



# THE TIDINGS

December 2020

## Covenant Congregational Church

*Celebrating over 135 years of ministry*

This month my message to you was harder to come by than usual. I had a couple of false starts where I was pondering the Christmas message of Peace on Earth in the midst of a raging pandemic and all kinds of national and international disasters. It was a good thought but I realized that it lent itself better as a topic for a book rather than a one-page reflection. But I couldn't let it go.

As I am writing this, the news of the resurgence of Covid hitting our country and the world hard, is jarring in contrast to Christmas movies and ads that want to convince us that all is well in "Hallmark Town". In Hallmark Town there is no Covid, no financial burdens, no domestic tensions, no food shortage, and certainly no shortage of snow. Only lots of romantic love and plenty of hot cocoa. Unfortunately, we don't live in Hallmark Town.

Our news show coverage from hospitals across the country where exhausted medical personnel in protective gear that mostly resembles space suits, are wiping sweat and tears from their faces after long shifts dealing with an overwhelming number of patients in dire medical need. The applause and hero encouragement of spring and early summer are memories that are quickly fading. Everyone is tired and overwhelmed. Everyone is longing for a vaccine. Everyone is longing for the old kind of normal. Everyone is longing for Hallmark Town.

And in to this longing comes the prophetic voice from the scriptures: *"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined."* (Isaiah 9:2) This is the time and this is the age, when God's light breaks in to our tired and weary world. *"For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."* (Isaiah 9:6)

I know we've heard the text many times. But does it make any difference to all those charged with the unglamorous task of caring for the sickest of the sick, for all those who choose to care for loved ones at home, exchanging medical proficiency for the touch of a family member. Does God coming to us, to share our world and our suffering, really make any difference?

Many years ago, former NPTS Professor John Weborg, in a December issue of the Covenant Companion, wrote an article where he first quotes from well-known atheist Philip Appleman's poem "Mary": *He /Was my baby, after all, I washed /His little bum, was I /Supposed to think I was wiping /God Almighty?"* John decided to take Appleman's rhetorical question of the absurdity of God becoming fully human, seriously, and responds:

Yes indeed! Cleansing bodies, washing vulnerable people while at the same time exploiting no shame in their nakedness is holy work. All such washings find their sanctification here. Let those who clean up those suffering severe retardation, those who wipe running saliva from mouths of stroke victims, those who must behold the nakedness of parents with dementia, and those who regularly wash the ungrateful know that the first Christmas these acts took on a sacramental quality. When blessed Mary was "wiping God", the least desirable of acts validated in no uncertain terms the humanity of God *with* us. Concealed in that holy anatomy was another prepositional phrase: God *for* us. But that awaited a time beyond the infancy and boyhood of Jesus. (Covenant companion, Dec. 2005)

So yes, Christ coming to us, to be with us, to bear our burdens, makes a difference. It sanctifies the most mundane tasks done out of love, obligation, and care, as to the glory of God. God with us is absurdity and salvation. When we were unable to attain the perfection and glory of God in order to share his presence, God chose our burdens and struggle to share our presence. For that is the very essence of love. This is the message of Christmas. This is the message of the Kingdom of God.

May your Christmas be blessed with the presence of God.

*Pastor Eva*

## ***Join us for In-Person Worship on Sunday Mornings!***

**Make a reservation.** Due to recent increases in Covid 19 cases, we are limiting our attendance to 25 in our sanctuary for Sunday mornings. *That said, we are asking everyone to make a reservation prior to attending on Sundays.* Please call the church office by 1pm Friday afternoons to make your reservation.

***When you show up, come early (10:15) and enter through the front doors. Have your nose and mouth covered by your mask and please use hand sanitizer upon entering. You will be welcomed by our usher and greeter. Our usher will help you to your seat as we have the pews roped off to make social distancing easier to accomplish. Please do not move the ropes.***

Contact the church office with any questions.

Additional information is located on our website.



### ***A Note from the Church Office***

Please note that the church office will be closed Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Years Eve, and New Years Day. If you have an urgent need, please contact Cheryl Oppen at 781-254-2490.



