



transforming faith
HOLY COVENANT UCC



Sam: "Norm! How's it going?"

*Norm: "It's a dog eat dog world,
Sammy, and I'm wearing Milk Bone
underwear."*

~From Cheers

Some of us, I fear, think of sacrifice as a big, once-and-for-all gesture, something dramatic, gratifying- and falling in the main on somebody else. But the real point about sacrifice, except in times of open warfare, is surely that it tends to be undramatic, prolonged and irritating.

~Robert F. Kennedy

If you cannot be perfect, then at least be generous.

~Michael Rinehart

HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

September 18, 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.)*

Opening Voluntary

* Invocation (*Unison*)

Sally McLester

Holy Source of life and light and love, we gather here this morning, a band of faithful folk hungry for a clear sense of your presence. We gather in this sacred space to pray for rulers and those in high places so that we may lead fulfilling lives with your grace and dignity. We celebrate the mystery of life, we seek to comfort one another, we pray that you will fill us with your holy love, for we gather in the name of Jesus, the Christ. Amen

* Passing of the Peace

Sally McLester

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.**

* *All rise in body or spirit* ☩ *Join in Singing* ✠ *Hymnals located below pews*

* Hymns

“You Alone Can Rescue”

φ Who, oh God, could save themselves, their own soul could heal?
Our shame was deeper than the sea, Your grace is deeper still.

Chorus: You alone can rescue, You alone can save
You alone can lift us from the grave.
You came down to find us, led us out of death
To You alone belongs the highest praise.

You, oh God, have made a way, the great divide You heal.
For when our hearts were far away, Your love went further still,
Yes, Your love goes further still. *Chorus 2x*

“Oceans”

φ 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*

Bridge (3x): 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 - *to Chorus after 3rd time*

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

Hebrew Scripture

Jeremiah 8:8-22

Steven Burleson

How can you say, 'We are wise, and the law of the Living God is with us', when, in fact, the false pen of the scribes has made it into a lie? The wise shall be put to shame, they shall be dismayed and taken; since they have rejected the word of the Living God, what wisdom is in them?... From the least to the greatest everyone is greedy for unjust gain; from prophet to priest everyone deals falsely. They have treated the wound of my people carelessly, saying, 'Peace, peace', when there is no peace. They acted shamefully, they committed abomination; yet they were not at all ashamed, they did not know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time when I punish them, they shall be overthrown, says the Living God

My joy is gone, grief is upon me, my heart is sick. Listen to the cry of my poor people from far and wide in the land: 'Is the Lord not in Zion? ...' 'The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.' For the hurt of my poor people I am hurt, I mourn, and dismay has taken hold of me. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of my poor people not been restored?

One: For the word of God in scripture, for the word of God among us,
for the word of God within us.

Many: **Thanks be to God.**

Call to Prayer (553)

"There is a Balm"

BALM IN GILEAD

φ **There is a balm in Gilead, to make the wounded whole,
There is a balm in Gilead, to heal the sin sick soul.
Sometimes I feel discouraged, and think my work's in vain,
But then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again.
There is a balm in Gilead, to make the wounded whole,
There is a balm in Gilead, to heal the sin sick soul.**

Our Time of Prayer Together

Steven Burleson

Silent Prayer

Pastoral Prayer

* Gospel Lesson

Luke 16:1-13

Nancy Ellett Allison

Then Jesus said to the disciples, ‘There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. So he summoned him and said to him, “What is this that I hear about you? Give me an account of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer.” Then the manager said to himself, “What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.” So, summoning his master’s debtors one by one, he asked the first, “How much do you owe my master?” He answered, “A hundred jugs of olive oil.” He said to him, “Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.” Then he asked another, “And how much do you owe?” He replied, “A hundred containers of wheat.” He said to him, “Take your bill and make it eighty.” And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

‘Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.’

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

“Our Hands, God’s Hands?”

Nancy Ellett Allison

Sermon Prayer: *(Unison)*

I thank You, O God, for this new day of life. It is a gift from You.

Everything is a gift from You. How shall I live this day?

