



CONNECTIONS

The Newsletter of the Ewing - Covenant Presbyterian Church – December 2021

Our Vision

Ewing-Covenant Presbyterian Church is called to be a church where people seeking hope find the light and love of Christ and together, joyfully serve the community with abiding love and purpose.

Our Mission - As a church

We find and share the light and love of Christ in prayer, in worship, in fellowship, and in service. We welcome the rainbow of God's children, and we embrace our differences. We gather to develop relationships with God, with each other, and with the world. We are inspired by the Word of God as proclaimed through music, and our love of music strengthens our relationship with the community. We empower others to embody grace, mercy, justice, and peace, guided by the light and love of Christ. We purposely demonstrate compassion, understanding, and generosity to others, inspired by the love of Christ. We open our hearts and our doors to those seeking hope, wholeness, wellness, acceptance, and a place to be seen.



Letter from the Pastor

Tis the season....

If we listen to the marketplace, this is the season to shop! Given the disruption in the supply chain due to the pandemic, retailers are fanning the fear of scarcity: fear that we might not be able to buy that perfect Christmas gift (or receive it from someone).

An ad featuring a Cartier wristwatch (or is it wristwear?) piqued my interest this morning. It pictures a handsome watch-- seeming to elude gravity--suspended in a translucent white and gold box. The accompanying words are "Shop the perfect gift...." The overall message drew me into a marketplace mindset. A mindset of meeting needs by seeking what seems perfect, comes at a high cost, and from a source outside of myself. Not surprising, I felt angst and even anxiety.

But instead of rushing to the marketplace for relief, I slowed down to experience my life, today, now. There, anchored in God's time, I tucked myself into this season of Advent. There, I contemplated the comfort of the Advent wreath, with its candlelight that stirs hope, peace, joy, and love within me. And I understood that all life is infused with the clear light of the Christ child.

Such is the perfect gift this season.....the anticipation of the birth of a vulnerable baby. A baby arriving in a broken world. A baby without simple clothes., And a baby without any power at all to survive, let alone to save the world. Such is the gift each of us already has. It is God's abundant love and grace within us. And it is a gift we are free to share with each other, at any and all times. It is a gift we are meant to give away as God's light for this world.

Peace

Pastor Ann

Pastor Ann

RETURN TO CHURCH COMMITTEE

Sunday Morning Guidelines We welcome you as you enter for worship this morning. As you enter, we ask the following of you:

1. If you have not already done so, please fill out a "Hold Harmless" form. Remember that you only need to do this once. *
2. Fill out the Health Form for the day. This helps us know who is present so that we will be able to track who was in attendance should it become necessary for any health-related reason.*
3. We ask that you remain masked until you leave the worship service and are again outside.

* For your convenience, an updated [COVID Screening Questionnaire](#) is now available on the church website.

WHY DO WE ASK THAT YOU CONTINUE TO WEAR A MASK?

First, know that the Return to Church Committee and the Session are continually examining our protocols and procedures related to the COVID Pandemic. We realize that the State of New Jersey has eliminated almost all restrictions for those who are vaccinated and recommends social distancing and masking for those not vaccinated be continued. Yet, the Pandemic continues to be with us, and the new variants of the disease is heavily striking the unvaccinated. And, while the effectiveness of the vaccine is incredibly high, it is still possible for a vaccinated person to contract Covid while suffering symptoms at a less dangerous level.

While the percentage of our congregation who have been vaccinated is high, we also know that there are those in our midst who are not able to be vaccinated for any number of reasons, including choice. We are an open congregation, welcoming any and all who come to gather with us in worship. We ask that all who attend our worship in person remain masked in order to respect and protect everyone, from the youngest child who cannot be vaccinated, to the oldest person who has been vaccinated but is still vulnerable to the Covid virus. It is for "the least of these" in our midst that we will continue to ask people to wear their mask during in-person worship.

We recognize that masking is difficult for some. If your mask becomes unbearable, we encourage you to step out of the worship service (yes, even during the sermon) and remove your mask once you have passed to the outside.