### ***Honoring Pastor Eva***



As you know, Pastor Eva's time with us as interim pastor is coming to a close at the end of December. We are so very grateful God sent Pastor Eva to serve as our pastor for these past two years. What a blessing she has been for our congregation and community. We will all miss her dearly!

On December 27, we will have a special Farewell Celebration for Pastor Eva during our Sunday worship service at 10:30am. We invite you to prepare a 20 second video with a special message to Eva.

***Please send your short video to Cheryl Oppen at: [Children@ecovchurch.org](mailto:Children@ecovchurch.org) by Dec. 5th.***

***Here are some ideas for your short video:***

1. Share a favorite children's message or sermon point from Pastor Eva
2. Share your favorite bible verse or a blessing
3. Share an encounter with Pastor Eva that made a difference in your life

***Here are some other great ways to show your gratitude and love for Pastor Eva:***

1. Send a card to the church
2. Kids can send a drawing to the church
3. Make a monetary gift by sending a check to the church and write Pastor Eva in the memo line.

If you want to say farewell in person, attend one of our Advent open houses in the sanctuary on 11/30, 12/7, 12/14 or 12/21, anytime from 5:00-7:30pm. Enjoy the quiet peace and beauty of our decorated sanctuary. Pastor Eva will be present during these times so you can visit with her. No registration is required, but please follow social distancing, mask and hand sanitizing protocols. We are following strict health and safety procedures at the church to protect you and our staff.

If you have any questions please contact the church office. Pastor Eva's last day is December 27, 2020.

*Thank You*

## Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart

### A Note From Pastor Eva

My Dear Friends,

As my time with you is drawing to a close I just want to say a deep and sincere Thank You for allowing me to come alongside with you for this time in your journey. I rejoice with you in what I believe this next chapter will hold with new pastoral leadership and post Covid ministry. You will always hold a special place in my heart and I look forward to hearing what new things God will do among you and through you. I know there are wonderful days ahead as you pursue God's will for Covenant Congregational Church.

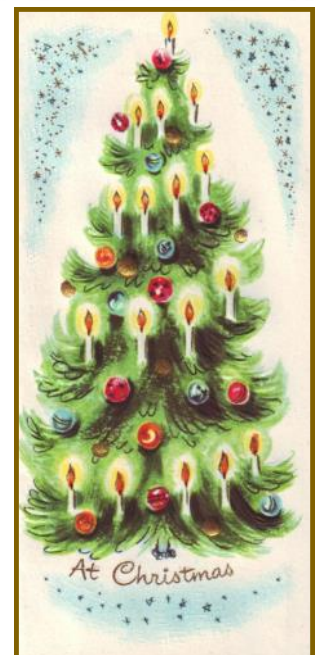
May you be blessed, May you be a blessing.

With Much Love,  
Pastor Eva

### The Flowers in the Sanctuary

We are so grateful for the floral arrangements Liz Eaton creates for our sanctuary. And with Thanksgiving and Advent, we extend an extra bit of gratitude to Liz for the beautiful flowers and decorations in the Narthex and in the sanctuary during this holiday season. If you would like to help out with the expenses of flowers or would like them in memory or in honor of someone, please speak to Liz Eaton. Payments can be made directly to Liz or you can drop it off in the church office and we will ensure it gets to her.

*We also want to thank Liz Eaton and Karen Short for the lovely Thanksgiving display they made around our Communion Table, Sunday, November 22nd.*







**For questions or  
information, contact :**

**Bev Carlson**  
Chair of Worship &  
Music Ministries

**Ginny Elson**  
Director of Music  
Ministries

## ***Worship & Music***

### **Zoom Meeting for Choir and Handbell Groups**

Joint meeting, **Thursday, December 3, 7 pm**

Video-taping: Thursday Handbell Group,

**Saturday, November 28, 9:00 am**

Video-taping: Christmas Eve 11 pm Handbells (either group),

**Sunday, December 13.**

**Rehearsal 5 pm, taping 6 pm.** (Red book Carols)

### ***New England Seafarers Mission: Christmas Shoeboxes & Ditty Bags***

We are continuing to accept Christmas shoebox donations and Ditty bags this year for the men and women seafarers who visit our ports from around the world. Please fill a shoebox or Ditty bag with the following items:

- travel-size toiletry items (soap, shampoo, mouthwash, toothpaste/toothbrush, comb, razors)
- winter knit hats, gloves, warm socks
- cough drops, gum, hard candy
- air fresheners
- (a slight change this year) a hand-sized paperback devotional or New Testament

*Finally, insert a Christmas card and wrap the box in festive paper.*

Drop off your shoeboxes or Ditty bags at the church during business hours (10 AM-1 PM Tuesday through Friday) or on Sunday mornings.

If you need a shoe box or cloth for a Ditty bag, a limited supply are at the church office, in the Narthex, or available from Lita Kuipers (see email below).

***Please donate all items by the morning of December 13.***

If you have any questions, please contact Lita Kuipers at [Lk83cw@verizon.net](mailto:Lk83cw@verizon.net).





# Advent & Christmas

## Important Dates and Reminders

### O Come, All Ye Faithful...



## December Worship Schedule

All Services will be Live - streamed, [www.ecovchurch.org](http://www.ecovchurch.org)

**Sunday, November 29, 10:30 AM** First Sunday of Advent Worship, "HOPE"

**\*Please register to attend.**

(This service will be led "virtually" by our Pastoral Candidates.)

**Sunday, December 6, 10:30 AM** Second Sunday of Advent Worship, "PEACE"

**\*Please register to attend.**

**Sunday, December 13, 10:30 AM** Third Sunday of Advent Worship, "JOY"

**\*Please register to attend.**

**Sunday, December 20, 10:30 AM** Fourth Sunday of Advent Worship, "LOVE"

**\*Please register to attend.**

**Thursday, December 24, 4:00 PM** Christmas Eve Family Service  
**\*Please register to attend.**

**Thursday, December 24, 11:00 PM** Christmas Eve Candlelight Service (Live-streamed only)

**Sunday, December 27, 10:30 AM** Service of Farewell & Appreciation  
**\*Please register to attend.**  
(This service will be held in appreciation for Pastor Eva Cudmore)

O Come, All Ye Faithful 152

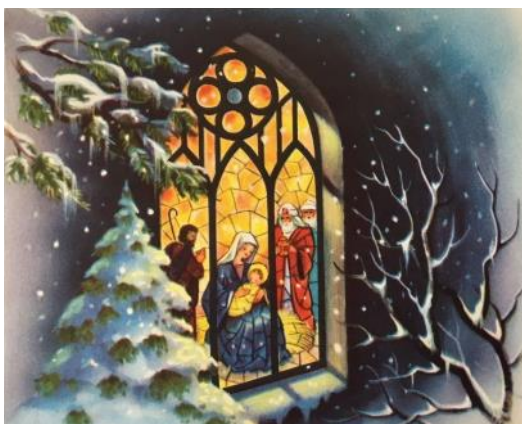
1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant; O  
2 I Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion, I  
3 I Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing, f

come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;  
sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav - en; a - bove;  
Je - sus, to thee be all glo - ry given;

come and be - hold him, born the King of an - gels;  
Word of the God, all glo - ry in the high - est;  
Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing;

Refrain  
O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him;  
O come, let us a - dore him, Christ, the Lord.

WORDS: Ann John F. Wade (1711-1760); cf. Frederick Oakeley (1802-1880)  
MUSIC: John F. Wade's Carols Direct, 1751 ADESTE FIDELIS Impropria



## Advent Open House:

### Monday Evenings in the Sanctuary

The sanctuary will be open from 5-7:30 p.m. on November 30, December 7, 14, and 21 (The Mondays of Advent) for you and your family to enjoy the quiet peace and beauty of our sanctuary decorated for Christmas.

Pastor Eva will be present if you'd like to visit before she finishes up at the end of the year.

No registration is required, but please following social distancing, mask, and hand sanitizing protocols.





