



Dear Friends in Christ,

I have great joy in bringing your greetings in your congregational meetings in 2022.

Saint Luke, in his Gospel (2:10-11) tells us that at the first Advent, angels appeared to the poor and humble shepherds of Israel with these life changing words:

*“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.”*

After more than two thousand years the Gospel story remains the central declaration that gives human history and every person an enduring focus, purpose, and meaning.

In the midst of all that elicits fear, *we have reason not to be afraid.*

In the midst of all the bad news, *we have been given good news.*

In the midst of so much darkness, *we have great joy – joy for all people.*

Luke tells us that the Savior was born in the midst of anguish; God’s Son entered the world to embrace our predicament, and to overcome our bondage. He assumed our broken existence to heal our foolish resistance. Christians, still today, are entrusted with the enduring enterprise of bearing witness to this great message – a message that transforms hearts, homes, and cultures as the Messiah, the Lord, becomes central.

Since 1889, The East Coast Conference has been a servant to, and extension of, this message and mission for Covenant churches and mission agencies. Together we are weathering our second pandemic (the first was in 1918). Today offer churches an array of resources including consulting, church planting, leadership coaching, pastoral development, clergy credentialing, and spiritual direction. Our churches and agencies, battened down, bruised, and weary – are still afloat and advancing together on the seas of adversity. We are lashed together to Christ, bound one to another in love, in fellowship, and in mission. As we meet to reflect, to pray, to plan, and to renew our promises as God’s people – may we celebrate our deep and enduring connection as a diverse fellowship of Covenant friends – mission friends.

Yours because of Him,

Howard K. Burgoyne, *Superintendent*