DECEMBER WORSHIP at E-CPC

Ewing-Covenant Presbyterian Church will continue to gather both in person and online for worship through the month of December. Those who attend in person are asked to be masked and to continue to practice social distancing. For those who prefer to worship online, the Zoom Link remains the same:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/910100569>

Or by telephone dial 1-929-205-6099, if asked, enter the Webinar ID: 910 100 569

December 5 2nd Sunday of Advent

10:00 am Worship

Mal. 3:1-4 and Luke 1:68-79;

Phil. 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6

December 12 3rd Sunday of Advent

10:00 am Worship

Zeph 3:14-20 and Isa. 12-2-6

Phil. 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18

December 19 4th Sunday of Advent

10:00 am Worship

Micah 5:2-5a and Luke 1:47-55

Or Ps 80:1-7; Heb.10-5-10;

Luke 1:39-45 (46-55)

December 26 1st Sunday of Christmas

1 Sam.2:18-20, 26 and Ps 148;

Co.3-12-17; Luke 2:41-52



ZOOM/IN PERSON MEETINGS EVENTS

Wednesday Nights at 7 PM Bible Study-Led by Sam Bonner

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82526065866?pwd=NU14N3FHZndTaFdBU2t0cVlnRFd2QT09>

.ID: 825 2606 5866

Passcode: 399123

Sunday Afternoon Adult Ed. - Following worship

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6762714701?pwd=TLhhdS9nR3J4dWxPaDc3RUFNVEg0Zz09>

By phone: 1 (929) 205 6099; Meeting ID: 676 271 4701; Passcode: 111035

Chats with Pastor Ann: Tuesday at 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81010467123pwd=UDNqWG5pNot3MFJUEdN5SFcvQnpzd09>

Meeting ID: 810 1046 7123; Passcode: 271785;

By phone: (929) 436-2866

Grief Group with Pastor Ann – 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 2:00 PM

Grief Group will be meeting both in person in the parlor room of the Church Office Building and online via Zoom.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85946835493?pwd=U1dBbHVVQIRVNnU1d25OMThrTmlUZz09>

Meeting ID: 859 4683 5493; Passcode: 891990;

By phone: (929) 436-2866

Lunch Together...from Church and/or Home is held every 3rd Thursday at 11:45AM in the Adult Lounge. Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83279089163>

Meeting ID: 832 7908 9163; By phone: (929) 436-2866

Presbyterian Women

RUTH AND TABITHA CIRCLES

Ruth and Tabitha Circles will be meeting together at 6:30 pm on the 2nd Wednesday of every month in the Adult Lounge. This will be both an in person and a Zoom/phone meeting. All are welcome. We will be reconnecting after a long year and planning our programs for the year. Come join us even if you have never participated in a Presbyterian Women's event before.

If you do not feel comfortable meeting in person or cannot attend for some other reason, the meeting will be accessible on Zoom. All are welcome. Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81514129580?pwd=aFBINStaeDVUVGxaamZzU13c1pPQT09>

Meeting ID: 815 1412 9580; Passcode: 580310

Or call in by phone by dialing: (929) 436-2866

DEACONS DOINGS

The Deacons are collecting 43 new books to be given to Head Start children as Christmas presents. Please place books in the box in the Scout Hut. If you wrap the books, be sure to include a note on the package with the title written on it. All books need to be contributed no later than December 20th. A list of book suggestions may be found in the Scout Hut, outside the Fellowship Hall, and in your December newsletter. Please contact Suzie Wentworth, 609-462-5090, suziewent@gmail.com with any questions

The Very Hungry Caterpillar - Eric Carle
Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See? – Bill Martin Jr., Eric Carle
Llama Llama Red Pajama – Anna Dewdney
The Snowy Day – Ezra Jack Keats
If You Give a Mouse a Cookie – Laura Joffe Numeroff
Good Night Moon – Margaret Wise Brown
The Snowman – Raymond Briggs
Bear is Awake – Hannah E. Harrison
The Way I Feel – Janan Cain
The Serious Goose – Jimmy Kimmel
The Wonderful Things You Will Be – Emily Winfield Martin
The Pajama Zoo Parade: The Funniest Bedtime ABC Book – Agnes Green
Giraffe and a Half – Shel Silverstein
Chicka Chicka Boom Boom – Bill Martin, Jr.
Jabari Jumps – Gaia Cornwall
Hair Love – M. Cherry & V. Harrison



Go Dog Go – Eastman
Stella Luna – Janell Cannon
Corduroy – Freeman
Where the Wild Things Are – Sendak
Crowne: An Ode to the Fresh Cut – P. Barnes & G. James
Pete the Cat – Kimberly Dean, James Dean * any book in the series
Elephant and Piggie – Mo Willems * any book in the series
On the Night You Were Born – Nancy Tillman
A Sick Day for Amos McGee – P. Snead
Mouse Paint – E. Stoll Walsh

A big Thank You to all who contributed towards Shop Rite cards for families in the Head Start program. We exceeded our goal and they are very thankful.