## Children and Youth



### *A Special Holiday Message For Our Kids*

As we begin to celebrate Advent and prepare for the birth of Jesus Christ, we would like to wish all of our precious children at Covenant Congregational Church a joyous and meaningful Christmas season. Our prayer is that your days will be merry and bright with the light of God's love. Blessings to you and your family as we embrace the wonderful story of Jesus' Birth! Just a reminder the Children and Youth Ministry has prepared special Family Advent packets. If you haven't picked up your Advent packet yet, please call the church office to make arrangements to pick up your packet in the narthex. If you would like your packet delivered to your house please send an email to: [Children@ecovchurch.org](mailto:Children@ecovchurch.org). We look forward to all being together in 2021 when the time is right!



### *The Kids' Christmas Parade*

The Kids Parade was held on November 14th and was enthusiastically supported by Sunday school teachers and Children and Youth committee members. There were lots of festive decorations outside and on the cars, including signs, balloons and streamers. It was a fun day and we all enjoyed seeing the smiling faces of our children and parents that we have missed. The families received an Advent package that contains lots of activities to keep them connected to the real meaning of Christmas. Thank you to Beth Abreu, Joyce Nelson, Sandy Willette, Julianna Anderson, Ava Anderson, Sally Poirier, Liz Eaton and Karen Short for all your support, time and eagerness to support the children and parents of our community. If you would like an Advent package, please feel free to stop by the church Monday-Friday between the hours of 10am-1pm.





## *Let Us Rejoice with Those Who Rejoice!*



BE  
joyful  
IN HOPE  
patient  
IN AFFLICTION  
faithful  
IN PRAYER  
-ROMANS 12:12

### *It is time to rejoice!*

#### **A letter from Laura Slomba**

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer! It is time to rejoice! I am blessed to share the good news that my daughter, Aimee, is doing well and has recovered. Aimee is back at school and thriving! She has recovered 100% of her abilities after battling 2 1/2 years with infection induced autoimmune encephalitis.

Through this devastating journey our church family has stood by our whole family and continued to lift us in prayer and lift us in spirit. The prayers, hugs, cards, meals, time and love helped change the trajectory. It kept us going and allowed us to see the light in a dark time. We are all truly grateful and touched by the outpouring of support.

There are so many of you who helped and touched our hearts in the past years. A few families went above and beyond to help us. Beth and Larry Abreu, your time, love and thoughtfulness was always there when we needed it. Joyce, Jon-Erik, Anna, Karl-Erik and Jenna Nelson, your endless unconditional support at all times of the day and night made us all laugh, gave us hope and provided so many outlets. I apologize for your inevitable PTSD. Juliana and John Anderson for always opening their home and heart to Alex. Thank you, Leslie, Alynne, Sue, Cathy, Lizzie, Sally and Pastor Eva for the many times your gifts kept us on the best path to healing. We also want to thank and remember Paul Poirer. Every week Aimee would receive a card from the Sunday school group. It was Paul's way of reminding her that she was important and the kids didn't forget her. She may have received as many cards from Paul and Sally as she did from Allie Zelinski's whole school in Chicago. We have a gracious church and we look forward to celebrating and rejoicing with everyone again.



### *Grace Amelia Driscoll*

Rob and Priscilla Driscoll would like everyone to know that their son and daughter in law, Timothy and Melanie, are now the proud parents of Grace Amelia Driscoll. Born on October 23.

Gramma and Papa couldn't be more proud, and great grandmother, Metta Lyons, is joyful for this blessing.





## Letter of Appreciation and Gratitude for Pastor Eva



***"Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm."***

**- Matthew 8:26**

Did anyone think at the end of 2018 that Covenant Congregational Church would utter the words peace or calm within our walls again? Words like turmoil and rough seas were more likely the words we would use to describe how we were feeling. But God is great, and HE sent a remarkable woman from Connecticut by way of Sweden to our church! When Pastor Eva arrived, it seemed that "peace" and "calm" would be words that we could use again. What was it about Pastor Eva that made us feel so comfortable? Was it her lilt of a Swedish accent, or the time that she spent listening to everyone? Maybe it was her sense of humor, her friendly sermons, or her special children's messages. Each week Pastor Eva traveled 2 hours to Connecticut to be home with her family for a few days, before spending another 2 hours heading back to Easton for Sunday morning worship. Never did she complain, not even once. Pastor Eva remained calm and steady as our leader even during the pandemic when everything else in our lives turned upside down.

