



The Scroll



Volume 47, Issue 12 • December 2018



Advent

A Message from Pastor Linda

As a child, one of the most meaningful times of the year for me was Advent – the four weeks of preparation and anticipation before Christmas. To be sure, I **loved** Christmas! But there was something especially sacred about those days leading up to *the* Big Day.

What made Advent most special for me was observing it with my family at home those four Sunday evenings. It was a rare time our family would all gather together (a feat in itself) for prayer, a song, a meditation and to light the candle. For an active kid, this quiet, reflective time was mysterious and rich; it seemed an ancient ritual I was being invited. Though I understood very little of it, I did know it was exceedingly special. For an ever-so-brief time, I was able to experience the hustle/bustle and turmoil of my large family fall away, and sense the wonder and awe take its place among us. It was a holy ‘hush’ for our household and my being.

Admittedly, my understanding of Advent was truncated and naïve as a child. It has only been in recent years, I realize the waiting and watching is far deeper than counting down the days until Christmas ... or even celebrating the birth of Christ.

Over the years, the full meaning of Advent has become abridged, disjointed or altogether lost in the church. It is most certainly about waiting in anticipation of Christ’s coming – that day we celebrate Jesus’ birth. But Advent was originally meant to focus primarily upon His *second* coming: when Christ shall come *again* in all his glory; it was a time set aside to examine our own lives as we prepared our hearts to receive the coming King and to stand before Him in judgment one day.

Advent reminds us, too, that we live in the ‘*Now and Not Yet*’ – this difficult, ‘in-between’ time. It serves as a reminder that we are to be both bearing witness to the

good news – the advent of God through Christ’s birth and what He did on the Cross, *AND* waiting expectantly for Jesus’ coming again.

Symbolically Advent is observed during this darkest season of the year as a reminder of the darkness in our world, and our own role in it. We look any direction and see the brokenness, despair and desperation all about. We regularly see evil having its way in so many places. We know the power of sin in our own lives. As Christians, we know at our deepest core, there is no *human* hope of “making the world right” once and for all. It’s why our spirits often resonate with the words of Isaiah 64:1, “*Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down!*” We know only God can make the world right. This is the Advent – the ‘coming’ we ultimately long for: when Christ shall come again to do away with evil once and for all. We long for the day when His light shall come forth as the dawn, and darkness is banished forever.

So in this contemplative season, we lament for the pain and damage wrought by evil. We give voice to our longings for that day when ‘*swords will be beat into plowshares,*’ ‘*when nations live at peace*’, (Isaiah 2:4), ‘*when the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.*’ (Isaiah 65:19). We confess our wrongdoings.

“Look, I am coming soon! ... I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.
Revelation 22:12-13

We are also called to “see through the darkness and the present into the light of the coming kingdom.”¹ Though evil so often seems to be ‘winning’, we remember Christ has already won. He has already defeated sin and death. The Faithful One has promised to return. We are to watch and wait for Advent – the ‘coming’ day when the Prince of Peace will, once and for all, redeem His world and make all things new again.

Advent reminds us anew to see and to live with the long view: God in Christ shall come again and reign forever. This is our Hope!

Merry Christmas!

* *Advent: The Once & Future Coming of Jesus Christ*, p. 21



ALL SAINTS DAY

Each year in early November, the Church remembers those saints who have gone on before us. This year we lit two candles in honor of Virginia Gustafson and Robin Williams who entered into glory last spring, and gave thanks for their lives and ministry among us. We also lifted up the names of people special to each of us in our time of prayer.



GRUBBY SUNDAY

Vaccums were running, feather dusters were swishing and the smells of furniture polish, Windex and disinfectant mingled with the aroma of coffee. Yes! It was that time of year when volunteers of all ages show up before worship to scrub the church building from top to bottom: Grubby Sunday. The church was

buzzing with lots of activity as people worked upstairs and downstairs. All the windows were washed – including the huge picture windows in the Sanctuary (thanks to a handy lift!). Probably for the first time in



years, all the heating vents in the Sanctuary were vacuumed. Cobwebs were swept away, walls were washed, furniture polished, closets were sorted and organized, hoses were stored for winter, and the list goes on. It's pretty amazing how much is accomplished when there are lots of people pitching in to help. By the time the choir was singing the Introit in Worship, the whole place was sparkling clean. Thank you to all those who helped that morning.



CHURCH THANKSGIVING DINNER

In light of the local churches taking a 'sabbatical' from an Interfaith Community Thanksgiving Service this year, Salem made an alternative plan to host a Church Thanksgiving dinner the Sunday evening before Thanksgiving. Before the evening arrived, our children made a tablecloth with their words of thanks during Childrens Church. Along with the adorable table cloth, Julie Fredlund made some simple but elegant flower centerpieces for our tables. That evening, with Taylor Cannavaro as our Chef, about 30 people came with appetizers or pies for a meal together. We sang several songs before the meal, prayed, and then shared a relaxing evening over great food with great people.