How shall I spend the currency of my resurrected life,

of my personhood created in your image, the currency of my hours, my money, my speech, my abilities, my influence?

Help me, O God, spend it all with You in mind. Amen.

Offertory Invitation

Steven Burleson

Offertory

Jared Fischer

* Offering Response 38

WOODLANDS



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!

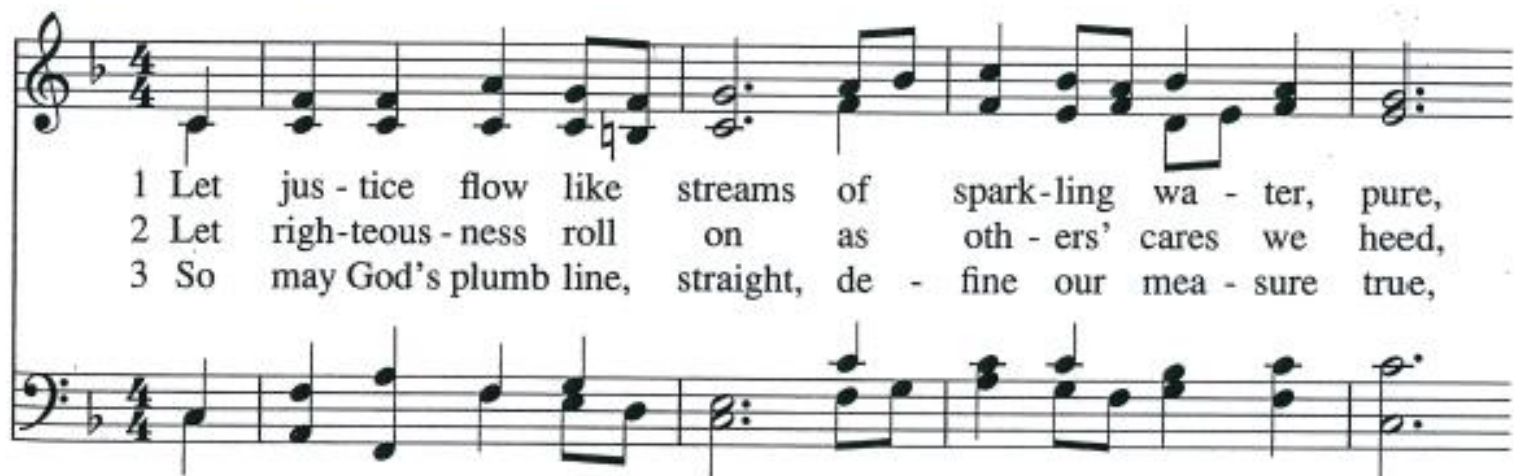
* Offertory Dedication

Steven Burleson

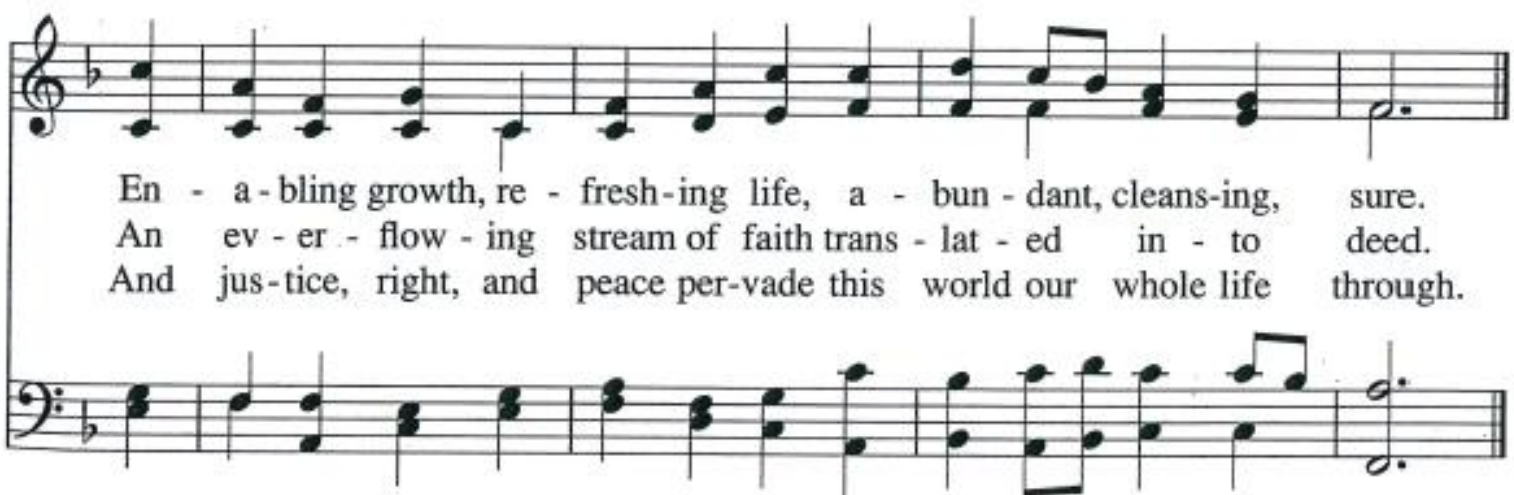
* Hymn 588

“Let Justice Flow Like Streams”

ST. THOMAS



1 Let jus - tice flow like streams of spark - ling wa - ter, pure,
2 Let righ - teous - ness roll on as oth - ers' cares we heed,
3 So may God's plumb line, straight, de - fine our mea - sure true,



En - a - bling growth, re - fresh - ing life, a - bun - dant, cleans - ing, sure.
An ev - er - flow - ing stream of faith trans - lat - ed in - to deed.
And jus - tice, right, and peace per - vade this world our whole life through.

* Benediction

Nancy Ellett Allison

Postlude

Jared Fischer

UCC “Comma” Rock Blessing

Memorial Garden

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.

**JOIN US IN A NIGHT OF
CELEBRATING & ENVISIONING OUR NEXT 100 YEARS!
Featuring our UCC General Minister & President
Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer**



CALLING ALL YOUNG ADULTS, FOLLOWING WORSHIP

Are you 18-26? Join Steven Burleson after worship today 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.

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. 25% of all donations will be used to assist neighbors in Mecklenburg County. Charlotte CROP is a poverty-fighting organization that honors the call to improve the quality of life of people suffering from poverty and hunger, educating, inspiring and empowering the Charlotte community to become agents of change through fund-raising events with local and international impact. To sign up or ask questions, contact Tina Dickens at 704-965-7708 or taichitina@gmail.com.

