



THE HISTORY OF CAMARILLO COMMUNITY CHURCH

Camarillo Community Church (CamCC), located at 1322 Las Posas Road in Camarillo, California, traces its roots to a small group of believers in the early 1960s in what was then a growing but unincorporated area. The church, originally known as Camarillo Heights Baptist Church (CHBC), has evolved from humble home meetings into a vibrant, evangelical congregation focused on

biblical teaching, discipleship, community outreach, and global missions. Its history reflects resilience through challenges, volunteer-driven growth, and a commitment to making disciples.

Early Beginnings (1961–1960s)

The church’s story begins with a “chance” meeting in mid-1961 between Reverend Ned

Holmgren of the Southwest Baptist Conference and local resident Larry Mild. This led to the first prayer meeting on November 19, 1961, at the Mild home on Neish Street, attended by 16 people. Initial gatherings included preaching, Bible studies and prayer, led by Reverend Cornelius Leih. By late 1961, the group formalized as an independent Baptist church, adopting a constitution and

charter members (including the Leihs, Milds, Larsons, Kings, and others). They rented a home at 90 Calle La Sombra for meetings.

Early growth was modest but steady, with Sunday School and services expanding under Pastor Leih. Challenges included leadership transitions. Interim pastors and candidates followed, with Pastor Mike Delamarian (1966–1969) spurring significant growth through door-to-door evangelism, Awana programs, and moves to larger venues like the Converse Ranch (a rented property with an adobe

house, pool, and trails, used 1966–1970). Attendance peaked near 169 just before a devastating 1970 wildfire destroyed the ranch, reducing the faithful by about two-thirds and ushering in a “nomadic period.”

The Nomadic Period and Property Battles (1970s–1980s)

The congregation endured multiple temporary locations: Capeheart Rec Center, Camarillo Community Center, Mt. Cross Lutheran, Seventh Day Adventist, United Methodist, and Evangelical Free churches. A pivotal 1970 decision involved purchasing six acres at Las Posas and Lantana (later adjusted to Las Posas and Carmen) for \$110,000, despite neighbor opposition, traffic concerns, and a prolonged battle for a conditional use permit. Funding came via Southwest Baptist Conference support, pledges, and sales of notes.

Pastoral leadership included Vern Snyder, Marvin Nixon, Dan Jackson, and others. Elmer Fisher (1981–1982)

emphasized debt reduction before building but passed away suddenly. His memorial funds helped pay off the land. In 1983, Ralph Rittenhouse arrived as senior pastor, promising (and delivering) long-term stability. The church dropped “Heights” from its name around 1987 to reflect its broader reach, becoming Camarillo Baptist and later Camarillo Community Church to appeal beyond denominational lines.

Building the Permanent Home and Growth (1980s–2000s)

Volunteers played a heroic role. The first building (Activity Center, seating approximately 300) was constructed largely by volunteer church members in the mid-1980s, involving clearing land, foundations, trusses, and finishing work amid rains and inspections. The congregation moved in around 1987. A second, larger Worship Center (seating ~1,000 with stadium seating, stage, and tech) followed in 2002, addressing



The first truss of the Activity Center hoisted up (first building, 1986)



Ribbon cutting for the current building (2002)



A Sunday worship gathering (2022)

overcrowding from multiple services.

Under Rittenhouse (1983–2015, 32 years), the church grew from under 100 to nearly 800 members. Staff expanded and ministries flourished: Awana, music/choir/Christmas programs (“Come Celebrate Christmas”), small groups, technical production, and outreach. The church emphasized evangelism, discipleship, and community impact.

Post-Rittenhouse Era and Recent Developments (2015–Present)

Rittenhouse retired in 2015 to co-found the Global Discipleship Initiative (GDI) with Greg Ogden, shifting the church toward micro-group (“quads”) discipleship—groups of 3–4 for deeper relational disciple-making—which transformed its culture and multiplied impact locally and internationally.

David Hurtado became senior/lead pastor from 2017 to 2026, focusing on reaching

the next generation and community engagement. Current leadership includes Executive Pastor Kenny Kibble (since 1997), Worship Pastor Kelley Reid, Associate Preaching Pastor Jacob Salas, Pastor Brandon Di Puma, and others. The church maintains a strong emphasis on biblical preaching, worship, children’s/youth ministries (including Awana and Seven Cs childcare), Growth Groups, and care ministries.

Recent projects include The Welcome Project (completed), which enhanced the lobby, outdoor spaces, and curb appeal to boost fellowship and outreach. Community Impact efforts involve local service (e.g., foster care support, Ronald McDonald House, kindness kits, Walk for Water) and global missions. The church continues two Sunday services (9 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.) and prioritizes discipleship and family ministry to sustain long-term fruitfulness amid cultural challenges.

Legacy and Vision

From 1961 origins with a handful of believers to a multi-generational congregation serving thousands over six decades, CamCC embodies perseverance, volunteer sacrifice, and adaptation. Fires, moves, financial strains, and leadership transitions tested the church, but faithful prayer, unity, and God’s provision prevailed. Today, it seeks to bridge its legacy of gospel teaching with fresh vision for disciple-making, reaching young families and community relevance in a growing Camarillo area (population ~71,000). As one recent message noted, the goal remains seeing more people “know and follow Jesus Christ.”

The church’s emphasis on Scripture, reaching young families and balance of local/global impact position it well for future generations. Its story is one of ordinary believers stepping out in faith—building not just structures, but lives transformed by Christ. For more, visit camcc.net.