

# Covenant Call – December 2025

## A Letter from Caitlin

Siblings in Christ,

Last week we honored the end of the church year. This week a new church year begins with the first Sunday of Advent. To guide us through Advent, we're using resources from *A Sanctified Art*. Grounded in the question "What Can't Wait?," we'll reflect on what it means to be actively engaged during a season of waiting. We'll explore questions like "Is idle waiting what God wants of us? In preparation for the coming Messiah, what things can't wait? What demands our immediate attention? What requires our work and preparation? For what or for whom can't God wait? Is it our praise, reconciliation, and proclamation? Is it the end of suffering, isolation, and fear?"

You're invited to join Church of the Covenant in **holy waiting** this Advent season. We're excited to "imagine, prioritize, and prepare" for the coming of Christ. Be sure to check out **all of the opportunities for worship and fellowship** happening at Covenant during this Advent season. Below is a preview of worship services at Covenant during Advent (worship services are in-person in the sanctuary, live on Zoom, or live and recorded on YouTube):

**Nov. 30th, 11am — First Sunday of Advent: God's Promised Day (Hope) Can't Wait**

Join our sister congregation, Emmanuel Indonesian Presbyterian Church (EIPC), to open the Advent season with a message of hope and shared Communion.

**Dec. 7th, 11am — Second Sunday of Advent: Repentance (Peace) Can't Wait**

**Dec. 14th, 11am — Third Sunday of Advent: Delight (Joy) Can't Wait**  
**Intergenerational Christmas Pageant**

Grab a costume from the collection and help retell the Christmas story.

**Dec. 21st, 11am — Fourth Sunday of Advent: Courage (Love) Can't Wait**

**Dec. 24th, 7:30pm — Christmas Eve: What Can't Wait?**

Celebrate the coming of Christ with lessons and carols. Stay afterward for fellowship. *(Let Susan Tarr know if you plan to contribute Christmas goodies.)*

**Dec. 25th, time TBD — Christmas Day: Join EIPC for their Christmas Day worship service**

**Dec. 28th, 11am, ZOOM ONLY — First Sunday of Christmas: God Couldn't Wait**

Advent Blessings,  
Caitlin

Resources and quotes are from A Sanctified Art LLC | [sanctifiedart.org](https://sanctifiedart.org)

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## **“What Can’t Wait?” this Advent Season: 2025 Calendar**

### **Nov. 30—First Sunday of Advent: God’s Promised Day (Hope) Can’t Wait**

At 11 am, join our sister congregation, Emmanuel Indonesian PC, to open the Advent season with a message of hope and shared Communion.

*Worship continues to be in-person, on Zoom, and recorded on YouTube.*

**Nov. 30—The Hanging of the Greens.** Following worship, from 12 noon-2 pm, come lend a hand to adorn the sanctuary, fellowship hall and lobbies for Advent. Take a break from decorating to enjoy soup and salad with friends.

**Dec. 6, 5pm — Light to the Nations.** Join EIPC and immigrant congregations from National Capital Presbytery for an evening of worship and fellowship. Bring a dish to share if you’d like and regardless, stay after worship for an international food potluck.

**Dec. 7—Second Sunday of Advent: Repentance (Peace) Can’t Wait** At 11 am, worship in the sanctuary and on Zoom.

**Dec. 9—Tuesday Bible Study: The scriptural basis for Handel’s *Messiah*, the Christmas portions.** At 10 am on Zoom only (Pt. 1 of 2).

### **Dec. 14—Third Sunday of Advent: Delight (Joy) Can’t Wait.**

**Intergenerational Christmas Pageant** at 11 am, in the sanctuary and on Zoom. Grab a costume from the collection and help retell the Christmas story.

**Dec. 16—Tuesday Bible Study: The scriptural basis for Handel’s *Messiah*, the Christmas portions.** At 10 am on Zoom only (Pt. 2 of 2).

**Dec. 21—Fourth Sunday in Advent: Courage (Love) Can’t Wait.** At 11 am, worship in the sanctuary and on Zoom.

**Dec. 21—Christmas caroling.** At 4 pm, meet at the church to join the choir in serenading selected members at their homes or temporary residences. Dress warmly. Afterward, celebrate with a pizza party at the Tarr home.

**Dec. 24—Christmas Eve Service: What Can’t Wait?** At 7:30 pm, in the sanctuary and on Zoom, celebrate the coming of Christ with lessons and carols. Stay afterward to share refreshments with friends and neighbors. *(Let Susan Tarr know if you plan to contribute Christmas goodies.)*

**Dec. 25—EIPC Christmas Day Worship.** At 1 pm, in the Sanctuary.

**Dec. 28—Dec. 28—First Sunday of Christmas: God Couldn’t Wait.** At 11 am, an informal Zoom-only worship service.



## Advent Bible Study on Zoom: Handel's *Messiah*



Is listening to a performance of Handel's *Messiah* part of your Christmas tradition? Did you know that Handel wrote the music for the entire *Messiah* in 24 days using the libretto by Charles Jennens, country gentleman and amateur theologian? Jennens had drawn most of the passages for the libretto from the traditional lectionary of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, and many are from Old Testament scriptures rather than the Gospels.

What are the original contexts of these Old Testament scriptures, and how do they anticipate the new thing God was doing in the advent of Jesus Christ? In a 2-session Kerygma study at 10 am on Tuesday mornings, we will explore scriptures that form the Christmas portions of the *Messiah* and will listen together to pieces from this wonderful oratorio. All are invited to join these one-hour Zoom classes on Dec. 9 and 16. Contact Susan Tarr for the Zoom link.



