CONEJO VALLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

BE the BLESSING

September 6, 2026

Welcome!

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

Today

9:00am	Fall KickOff Breakfast Potluck
10:00am	Virtual Meet-and-Greet via YouTube Chat
10:15am	On-Site and Virtual Worship Service via YouTube
5:00	All-Church Game Night

Upcoming Events

Sept 9	Flourishing Families
Sept 9	Reynolds' Life Group
Sept 12	Men's Golf Outing
Sept 13	Town Hall Meeting
Sept 20	Infant Dedication Service
Sept 26	Hiking Ministry
Sept 27	CM Harvest Festival Planning Meeting
Oct 2-4	HS Pismo Retreat
Oct 4	Health Ministry Event
Oct 11	Mexico Mission Fundraiser
Oct 15-19	Yosemite Men's Trip
Oct 16	Women's Dinner
Oct 24	Harvest Festival

Upcoming Birthdays

Yvonne Darby	8/31
Susu Pratt	8/31
David Rhoades	8/31
Arlene Leedy	9/1
Ella Michael	9/1
Kipp Landis	9/2
Freya McAfee	9/2
Harriet Overton	9/8
Everly VanAtta	9/9

Picture This!

Andy Wall

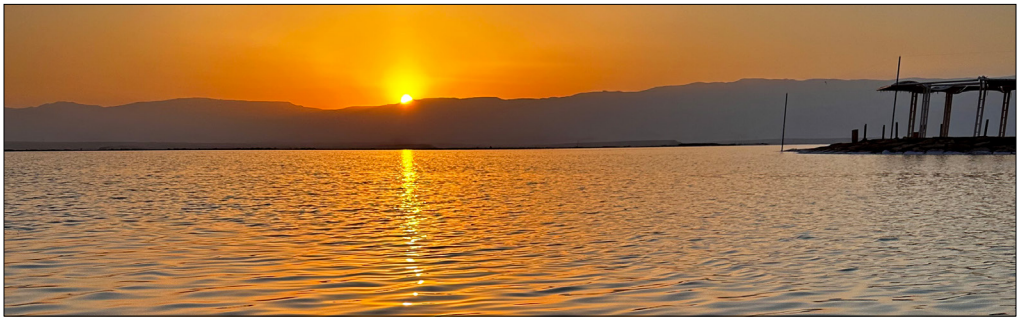
An old saying goes, "A picture is worth a thousand words." To take that a step further, I sometimes think, "Yes, and… a story is worth a thousand pictures." A good story opens our eyes and enables us to see realities and envision possibilities to which we were previously blind. So it is with the parables of Jesus, which paint a rich array of pictures envisioning what life in the kingdom of God is like. How we understand Jesus' parables can decisively shape how we understand living under God's reign.

I have long appreciated C.H. Dodd's definition of a parable: "A parable is a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought." Building on this, a preacher friend once compared parables with peanut butter that gets stuck on the roof of your mouth, that you have to keep mulling over and chewing on in order to fully digest. The idea here is that those who hear the parables are not just passive listeners but must actively think, reflect, and tease out the parable's full meaning.

Based upon the disciples' responses to Jesus' parables, we can see that their meaning wasn't always clear (Mark 4:10,13). Which brings us back to the notion that "a story is worth a thousand pictures." While it's fair to say that some parables make one primary point, it's also true that Jesus' parables contain a surplus of meaning, and like a diamond held up to the light, refract a rich variety of colors and hues. Further, the gospel writers tend to gather and emphasize specific parable themes. Tom Long observes that Matthew's parables tend to emphasize wisdom and righteousness while Luke's parables emphasize joy, hospitality, and justice.

So why did Jesus teach in parables? Why not just lay it out in point-by-point Aristotelian logic? For starters, Jesus was a Jewish Rabbi, not a Greek orator. Jesus was also an excellent teacher who understood the power of stories over syllogisms. The effectiveness of a story to evoke, envision, and innervate far exceeds that of other forms of persuasion. I think Jesus also understood that to connect deeply with his audiences, he had to engage with their imagination and curiosity. The story form of parables was a most potent vehicle for Jesus to communicate the possibilities of a world in which "we can be on hand for the kingdom, which is at hand but not in hand," in Christopher Morse's memorable phrase.

