



"We need to find God, and [God] cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature--trees, flowers, grass--grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence....We need silence to be able to touch souls."
~*Mother Teresa*

Despair has been called the unforgivable sin—not presumably because God refuses to forgive it, but because it despairs of the possibility of being forgiven.
~Frederick Buechner

If you can't see something beautiful about yourself, get a better mirror.
~Shane Koyczan

Desolation is a lie, and the endurance of darkness is preparation for great light.
St. John of the Cross

**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

September 11, 2016

Gathering Music

Jared Fischer

Welcome and Announcements ✕

Nancy Ellett Allison

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: And also with you.

*(Please pass the information pads so that all worshippers
might have the opportunity to sign them.)*

Gift of Music

“Oceans”

The Music Cooperative

**You call me out upon the waters
The great unknown where feet may fail
And there I find You in the mystery
In oceans deep, my faith will stand**

*Chorus: And I will call upon Your name
And keep my eyes above the waves
When oceans rise
My soul will rest in Your embrace
For I am Yours and You are mine*

**Your grace abounds in deepest waters
Your sovereign hand will be my guide
Where feet may fail and fear surrounds me
You've never failed and You won't start now *Chorus***

**Spirit lead me where my trust is without borders
Let me walk upon the waters
Wherever You would call me
Take me deeper than my feet could ever wander
And my faith will be made stronger
In the presence of my Savior**

** All rise in body or spirit ϕ Join in Singing ✕ Hymnals located below pews*

* Invocation (*Unison*)

Kevin Decker

O Holy God who made us in your image, we gather as you people. We come hungry for the stories that will connect us with our past, with each other and with you. We come to offer praise and thanks for your sustaining presence, sinners that we are, and for calling us to stand with you in the search for peace and justice. May there be joy in heaven through our worship and repentance in this day. Holy Mystery, our strength is in you alone. Amen.

* Passing of the Peace

Kevin Decker

One: Let us now greet one another as a sign of God's peace, for the peace of Christ is here to stay.

Many: Thanks be to God.

* Hymns

"O for a Thousand Tongues"

AZMON

φ O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise
The glories ever echoing the triumphs of God's grace.
My gracious Savior and my God assist me to proclaim
To spread through all the earth abroad the honors of Thy name.

Refrain: So come on and sing out, let this anthem grow loud;
God is One Great Love.

Jesus, the name that charms our fears, that bids our sorrows cease,
'tis music in the sinner's ears, 'tis life, and health, and peace.
Christ breaks the power of cancelled sin and sets the prisoner free,
His love can ease our suffering, His love availed for me. *Refrain*

Christ speaks and listening to his voice, new life the dead receive,
The mournful, broken hearts rejoice, the humble poor believe.
Glory to God, and praise and love be ever, ever given, By saints
below and saints above The Church in earth and heaven.

Refrain: So come on and sing out, let this anthem grow loud;
God is One Great Love. God is One Great Love.
Let all hearts with one voice shout
"Hosanna to Christ in the highest, in the highest!"

φ I heard the voice of Jesus say “Come unto me and rest
Lay down, O weary one, lay down your head upon my breast”
I came to Jesus as I was weary, worn, and sad
I found him in a resting place and he has made me glad

I heard the voice of Jesus say, “Behold, I freely give
The living water, thirsty one, stoop down and drink and live”
I came to Jesus, and I drank of that life-giving stream
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived and now I live, redeemed

I heard the voice of Jesus say “I am this dark world’s light
Look unto me, your morn shall rise and all your day be bright”
I looked to Jesus, and I found my guiding star, my sun
And in that light of life I’ll walk till traveling days are done

Children’s Offering & Message

Nancy Ellett Allison

*(Following the Children’s Message, pre-schoolers may go to extended care
and those in kindergarten through fifth grade to Children’s Church.)*

* Gospel Lesson

Luke 15:1-10

Tom Magraw

Now all the tax-collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, ‘This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.’ So he told them this parable: ‘Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, “Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.” Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.

‘Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, “Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.” Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.’

One: May we hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Many: **Thanks be to God. Open our ears, our hearts, our minds.**

Our Time of Prayer Together
Silent Prayer
Pastoral Prayer

Nancy Ellett Allison

Gift of Music

Mi Ha'lsh
Kristin Andes, harp

by Baruch Chait

"Which of you desires life and covets many days to enjoy good? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it." ~ Psalm 34:12-14

Hebrew Scripture

Psalm 88

Gregg Walker

O Lord, God of my salvation,
when, at night, I cry out in your presence,
let my prayer come before you;
incline your ear to my cry.
For my soul is full of troubles,
and my life draws near to Sheol.
I am counted among those who go down to the Pit;
I am like those who have no help,
like those forsaken among the dead,
like the slain that lie in the grave,
like those whom you remember no more,
for they are cut off from your hand.
You have put me in the depths of the Pit,
in the regions dark and deep.

Your wrath lies heavy upon me,
and you overwhelm me with all your waves.
Every day I call on you, O Lord;
I spread out my hands to you.
Do you work wonders for the dead?
Do the shades rise up to praise you?
Is your steadfast love declared in the grave,
or your faithfulness in Abaddon?
Are your wonders known in the darkness,
or your saving help in the land of forgetfulness?
But I, O Lord, cry out to you;
in the morning my prayer comes before you.
O Lord, why do you cast me off?
Why do you hide your face from me?
Wretched and close to death from my youth up,
I suffer your terrors; I am desperate.
Your wrath has swept over me;
your dread assaults destroy me.
They surround me like a flood all day long;
from all sides they close in on me.
You have caused friend and neighbor to shun me;
my companions are in darkness.

