

# The Dayspring

## Newton Presbyterian Church PC(USA)

### Advent and Christmas 2020

#### Isaiah 62.2-4

2 The nations shall see your vindication,  
and all the kings your glory;  
and you shall be called by a new name  
that the mouth of the Lord will give.

3 You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,  
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

4 You shall no more be termed Forsaken,  
and your land shall no more be termed Desolate;  
but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her,  
and your land Married;  
for the Lord delights in you,  
and your land shall be married.

I can't wait! That was my most frequent thought about Christmas when I was a child. The month of Advent was full, but I lived safely in the existence of a child. While there was a church Christmas party to plan, and a school holiday concert to rehearse, and presents to wrap, and a tree to decorate, and new clothes to try on and buy, my life was blissfully ignorant of most issues. My parents would tell me what to do and when to show up, and my grandparents would come, and my "contributions" consisted of helping to put the crèche out (and try to come up with a way to use fishing line to hang the angel above it that looked "natural"), and helping to hang Christmas ornaments on the tree, and occasionally shoo the cat away from the low hanging ornaments. Other than that, I would mostly page through the Sears or J.C. Penney catalogues, and wonder and daydream about what might be under the tree for me on Christmas morning. Little did I know or appreciate the number of hours that went into cooking, planning, shopping, wrapping, baking, and Christmas card writing that occurred in our home.

Christians are a little bit like children. Oh, we're older, and appreciate more the effort that goes into our celebrations and other efforts to mark the holiday. But seldom do we think about the enormous effort that the triune God has put into the reality in which we live. The brilliant early theologian, Irenaeus of Lyons, who lived from ca. 130-202 in the Roman Empire, gave some thought to this. He linked the beginning of creation and the stories of Adam and Eve to the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. In Irenaeus' theology, Jesus recapitulated the history of the earliest world. Just as Eve was a virgin when she was tempted by the serpent, so it was Mary who was a virgin when she was obedient to God's plan. Just as Eve's sin was tied inextricably to a tree, so too Jesus died on a tree, taking the world's sins upon himself. When we think about Irenaeus' theories, we begin to see that God has been planning the events we commemorate on Christmas from the beginning of humanity's time on earth.

Irenaeus may not have gone far enough. John the evangelist, in his gospel, begins with some of the most profound words about Jesus ever written – "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." John was convinced that God's plan had begun at the very first moment of time, at the very first instant of creation. God has been planning, and working, and sacrificing, for eons while we like children have wondered what our presents will look like.

It is wonderful to be a child, and not be burdened with the cares and concerns of creating the celebratory moments of a holiday. But the apostle tells us that when we became adults, it was important to put childish things away. One such thing is to think that we have a grasp on the enormous effort God has put into the reality we celebrate on Christmas – that Christ has come to earth to create not only salvation – but another



See you in church,  
RW

chapter in God's relationship with humanity that stretches back to the very first instant of time. We do not, and cannot grasp that fully. But taking some time in this season of anticipation to consider the enormity of God's action for us – the working out of love – will brighten not only our holidays, but also our devotion to the Lord of Heaven and Earth.

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### Lighting the Advent Wreath in the Tradition of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love

Merry Christmas from the McTaggart / Nolan Family,  
and best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year



*Elle, Tom, Laura, Adair*

Merry Christmas and a Happy  
New Year from the Donkors



*Leila Abena, Mariama, Kweku*

In the ancient world, various peoples lit fires to mark the turning of the light into winter's season and to pray for the return of the light.

The church has Christianized that practice in the lighting of the Advent wreath. To us, these candles are signs of the growing light of Christ who is coming again in all fullness into the darkness of our world.

Until the dawning of that Great Day, we watch and wait in Holy Spirit for Christ's coming into the darkness of our world, lighting candles of hope, peace, joy, and love;

and remembering the promises of God with prayer.



*Allison, Dave  
Jonah, Natalie*

Merry Christmas!!  
from the Penn Family

*Ethan, Gerald,  
Arianna, Magdalene, Briella*



A Joyous Christmas is wished for all!  
from the Tabi Family

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Newton Presbyterian Church is deeply committed to the cause of ending systemic racism and social injustice in America and around the world. This position is aligned with that of our denomination, the PC(USA). To see our full statement on social justice, please visit our website and in the menu go to "About Us / What We Believe":  
<http://www.newtonpresbyterianchurch.org/what-we-believe.html>

### Advent and Christmas Readings

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent

First Reading Isaiah 64:1-9  
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19  
Second Reading 1 Corinthians 1:3-9  
Gospel Mark 13:24-37

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent

First Reading Isaiah 40:1-11  
Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13  
Second Reading 2 Peter 3:8-15a  
Gospel Mark 1:1-8