Upcoming --

The Deacons will be decorating the Worship space on Saturday, December 4th. Poinsettias will be part of the decorations displayed. We are offering the opportunity to purchase a poinsettia to donate in honor/memory of a loved one. More information to follow.

We are also collecting hats, scarves, mittens and gloves for the "Giving Tree" for the Head Start families. Contributions may be deposited in a box in the Scout hut.

HEALTH IN HAITI

Sale to Benefit Friends for Health in Haiti



On Sunday December 12th, following worship, Mission Sewing will hold a sale of antique quilts, handmade teddy bears, and other items in the adult lounge. Proceeds will benefit Friends for Health in Haiti. Question should be directed to Sylvia Allen and Jane Kidder.

LAY READER SCHEDULE

The Worship and Music Committee is putting together a Lay Reader schedule for this church year. The Lay Reader will assist Pastor Ann during the worship service. If you are interested in being a Lay Reader, there is a **sign-up sheet** available on the table in the entrance to the worship space, or you can contact Pam Miller, Jane Perelli or the church office. Thank you!



Newly Listed

Betty Newberry and her daughter Carolyn Parham

Beatrice Mould, *friend of Will Olson*

The Anthonys

Judy Ecuyer, *friend of Betti Schubert*

Bill Stettler, *friend of Will Olson*

Doris Wiles, *sister of Harriet Berens*

Diane Watson, *niece of Harriet Berens*

Laura Papas, *cousin of Harriet Berens*

Carol Frantz, *friend of Harriet Berens*

Ronnie Reading, *friend of Harriet Berens*

Charlie Magee, *brother of Judy Carapezza*

Maryanne Eleuteri, *friend of Judy Carapezza*

Caitlyn Webster, *granddaughter of Nancy Coleman*

Carol Martin, *friend and former Covenant member*

Winifred Smith, *friend of June Scott*

Wayne Allen

Judy Carapezza

Ingrid Pope

Esther Clark, *friend of Janice Rockmore*

Pam Miller

Marjorie Burtis

Louise Burroughs

Jim Disler

Peace Weigh

Carol Martin

Lois Miller, *sister of Joan Hodak*

Trey Byrd, *friend of Bette Schubert*

John Hodak, *husband of Joan Hodak*

Mike Cieplechowicz

Jane Crane, Lucy Smith, Anita Swallow,
friends of Betty Ranson

JoCarolyn Dent-Clark

Kathy DiGiacomo, *friend of Terri Harvey*

Jessica, *friend of the Harvey Family*

Michael Coleman, *son of Jerry Coleman*

To keep the prayer list timely, listings will remain for 2 editions of the Newsletter and then be taken off. In the event you desire a listing to run longer, or for a shorter time, please contact Pastor Ann, or otherwise let your parish leaders know.



April 27, 1932-November 18, 2021

We mourn the death of church member Shirley Sandford. Shirley, along with her husband Ed, were blessings unto our congregation. Both are now in the Church Triumphant. Please keep the Sandford family in your prayers. Please comfort one another in your grieving



Visioning Team Update

“We’re off to call a pastor!” Step-by-step, the Visioning Team has been walking through the steps required for calling a pastor. Thus far, we’ve developed our new Vision and Mission statements, held congregational dialogues and retreats through whereby members of the congregation asked questions and conveyed their input to the visioning process. The remaining steps are illustrated in the flowchart below.

During November and December, the team is drafting a Mission Study Report, an honest and extensive assessment of where the congregation(s) has been, where we are, and where God is calling us. Once completed, it will be presented to the Session and then to the Committee on Ministry (COM) of the Presbytery for review and approval. This document is critical to the call process because it is a key component of the information provided to individuals who might apply to be our new pastor. Once approved, we will be ready to elect a Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNP)! We are hoping to complete this document by January.

Your help is needed! 1) You will be receiving a survey requesting your input into the qualities you think our new pastor should have. Please complete and submit it promptly. 2) Pray for us. 3) Also, please be sure to share your ideas and questions with any member of the Vision Team. The team really wants to hear from you directly.



The Visioning Team

Sandra Austin, Barbara Brezak, Joanne Durham, Rick Durham, Don Lovett, Ralph Sims



¡Hola!

Want to speak a little Spanish? Eastern Service Workers Association (ESWA) has many members and volunteers that speak Spanish, and several of our English-speaking volunteers want to be able to speak with them! We've found a volunteer teacher and are working on details. If you are interested in participating, please let Sandra Austin know (609-658-2379). ¡Gracias!

Pledge Envelops for 2022 are ready for Pick Up.

