

THE COLLECTIVE

Christ The King Anacortes
Quarterly Issue No. 4
April - June 2025



Worship
Community
Story

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Information about upcoming events can be found on the back cover!

Whether this is your first time reading our publication or you've been attending CTK for years, there's something for everyone within these pages.

But if you are new, here's a little bit of context to our church:

Christ The King is a community of disciples seeking to love Jesus, become like Him, and do what He did. Together on Sunday mornings and in small community groups throughout the week, we set the table where individuals can encounter Jesus. In everything, we desire to glorify God as we seek to be Entirely His, being formed by His Spirit into people of love for the sake of others. Everyone is welcome to the table.

Welcome!

If this sounds interesting to you, we encourage you to keep reading! The stories, thoughts, and information within these pages will give you greater context to our beliefs.

If you'd like to inquire more about our church, we encourage you to visit us online at www.ctkanacortes.com or visit us in person on Sunday.

Where: 916 8th St
Anacortes, WA
When: Sundays
9 & 10:45 AM

Editor's Commentary

On a wall in our home, Jonell and I have 1 Thes. 2:8 framed, Hobby Lobby style. It's the closest thing I have to a "life verse": a Scripture to center my life and relationships around. In the NIV, the verse reads, "Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well." Or, as Eugene Peterson renders it in the Message, "We loved you dearly. Not content to just pass on the Message, we wanted to give you our hearts. And we did." We've been at home here at Christ the King for just a few months, but already we've shared a lot of life together. I'm grateful for each moment, and I am so pleased to be a part of this community! But regardless, it's still been a big change.

Change is a fact of life, and it's a fact of our church life as well. It is often uncomfortable, but it is also one of the clearest signs of life and growth. Embracing change allows us to be sensitive to the Spirit's movement and to the needs of the world around us. The early church modeled this kind of Spirit-led flexibility—responding to new challenges, new people, and new callings with faith and courage. If we desire to be faithful stewards of the Gospel in our own time, we must be willing to move with God as He shapes us into the community He desires us to become.

CTK Anacortes has been undergoing some significant changes over the last few months; changes that we expect will posture us for long-term health in our community. Most prominently, we have created space for Pastor Ben to take a well-earned and much-needed

sabbatical and brought on board Joseph Carlson for the interim period. We welcomed Mark Kitzan and Jake Verschuyt to our Council. We have blessed Michelle Oakey as she has left our staff to begin her intensive nursing training program, but we haven't lost the vision she shared with us for a vibrant prayer and prophetic ministry within our body. We have welcomed back Kevin Foss as our youth pastor, and he has already begun to build on the solid foundation and model for youth ministry that has been laid. We have launched new community groups and new ministries such as our Circle Group for new moms, and ended others for the current season. We've made adjustments to virtually everything, seeking to bring alignment in every aspect to our vision of a church centered on a whole-life apprenticeship to Jesus; being Entirely His.

But change doesn't mean abandoning who we are—it means leaning more fully into who we are becoming like Christ. These shifts give us fresh opportunities to discover and use our gifts, to listen deeply to one another, and to trust God with the unknown. Our identity remains rooted in Him, but our expression of that identity must remain responsive and alive. When we say "yes" to change, we say "yes" to staying vibrant, relevant, and engaged in the work God has for us today. I'm excited for the season ahead! I'm particularly excited for you to get to know Pastor Joseph - both in his writings here and as he joins our community. God is on the move, and the following pages tell some of that story.

- Rick Thompson

Jennie Was A Weird Kid

It may not surprise anyone to hear that I was a weird kid. I thought Captain Kangaroo lived in my bedroom wall (largely because of my Captain Kangaroo LP that I played on my little red record player), I thought Hell was under my carpet (I have no explanation for that one but I was afraid when it came time to replace the carpet), and I loved hanging out with the Holy Spirit.



Now that last one, the one about the Holy Spirit was absolutely true. Even now I like spending time with the Holy Spirit, but it's just different. When I was a very little child, I could somehow tune into my own spirit and then sense THE Spirit, the actual Holy Spirit, and just hang out. It seemed normal to me as a kid, if not a little strange when I think back on the experience, but that is exactly what it was; I was experiencing the presence of God's Spirit. There came to be a time when I could no longer have this experience. Perhaps I grew up. Maybe I became jaded by a more buttoned-up, boxed-in "faith" that eschewed the wild side of spirituality.