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent

First Reading Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11  
Psalm 126:1-6  
Second Reading 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24  
Or Alternate Second Reading  
Luke 1:46b-55  
Gospel John 1:6-8, 19-28

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

First Reading 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16  
Response Luke 1:47-55  
Or Alternate Response  
Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26  
Second Reading Romans 16:25-27  
Gospel Luke 1:26-38

#### Christmas Eve

First Lesson: Isaiah 9:1-7  
Second Lesson: Isaiah 11:1-9  
Third Lesson: Luke 1:26-38  
Fourth Lesson: Luke 2:1-7  
Fifth Lesson: Luke 2:8-20  
Sixth Lesson: John 1:1-14

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Christmas

First Reading Isaiah 61:10-62:3  
Psalm 148:1-14  
Second Reading Galatians 4:4-7  
Gospel Luke 2:22-40

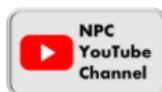
#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Christmas

First Reading Jeremiah 31:7-14  
Psalm 147:12-20  
Second Reading Ephesians 1:3-14  
Gospel John 1:(1-9) 10-18

#### Epiphany

First Reading Isaiah 60:1-6  
Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14  
Second Reading Ephesians 3:1-12  
Gospel Matthew 2:1-12

You can find our services online by pressing the "NPC YouTube Channel" button on our church website at  
<http://www.newtonpresbyterianchurch.org/>



You may also access our services from Facebook by clicking 'watch video' on our home page. Find us on Facebook by searching for "Newton Presbyterian Church" or click the link  
<https://www.facebook.com/newtonpresbyterianchurch>  
Please be sure to "Like" the page and enjoy viewing our amazing events past and present!





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### Committee Spotlight: Outreach

Outreach Committee: Anita Ulloa, Elder / Chair; Esther Tambe, Elder; Phyllis Doig, Deacon; MaryLou Smith; Gerald Tabi; Emmanuel Tendo; and Ewen Urquhart

#### What is the Outreach Committee planning?

Our first year kicked off with an all-church brainstorming event in March 2019. The brainstorming focused on 2 questions that would serve as the blueprint for future outreach planning. The rich conversations and thinking have and will continue to help us build future programming.

#### Question 1 – Why is outreach important to NPC?

1. Share the Gospel
2. Bring people into church/connect
3. Generate revenue
4. Survival: We need more people to do tasks and develop ministries
5. Programs can't run without people
6. Counter negative myths about Christianity
7. We are called to outreach
8. Let neighbors know how accepted they are here/All inclusive/All are welcome
9. Spread the Word and love of God
10. Grow and strengthen the NPC community with programs

#### Question 2 – What might outreach look like?

1. Having social activities
2. Consider PCNS families as a way to generate members
3. Bring concerts to church
4. Ethnic festivals
5. Social media, digital presence/advertising – esp for the holidays
6. Church events that we can easily invite others to
7. Intersectional events
8. Interfaith work
9. Art programming

This wonderful event with participation from over 30 members was full of energy, creativity, and bold thinking. I am delighted we have actualized several of the top ideas for outreach. They include.

1. Utilizing social media more often and effectively  
Our website is currently [www.newtonpresbyterianchurch.org](http://www.newtonpresbyterianchurch.org) and Phyllis is Administrator  
Our Facebook page is currently [@newtonpresbyterianchurch](https://www.facebook.com/newtonpresbyterianchurch) and Kweku is Administrator  
We recently started an Instagram account, our handle is [@newtonpresbyterianchurch](https://www.instagram.com/newtonpresbyterianchurch) (If you could volunteer to be administrator, please contact me)
2. An evening of theater in 2019 at New Rep Theater in Watertown for a group of intergenerational, interfaith women with a post-performance discussion.
3. Movie night at NPC in December 2019 featuring, Home Alone. Approximately 30 children and adults from NPC and the local community attended.



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(Outreach Committee, continued)

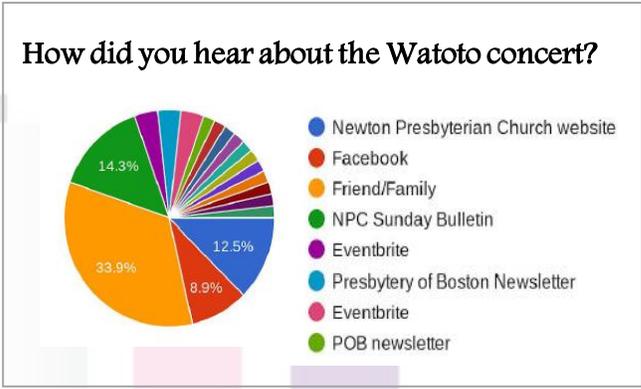
While 2020 has been an enormous challenge for all and the pandemic pre-empted any in-person events, we forged ahead with virtual programming. We began work in August 2020 for a virtual concert that aired on November 15th on Youtube. The Watoto Concert was well received and successful with the help of many. We especially appreciate the participation of Ward Holder, Hope Mugerwa, MaryLou Smith, Ben Summerton, Phyllis Doig, and Kweku Donkor.