Some church members and friends are no longer using pledge envelops. Your giving has shifted to a monthly basis, you use your own envelops, or you contribute using electronic means. We have noted your preference, and have not ordered 2022 boxes on your behalf.

For those of you who continue using pledge envelops, please know that new boxes for 2022 have arrived and will be available for pick-up in the worship space on Sundays in December. You may also pick up your box during the week, or request that it be delivered to you by calling the church office 609-882-3673, and speaking with Debbie Pelsinski.

If you are a person who has not been using your pledge envelops but find that you want to resume to using them, extra boxes have been ordered and are available.



If you would like to make a donation toward memorial poinsettias please fill in the tear-off below and put it in the offering plate or return it to the church office.

The suggested donation for poinsettias is \$15.00.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

(PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

In memory of: _____

For Glory of God:

Have you paid your 2021 Per Capita Assessment?

Each congregation is asked to pay a Per Capita Assessment to the Presbytery each year. The Per Capita Assessment basically is our dues to the PC(USA). The funds are used to pay the operating costs of the Presbytery, the Synod, and the General Assembly. It also various mission causes. **The assessment for 2021 is \$34.50 per person.** The church must pay this amount, irrespective of how much it collects from its members. So far this year, only about half of the members of E-CPC have paid their 2021 assessment to the church. We understand that some individuals are in financial situations where they cannot afford to pay this year. The church will gladly pay this amount on your behalf. But, perhaps you simply have forgotten about it, or did not even know that you owed this amount?

There is an envelope near the front of your box of offering envelopes, but you can merely write a check, put it in a plain envelope, and send it to the office or drop it in the offering plate on Sundays. Be sure to write "Per Capita" in the memo line of your check for \$34.50 per person.

Thank you very much for remembering to pay this.

PLEASE BE ADVISED:

The Presbytery of the Coastlands voted at its recent November 23rd meeting to increase "per capita" to \$40.00 for 2022. If you have questions, speak with Pastor Ann, or Elders Will Olson and Pam Miller



Advent Devotions

Hope is hard to find during a long pandemic. Dark feelings of grief, loss, anger, betrayal and despair plague our souls and our communities. As the light fades and the evenings grow long this December, the season of Advent reminds us that *God is with us in the night.*

Advent is a time of preparation for the birth of the Christ child. This year, Advent begins on November 30. **Our devotional series will be provided in weekly installments both by email, printed copies on the table at the back of the Worship space and in the church office.** The Christian Education committee hopes you will find this to be a valuable way in which to deepen your spiritual walk with God.

These devotions guide us to observe God at work in the dark, marvel at the beauty of creation lit by moon and stars, and rest from the day's labor. Darkness is often associated with evil and suffering, but a devotional exploration of "night" bears witness to Christ's Good News. Exploring biblical happenings that occur at night – visions, angel visits, prisoners set free – we will move through this Advent season as watchful disciples, keeping vigil for the One who is promised to arrive like a thief in the night.

The Adult Education Classes during Advent in *Celebrating the Child in our world and in all of us.*

- December 5 Rosa Ross will lead a session on *What Does it Mean that God Became a Child?* which will investigate how we think about Jesus on the cross in relation to Jesus as a helpless baby.
- December 12 Pam Hoffman will present *The Littlest Angel* and we will share memories about childhood experiences celebrating the Christ Child.
- December 19 Explore the story of *The Other Wiseman* or the fourth wiseman and talk about the journey to seek and find the Christ Child.

Offerings and ways to reach out to others:

Congregational Christmas Card. We donate the postage we would have spent on stamps for the card. This year we are asking people to send their donation by mail, electronically or deliver to the Church Office or we will have a signup sheet at worship on Sundays in December. Please write on the memo line Christmas Card. The names will appear in the January newsletter. We will begin receiving this offering after November 28th. The committee is recommending to the Session that the money given this year goes to **Presbyterian Disaster Relief for Hurricane relief.** An article will appear in the January newsletter.

Who do we choose to donate to this year? Task; Arm in Arm;?

The Christmas Joy Offering. You will be receiving in the mail a flyer and envelope for this offering (one of the 4 major offerings of PC(USA)).

“God is with us”. Matthew 1:23

The Christmas Offering will be taken with envelopes already in the congregational pledge boxes may be delivered, sent either by mail or electronically. This offering will be reported to Session at the January meeting of Session to decide where this financial offering might be best used at this time. The Offering is usually received during the Christmas Eve Service. Write Christmas Offering on the memo line.



