



**Forget the former things;  
do not dwell on the past.  
See, I am doing a new thing!  
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?  
I am making a way in the wilderness  
and streams in the wasteland.  
Isaiah 43:18-19 NIV**

**NEW COVENANT**  
COMMUNITY CHURCH

**1587 W. EXCHANGE ST., AKRON, OH 44313  
COVENANTAKRON.ORG**



## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

### *Sing a New Song*

As all of us are aware, the coronavirus pandemic has caused most non-profit organizations to pause or at least significantly adapt much of what they do... and, without a doubt, New Covenant Community Church is included in that. Much of 2020 was consumed with finding new ways to meet our mission that did not put our staff, our congregation, or our visitors at risk. Yet, in spite of the pandemic, our church found ways to be fruitful, by enacting responsive ministries to meet the needs of our community both near and far. We know we still have challenges ahead of us but with continued support of our faithful community as a whole we know we will succeed.

Accordingly, the New Year invites us to participate in a fresh beginning and to sing a new song, as new realities are acknowledged and new possibilities are realized. But most significantly, the new year offers to us an opportunity to embrace the gospel's new normal of trusting in God's way with sustained intentionality, for God calls us, not down the same old paths which prohibit creative ideas and lead us back to the same old places, but to embark on a new journey which leads us to pinnacles of proclamation where we can share what we know — Jesus Christ, “light and life to all He brings.” That is our calling, and the world is waiting for our Christian voices to be heard.

Blessings,  
tom

**O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord,  
all the earth. Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell  
of his salvation from day to day. -Psalm 96:1-2**





## ***The Year We Left Behind...The Year Ahead***

*On January 19<sup>th</sup> of last year, after the worship service, we had a lunch and discussion in Fellowship Hall about what the Governing Board should be doing in the year ahead and how members could assist. A long time ago, right? While I later summed up in the February Messenger our accomplishments for 2019—mission projects, Hunger Walk, New Initiatives proposals tried, AAIC,—I also compiled some of your thoughts from that luncheon.*

- 1. Improve the PowerPoint*
- 2. Incorporate a variety music*
- 3. Compile an up-to-date list of contactors for snow-plowing, lawn service, trash, Code of Regulations, and where to find phone numbers, etc.*
- 4. Beautify the church grounds and repair/repave the parking lot*
- 5. Pursue a relationship with Gospel of Christ*

*Of course, two months later, COVID hit and closed down just about everything. We now have left 2020 behind, and most people said, “Thank goodness.” However, in spite of being closed for 9 months, we made great strides toward several of these goals.*

*In early February, a young man named Bradley Van Tyne, gave us our free hour of consultation on how to improve and add to the Sunday streaming of our worship services (crash-free), as well as ways to improve our somewhat outdate website and Facebook pages. Carol Davis found Brad through on online search for qualified outside tech help for a small church. Spending much more than a hour, Brad presented his proposal, and the Governing Board approved it. And the timing couldn't have been more perfect. Just a month later streaming the services wasn't a luxury, it was mandatory. And while our audio visual team is very capable, Brad's skills were needed to help overcome some new hurdles and challenges that came along with the lockdown. Hal can tell you just how essential Brad has been throughout the year. Brad has also played a critical role in helping us improve our online presence. (If you haven't seen the redesigned site, you should take time to check it out — [covenantakron.org](http://covenantakron.org).*

*Fortunately, our own A/V team has become very proficient in their work.. They've added features which have enhanced the worship experience. Those additions are the result of the A/V team spending sometimes 2 to 3 hours of post-production editing.*



*Pastor Tom and Ken have been playing their guitars and singing, lately, and we have been able to add vocal as well as instrumental music to our streaming. More needs to be done in this area while we await in-person worship again.*

*Thirdly, lists, phone numbers, emails, etc. have been updated and are stored with our competent Office Manager, Reesá Matthews. If you have been following events through the year with Reesá's colorful, weekly bulletins and monthly Messengers, you are keenly aware of what has been accomplished.*

*You all know of the transformation in our church parking lot and the grounds around the building. Members were extremely generous in coming up with additional funds to complete the parking lot renovation. Tim Meyer spent a great deal of time working with Perrin Asphalt as they stripped and repaved the parking lot. Tim personally worked on enhancing the grounds by adding mulch and planting perennials, along with assisting the Mission garden group that provided an abundance of tasty vegetables for Gennesaret.*

