

# The Messenger

Orchard Covenant Church  
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## THE PASTOR'S PAGE

### An Advent Credo

It is **not** true that creation and the human family are doomed to destruction and loss—

**This is true:** *For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life* (John 3:16) ;

It is **not** true that we must accept inhumanity and discrimination, hunger and poverty, death and destruction—

**This is true:** *I have come that they may have life, and that abundantly* (John 10:10)

It is **not** true that violence and hatred should have the last word, and that war and destruction rule forever—

**This is true:** *Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, his name shall be called wonderful councilor, mighty God, the Everlasting, the Prince of peace.* (Isaiah 9:6)

It is **not** true that we are simply victims of the powers of evil who seek to rule the world—

**This is true:** *To me is given authority in heaven and on earth, and lo I am with you, even until the end of the world.* (Matthew 28:18,20)

It is **not** true that we have to wait for those who are specially gifted, who are the prophets of the Church before we can be peacemakers—

**This is true:** *I will pour out my spirit on all flesh and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions and your old men shall have dreams.* (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17)

It is **not** true that our hopes for liberation of humankind, of justice, of human dignity of peace are not meant for this earth and for this history—

**This is true:** *The hour comes, and it is now, that the true worshippers shall worship God in spirit and in truth.* (John 4:23)

**So let us enter Advent in hope, even hope against hope. Let us see visions of love and peace and justice. Let us affirm with humility, with joy, with faith, with courage: Jesus Christ—the life of the world.**

*From Testimony: The Word Made Flesh, by Daniel Berrigan, S.J. Orbis Books, 2004. (emphases and passage lookups mine)*

**See you in Church this Advent season! - Pastor Nancy**

### Advent:

(On a Theme by Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

**Look how long  
The weary world waited,  
Locked in its lonely cell,  
Guilty as a prisoner.**

**As you can imagine,  
It sang and whistled in the dark.  
It hoped. It paced and pattered about,  
Tidying its little piles of inconsequence.**

**It wept from the weight of ennui,  
Draped like shackles on its wrists.  
It raged and wailed against the walls of its own  
plight.**

**But there was nothing  
the world could do  
to find its own freedom.  
The door was shut tight.**

**It could only be opened  
From the outside.**

**Who could believe the latch  
Would be turned by a pink flower –  
the tiny hand of a newborn baby?**

*Copyright Pamela Cranston, 2011*

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Dear Orchard Covenant Family,  
Yes, who could believe? You? Me?  
I share with you two poems for Advent meditation  
while we wait for Jesus' birth. Let God speak to  
your soul as you wait to celebrate the birth of

**Jesus Christ –  
the Life of the World!**

## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

December 5 – Joie Joseph  
December 8 - Mary Gibbs  
December 10 – Sheron Boyle  
December 14 - Mary Ann Henriques  
December 17 – Gabrielle Thibideau  
December 24 - Alicia Thomas  
December 25 - Jesus of Nazareth  
December 26 - Wally Ebner  
December 29 - Jacob Thomas  
December 29 - Kalie Thomas

## ANNIVERSARIES

December 7 - John and Linda Howell

[If your date is wrong or your name has been omitted, please contact the editor.]

## DATES TO REMEMBER

December 2 First Sunday of Advent  
See Advent Schedule  
December 3 Council meeting  
December 8 Scandinavian Christmas Coffee at ECC  
December 9 Christmas concert at ECC  
December 15 Men's Breakfast  
December 15 NYC trip (ECC)

## *The Men's Connection*

*Saturday, December 15*

*Time: 8:30 to 9:30 am*

*at the Orchard Covenant Church*

*Breakfast will be served.*

## CHRISTMAS MUNCH 'n MINGLE

On **December 23**, we will be having a special Munch and Mingle and are requesting that you bring a traditional Christmas dish to share with the church. Special performances are welcomed and gift contributions for the kids are also encouraged. Please contact Sis. Gail Joseph for further information.

## CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Paul Baloche and Dave Pettigrew will present a Christmas Concert at ECC on Sunday, **December 9** at 7:00 pm. Tickets are \$25.00.

