

## COMMUNITY COVENANT CHURCH – INTERIM PASTOR - REV. TONY CHEN

I was born as an American citizen in Taipei, Taiwan, and attended the American Schools there until I returned to the United States for college in 1986. (As a native English speaker and fluent in Chinese, my overseas background granted me a unique international and Asian religious life experience. While living in Taiwan, our family visited the U.S. every summer.) I became a Christian in 1993, while I was working as a financial analyst in California. As a result of my life-changing conversion and steadfast growth in my Christian faith, I changed my professional career from a business background to the pastoral ministry. Therefore, I applied to the M.Div. program at Talbot School of Theology in 1997 and there also met my South Korean wife, So-Young (Ph.D. in Educational Studies). I was ordained as a minister of Word and Sacrament with the Evangelical Covenant Church in 2005. After seven years of pastoral ministry in California, God led me to pursue a Ph.D. in Biblical Studies (Old Testament). My studies at Asbury Theological Seminary also helped me to discover that one of the most significant themes in the Bible is the doctrine of sanctification—a call to holy and righteous living. In the Book of Isaiah, God called his people to “cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression” (1:16-17). I learned about this theme early on in my Christian faith and realized that God is seeking servants who will promote his kingdom’s righteousness and justice in this sinful world. As a professor/pastor, I try to remind my students of God’s simple requirement of us —“To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8). After finishing my Ph.D. degree, both my wife and I had the wonderful opportunity to teach at a seminary in Taiwan for three years. I also cherished the time mentoring our students inside and outside the classrooms. At the seminary, I developed a stronger conviction to properly train up God’s servants to do his Kingdom work with excellence and faithfulness. As a biblical studies professor/pastor, I strive to help students learn who God is and what it means to “Fear the LORD,” because this is the beginning of true knowledge and wisdom (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10). Understanding God’s truth and applying his wisdom in life’s endeavors can help students become joyful and successful leaders and cultivate personal integrity in their future vocations. I believe that having a relationship with God enables people to develop their full potential of doing excellent work and living rightly. My passion is presenting God’s Word in its fullness, proclaiming Christ’s glory and the truth of the Gospel, so that everyone who listens may have true hope and mature in genuine faith (cf. Colossians 1:27-28). I enjoy helping people understand abstract concepts about God, his truth, and how God relates with humanity—from his creation to salvation and sanctification. Thus, through my life, I desire to help Christians revere God and draw closer to him. A believer who begins to fear the LORD will gain wisdom and knowledge, do justice, and love mercy. Finally, as pastoral ministry should be holistic, I believe that my godly life is also important in influencing my congregants’ learning. As a pastor/professor, my public life should reflect the integrity of my private life. Therefore, I endeavor to live humbly, and pursue faithfulness and purity in my personal life. Now after finishing our teaching assignment in Taiwan, our family, including my 15 year old son Joshua, have returned to the U.S. (now living in Rhode Island) for a brief sabbatical.