Here are some highlights of the Watoto concert:

- 56 Pre Registrations and many had more than 1 viewer at their location
- 15 registrants are NPC members, 41 are non NPC members
- Registrants included people from all over the United States
- Approximately 36 viewers remained for the entirety of the program and many more coming in and out.
- As of December 12, 2020, there have been 127 viewers of the YouTube concert
- Outreach now has 41 new contacts to include in future programming
- Our concert night produced over \$450 in donations to the Watoto Community

The Watoto community In Uganda is an incredible home for vulnerable children and women. Watoto seems promising for future events and I have begun conversations in that direction.

The concert is still available so please continue to share it with family and friends. The recording is available at: [npc-ma.org/WatotoConcert](http://npc-ma.org/WatotoConcert)



So, what comes next?

Growth, a common objective for churches is also our hope at NPC. Outreach is key to our future. Actualizing the vision which was so enthusiastically discussed at our all-church brainstorming in 2019 involves bringing to life an Arts Program as well as leveraging social media. The pandemic may have triggered the use of YouTube as a platform for our beautiful Worship services allowing us to worship together virtually and more recently using it to further outreach with the Watoto Concert. NPC leadership is supportive of the vision our congregation voiced and to continue actualizing plans on sharing the message of God.

Those conversations in March 2019 demonstrated a church family that does not want to be complacent or ordinary about how we share The Word. We recognize that artistic skills are provided to us by God as a gift to be used widely and for His glory. The arts are a vehicle for outreach and to connect with others in a very personal and meaningful way. We gravitate towards art and it captures us in a way that nothing else does or can do. NPC congregants desire an Arts Program to share God's message with a wider reach. My hope is to continue actualizing the vision of our congregation. For that, we need helping hands.

The Outreach committee is in the process of ascertaining who will be on our committee next year. A big thank you to the members who have served to date and are invited to remain on this committee, Phyllis Doig, MaryLou Smith, Gerald Tabi, Esther Tambe, Emmanuel Tendo, and Ewen Urquhart.

Anita Ulloa  
Elder and Chair, Outreach Committee



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### Church Committee Updates

#### STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

**Kathy Barnes, Elder / Chair ; Lou Fazio, Treasurer**

We are working hard to resolve the issue with the smoke beam detectors in the sanctuary, and have a meeting scheduled with the Newton Fire Prevention and Assured Fire Alarm to come up with a new plan.

#### 2020 SUCCESSES -

- We worked on resolving additional problem areas of the church roof that have been leaking. There are two more areas of concern that we are looking at to prevent further interior damage.
- We completed the installation of a new heating system in the kitchen.
- We continue to make repairs and improvements to our steam boiler.
- We restored our wooden exterior sign at the front of the church.
- We were able to rent out two parking spaces in the back of the church which helped to offset the expense of the kitchen heater.
- And, we refurbished our vestry floor which looks refreshed and beautiful!



#### NURTURE COMMITTEE

**David Penn, Elder / Chair**  
**Hope Mugerwa, Deacon**

The worship at NPC continues with our on-line pre-recorded services, with regular appearances by our singers. We are looking to distribute children's activities for Sunday school and Advent..

#### MISSION COMMITTEE

**Mark Saunders, Elder / Chair**  
**Laura McTaggart, Deacon**  
**Allison Penn, Deacon**

- ✓ For the third and fourth quarters of 2020 (July through December) the recipient of our Change for Change mission is the Centre Street Food Pantry.
- ✓ The current PC(USA)-wide offering is for Christmas Joy (November and December 2020).
- ✓ The Committee will be posting materials related to NPC's stance against racism on the NPC website.

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### Elders and Deacons



A very warm Thank You to our outgoing church officers:

The Session – Mark Saunders, Class of 2020 and  
Board of Deacons – Phyllis Doig, Class of 2020

*We Thank You so much for your love, dedication and support  
of Newton Presbyterian Church and beyond.*



A Service of Ordination and Installation was held Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup>.  
Please welcome our new Elders (Kweku, Esther) and Deacons (Jack, Allison)!