I believe now that this is what is meant by "childlike" faith. It seems to me that children inherently embrace the wild side of faith. I also think that there is something to the innocent belief of children that can lead to a rich and genuine experience. In fact, Jesus says in Matthew 18, while the disciples were arguing about who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven and whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me."



Traditional commentary on that passage speaks to children being trusting, and therefore we must also have “childlike” trust in God, but I think there is much more to it than this reductionist point of view. I think it is not only telling us that children can be deeply spiritual, but that they can also experience the Holy Spirit and respond to Him as well. My own experience shores up this notion. I was a deeply spiritual child, I experienced God’s Spirit in those quiet nighttime hangouts and I responded to Him by loving, thanking, worshipping and yes trusting Him.

What are some other characteristics of children that can lead us to experience God? How about a wild and wonderful imagination? Or wonder and awe? When was the last time you looked at bugs or plants or a nighttime sky with a kid? There is also a fresh openness to a child’s thinking and a humility in asking questions – so many questions – yet no presupposition that they have all the answers. Or creativity!

I love seeing art where kids are given the same materials and instructions and yet each project looks completely different from the next because of the child’s unique interpretation and expression of the project.

So, what do we have to learn from my weirdness? A few things I’d say. If you have kids or grandkids, affirm their spiritual nature and give them space to wonder and imagine and ask questions and BE the spiritual beings they were created to be. And I for the adults in the room, “change to become like little children.” Embrace wonder and imagination and creativity and trust and faith and belief. Experience and respond to the Holy Spirit and enter the “right now and not yet” kingdom of God.

- Jennie Kind



CALLING ALL KIDS!
JOIN US FOR

THE CTK BLOCK PARTY!

Join us for Thursday July 17th
from 11AM - 2PM for games, hot
dogs, cotton candy, and sno-cones.

AND DON'T FORGET TO
SIGN UP FOR

SUMMER FUN DAYS!

July 29th through 31st
from 9AM - 12PM at Wisteria Gardens
Sign up at ctkanacortes.com!



Where's My Cupcake?

In the weeks following the announcement of my sabbatical, a common thread emerged in people's responses—a deep longing that the news seemed to stir. This longing reminded me of something that happened at a family Christmas gathering years ago. All of my siblings and their children were gathered in my parents' home in Missouri. After dinner, someone opened a gift containing an assortment of mini gourmet cheesecakes. They were quickly passed around. In the silence of everyone eating, a little voice humbly spoke up and asked, "Where's my cupcake?"

My three-year-old nephew had quietly watched everyone enjoying their fancy desserts, and of course, he longed to partake. My sister quickly whipped something up for him that satisfied his desire, but the longing in his face—and that simple question—has stuck with me for years. In fact, it's become a bit of a catchphrase in our house. Whenever we hand out desserts, regardless of what it is, it's common to hear someone say in jest, "Where's my cupcake?"

That phrase captures the longing that surfaced for many as I announced my need for a prolonged rest. I saw it in faces and heard it in words: "What about my sabbatical?" Of course, a ministry sabbatical is unique, implemented for reasons specific to the nuances and pressures of vocational ministry. But I didn't hear people asking for a sabbatical in the same way I'm taking one. I heard something common in all of us—a longing for a break, for real rest.



The middle-aged man faithfully churning away at his career for decades.

The mom of young kids working around the clock.

The newly retired couple who are somehow filling their days with doing.

The daughter caring for her aging parents.

The student feeling stuck in a constant cycle of performance.

The individual whose schedule is free, yet their mind is flooded with intrusive and anxious thoughts.

They hear of a pastor taking a sabbatical and think, "What about me?" But what they're saying is, "I'm exhausted, and I long for real rest." What they're asking is, "Is that rest on offer for me too?"

Is that your question? Scripture reveals that the answer is yes.

In the Old Testament, the Sabbath was a day of rest—a sign of God's covenant with His people and a reminder that rest comes through trusting Him, rather than by any works of our own. In the New Testament, Jesus fulfills the meaning of the Sabbath. He invites all who are weary to come to Him for rest (Matthew 11:28–30), offering peace with God through His finished work on the cross. Hebrews 4 explains that true Sabbath rest is no longer just a day, but a person—Jesus—who provides rest from striving, guilt, and self-justification. In Him, we find deep soul-rest, now and eternally.