This fall, our sermon series is on the parables of Jesus and is titled "Kingdom Stories: Portraits of God's Present Future." Together we'll explore how seeds and coins, sheep and weeds, pearls and wineskins, all can open up our understanding of God's kingdom reign as it unfolds in the present, in promise of its full revelation in the future.



What's Happening At Conejo

Fall Kickoff Sunday / Today!

Welcome to our 2026 Fall Kickoff Sunday! Enjoy the backyard potluck breakfast and fellowship time during our Bible class hour. Engage in worship with us at 10:15 as we are led by the praise team. Learn of ways to engage more through the variety of ministries, classes, and small groups which our ministry team will highlight. We're so glad that you are present and ready to journey with us as we seek to follow God.

Sermon Series: "The Parables of Jesus"

This fall, we'll be exploring a cross-section of the parables of Jesus, which are some of his richest, most memorable teachings. Our understanding of Jesus' parables is critical because how we understand them is critical to how we understand the Kingdom of God, which was at the heart of Jesus' teaching. Our first stop will be Jesus' parable concerning the four types of soil, which in one sense is a parable about how we hear parables. At the heart of this foundational parable is the summons to listen, with Jesus inviting his readers to reflect upon what kind of hearers they are.

Auditorium Class: "Back to the (not so) Basics"

"What are the 'first things' of Christian belief and practice? Or, what self-understandings and behaviors give our faith its unique contours and ways of being in the world? This fall, our auditorium class will reflect on these questions in a series titled, "Back to the (not so) Basics." The class title hints at the simultaneous simplicity and complexity of our shared faith. Through class discussion, group dialogues, and communal reflection, we hope to deepen our understanding of the foundations of Christian belief and practice—to have what the theologian Anselm once called "faith seeking understanding." Join us as we explore topics like the Bible and inspiration, God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the nature and mission of the Church, sin and atonement, the Christian life, worship and prayer, baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the last judgment and afterlife. This series will start on Sunday, September 13.

Endeavor Together: A Good Life

What does it mean to live a good life? Are you living one? Join us to explore these questions in a Sunday morning discussion-oriented class centered on what it truly means to live well. Using podcasts (assigned between sessions) and supplementary materials, participants will engage in meaningful conversations each week. We'll be listening to *No Small Endeavor*, a podcast with a wide variety of guests from a range of fields and perspectives. Lee Camp, who recently concluded three decades of service as a professor of theology and ethics at Lipscomb University, hosts the podcast.

Not sure? You're welcome to come to the introductory session on Sunday, September 20, at 9am in the overflow room nearest the front entrance. You may also talk with facilitators Ty De Long and Connie Horton to see if this is for you.

Young Professionals Class

If you're in the post-college years of young adulthood and seeking to grow in your faith while building community with your peers, you're invited to come take part in our Young Professionals group. The class will start on Sunday, September 13, at 9am, in the overflow classroom nearest the coffee and donuts. Mike and Darlene Rivas will be leading this class and during the first week, the discussion will center around what themes the group would like to explore together.

Game Night / 5pm

This evening at 5, we will meet at the building for an evening of fun and games for all ages. Bring your favorite card games, board games, and snacks to share. Since the following Monday is Labor Day, it will be a great opportunity to have extra time with friends at church. Come and bring friends!

Elder Selection Process

Last week, we announced the names of 4 elder nominees (Kindy De Long, Rick Furino, Connie Horton, and Paula Marrs) and 3 current elders (Bill Foster, Chris Heard, and Davi Rhoades) who are available to continue serving. Please pray for each of these people and their families as they discern God's call on their lives concerning the possibility of serving as elder for the Conejo Church. Also, please mark your calendars for Sunday, September 13 at 6pm, for a Town Hall congregational discussion with all of our elder nominees and returning elders.

Fall Small Groups

Our small group program is launching over the next several weeks. 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 ***Fall 2026 Small Groups*** for a detailed listing.