Thank you

for your support of the
PC(USA) this #GivingTuesday!

Thank you for your support of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on **#GivingTuesday!** Together we raised over \$145,000, and the gifts continue coming in! Your generosity will help the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) live out our call to be a Matthew 25 Church by addressing systemic poverty, structural racism, and congregational vitality.

If you missed portions of yesterday's live stream, we invite you to visit our [Facebook page](#) for videos and highlights.

Please Complete the Pastor Characteristics Survey



Our congregation is in the process of preparing to call (i.e., hire) a new installed pastor. The Visioning Team is tasked with preparing a report called the Mission Study. The information contained in the Mission Study will be used to prepare something called a Ministry Information Form, which essentially is a very detailed job ad for the new pastor. One important component of the Mission Study will be a description of the characteristics needed in the person who is open to being called to our congregation.

The Visioning Team needs your input to help define the qualities a pastor will need to lead our congregation into our future Vision and Mission, and to care for the needs of our church family. Please complete the **Pastor Characteristics Survey** as soon as possible.

The survey is being made available as both online and paper versions. You may complete either version, but please complete the survey only once. However, each person in a household should complete their own copy of the survey separately. If you complete the paper version, you may mail it to the church, drop it off at the church office, or drop it off in the box provided at the back of the worship space.

Paper versions will be handed out in the worship space on Sunday, November 21st. Paper copies also will be mailed to those who normally receive paper copies of the newsletter in the mail. For those who prefer to respond online, the link is provided here:

<https://forms.gle/oCd5BrsfMfuLLhc8A>

Please complete the survey and return it no later than December 19, 2021.

Thank you from the Visioning Team.

Spreading Christmas Joy!

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it abundantly." John 10:10

"Love one another with mutual affection; outdone another in showing honor." Romans 12:10

Your Missions Team hopes you can support the Christmas Joy Offering this year!

This is one the Presbyterian Church's special offerings which you can learn more about on their website: www.pcusa.org/christmasjoy During the Advent season, pick up the *Christmas Joy Offering* brochure and envelope in our Worship Space or Church Office.

What do these funds support?

- 50% of your gift assists current and retired church workers and their families with critical financial needs
- 50% makes it possible for students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

How do I give?

Write a check to *Ewing-Covenant Presbyterian Church* and put "Christmas Joy" on the memo line and mail to the church at 100 Scotch Road, Ewing, New Jersey 08628.

THANK YOU for spreading Christmas joy to others!



Please refer to the worshipping schedule portion of this newsletter for all Zoom and phone-in connections.



DECEMBER 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 6:00 Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30 Regular Choir	3	4
5 Worship 10am Adult Ed.	6	7 10 am Pastor Ann Chat 10 am mission sewing 2:00 PM Grief Group 7:00 Big Committee Night	8 6:30 pm Pres. Women's 7 PM Bible Study	9 6:00 Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30 Regular Choir	10	11
12 Worship 10am Adult Ed. Mission Sewing Sale to help Haiti	13	14 7:00 Deacon's Mtg	15 7:00 PM Session meeting 7 PM Bible Study	16 6:00 Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30 Regular Choir	17	18
Worship 10am Adult Ed.	20	21 2:00 PM Grief Group – Ann 7:00 Service of Solace and Hope	22 7 PM Bible Study	23 6:00 Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30 Regular Choir	24 Christmas Eve service	25 Nativity of the Lord/ Christmas Day 
Worship 10am Adult Ed.	27	28 7 PM Session Mtg	29 7 PM Bible Study	30 6:00 Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30 Regular Choir	31	

Please refer to the worshipping schedule portion of this newsletter for all Zoom and phone-in connections.

Memorial Flowers – Now Scheduling

We are now scheduling Sunday Memorial Church Flowers, beginning Sunday August 8th. If you would like to schedule for a loved one, please fill out the form below. Please make your check for \$48 out to E-CPC and indicate "Sunday Flowers" in the memo line.

DONATED BY: _____ Requested Sunday Date: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION (phone or email): _____

NAME OF PERSON(S) FLOWERS ARE IN MEMORY OF: _____

Flower Memorials will be in the Sunday Bulletin

Please cut this form out and send or bring into to the church office along with your donation.

Questions? Please contact the church office at churchoffice@ewingpres.org or 609-882-3673

Memorial Flowers – Now Scheduling 

NEW CHURCH NAME: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION (phone or email): _____

Submit this form by snail mail to the church office, email it to churchoffice@ewingpres.org, call into the church office by dialing 609-882-3673, or put this suggestion into a box provided in the narthex!