Jesus is our salvation. Jesus is our rest. The two are integrally linked. As we've discussed over the past couple of years, salvation/rest isn't just a future gift—it's a present reality for those who follow Jesus. We've been conditioned to admire this gift from afar. We know Jesus fulfilled the law and therefore think there's no longer a need for a formal day of Sabbath. But many of us have no real experience with Sabbath rest. We work. We strive. We fill our days and our minds until we're on the brink of burnout. All the while, Jesus is gently calling us: "Stop."

In the throes of life and ministry, Jesus paused. He rested. He withdrew—and returned renewed, ready to pour out again. If He rested, so can you. Stop striving. Be still. Taking a day to be with Jesus isn't a return to legalistic obligation—it's an intentional move to transform information about Jesus as our rest into lived experience through practice.

The sweet cupcake offered to the weary, the burdened, and the burned-out is this: To enter Sabbath rest and taste a holy “enoughness” in the presence of Jesus—where striving ceases and His presence satisfies. Have you recognized where you’re tired? Are you honest about where your worth is attached to your work? Are you courageous enough to stop—for a full day or even a few hours—and trust that, even though the project is

unfinished, even though you might disappoint people, you are enough in your Heavenly Father’s eyes simply because you are His beloved?

If you desire to truly rest, then hear—and practice—Jesus’ invitation: “Abide in me... Come to me, and I will give you rest.”

- Ben Boatright





When Your Pastor Rests: A Word To The Congregation

Sabbatical is not a sign of weakness or burnout—it's a **sign of wisdom, health, and obedience.**

In Scripture, rest is a rhythm God built into creation itself. Even Jesus withdrew to quiet places to pray and be refreshed (Mark 1:35). When your pastor steps away for a time of sabbatical, it's not a retreat from responsibility—it's a return to soul alignment with God.

The Lord is my shepherd... he makes me lie down in green pastures.

Psalm 23: 1 – 2

Come away by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.

Mark 6:31

Here's What To Expect

The
Church
Is Not
Pausing

Ministry will continue, sermons will be preached, lives will be changed, and Jesus will still be Lord. The staff and leaders are prepared. Your church is in faithful hands. This is a chance for others to lead, serve, and grow. You may miss your pastor—and that's okay. Love them enough to pray for their rest, not demand their presence.

How
You
Can
Participate

Pray for your pastor's rest, clarity, and renewal. Stay engaged. Your presence and participation matter. This isn't a holding pattern. Trust God. The Good Shepherd is still leading this church. Sabbatical is a gift. For the pastor. For the team. For the whole body. Let's honor it together—with grace, joy, and expectation.

Sabbatical
Is A Gift.

For the pastor. For the team. For the whole body. Let's honor it together—with grace, joy, and expectation.

Sometimes the most spiritual
thing you can do is take a nap.

– Eugene Peterson

Can You Find John?

Our worship leader John Van Deusen is hidden somewhere in this painting of Jesus feeding the 5000. Can you find him? (Hint: He's wearing a hat). This is a creative reminder that John is our Artist in Residence, and as he travels around the world performing, we'd like to invite you to worship for him and his family.

Don't know what John looks like? Scan the QR code below to view the exact image of John hidden somewhere amongst this crowd.







A Reluctant Pastor

The details of my biography are unspectacular in many ways: the middle child of five, I grew up just down the road in Bothell. Participation in our home church was one of the most central aspects of my life up through high school. It was there, as a young child on the floor of the main sanctuary—after I threw a magnificent temper tantrum at the prospect of being put into my designated Sunday school class—that I had an experience I have come to believe has enduring significance for me.

There I was, happily scribbling away on a church bulletin on the floor under my parents' legs. The pastor was mid-sermon, rolling along in his warm, booming baritone, when all of a sudden something clicked. Dropping my crayons, I clambered up onto my Dad's lap, transfixed by what was unfolding as a thought entered my young mind and heart: "Someday, I am going to do what he is doing."

In many ways, I now believe that to be the first experience I had of Jesus inviting me with a call to ministry. But as a child, it was soon forgotten, sunk in the recesses of my memory. Nevertheless, my junior high and high school years were spent actively leading in our church's student worship ministry, and I went on to earn a BA in Theology and a minor in Oral Communication at Whitworth University.

College was a paradoxical time for me, as it is for many young adults. Previously unknown degrees of autonomy coupled with the cultural narrative of college being a time of liberation and experimentation created conditions where I was pulled in many different directions. I began to question my previous identity as an earnest try-hard church kid. Meanwhile, my exposure to rigorous study of the breadth and depth of the Christian tradition both thrilled me and led to a haughty cynicism about the expression I was raised in and church in general. Pastors' sermons were boring compared with professorial erudition.