WINTER YOUTH RETREAT, JANUARY 13-16, 2017

Blowing Rock Retreat Center

Southeast and Southern Conference youth and leaders are invited to come together for a weekend of worship, service, snow, and fun as we take time to build relationships and nurture our faith. Our theme challenges us to ask "*What is your purpose?*" We will welcome back Mande and Christi from *Alathea*. Early bird deadline (and lowest cost registration) is November 4, 2016. Youth and adults will be welcome to participate! Contact **Steven Burleson** if you are interested.

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.

STINKY SNEAKER SUCCESSES

Thanks to all who contributed to the Nike Grind recycled sneaker collection. You kept 53 pairs of tennis shoes from joining the landfills!

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

Elder of the Month: Jeff Hughes
Greeters: Carl Johnson, Phyllis Johnson
Media: Brian Hankins, Joe Craig
Ushers: Barry Holcomb, Joy Johnson
Tabulators: Lori Cipot, Terry Raley-Dennis

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Jean Berg, Karen Griffin, Laura Hankins, Helen Lambert, Irene Mikkelson,
Deb & Yvette Ross, Ed Sharp, Sheryl Stogner, Kathleen Wagner
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),
Sarah Mitchell (Scottie Foster), Tommy Simpson (Cynthia Simpson),
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

3501 West W.T. Harris Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28269-8510

www.holycovenantucc.org office@holycovenantucc.org 704-599-9810