Weekly

Sunday Bible Classes	Sundays 9am
Endeavor Together	Sundays 9am
Devos in the Park	Sundays, 5:30pm
Guys' Group	Mondays, 6:30pm
Women's Bible Study	Mondays, 7pm
Flourishing Families	Wednesdays, 6:15pm
Reynolds' Life Group	Wednesdays, 6:45pm
Conejo Tutoring	Thursdays, 6:15pm
Fosters' Life Group	Thursdays, 7pm
Guys' Golf Group	Saturdays, early mornings
CVYM Event Calendar	Support teens at their events

Monthly, Quarterly, and TBD

Health & Care Ministry	Monthly Classes & Seminars
Fifth Commandment	4th Tuesday monthly, 7pm
CVWM Dinner	Quarterly Fridays, 6pm (begins 10/16)
Hiking Ministry	TBD Saturdays (begins 9/26)
Crafty Women	Monthly Saturdays or Sundays

Middle School and High School

Youth Ministry Bible Classes

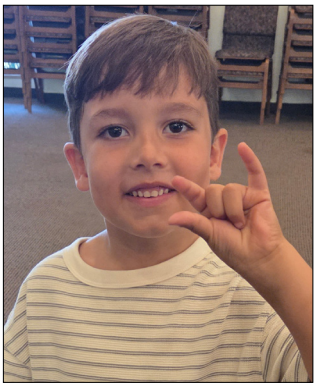
The youth group is going through a series on Luke-Acts to get a big-picture view of Jesus' life, work, and ministry – and what it looks like for the church to carry on his mission in the world today. As we read through the stories aloud and dive into individual sections in groups, we are noticing key emphases and connections that Luke is drawing out for his readers/listeners. This week, we commune in the backyard to celebrate the Fall Kickoff! We will continue with our study series next Sunday, 9/13.

Youth Ministry Sunday Evening Devos

All youth group teens are invited to join the church-wide game night this Sunday evening at 5pm at the church building! We'll have snacks and board games galore! Come and enjoy a wide selection of gaming opportunities or bring your own to share!

CVYM Extracurricular Events Calendar

Be a part of the supportive community for our teens as they participate in a multitude of extracurricular activities this fall: volleyball, choir, football, band, soccer, theatre, dance, water polo, and more. Access the schedule through this Google calendar to learn of the dates, times, and locations for our teens' upcoming events.



Pismo Beach High School Retreat

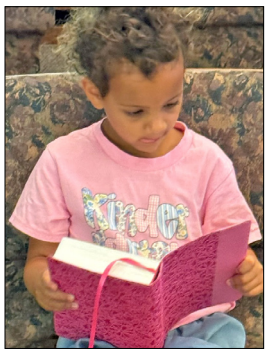
Plans are being finalized for the high school retreat at Pismo Beach over the first weekend in October. If you plan to attend or are interested, ***RSVP by September 6! That is this Sunday!*** Please use the QR code to the right to register:

Upcoming CVYM Events

TONIGHT!	Church-wide Game Night @ 5pm, CVCC
Sept 13	Devo at the Park @ 5:30-7pm, Paige Lane Neighborhood Park
Oct 2-4	Pismo Beach High School Retreat

Children's Ministry

What Our Kids Are Learning



During our ***Bible Classes***, our **Little Lights** and our **Kingdom Kids** will begin a series on September 13, called, "Problems and Promises." God fulfills His promises by making a way through any obstacle. In this series, kids will explore how God helped Israel conquer the Promised Land through the miraculous victories of the Jericho spies, the falling walls, and the sun standing still.

In ***Children's Worship***, our **Little Lights** will begin a series called, "We Go Together." As a child, one of the best and easiest ways to shine your light for Jesus is to be a good friend. The friendships in the Bible display friendships that protect, mentor, and are honest with each other. Most importantly, we can learn what a friendship with Jesus is all about. Our **Kingdom Kids** begin a series entitled,"Donuts and Disciples: The Sweet Life of Following Jesus." This series uses kids' favorite sweet breakfast treats to look at what the Bible says about becoming and growing as a disciple of Jesus.

Memory Verse

He will keep his covenant forever.
He will keep his promise for all time to come.
1 Chronicles 16:15

CVCM Teachers

Thank you to our amazing volunteers. Please consider serving this fall in the Children's Ministry as a teacher or helper for our nursery, preschool, or elementary classes. Contact Char Hurley.

Parent Meetings: Mark Your Calendar

Join us for one of two parent meetings to connect with Char and hear what's happening in our Children's Ministry. Come ready to share your ideas, questions, and hopes for our kids' faith journeys. Please pick the time that works best for you.