GUEST PREACHERS, REV. BARBARA ETTINGER AND REV. ROB SATTERBERG



We are blessed here in the Covenant East Coast Conference to have many gifted men and women to call upon to preach. This month we had the privilege of having two guest preachers. The first was East Coast Conference Associate Superintendent, Rev. Barbara Ettinger. (Her primary role here in the EastCC is leadership development and discipleship.) With a warm and bright spirit, she gave a wonderful message on the 'new' family of God and belonging. You may listen to it via this link:

<http://saalemcov.sermon.net/main/main/21280727>

Then the last Sunday in November while the Pastor was out-of-town, Rev. Rob Satterberg preached. Rob serves as Director of Administration at the Rivendell Institute at Yale University (in New Haven, CT) whose mission is "to examine and advance the contribution of a Christian vision of life to human flourishing and the common good within the academy and contemporary culture." He is a member of Bethany Covenant Church in Berlin, CT. You may listen to his sermon via this link: <http://saalemcov.sermon.net/main/main/21284818>

LOVE MERCY, DO JUSTICE

From our inception the Covenant has been concerned with helping hurting people (love mercy), and addressing the causes of that hurt (do justice). The mission of Love Mercy Do Justice (LMDJ) is to "Join God in making things right in our broken world."

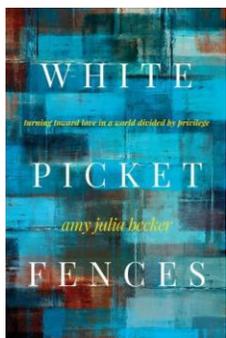
One aspect of Love Mercy Do Justice (LMDJ) ministry is this department works in coordination with Covenant World Relief, regional conferences and local congregations who have partnerships with organizations on the ground in disaster areas here and abroad. Currently LMDJ, in partnership with Pacific Southwest Conference and Bayside Covenant Church, is providing support and relief to communities devastated by the impacts of the Camp, Woolsey and Hill fires in California. In November, Salem (through your generosity) provided a special Thanksgiving offering of \$650 to LMDJ to help ease the suffering of those whose lives have been devastated by these destructive fires. If you would like make a contribution for this important work, please send it to:

The Evangelical Covenant Church
Attn: Love Mercy Do Justice
Memo: CA Fire Relief
8303 W. Higgins Road
Chicago, IL 60631

In addition to these funds, Salem also contributed \$910 to Covenant World Relief. Thank you!



UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS



WHITE PICKET FENCES BOOK DISCUSSION

With author, Amy Julia Becker
December 3, 7:30 PM

For those who have the opportunity to read *White Picket Fences*, you are invited to come meet, and engage in conversation with the author, Amy Julia Becker, about her book on December 3, 7:30 pm at Salem. (The book is available in our church library, and for sale at the History Stick Book Store or on-line at Barnes & Noble, Amazon and other vendors.)

Come and stay awhile...

SALEM COVENANT CHURCH

warmly invites you and your family and friends
to join us this holiday season.

December 8 - Choir's Christmas Concert, 5:00 pm

December 12 - Seniors' Christmas Brunch, 10:00 am

An RSVP is kindly requested by December 10.

December 16 - Children's Christmas Pageant, 10:30 am

December 19 - Blue Christmas Service, 7:00 pm

A Service of Reflection for those who find this season difficult.

December 23 - Celebration of Advent, 10:30 am

December 24 - Christmas Eve Service, 5:00 pm



WINTERBLAST

PILGRIMPINES.ORG

JANUARY 25-27, 2019

FEBRUARY 8-10, 2019

WINTER YOUTH RETREAT!

Pilgrim Pines will be hosting its annual Middle School Youth retreat, February 8-10, 2019. This awesome retreat is open to all youth in grades 6-8.

Get ready for a great weekend of fun, games, dynamic speakers, and camp style worship all in the amazing winter wonderland of Pilgrim Pines. The cost is \$125 and scholarships are available.

If your child is interested in going, please contact Pastor Linda.

Upcoming Missions Opportunities



March 18-26, 2019 – MERGE ministry to Morelos and Tetela, Mexico

Back in May, Pastor Linda and Michel Williams were part of a small team that went with MERGE (Covenant) to Morelos and Tetela, Mexico to help rebuild three homes damaged in an earthquake. This March they will be returning to the same town to continue the rebuilding effort. Pastor Linda, Michel and the MERGE staff invite you to consider being a part of the team this spring. No skills are required – just a heart for helping families in need. There are many ways you can help in the mission: be part of the construction team, pray, cover the cost of materials, or help pay the way for someone with time/energy but in need of funds. The trip is scheduled for March 18-26. The registration is \$495 (which covers lodging, meals, and other expenses) plus airfare to Mexico City. For more information, speak to Michel or Linda.