## Join the Caroling Party on December 21



Caroling is the perfect way to get your soul ready for Christmas. Join the caroling party, hosted by the Covenant choir, at 4 pm at the church entrance on Sunday, December 21. We'll be traveling by carpool to sing for selected members of our church family. You're welcome to come along—and then, warm up afterward with pizza at the Tarr home. Alternatively, if you'd like a visit from the Covenant Carolers, please contact Susan Tarr at 703-527-7816 or [starr4321@aol.com](mailto:starr4321@aol.com).



### Poinsettia Alert!



It's time to order **poinsettias** to adorn the sanctuary for the last Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve. Please place your order with Marita Dillery ([maritadillery@gmail.com](mailto:maritadillery@gmail.com) or 703-276-7134, before December 14, specifying how many and which color (red, white, pink). The cost is \$7.50 per plant. Make your check out to the church and write "poinsettias" on the memo line; then put it in the offering plate or leave it in the office. You may take your poinsettias home after Christmas Eve worship.



### Calling for Cookies!



December is the season for baking, and there are two occasions for which your cookies are invited: The Whipple memorial service on December 7 and the Christmas Eve reception after worship on December 24. Start baking any time and watch for upcoming information about when and where to deliver your goodies. Thanks in advance!





## Light of Nations Worship Service

The National Capital Presbytery's (NCP) annual international community Christmas Service, Light of Nations, will take place at the Church of the Covenant on Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm. Covenant members are invited to join EIPC and other international NCP communities for the service and, if you choose, to bring a dish for the international potluck meal immediately following the service.



The poster features a light green background with a subtle pattern of white, glowing, flame-like shapes. At the top, there are three strings of warm-white LED Christmas lights. In the center, the National Capital Presbytery logo is displayed, consisting of a stylized cross made of colored dots (red, green, blue, yellow) and the text "National Capital PRESBYTERY" with the tagline "• MISSIONAL • PASTORAL • PROPHETIC" below it. Below the logo, the word "PRESENTS" is written in red. The main title "LIGHT OF NATIONS" is in large, bold, green letters, with "2025" in white on a green shield-like shape to its right. Below the title, the words "CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL" are written in a smaller, green, serif font. A red box contains the theme: "THEME: 'She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.' Matthew 1:21". Below this, a green box contains the venue: "VENUE: CHURCH OF THE COVENANT 2666 MILITARY ROAD, ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22207". To the right, the guest preacher is listed: "GUEST PREACHER: RULING ELDER AND FORMER MODERATOR, SHANI MCILWAIN, CRE". Below this, the date and time are prominently displayed: "DEC. 6TH, 2025 5PM". At the bottom left, a contact box lists "BUDDI 301-580-7907" and "FREDDIE 240-217-9960". At the bottom right, there is a close-up image of a brown, fuzzy, pinecone-like decoration with warm-white LED lights wrapped around it.

**National Capital  
PRESBYTERY**  
• MISSIONAL • PASTORAL • PROPHETIC

**PRESENTS**

**LIGHT OF  
NATIONS** **2025**  
**CHRISTMAS  
FESTIVAL**

**THEME:** "She will give birth  
to a son, and you are to give  
him the name Jesus, because  
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their sins." Matthew 1:21

**VENUE:** CHURCH OF THE COVENANT  
2666 MILITARY ROAD, ARLINGTON,  
VIRGINIA 22207

**GUEST PREACHER:**  
RULING ELDER AND FORMER  
MODERATOR, SHANI MCILWAIN, CRE

**DEC. 6TH, 2025  
5PM**

FOR ANY ENQUIRY PLEASE CONTACT

**BUDDI**  
**301-580-7907**

**FREDDIE**  
**240-217-9960**



## More than Enough - Some thoughts on Stewardship

*Everyone ate until they were full, and the disciples filled twelve baskets with the leftovers.* Luke 9.17

One of the most fruitful occasions of having More Than Enough is the wonder of the loaves and fishes. It is the only wonder that is shared in all four Gospels. It is a basket full of lessons about sharing, abundance, and the sacrament of communion; it also shows the fractured parts of ourselves that can be cynical, and slow to act. I suspect that many who were fed that day had no idea about the generosity of God that was put on display.

On Sunday November 16, Pledge Dedication Sunday, we received and dedicated, 21 pledges for a total \$142,800, to do God's work at Covenant and in our surrounding community. Most of these pledges were from members and friends who have been pledgers for a long time. **Thank you.** We welcomed two new pledgers.

How can we add to the monies already received? For those of you who give regularly we encourage you to convert your donation to a pledge, since this allows us to include it as income, thereby helping us fill the baskets that God will use to work wonders here at Covenant.

Do you donate on-line? Please fill in the pledge card so that your donation can be counted as a pledge. To allow Covenant full use of your donation make sure to include the transfer fee to the total donated – if you do not, Covenant is left to covers these thereby reducing the amount of the donation that is available for Covenant's use.

Those of you who have stock know that the market has gone to all-time highs. You might consider prepaying the pledge with appreciated stock. Speaking of appreciated stock, what about taking a portion of that appreciation and making an extra gift to Covenant over and above your pledge?

We are in a new era with Rev. Caitlin as our pastor. We want her to have sufficient resources to lead us with new ideas. Whether the stock is in a brokerage account or an IRA, Covenant could put some of that appreciation to good use! God works with whatever we give. Pledging is a promise, an act of faith, and a statement of cooperation.

All pledges received on or before **December 31, 2025**, will be included in the 2026 budget.

Before closing I want to say **thank you to all our volunteers** for all the times you have shown up in whatever way you can, all the times you step up to act with love and mercy, even when it is hard. Stewardship is not just fund raising, it is all that we do after we say 'we believe.' Thank you!

-Hille Blackshaw, Financial Secretary