## NEW YORK CITY BUS TRIP



On Saturday, **December 15**, there will be a bus trip to NYC leaving from ECC at 7:15 am and returning at 10:30 pm. The cost is \$45.00. SEATS ARE STILL AVAILABLE! Please contact Pam at the ECC office, 782-5212.

## Journey through Advent to Christmas 2018

 First Sunday in Advent *December 2 11am*

*Worship with Holy Communion:*

“The Hope of the World” Luke 2:25-26

Stay after the service to help decorate our sanctuary!

 Second Sunday in Advent *December 9,*

*11am Worship: “Preparation Required!”* Luke 3:1-6

 Wednesday *December 12, “Community Lunch”:*

Lunch at Applebee's, Boston Road, Springfield! 12:00 noon.  
Bring \$10.

 Saturday, December 15 *Men's breakfast,*

*8:30am. Christmas Program Practice: 9:00 am*

*10:30am*

 Third Sunday in Advent *December 16, 11am*

*worship: Children's Christmas Program: “An Ancient Story for Us Today”*

 Fourth Sunday in Advent *December 23,*

*11am worship: With Lessons and Carols “Christmas Dinner Party” after church.*

 Christmas Eve Candle Lighting Service

*Monday, December 24, 5:00 pm: Luke 2:1-20 “The Gift of Life”*

All Welcome! Bring friends and family as part of your Christmas celebration.



## SCANDINAVIAN CHRISTMAS COFFEE

Ladies, on Saturday, **December 8**, from 10:00 am to noon at ECC-Springfield, there will be a bountiful brunch, Scandinavian activities and the message, “Behold” by Kerri Ramgren. Tickets MUST be reserved before December 4. Email Nan Lingenfelter at [nlingenfelter@charter.net](mailto:nlingenfelter@charter.net). Child care will be available.

## INTERVARSITY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Noelia Rodriguez, campus pastor for InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, and her team of student disciples at AIC have come up with a new form of "Cookies and Love" called "Question a Cookie". Students can order a cookie to be delivered to their dorm room with an invitation to ask any question about God, Jesus and/ or Christianity. It is likely that this effort could be the catalyst for spiritual conversations among the recipients of the cookies and their friends. Please be praying for Noelia and consider supporting her financially as well through the link: [donate.intervarsity.org/donate#20001](https://donate.intervarsity.org/donate#20001).

Recently OCC donated \$1000 to her ministry and she wrote the following note in response:

Dear Orchard Covenant Church,  
Thank you for your gift and support toward InterVarsity's ministry in Springfield. Your gift is an encouragement to myself and students! We are all so grateful for your partnership and pray that God meets every one of your needs according to His riches in glory.  
Blessings, Noelia

## IMMERSE

This Fall, the Immerse readings have been from the books of the Old Testament written by prophets. Here's what some of our readers have said about the experience:

"Reading the Prophets this fall was fun, and eye-opening! I saw for the first time how deeply God loves his people, and how desperately he wants us to love him. God hates idols!" Toni Wapner

"I had never read a book of a prophet all the way through. Reading a prophet's declaration straight through gives a complete picture of God's message to Israel and to the whole world. I was particularly struck by God's clear and repetitive message in Isaiah especially to the leaders and to all of God's people to be just and protect the poor and the powerless." Mary Gibbs

"I found Jeremiah especially great reading--his deep concern for his people, in the face of severe persecution, and his pronouncement that God will "...remove their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.." In Christ, God has done that--for me and for all of us! We may not always live that out, but the reality is there. We did not change our own hearts any more than ancient Israel could do that--it is God's work." Mike Foster

"I found it encouraging to put familiar verses and stories in the context of the whole book to better understand God's great longing for His people to return to living lives honoring to Him." Linda Howell

## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO OUR WILLIAM A JOHNSON ORGAN!

Dick Warner

This year, 2018, marks the centennial anniversary of our very special W.A. Johnson organ. For it was in 1918 that our organ was installed in what was then the First Congregational Church of Indian Orchard. 100 years!

