



Saddleback Church

When Dr. Rick and Kay Warren first arrived in the Saddleback Valley of Southern California in December 1979, they could fit their possessions in the back of a U-haul trailer.

Fresh out of seminary in Texas, the young pastor and his bride dreamed of starting a church that would be “a place where the hurting, the depressed and the confused can find love, acceptance, help, hope, forgiveness and encouragement.”



With many good Bible-teaching churches already in Southern California, Warren turned his attention to people who didn't attend church regularly. Two weeks after he and his wife arrived in the Saddleback Valley, they began a small Bible study, meeting with one other family in the Warrens' small condominium.

On Easter 1980, Saddleback Valley Community Church held its first public service, and 205 people – most of whom had never been to church – showed up. Today, the church is one of the biggest in the country, and its influence is felt around the world.

Saddleback celebrated its 25th anniversary on April 17, 2005 with a crowd of 35,000 people at Angel Stadium in Anaheim, Calif. At the service, Warren launched his PEACE Plan, a blueprint to mobilize Christians around the world to slay the global giants of spiritual emptiness, self-centered leadership, extreme poverty, pandemic disease and illiteracy/education through an initiative to Promote reconciliation, Equip servant leaders, Assist the poor, Care for the sick and Educate the next generation.

Also in 2005, Saddleback began its annual Global Summit on AIDS and The Church. In 2007, Outreach magazine ranked Saddleback as the fourth-largest church in the United States, with an average 22,000 in weekly attendance. The church has more than 300 ministries serving the church and community. One in nine people in the region call Saddleback their church home.

Each weekend the church holds 20 services in eight distinct worship formats at the main 120-acre campus in Lake Forest, California, and additional services at satellite campuses in Corona, Irvine, and San Clemente, California. In addition, the church has more than 3,500 adult small groups – with at least one in every city in Southern California. More than 30,000 people participate in small groups – more than attend an average weekend services.

The church offers more than 20 different worship styles at its campus on weekends but everyone hears the same sermon. There are six services – two on Saturday and four on Sunday.