brian Smithers – loss of nephew / cousin, Jason Knight

Pepperdine Community and families – of Deslyn, Asha, Niamh, and Payton following their tragic deaths

Kay Falletta – loss of brother-in-law, Bill McQuillan

Tim Willis – loss of father, John Willis

Loree Hunnicutt – loss of mother, Judy Long

Andrew Clark – loss of mother, Kerrie Clark

Friends and family of **Barbara Schlosser** (former member)

Susie Lindley – loss of husband,

Jim Lindley

Dena, Elissa, Luke McAllister – loss of husband and father, Ted

Rene Heard – loss of mother, Joan Nicholas

Jacob, Ella, Kate, Tess Michael – loss of wife and mother, Joella

Mark and Suzanne Scarberry – loss of daughter, Caitlin Scarberry

FIGHTING CANCER

David Green – fighting two types of cancer cell lines; recovering from recent surgery

Joe Watts (friend of Rene Heard) – cancer in leg, spine, and lungs

Dede Koldyke (cousin of Steve Scott) – her cancer has returned

Cindy Hall (cousin of Matt Joyner) – stage IV metastasized breast cancer

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

Kurt Krebs (friend of Ed Sanders) – multiple myeloma

Justice Howard (cousin of Yashica Budde) – thyroid cancer

VARIOUS CONCERNS

Julie Waters – recovering from recent surgery to remove kidney stones

Griffin McAfee – (grandson of Maxi McAfee, brother of Freya) – recovering from recent kidney surgery; prayers for speedy and uncomplicated recovery

Amy and Kevin Stalbaum (niece and nephew of Kay Falletta) – serious injuries from hit-and-run

bicycle accident

Peace and safety for all in Israel and the Middle East

Marty Lince (brother of Suzanne Scarberry) – congestive heart failure; in constant, severe pain

Marilyn Aurand – nodules in lungs are noncancerous; additional tests in 4 months

Carol McNutt – recovery from knee replacement surgery

Susan Kenny (sister of Kimberly Thomson) – fighting babesiosis

Reilly Phillips (son of Phil and Heather Phillips) – type I diabetes

Jack Horn (coworker of Robert Charles) – lineman seriously injured by high voltage wire; pray for healing and hope as he recovers at home

Joe Reynolds (father of Brittany Joyner) – heart failure

Calvin Hill (friend of Haylie Douglas) – severely burned, many complications

Andy Long (father of Loree Hunnicutt) – as he grieves the loss of his wife, Judy

Carina Grant (granddaughter of Mark and Suzanne Scarberry) – Carina's cast was removed; prayers that her hip bone will stay in the socket

Healing, peace, and justice in our nation and communities

Barb Suhr (friend of Char Hurley) – dealing with memory loss issues

Sonia Smithers – safety for friends and family in Ukraine

Martha Condley (daughter of

Janie Condley) – lupus

Mary Zollman (friend of Lisa Scott) – multiple sclerosis

Harriet Nutter (mother of Daphne Green) – depression

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

Carol McNutt – neuropathy

MISSION EFFORTS

Raul and Betty Alvarado – mission efforts in Panama

Baja Missions – Baja California, Mexico

Julie Broyles – Bible English Study Center (BEST) in Cambodia

City of Children – Ensenada, Mexico

Made in the Streets – Nairobi, Kenya

Medical Clinic Mission Support – Ghana

Daniel and Karly Napier – Thessaloniki, Greece

Megan Randolph – Associate Director of Teacher Services, TeachBeyond

David and Danna Willis and family (brother of Tim Willis) – mission work in Samoa

MILITARY SERVICE

Javon Johnson – six-month deployment to Okinawa

Michael Warford – stationed in Spain with the Navy

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

Attendance
+ Giving

December 10 Attendance		December 10 Giving	
On-Site Service	124	Weekly Giving Average	\$12,623
Online Viewing	61	Weekly Giving Budget	\$14,406
		Be the Blessing Giving (To Date)	\$1,658,805
		Property Settlement	\$225,000

CONEJO VALLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

(805) 371-1381 Office | (805) 371-1384 Fax

www.conejochurch.org

Haylie Douglas

Children's Minister
(979) 676-1529 cell
haylie.douglas@conejochurch.org

Rene Heard

Worship & Media Manager
(818) 665-8598 cell
rene.heard@conejochurch.org

Travis Moore

Youth & Family Minister
(520) 591-8246 cell
travis.moore926@gmail.com

CHURCH

2525 E. Hillcrest Drive
Thousand Oaks, CA 91362



Andy Wall

Preaching Minister
(805) 331-0187 cell
andy.wall@conejochurch.org

Elders: Michael Ditmore, Bill Foster, Chris Heard, David Rhoades, Mike Rivas, Chris Stivers, Tim Willis – elders@conejochurch.org