May 24-27, 2019 – Pilgrim Pines Conference Center, Swanzey, NH

Enjoy a fun-filled weekend of work, play and worship together at beautiful Pilgrim Pines. Use your talents and willing hands to help prepare the Pines for another exciting summer season. In exchange for your work, Pilgrim Pines will provide excellent meals, lodging, recreations, group activities and worship times.

You, your family and friends, and anyone are invited to participate in our work and worship weekend. You do not need to have any building or carpentry skills to pitch in! We need all kinds of people to make contributions. You need to have some energy and a willingness to get dirty, try new things, be flexible and enjoy the company of others who want to pitch in, too. We need cleaners, painters, rakers and electricians, as well as plumbers, carpenters and handy people. All of us have contributions to make, so come on out and enjoy some physical activity with your friends at Pilgrim Pines! The cost of the entire weekend is \$40/adult, \$20/children, 5-12.

Thank you!

Dear Lydia Circle the Salem Covenant Church,

Thank you for your donation of \$348.95 to our 2018 benefit event, “We Believe in Caring for Our Community,” which was held on Saturday, October 13, 2018 at Casa Mia at The Hawthorne in Berlin, CT. All proceeds will benefit the CVOC Benevolent Care Fund, which assists those residents who can no longer fully cover the cost of their housing and healthcare. Because of your generosity, our net proceeds for the evening we’re over \$36,000 which is a \$6000 increase over last year’s event.

Simply put, if it weren’t for faithful supporters like you, we wouldn’t have had another successful fall gala to support our Benevolent Care Fund.

Heartfelt thanks for your continued support.

Sincerely,
Christin Urciuoli, Director of Development
Covenant Village of Cromwell

Dear friends,

Words alone cannot express our appreciation for the continued financial support we receive from our partners. Please accept our heartfelt thanks for your donation to the ministry of the New England Seafarers Mission. It is only possible by the faithful giving of partners, who by their generosity and kindness, that we can extend the love of Christ to the often weary and lonely men and women that work on the sea.

We are nearing the end of another cruise ship season and we would not have been able to serve the seafarers without the volunteering of so many faithful individuals. We will be having our yearly Ditty Bag Packing Day on November 10 at the Community Covenant Church in West Peabody, MA starting at 9:00 AM. Please let your congregation and you know that what we would love to have them help us.

Again, thank you and God bless you.
On behalf of our Board of Trustees and Seafarers,
The Rev. Stephen R. Cushing
Senior Chaplain and Executive Director

Dear Salem,

Thank you very much for the gifts of \$213.50. We really appreciate the gifts you have given to Susan B Anthony Project over the past 10 years. These gifts not only support direct crisis services to victims of domestic and sexual violence, they are also very important to the prevention of this violence through our community education and outreach programs in schools and throughout the professional community.

Victims who seek services are often fearful. With your support of hotline, Counseling, medical, court, and support group services, victims understand more about domestic and sexual violence and the impact it has had in their lives. From that understanding, a victim experiences healing and hope. Thank you for partnering with Susan B Anthony Project to provide safety, healing, and growth.

Sincerely,

Jeanne S. Fusco, Executive Director



December Birthdays

- 2 – Hayden Fisher
- 6 – Patty Parker
- 6 – Ann Von Hoorn
- 7 – Jerry Mele
- 7 – Linda Williams
- 9 – Linnea Quist
- 12 – Alisha Tillman
- 14 – John Quist
- 15 – Liam Hurley
- 15 – Diane Swanson
- 16 – Noel Evans
- 18 – Susan Swanson
- 20 – Deborah Griesbach
- 24 – Christi Guptill
- 28 – Gaylinn Fast
- 29 – Holly Camp
- 30 – Penelope Becker

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor – Reverend Linda Williams
Music Director – Dianne DeMarco
Administrative Assistant – Caitlin Cannavaro
Nursery Care Provider – Stephanie Shaw

CHURCH COUNCIL

Chair– Jeremy Chase
Vice-Chair– Spencer Guptill
Treasurer/CFO– Caitlin Cannavaro
Secretary – Julie Fredlund
Trustee – Mark Showalter
Spiritual Formation – Amy Julia Becker
Fellowship – Robin McHan
Diaconate – Charlotte Johnson
Ex-Officio – Pastor Linda Williams

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Ron Ames
Mike Andrews
Bob Dickinson
Mark Showalter
Michel Williams

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Jeremy Chase
Spencer Guptill
Peter Becker
Amy Hoeniger
Holly Camp