Spring of my senior year, I sat in the office of Keith Bebee, my mentor and the chair of the Theology Department. "Keith, I feel so lost. Did I just spend four years earning a degree in Theology only to lose my faith?" A former pastor, Keith knew that this was a crucial moment. He fixed me with a kindly gaze and a warm smile and simply said to me, "Joseph, I have no fear that you are losing your faith. You're simply wrestling with expanding your definition and understanding of faith and spirituality. Trust Jesus. He will be with you through this process."

I graduated a few months later with a broken heart from a painful relationship and with no sense of what to do next. I

remember saying to myself, "I'm never going to Seminary. I'll never work for a church. I think I'm done with all of this Christianity stuff." The next several years I tried to push God to the periphery and do as I pleased. The dark fruit of that was all too predictable a story to repeat here.

At an all time-low, I drove back across the state to meet with my three primary theology professors and mentors to ask them what I should do with my life. Separately, and each in their own way, they said clearly: go to Fuller Theological Seminary and become a pastor.

What?! No! I swore I'd never do either of those things. And yet, I couldn't shake how strange it was that all of them had separately said the same thing.



A year later, I was driving all of my earthly possessions down the coast to Pasadena to begin a Masters of Divinity. I'd often heard the refrain from certain church circles, "Careful, seminary will be a cemetery for your faith." Conveniently for me, my faith had already spent a long season in the valley of the shadow of death and was now just beginning to show signs of life. Yes, I had made the decision to attend seminary, but I was still deeply wounded and obstinate. I remember telling more than a few bright-eyed classmates—who gushed about how excited they were to change the world for Jesus and dedicate their lives to ministry in one form or fashion—that I was not there to become a pastor but to discover if I could still be a Christian and if this God that I couldn't not believe in was really worth giving my full life to.

My time at Fuller was profoundly healing in many ways. I found answers to many of my questions. I met people of deep faith, who lived lives of purpose and meaning that offered a profound critique to the "culture war Christianity" of the 90's and early 2000's that I had grown so disenchanted by. My cynicism regarding the church was eroding. I got my first taste of pastoral ministry. As graduation approached I remember telling God, "I'm not sure I want to be a pastor yet, but I am willing to work at a church—just not a conservative evangelical mega-church. They are mainly what's wrong with American Christianity!"

By now you'd think I would have learned to never tell God, "I won't do x!" I believe that those moments and areas in life that provoke such a statement from us are often places where God is lovingly inviting us to trust. Since I had seen that pattern play out with both Whitworth and Fuller, when God opened a door to join the staff at North Coast Calvary Chapel

as their Director of Production & Communications, I hesitantly accepted.

For the last ten years, NCCC has been my spiritual home. It was there that God gently rebuked my self-righteous judgmentalism regarding the ever-present dysfunctions that plague every church congregation. Ensnared in a staff rich in wisdom, deep in love, and broad in their convictions and theological positions, I was schooled by the Spirit in the unique form of unity that Christ desires for his church: one where a common pursuit of Christ creates the conditions where we can hold differences with humility and charity, without division. During this time I met and married my wife, Kelly, who just finished almost eight years leading NCCC's Mission Impact ministry, shepherding our 40+ missions partners globally and locally.

The last three years have been a vocational roller-coaster. I left full-time staff at the church to serve as Editor-in-Chief for Nations Media, a Christian media company. Following that I spent a year and a half serving on staff for a ministry I had been volunteering in for five years: The Relationship Resource, founded by our Marriage & Family Pastor and his wife (a licensed therapist) to equip the local church to journey alongside people in their healing journey through trauma, addiction, and mental health crisis. It has been one of the greatest privileges of my life to get a front row seat to watch how profoundly Jesus' truth and love can free people from years of bondage and brokenness so they can begin to experience the fullness of life here and now that Jesus invites us into.

A week before our daughter Junia was born, I unexpectedly lost that job. A few months later, the ghost-writing book project that constituted the other half of my time and income also prematurely ended. The community of wise friends and elders in my life were unanimous that it was not by accident, but that God was getting my and Kelly's attention and was desiring to invite us into a new season of life and a new way of being as we became parents for the first time.