One: May we hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Many: Thanks be to God. Open our ears, our hearts, our minds.

Sermon

“Life in Despair”

Nancy Ellett Allison

Offertory Invitation

Gregg Walker

Offertory

Jared Fischer



Lift eve - ry gift that God to us has given;



How lies the best 'til blessed by God in heav'n!



With spi - rits one, with hearts inspired and awed,



We lift them up, we lift them up to God!

* Hymn 299

“For All the Saints”
(stanzas 1, 5)

SINE NOMINE

For all the saints who from their labors rest,
Who to the world their steadfast faith confessed,
Your name, O Jesus, be forever blessed.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

And when the strife is fierce, the war-fare long,
Steals on the ear the distant triumph song,
Then hearts are brave again, and faith grows strong.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

* Benediction

Nancy Ellett Allison

Postlude

Jared Fischer

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

WELCOME TO HOLY COVENANT

We welcome all who worship with us at Holy Covenant. Guests and members, we invite you to sign our friendship pads so that we may have a record of your worshipping with us and be in touch with you during the week. We are an Open and Affirming, progressive Christian church welcoming all. Please join us in the Gathering Room after worship for fellowship and refreshments.

MINISTRY TEAM FAIR TODAY

Following worship, the Nominations team is hosting our 2nd annual Ministry team fair. This will be a time for each of us to learn more information about the work being done by our ministry teams in sharing the love of Christ and furthering our outreach in our community and beyond. *Where is God calling YOU to Serve at Holy Covenant?*

CALLING ALL YOUNG ADULTS, SEPTEMBER 18

Are you 18-26? Join Steven Burleson after worship on Sunday, September 18th at Antony's Caribbean Café on Harris Blvd. We want to encourage and build community for our Young Adults. What does community look like to you? Come out and share your thoughts! Contact **Steven Burleson**, youthmin@holycovenantucc.org

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE NETWORK

Friday, Sept 23, 11:45: Learn about "Creation Justice Churches" at Union Chapel UCC, Burlington, NC. Brooks Berndt, the national UCC's environmental justice minister, will be special guest.

Saturday, Sept 24, 8:45-11:30: Brooks will present at United Church of Chapel Hill

BACK TO SCHOOL MEANS TIME FOR BACKPACK MINISTRY

The Backpack Ministry supports hungry children at David Cox Elementary School and Morehead Academy, feeding students and younger siblings each weekend. Bring your food gifts of small sized protein, vegetables, soup, starches, fruit, breakfast items or a snack. *Don't have time to shop? Make a donation and a personal shopper will do the rest!*

BOOK CLUB

All are welcome! Our September 19th book choice is William Kent Kruger's "Ordinary Grace". Barbara Schneller will lead the discussion beginning at 1:30 pm at the Sharon Campus. October's read is Bill O'Reilly's "Killing Reagan". Jim Humphrey will lead our discussion of this work on October 17th. The book club has extended their invitation to members of South Park Christian Church to join in the discussion.

NEW AND EXCITING HAPPENINGS ON THE HC WEBSITE

Changes are in process, so visit often! Tickets for the Centennial Banquet on October 1st are available now online. The survey report is available, so you can learn more about our demographics. Sermons are now both live and recorded, along with the bulletins, so if you are traveling or under the weather, you can still be with us in spirit! HolyCovenantUCC.org

CROP HUNGER WALK, OCTOBER 16

All are welcome to join the Holy Covenant walking hunger fighting team on October 16 at 2:00. The Walk, 3.6 miles, symbolizes the average round trip people in developing nations make daily to get water. To sign up or ask questions, contact Tina Dickens at 704-965-7708 or taichitina@gmail.com.

WE COULDN'T PROVIDE OUR WARM WELCOME WITHOUT THE HELP OF:

Elder of the Month: Tina Ettesen

Greeters: Donna Collins, Suzanne Lamorey

Media: Brian Hankins, Joe Craig

Ushers: Kevin Edwards-Knight, Sue Godfrey, Tom Magraw, Barbara Rutelonis

Tabulators: Sally McLester, Kathleen Smith

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Jean Berg, Karen Griffin, Laura Hankins, Helen Lambert, Irene Mikkelson,
Deb & Yvette Ross, Ed Sharp, Sheryl Stogner
Karen Long and family in the death of Chuck Johnson

Friends & Family Members

Amarless and family (Ben Hale), Rose Bouchonville (John Maze), Bill Funderburk (Donna Collins), John Jacobsen (Holly Middleton), Ashley Jones (Annette Shoop), Aaron Johnson (Joy Johnson), Urban Linn (Julie McLelland) Bob Lyon (Melissa Noll), Carrie McLelland (Joe McLelland), Luz Soto (Aida Marcial), Milton & Jane Thompson (Kevin Decker), Charles Weaver (Susan Rettberg)

Candid photographs and/or video recording share our work and witness and invite others into the fellowship of our congregation. Some pictures/video may be published in church print publications, on our website or on our official social media sites. If you do not wish to have your image published, please contact the church office by phone or email.

Holy Covenant United Church of Christ

Rev. Nancy Ellett Allison, Ph.D., Pastor

Mr. Jared Fischer, Music Director

Mr. Steven Burleson, Youth & Young Adult Pastor

Mr. Gregg Walker, Ministry Intern

Mrs. Dawn Simmons, Executive Assistant

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