*Improving our relationship with Gospel of Christ, got off the ground with a combined service the Sunday before COVID shut us down. In October spiking numbers kept us from working together on the Trunk or Treat. This year, we'll make an effort.*

*We did have some bright spots in 2020: the successful pledge campaign; Zoom meetings, chats, and Bible Studies; the collection of clothing and gift cards for 50 immigrant families; the successful, not-in-person Portage Path Book Fair; the adoption of a Case CLC family for Christmas gifts; the record \$2300 in contributions from our members for the Hunger Walk; and our reacquaintance with One Family Under Guard via Zoom.*

*So, if we could do that much and more in a year that was virtually shut down, think about what we can accomplish in 2021! As a lead-in, a discussion of the theme of, "MISSION for All of Us," not just for a small committee is on Tom's agenda as well as on both the new and retiring Governing Boards'. And as we move toward gaining new faces in our congregation, a combining worship services with other congregations during the year could occur.*

*In closing, I enjoyed my time as your Governing Board President, working with people who care deeply about the church and are willing to discuss ideas and then work to implement them. Sure, I would have liked to talk to all of you in person each Sunday, have social outings, and observed first-hand the various needs in our church family. However, with Pastor Tom's leadership, your new Board with Tim Meyer as President, and all of us from gardeners to the A/V crew, we should be able to move FORWARD significantly in the year ahead.*

*May God bless all of you as we leave behind 2020 and move on to 2021.*

*Nancy Williams,  
2020 Governing Board President*



## *Remembering Mary Norval*

Ken and I were saddened by the death of Mary.

I worked with her closely for many years on the awesome, fun, Fellowship Committee. The committee members enjoyed lunches at the Valley Cafe before our 1 pm Monday meetings, at either the Marshall Ave. or Market St. locations. She was always cheerfully ready to work on any task given to her. Mary had great ideas, and a talent for decorating tables for a special fellowship event. Name tags were always creatively handwritten or computer printed. One of those "Hello, my name is" was not acceptable!

Mary was also always willing to contribute food, especially deviled eggs, at the Easter Breakfast, and for other social events. She suggested the Christmas Bingo game that we used for two recent parties. She also headed up the Valentine Pie Sale during a particular February when our committee was attempting to do anything we could to get money for kitchen remodeling. Since there was always so much to do in our group, she always kiddingly asked toward the end of a meeting, "Can we go now?"

In addition to all her Fellowship activities, Mary was also in charge of recruiting ushers for Sunday and special services. She had a way of nudging people to step up and fill in on a particular Sunday.

Yes, I and those who knew and worked with you, will certainly miss your smiling, cheerful face.

Nancy Williams



## A Look Back at NCCC'S Facilities in 2020

While we started out 2020 in the and planted grass and usual way meeting in our West gardens in its place. Exchange Street home, New Covenant's Many of you donated members spent most of the year away, bulbs, and helped to in our own homes, making do with poor plant them. The substitutes for in-person fellowship as a perennials should fill in congregation. But, that did not mean and beautify our that we neglected our building and backyard, and hopefully grounds. On the contrary, we moved crowd out the weeds for an easily-ahead with a number of improvement maintained campus. We also enlarged and maintenance projects, in our butterfly garden. The extra green preparation for the time when we can space lets more storm water soak into gather together once again. the ground. This will help the trees and



Early in the year, we completed a 2019 plants grow, and maintain the natural project and installed a new light underground water flow in the for the parking lot. The old light, neighborhood.

near the walkway, didn't light anything past a few feet. We installed a taller pole, closer to the parking lot, and topped it with an energy-efficient LED fixture, which lights the far corners of the lot.



Perrin also did our new concrete driveway aprons. The change should eliminate the ugly trenches from cars and trucks turning into our driveway.

Big thanks once again to everyone who contributed so generously to resurface our parking lot and driveways. This project, long overdue, not only preserves our paved surfaces from weathering and deterioration, it just looks an awful lot better.