- **Oct 4**, 9:15 am
- **Oct 11**, after church 11:45-ish

Prayer Corner

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

PRAISES

Pregnancy: Kelly Collins (Jan.), Taylor Duenes

Birth: Madison Grace O'Rear, daughter of Reilly and Alicia (Williamson) O'Rear

New Members: Gabriel Levai; Jerry Mehler; Alex Wall, Cassidy Woodward, Richard and Jess Wall-Smith, Paul and Maya Nutley, Jeffrey Ignarro

Baptisms: Ella Rockey, Jeffrey Ignarro, Rylan Downey, Genevieve Gaffga, Hayven Gaffga, Paxton Van Atta

THOSE GRIEVING

Joe Cocke – loss of brothers, Paul T. Cocke and Larry Cocke

Christian Socquet – loss of mother, Elizabeth Cowan

Ed Sanders – loss of mother, Barbara Sanders

The Beck Family in Simi Valley (friends of Rylan Downey) – loss when 13-year-old Reis Beck was killed in an e-bike accident

Bill Foster – loss of mother, Sonja Foster

Kym Churchman (friend of Rene Heard) – loss of son, Ayden Churchman

Family and Friends of Steve Rouse

Lynn Burke – loss of cousin, Steve Foster

Will Gaffga – loss of father, Davis Gaffga

Dwayne Hunnicutt – loss of brother, Kevin Hunnicutt

FIGHTING CANCER

Harriet Overton – undergoing treatment for leukemia; complication with blood clot forming in central artery near heart

Bruce McAfee (husband of Maxi McAfee) – pet scan indicated cancer is gone; dealing with blood clots and other side effects from cancer treatment

Marti Lewis (sister-in-law of Maureen Thomas) – recently diagnosed with cancer

Marilyn Aurand – additional cancer in the right lung; physically and mentally battle-weary

Rick Marrs – prostate cancer

Kiki White (sister-in-law of Jim and Penny White) – contained uterine cancer; rheumatoid arthritis

Tony Demuth (brother-in-law of Joe Cocke) –renal cell carcinoma

Cheryl Argano – breast cancer

Maria Baake – breast cancer

David Green – biomarker tests every other month yielding positive results

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

Kurt Krebs (friend of Ed Sanders) – multiple myeloma

VARIOUS CONCERNS

Sue Ann Meador – hospitalized after recent medical crisis

Burnard Pearce (father of Jonathan Pearce) – recovering after recent hospitalization

Luz Rivera (cousin of Joel Ornelas) – recently diagnosed with breast cancer; age 39, mother of 2 children

Marti Lewis (sister-in-law of Maureen Thomas) – recently diagnosed with cancer; receiving nutrition and hydration from IVs daily

James Rhoades (father of David Rhoades) – recovering from broken femur and cracked rib

Peggy Allin (mother of Julie Waters) – hospitalized with infection; dealing with confusion and fear from dementia while in an unfamiliar place

Nina Rowland (friend of Shannon Latson) - dealing with numerous medical problems and uncertainty

Louisa (Lulu) Steinwedell (friend of Lisa Scott) – a young girl (like family to Steve and Lisa) who is having brain surgery for the removal of a tumor

Peggy Carter (grandmother of Christina Eng) – some limitations due to atrial fibrillation and congestive heart failure

Carol Overton (mother of Daniel Overton) – recovering at home from effects of a brain infection

Steve Simpson (brother of Lorna T., Stephanie S. and Claudia dB.) – rare and aggressive autoimmune disease, ANCA-Associated Vasculitis

Joe Reynolds (father of Brittany Joyner) – heart failure

Martha Condley (daughter of Janie Condley) – lupus

Harriet Nutter (mother of Daphne Green) – depression

Mary Zollman (friend of Lisa Scott) – multiple sclerosis

Peace and safety for all war-torn areas around the world

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

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

Medical Clinic Mission Support – Ghana

Daniel and Karly Napier – Thessaloniki, Greece

Megan Randolph Lewis– Associate Director of Teacher Services, TeachBeyond

REMADE (formerly Made in the Streets) – Nairobi, Kenya

Brendin Williamson – Trekko Church, Tucson, Arizona

MILITARY SERVICE

Michael Warford – stationed in Spain with the Navy

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

Javon Johnson – serving in WA as a Navy chaplain

Attendance + Giving

August 30 Attendance		August 30 Giving	$13,355
On-Site Service	153	Weekly Giving Average	$12,426
Online Viewing	46	Weekly Giving Budget	$13,590
		BtB Giving (Funds Remaining)	$1,803,015

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