God knew exactly what our church needed for our Interim Pastor and HE brought Pastor Eva to us. Thank you, Pastor Eva for sharing your time and gifts with all of us these past two years. It is so clear now that you were supposed to be here, - and that is what makes it so hard now to say goodbye.

As we prepare for your Farewell Celebration Service on 12/27, please know that you will always hold a special place in our hearts and in our church history. We pray that the calm and peace you brought to us continues in your life, and in your family's life. We want to say a BIG THANK YOU to your wonderful family for sharing you with all of us. You have our deepest gratitude, prayers, and blessings as you begin a new chapter in your life. We know God has great plans for you and for our church. GOD IS GOOD ALL THE TIME!!!

*On behalf of Covenant Congregational Church,  
With Love and Appreciation,*

*The Church Council*

***P.S. If you would like to send a card to Pastor Eva or make a monetary gift in appreciation of her service please send it to the church by 12/20. You can make the check out to the church and write "Pastor's gift" in the memo line. Join us for a special service on 12/27, at 10:30am as we honor Pastor Eva and her time at Covenant Congregational Church. You can join us in person by making a reservation through the church office (limit of 25 people) or watch the service live streaming on-line. More information to follow.***







## Senior High League



### Unite 2022 (CHIC)

#### Looking ahead: Clothing Drive April 2021

Thank you for *the 3,000 lbs* of clothing and textiles donated in the Fall!

Please continue to save your gently used clothing or textiles that you wish to donate for our next drive, which will be April 2021. We appreciate all of your support!

Thank you

Senior High League

**CLEAN OUT  
YOUR CLOSET**



### Senior High League

#### Fire Pit in December!

Details will be sent to you via text.

If you are in grades 9th thru 12th & are not already getting Sr. High info & wish to receive text messages, please contact Joyce Nelson 508-941-4510.



### December Birthdays



John Anderson	1-Dec	George Chislett	17-Dec
Noreen Harmon	1-Dec	Armenie Varadian	17-Dec
Lori Prew	1-Dec	Nancy Waugh	18-Dec
Eva Cudmore	2-Dec	Geraldine Wallace	19-Dec
Dylan DeCosta	2-Dec	Heather Willis	19-Dec
Heather Larson	3-Dec	Elise McCormick	20-Dec
Sean McGarry	3-Dec	Kevin Symmons	20-Dec
Chris Hayes	6-Dec	Dom Di Battista	21-Dec
Leslee Buckley	7-Dec	Nick Cidado	22-Dec
Peter Gay	7-Dec	Brooke Bassett	23-Dec
Anna Goodwin	7-Dec	Tom Hyde	24-Dec
Judy McCullough	8-Dec	Anna Nelson	24-Dec
Timothy Driscoll	9-Dec	Heather Carroll	29-Dec
Johnny Agurkis	10-Dec	Derek Fredericksen	29-Dec
Debbie Chase	10-Dec	Christian Fredericksen	29-Dec
Brayden Burton	13-Dec	Carole Giberti	29-Dec
Christopher Legare	16-Dec	Claire Cummings	31-Dec