You can imagine the anxiety that this created for us both, and yet in hindsight I desperately needed the time away from work and the quiet rhythms of caring for a child to begin to slow down and listen deeply to God. During this season, God provided in incredible ways for our family financially, spiritually and emotionally. It was also during this past year that he drew from the well of memory that long forgotten experience of that Sunday in church, where I first heard his call to preach and pastor. I realized that one of the places where I experience the delight of my Father the most is in the whole process of wrestling with Scripture and developing a sermon for a community of people hungry to encounter the truth and beauty of God and to find their place in his story.

So, as Kelly, Junia and I step into serving CTK and the community of Anacortes during this season, we do so with excitement, wonder, and humility at the unique opportunity God has opened for me to take a step more fully into the calling he has been crafting for me personally and us as a family. What struck both Kelly and I the most about CTK was a profound sense of God's loving presence and Spirit already at work in powerful ways here. Something feels different here, and I firmly believe that we have only begun to glimpse the ways that God wants to move in our midst. There are more gifts he longs to give us. A clearer sense of identity. Deeper healing. Greater freedom. A more abundant life. A greater capacity to serve and suffer. A joy, a peace, and a purpose that invites those around us up and into the unfolding story of his Kingdom. We are thrilled to discover alongside you what God is bringing to life at CTK as we make space for the Spirit to move and as we strive together to "Be entirely His."

- Joseph Carlson



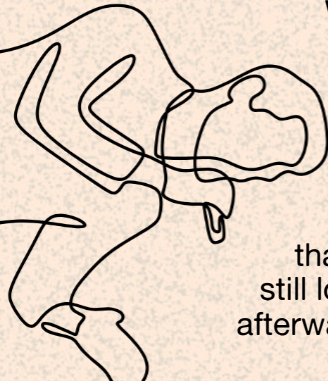
"Telling a story is like reaching into a granary full of wheat and drawing out a handful. There is always more to tell than can be told."

Wendell Berry,
Jayber Crow



Imperfectly Perfect

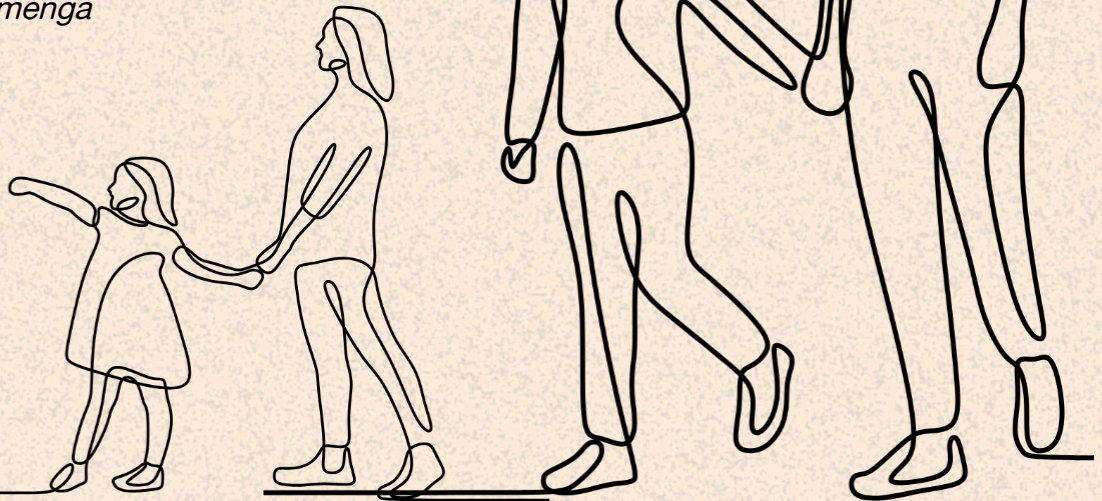
Do you have any baby brothers or sisters? Or maybe you know someone with one? If so, have you watched them walk or, to be precise - fall? Teeter, totter, BUMP. All babies have to learn to walk, just like you did when you were little. Sometimes, like babies, we have to learn to do the right thing even if it is hard. God loves us whether we choose to do good things or not, but he encourages us all to do the right thing.



We all make mistakes sometimes. I get into fights with my three brothers all the time, but God still loves me. He loves everyone, even though we're all imperfect and we all do bad things. That is not a reason to think that you can just go ahead and be bad though. God still wants us to try and be good, even though we can't be perfect. Take King David, for example: he tried hard to be good, but he did a lot of bad things. He once even had a man killed because he wanted that man's wife for his own! That was a very bad thing to do. But did God still love him? Yes, he did. King David even wrote an apology to God afterwards and asked for forgiveness. You can read it in Psalm 51!

