



December 31, 2010

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus,

On the eve of a new year I extend fresh greetings to you and offer prayers of thanksgiving for our partnership in the work of the Gospel as you gather together with your congregation for your annual meeting. May the love of God our Father, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be made manifest anew in your midst!

The year now ending has been a season of both waiting upon God and experiencing answers to many prayers. I am grateful for the generosity and wisdom God has granted us. Across the conference you make vital God has been at work in many churches stirring people to move more earnestly in their spiritual journey. I have observed this in various ways: in the deepening of prayer, in the renewal of compassion for people's suffering at home and abroad, in the launching of new ministries, and in the planting of new congregations. I trust that your congregation bears witness to these stirrings of the Spirit among us.

It is exciting to see the progress of the new Dining Hall at Camp Squanto at Pilgrim Pines. We broke ground in August, and now the framing of the new hall is almost complete. You can see evidence of the progress on the Pines website and on their Facebook page. We are counting down the days until the camp opens in 2011! I am grateful for your partnership in this important ministry among us.

The planting and strengthening of congregations is critical to our mission and purpose. I am most grateful that God has called Jason Condon to join our conference staff this year to direct our church planting and vitality ministries. Churches in Washington, D.C., Bronx, NY, and Manchester, NH began weekly ministry in 2010. A first regional cohort has formed to stimulate congregational vitality in the Greater Hartford/Springfield area. As we look to 2011, more cohorts and more new congregations are in the formative stages. There is genuine excitement and much anticipation for God's work among us.

2010 has also been a sober year of reappraisal in many churches. The economic and political woes of the world, calamities, wars, and despair are a real and present darkness. I know that you are impacted by these anxieties. Covenant churches in NH, MA, CT, and RI have concluded their ministry, and others fear they are close to such a necessity. In all these things we labor together in love and friendship. I do believe that out of the smelter comes a purified hope, and out of the ashes a new landscape is born. Renewal and resurrection is the central theme of the Gospel. It must be our central theme and message as Covenanters. Such hope enables us to stand with heads and hearts uplifted as we work and worship.

Yours because of Him,

Rev. Howard K. Burgoyne
Superintendent