While serving for 100 years at the now Orchard Covenant Church, the organ was actually constructed in the early 1860's at the Johnson Organ Company in Westfield, MA., making it nearly 160 years of age. Mr. Johnson constructed the organ, a modest two-manual organ of 14 stops, for the residence of his shop superintendent, Mr. Edwin Hedges. It must have been quite a residence!

Then, in 1918, the organ was moved from the Hedges residence to this church building by the Steere Organ Co. of Springfield. It was undoubtedly at this time that the manual, foot pumping air system was abandoned in favor the electric blower motor which resides in our church basement, dutifully pumping air through the various pipes and thereby producing the beautiful sounds that only an organ can make. Incidentally, the lowest sounding pedal pipe is nearly 16 feet tall, while the highest pitch comes from one the size of a pencil!

Other than modifications to the façade and multiple repairs to the 100-year-old blower motor, the organ remains exactly as it was built nearly 160 years ago and 100 years since its installation at 95 Berkshire Avenue.

Many thanks are extended to those who have contributed time and/or financially to the upkeep of this beautiful instrument. In particular, we think of Helen Ham who has worked tirelessly for decades raising money for the church's organ fund. Thank you, Helen.

Happy Anniversary to our Johnson Organ and may its music ministry continue for years to come!

## CHRISTMAS GIFTING FOR THE MUHUDU VILLAGE ORPHANS IN KENYA

Since 2008, OCC and Mama Esther's family have supported destitute orphans in their home village of Muhudu, Kenya. Many are now healthy, attending school and living with hope because of our involvement. Gifts will be prioritized for food, uniforms, school fees and textbooks.

**Please pray and give generously with any amount, large or small.**

**PLEASE SEE THE ACCOMPANYING FLYER**

# PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

**Pray for the Nominating Committee that they identify those that the Lord has called to give leadership to our church in 2019.**

**Praise that the church's financial needs can be met with generosity and abundance.**

**Pray for all our church families that may be suffering in the cold of the coming winter.**

**Pray for an end to racism in our land and in our neighborhood.**

## ADVENT

Advent, anglicized from the Latin word *adventus* meaning "coming", is a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas. It is the beginning of the Western liturgical year and commences on Advent Sunday.

God of hope, who brought love into this world,  
be the love that dwells between us.  
God of hope, who brought peace into this world,  
be the peace that dwells between us.  
God of hope, who brought joy into this world,  
be the joy that dwells between us.  
God of hope, the rock we stand upon,  
be the center, the focus of our lives  
always, and particularly this Advent time.

## A PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS

**We worship the birth of a baby,  
and in doing so acknowledge  
God reaching down to touch the earth  
and bless it once again;  
to walk within the garden  
as once he did in Eden.  
We worship the birth of a Savior,  
an infant in whose fragility  
lay all the signs of sacrifice;  
born in humility,  
growing into his kingdom  
as Scripture's Promised One.  
We worship Jesus, Savior and King.**

# Christmas Gifting for the Muhudu Village Orphans in Kenya



Muhudu Village Children in their new uniforms!

## **FILL A GREAT NEED WITH YOUR GENEROSITY!**

Since 2008, OCC and Mama Esther's family have supported destitute orphans in their home village of Muhudu, Kenya. Many are now healthy, attending school and living with hope because of our involvement. Gifts will be prioritized for food, uniforms, school fees and textbooks.

- ◆ **Meals are 50 cents each or \$100 per week for the group of 120+ orphans**
- ◆ **Support a high school student at \$350 per year**

We also support concrete steps of economic development, starting with those graduating from high school, some of whom have been trained as Community Health Educators. We pray for a village that can support its own children. **THIS IS KINGDOM WORK!**

- ◆ **Please pray and give generously with any amount large or small!**
- ◆ **Our zebra in the sanctuary can "eat" small cash gifts**

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NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DONATION AMOUNT \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL FEES AMOUNT \_\_\_\_\_

Gift cards are available in the church office. See Toni Wapner. Please make checks out to Orchard Covenant Church, and specify for "Muhudu Orphans Fund."