Like babies, we can always learn new things. I'm learning to get along with my brothers better every day. If you need more examples, you can always read the Bible! Every character in the Bible (except Jesus) made some bad decisions, but they often learned from their mistakes. Learning from your own mistakes or the mistakes of others can help anyone make better decisions. Even when we stumble and fall along the way, God always loves us, so let's go ahead and be as imperfectly perfect as we can.

- Kate Remmenga
Age 10





Photos from
our 2025 Spring
Called to Make

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Frank Jeretzky

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Kelly Larkin

Council Member

Jake Verschuyt

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Council Member

Mark Kitzen

Council Member

Mike Pearia

Council Member

Kyle Rash

Council Member

We hope you enjoyed this issue of The Collective. We here at Christ the King love the opportunity to highlight how God is working in the lives of those we love, and we hope you do as well!

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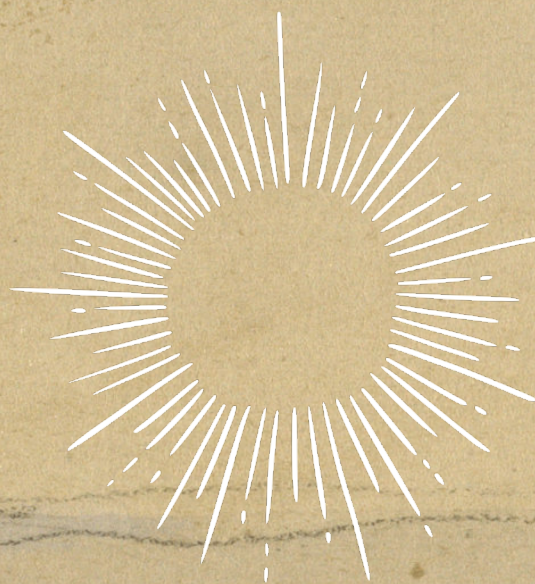
Rick Thompson
Jennie Kind
Ben Boatright
Joseph Carlson
Kate Remmenga
Jacob Hoxie

Thank You For Reading!

Do you or someone you know have a story you would like to share? Would you like to be highlighted in our next issue? Let us know! We would love to hear from you. Feel free to visit our website at www.ctkanacortes.com/connect to fill out a connection card or email jacob@ctkanacortes.com so that we can learn more about what you have to share.



If you haven't already, please subscribe to our mailing list via the QR code so that you automatically receive a digital copy of this publication when it's released each quarter. Our next issue will be published in July 2025.



Upcoming Events

August

Washington Park Service 3rd
10AM | Washington Park

Due to events occurring downtown, we will be hosting one service at Washington Park, followed by a community BBQ. Bring a chair and a side dish to share!

Worship Night 20th
6:30PM | CTK Building

An evening of intimate worship, fellowship, and prayerful practice. **Please note this date and time is specifically subject to change.**

Live Stream Service 24th
10AM | Remote Online

Due to events occurring downtown, we will not be hosting an in-person service this Sunday. However, we will be live-streaming a pre-recorded service at 10AM. You can access it anytime thereafter. We would encourage you to gather with others in your community group, friends, or family.

There's always something happening here at CTK, and we want you to be a part of it! If you have any questions or would like to RSVP for any of the events listed here, please visit www.ctkanacortes.com.

Please note all dates and times are subject to change.

July

17th CTK Block Party
11AM | CTK Building

Open to all kids. Come join us for games, hot dogs, cotton candy, and sno-cones. Stop by anytime between 11 and 2.

29th King's Kids
30th Summer Fun Days
31st 9AM | Wisteria Gardens

Calling all kids! Join us at Wisteria Gardens for a three-day extravaganza, complete with lots of great activities and plenty of fun

September

8th Leadership Gathering
5:30 PM | CTK Building

An evening of a meal, activities, and fellowship for all community group leaders or anyone interesting in starting a community group.

17th Worship Night
6:30PM | CTK Building

An evening of intimate worship, fellowship, and prayerful practice. **Please note this date and time is specifically subject to change.**

28th Fall Kickoff
10AM | Wisteria Gardens

Join us at Wisteria Gardens as we discuss the upcoming Church season over coffee and bagels. Please bring your own chair.