#### Elders:

Kweku Donkor – Class of 2023  
Esther Tambe – Class of 2022  
Anita Ulloa – Class of 2022  
David Penn – Class of 2021  
Kathy Barnes – Class of 2021

#### Deacons:

Jack Holder – Class of 2023  
Allison Penn – Class of 2022  
Hope Mugerwa – Class of 2021  
Laura McTaggart – Class of 2021

#### What is a deacon?

Deacons are called to lead the congregation in compassion, witness, and service, representing the ministry of the church in the world and the presence of the world in the church.



#### What do deacons do?

*We serve our congregation* by providing compassionate support, understanding, prayer and spiritual care through phone calls, handwritten cards, and visits.

*We serve our neighboring communities* through “deacons on call” visits to those in need, and we manage and raise money for the Benevolent Fund.

*We serve our church* by organizing Fellowship Hour, supporting Communion service, participating on committees, organizing special events and initiatives and preparing reports to Session.



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### What is COVID-19?

*This is first in a series of informative articles to provide helpful information about Covid-19. More can be found on our church website, including links to other helpful resources.*

#### Science Advice for Newton Presbyterian Church

Introduction: This series is meant to provide timely science-based information on issues of concern for this community. These articles are not meant to shape political and social views or offer medical advice, but to inform and help community members make informed decisions.

#### What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is the name given to the airborne illness that has created a global pandemic. It's caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

Viruses are made of proteins and DNA or RNA sequences covered with a protein coat that enables the virus to attach to healthy cells. Once attached, viruses send a DNA sequence into the healthy cells that forces them to make copies of the virus. Once enough copies of the virus are made inside affected cells, the cell bursts (lysis), and new viruses are released into the body. Viruses are also used as vectors in gene therapy and other biotech-based treatments which are beneficial in treating many diseases.

The appearance of the virus under a microscope makes it look like a crown. That's why they are known as Coronaviruses. Viruses are usually much smaller than the cells they infect and are not easily detected by our immune cells. A virus is about ten times smaller than a typical bacteria cell, and at least 100 times smaller than a typical human body cell. Viruses are different from bacteria and microorganisms and are treated with vaccines, not antibiotics.

Coronaviruses are a common form of virus, including viruses that cause headcolds and runny noses. Think of Coronavirus as a coat that is common to many other viruses. SARS-CoV-2 is different from other Coronaviruses because it is very infectious, and we currently have few countermeasures to stop the infection in the body and the public. The virus can be transmitted from person to person by breathing in droplets that carry the virus; these droplets are known as bioaerosols.

#### How can we protect ourselves?

Bioaerosol contact can be reduced by a combination of ventilation controls, personal protective equipment (PPE), and administrative controls such as social distancing and sheltering in place. The general strategy for reducing the chance of transmission for COVID-19 is similar to the strategy used by hazardous materials professionals to reduce exposure to any hazardous environmental agent.



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### What is COVID-19? (continued)

Exposure controls are managed by – in order of preference–

- Engineering controls such as ventilation systems and air scrubbers
- Administrative controls such as social distancing, sheltering, and universal precautions such as handwashing
- PPE such as masks, face shields, eyeglasses, goggles, respirators, gloves, and protective clothing are usually the last resort in contamination management

Bioaerosol droplets that contain the virus can also be picked up in the soft tissues in your eyes. If you cover your eyes with glasses or face shields or goggles, you can reduce your chance of getting infected. If you rub your eyes after touching bioaerosols forming on the inside of a mask, you increase your risk of infection, so don't touch your eyes with your bare hands after touching your mask. This is why covering your nose, mouth, eyes and hands can protect yourself and others in controlling infection and transmission of the virus.

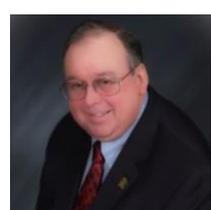
The same measures that are being used to manage SARS-CoV-2 follow the protocols of OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration), NIH (National Institutes of Health), and CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) for reducing exposure to any chemical, radiation, and biohazard agent.

Daily updates on COVID-19 and protective measures can be found on the CDC, FDA (Food and Drug Administration), NIH and Public Health Service websites.

As of this writing December 12, 2020 the first vaccine against COVID-19, Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine has been issued under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). Pfizer will be required to monitor for adverse events (side effects) for the lifetime of the product. Meanwhile, FDA has issued specific guidances for manufacture of COVID Vaccines. More vaccine candidates will follow.

*Please go to the Newton Presbyterian Church website for links to additional information:  
- [from the website](#), choose "Community" from the menu, the articles will appear at the bottom*

About the Author



Richard Tharin, MS, RAC, is a scientist with The Cerneos Group, LLC. He provides scientific and regulatory advice to biotech, diagnostic and drug companies to develop innovative products to treat, diagnose, and mitigate exposure to infectious disease agents. He has more than 20 years in industry and government service with the FDA and NIH in development of vaccines and diagnostics. He has published articles on biodefense and infectious disease management.