## Care Ministry

### Prayers of Petition

- That we would read and pray the Bible and see that the Lord is good
- Our community, country and world, as we reengage while still seeking a vaccine for COVID-19 and an end of this pandemic
- Wisdom for our church as we continue to meet in person on Sunday mornings
- Those who are isolated and alone during Christmas and New Years
- Our church as say goodbye to Eva and move into a new season with a new pastor
- Our two Covenant sponsored ministries, Pilgrim Pines and New England Seafarers Mission, are deeply affected by the recent pandemic. Prayers for their economic situations and the future of their ministries.
- Marriages in the church and for those who long to be married
- Parents as they juggle work and childcare
- Thad and Jen Krikorian's nephew, Caleb, and his parents, Chris and Anna. Pray for his heart and brain to be whole. His next heart surgery is postponed to 2021. Pray for God's sustenance for the family.
- Bridget Dumoulin's son, Billy Evans, in bootcamp and returning home Dec. 3rd.
- Kathy Murphy, friend of Steve and Sandy Willette who is battling cancer
- Mike Bassett undergoing treatment for prostate cancer
- Kim Callender and her family as she recovers from recent surgery
- Cathy Zelinski's friend Donna: her cancer treatment is ongoing, continued prayers are appreciated
- Metta Lyons welcomes your continued prayers of strength and healing
- Linda Johnson and her family as they grief the loss of their sister, Marilyn
- Karen McSherry's brother, Mark, and his family, as he continues to deal with multiple health issues
- Prayers of strength for Eugene "Don", husband of Barbara Takach, who has several health issues
- Please pray for continued strength and improvement for Len "Cid" Cidado



Psalm 121  
A song of ascents.

- <sup>1</sup> I lift up my eyes to the mountains—  
where does my help come from?
- <sup>2</sup> My help comes from the LORD,  
the Maker of heaven and earth.
- <sup>3</sup> He will not let your foot slip—  
he who watches over you will not slumber;
- <sup>4</sup> indeed, he who watches over Israel  
will neither slumber nor sleep.
- <sup>5</sup> The LORD watches over you—  
the LORD is your shade at your right hand;
- <sup>6</sup> the sun will not harm you by day,  
nor the moon by night.
- <sup>7</sup> The LORD will keep you from all harm—  
he will watch over your life;
- <sup>8</sup> the LORD will watch over your coming and going  
both now and forevermore.

### Prayers of Thanksgiving and Celebration

- Our online worship services reaching beyond our church family, and for those participating in the sanctuary and from their homes
- We are grateful for the 8 Confirmands continuing the Confirmation class this Fall. Please pray for them and their teachers as they learn and grow in their faith
- Cathy Zelinski's nephew, Burton, is recovering well from brain surgery. Thank you for your prayers!
- Aimee Slomba's full healing. It's a time of rejoicing!





# December 2020



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>29</b> <i>First Sunday of Advent</i> 9:00 Class w/ Candidate (zoom) 10:30 Worship Service 4:00 Congregational Meeting (zoom)	<b>30</b> 5:00-7:30 Advent Open House	<b>1</b> 7:00 Worship & Music House	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 7:00 Prayer Hour (zoom)	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b> <i>Second Sunday of Advent</i> 10:30 Worship & Communion 5:00 Confirmation (Narthex)	<b>7</b> 5:00-7:30 Advent Open House	<b>8</b> 7:00 Council	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> 7:00 Prayer Hour (Narthex)	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>13</b> <i>Third Sunday of Advent</i> 10:30 Worship Service *Seafarers Boxes & Ditty Bags Due 5:00 Confirmation (Narthex)	<b>14</b> 5:00-7:30 Advent Open House	<b>15</b> 7:00 PRC	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 7:00 Prayer Hour (zoom)	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>20</b> <i>Fourth Sunday of Advent</i> 10:30 Worship Service 5:00 Confirmation (Narthex)	<b>21</b> 5:00-7:30 Advent Open House First Day of Winter (shortest day of the year)	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 4:00 Christmas Eve Service 11:00 Candlelight service (online only)	<b>25</b>  <i>Emmanuel, Christ with us!</i> Merry Christmas!	<b>26</b>
<b>27</b> 10:30 Worship Service	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 	<b>1</b> 	<b>2</b>



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## CCC AT A GLANCE

### Sunday Mornings

10:30 Worship Service (Online and In-person)

### Pastor:

Eva Cudmore

### Staff:

Ginny Elson

*Director of Music Ministries*

Jen Krikorian

*Office Administrator*

Nick Zelinski

*Church Custodian*

[www.ecovchurch.org](http://www.ecovchurch.org)

508.238.6423



### *Our Mission*

To **Connect** the generations to Christ, to

**Grow** in our love for His Church, and to

**Serve** God in the greater Community