Our old parking lot was about ten feet wider than

it needed to be for two rows of cars, and volunteers sorted and stored the useful not wide enough for a third row. So, we things more efficiently. A huge reduced the width of our paved area, improvement!

A tip of the hat to our Office Manager, Reesá Mathews, for finding out that our trash service charges almost half as much for one dumpster, that's twice as big as the two old cans.

Out of most people's view, the corridor behind the chancel platform was cluttered with various supplies. In March,



We replaced a cracked toilet bowl in the ladies' room.

One side effect of leaving the building largely unused is that we use a lot



an attractive border after the daffodils finish their springtime show.

The trees were severely pruned for overhead wires and water in our pipes. This can lead to poisoning by road salt. They all died and leaching of chemicals from the pipes, were cut down. This fall we planted and even to harboring dangerous bacteria such as legionella. So we are now flushing the pipes weekly, and the trees can grow freely for many years. (The ones at Perkins Mansion are hot water above the danger zone for more than 150 years old.) Board infectious diseases; cold water at members, and a spouse, paid for the ground temperature is below the trees.

danger zone in the other direction.

Shrubs along the street side of the building and the sanctuary wing got their annual trims and pruning. After a spectacular bloom of daffodils around the church sign this spring, volunteers dug out hundreds (Ken Williams says thousands) of crowded bulbs. In the fall, the bulbs were replanted around the sign and in the new garden areas in the backyard. One of our members planted lamb's ear, a hardy, low-growing perennial, around the sign for

The facilities Committee has a list of projects to do in 2021, none are anywhere near the scale of a new parking lot.

When we are able to meet again to worship together, the building will be ready for us.



## Due Dates & Items to Remember

1. There's still time to send in your Acme receipts. Turn them in so we can add them up. Please get them to the church by **January 17**.
2. AAIC meeting— **Tuesday, January 5**, 12-1:30 (Nancy Williams has Zoom info)
3. Fairlawn Hunger Walk meeting— **Thursday, January 7**, 6:45pm, Zoom. The "Walk" may be a walk, drive-thru or a combination. It is set for Sunday, May 2. (Nancy has Zoom info)



## Minute for Mission

Your Mission Committee would like to give a BIG THANKS to all the generous members of our congregation who, in some way, made our fall and winter missions go very smoothly!!! From the Portage Path Virtual Book Fair to the Case CLC “Adopted Family” for Christmas to our Acme gift card giving in lieu of the Christmas baskets, YOU made our missions

a success! If you donated monetarily, you know who you are! For donations of time and effort, we would again like to thank Elaine Emerson, Cathy King, and Marty Pastor for shopping for our family and Lev Anderson for delivering the gifts. A big thank you goes to Barb Clough for addressing, stamping and sending the Acme gift cards, not to mention calling the recipients! Also, thanks to Tim Meyer for helping the committee and Sandi Cole for book labels for our Book Fair. A final thank you to Betsy Davis for all her hard work organizing Gennesaret volunteers throughout the year.

As our year comes to an end, we choose two worthy organizations to receive the money left in our mission coffers. This year, it will be split between:

- Eastminster Presbytery- provided NCCC with a one year Zoom subscription and supplemented the pay for our soloists, while we are worshipping virtually, and
- Warriors’ Journey Home - the nonprofit supports veterans, their families and their society during their military service, return home and recovery from unseen wounds

We will send \$700 to Warrior’s Journey Home and \$722.69 to the Presbytery.

May 2021 prove to be a better year for all!!

God Bless You and Happy New Year!!

Margie Frlich

## AAIC— Renewal, Regeneration & Growth

There are about 17 congregations and several non-affiliates represented within AAIC’s 60 members.

The six month plan for initial reconstruction includes reactivating the Spiritual Life Committee, continuing the successful Hunger Walk/s, supporting the newly-formed Interfaith Social Justice group, clarifying just how the entire, mostly white, AAIC connects with and acts on the subject of racism, the mental and physical stress of COVID, and the deaths of several long-time members of the group. Tall orders, yes.

The January 5th meeting from 12:00-1:30 p.m. on Zoom will include some ideas on these issues as well as a talk by a representative from the Akron Interfaith Immigration Advocates (the group we donated gift cards and clothing to).

It’s a new year, so if you might be interested in this group, Nancy Williams will give you the Zoom link.

