



Silent Meditation

*“Love has made me an inventor...
Every day I improvise new life.”*

~ Maggy Barankitse

The dry bones raised by Ezekiel are a metaphor for those who died in the service of God’s justice: those who died working to restore God’s distributive justice-compassion to God’s Earth, and who themselves never saw the transformation.

~ Sea Raven

When Jesus’s “I Am” sayings are understood to be about present reality – realized eschatology – they become an invitation to join him in raising the dead. “Raising the dead” is not about bringing back Elvis. Raising the dead is about returning from exile. Millions of people on this Planet are in political, physical, and economic exile from homelands, and from the basic needs for human survival: food, clothing, shelter, education, and medical care. Millions more are in spiritual or religious exile, no longer able or willing to suspend disbelief in the premodern gods and cosmologies that continue to prevail.

~ Sea Raven

HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

April 2, 2017

10:55 AM

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

“Westminster Chimes”
Holy Covenant Bell Choir

arr. Virginia Wilhoit

* Call to Worship

Renee Brown

One: Come from the four winds, O Living God,

Many: Breathe upon us so that we may live!

(Facing the east)

One: Come from the east, O Living God,

**Many: Our lives are dried up by disappointment, by bitterness, by
guilt;**

One: Blow Spirit of Peace,

Many: Breathe upon us so that we may live!

(Turn to the south)

One: Come from the south, O Living God,

Many: Our lives are dried up by grief, by hunger, by despair;

One: Blow Spirit of Hope,

Many: Breathe upon us so that we may live!

(Turn to the west)

One: Come from the west, O Living God,

Many: Our lives are dried up by apathy, by anger, by fear;

One: Blow Spirit of Grace,

Many: Breathe upon us so that we may live!

(Turn to the north)

* *All rise in body or spirit* φ *Sing Response* ✕ *Seating by Ushers*

One: Come from the north, O Living God,
Many: Our lives are dried up by prejudice, by discrimination, by
resentment;
One: Blow Spirit of Love,
Many: Breathe upon us so that we may live.
(*Turn to the east*)
One: Come from the four winds, O Living God,
All: Breathe upon us so that we may live!

* Passing of the Peace

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

"Jesus Gave It All"

I hear the Savior say, thy strength indeed is small
Child of weakness, watch and pray, find in Me thine all in all.

*Refrain: Jesus gave it all, all to Him I owe,
Sin had left a crimson stain; He washed it white as snow.*

O, now indeed I find Thy power and Thine alone,
Can change the leper's spots and melt this heart of stone. *Refrain*

And when before the throne I stand in Him complete,
"Christ's great love my soul did save" my lips shall still repeat. *Refrain*

“In Feast or Fallow”

**When the fields are dry, and the winter is long
Blessed are the meek, the hungry, the poor.
When my soul is downcast, and my voice has no song
For mercy, for comfort, I wait on the Lord.**

*Chorus: In the harvest feast or the fallow ground
My certain hope is in Jesus found.
My lot, my cup, my portion sure
Whatever comes, we shall endure;
Whatever comes, we shall endure.*

**On a cross of wood, Christ’s blood was outpoured
He tore through the veil, our rebellion had sewn
Trading pardon for violence, and blessing for scorn
By love’s self-denial, Death’s way He disowned. (Chorus)**

**When the earth beneath me crumbles and quakes
Not a sparrow falls, nor a hair from my head
Without Christ’s hand to guide me, my shield and my strength
In joy or in sorrow, in life or in death. (Chorus)**

Children’s Offering & Message

Nancy Ellett Allison

(Following the Children’s Message, preschoolers go to extended care and those in kindergarten through fifth grade to Children’s Church.)

Gift of Music

“I Am a Poor Wayfaring Stranger”

Terry Parrish, featuring the Holy Covenant Music Cooperative

Call to Confession

from Psalm 121

Ed Vickery

“I lift up my eyes to the hills - from where will my help come? My help comes from the Living God who made heaven and earth...The Living One, our keeper.”

Silent Prayer

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Keeper of us all, bring new life, where we are worn and tired; new love, where we have turned hard-hearted; forgiveness, where we have wounded, and the joy and freedom of Your Holy Spirit, where we are the prisoners of our selves. God our Redeemer, we place in Your hands the tangled web that is our lives. By Your relentless and patient grace in Christ, forgive and remove all that is sinful, untwist that which is tangled, free that which is knotted, mend that which is broken, and bring balance and harmony into our experience. Join our hearts, as together we pray “Our God in whom is heaven, hallowed be your name...”

The Lord’s Prayer (*using sins, sinners; may alternate “Our Father which art...”*)

Assurance of Pardon

One: As our sins are cast away, releasing their hold over our lives, before God and you who are near me, I release anything I hold against you; I regret all I have done to harm you; I stand beside the wrong in my life and ask God’s forgiveness.

Many: As our sins are cast away, releasing their hold over our lives, before God and you who are near, we release anything we hold against one another; we regret all the harm we have done; we stand beside the wrong in our lives and ask God’s forgiveness.

One: Jesus says to us, each one: “Go and sin no more, come and follow me.”

All: Thanks be to God. Amen.

Anthem “Into the Woods My Master Went” arr. by F. Callahan
Holy Covenant Bell Choir

Into the wood my Master went / Clean forspent, forspent,
Into the woods my Master came, / Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were no blind to Him / The little grey leaves were kind to Him
The thorn tree had a ind to Him, / When into the woods He came.

Out of the woods my Master came / And he was well content;
Out of the woods my Master came / Content with death and shame.
When death and shame would woo Him last,
From under the trees they drew Him last
'Twas on a tree they slew Him last / When out of the woods He came.

The hand of the Living God came upon me, and brought me out by the spirit of God and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. The Almighty led me all round them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. God said to me, 'Mortal, can these bones live?' I answered, 'O Lord God, you know.' Then God said to me, 'Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Living God. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Living God.'

So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then God said to me, 'Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Living God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then the Living God said to me, 'Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely." Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Living God, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Living One, have spoken and will act, says God.'

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 "Improvising New Life" Nancy Ellett Allison

Offertory Invitation Gregg Walker

Offering Music

* Doxology 776 OLD HUNDREDTH

φ Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Spirit, creatures here below.
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts;
Praise God, the Source of all our gifts! Amen.

* Offertory Dedication Gregg Walker

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation to the Table Nancy Ellett Allison

All: Christ invites us all to this Holy Feast. As we gather this morning, we remember our sisters and brothers from the four corners of the world. As today's sunlight inches across land and sea, Christians gather to celebrate their place in God's family. All are invited and all are welcome to share in Christ's love and to confess together our faith.

* UCC Statement of Faith 885

We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit,
God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God,
and to your deeds we testify:

You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image,
and set before each one the ways of life and death.

You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

You judge people and nations by your righteous will
declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and
risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot,
conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit,
creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ,
binding in covenant faithful people of all ages,
tongues, and races.

You call us into your church
to accept the cost and joy of discipleship,
to be your servants in the service of others,
to proclaim the gospel to all the world
and resist the powers of evil,
to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table,
to join him in his passion and victory.

You promise to all who trust you
forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace,
courage in the struggle for justice and peace,
your presence in trial and rejoicing,
and eternal life in your realm which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen.

Words of Institution

Nancy Ellett Allison

Prayer of Consecration

*Communion is received by intinction. Please take bread or a gluten free
wafer and dip it into the cup to receive both elements.
The Communion elements are bread and grape juice.*

Music during Communion “Take My Life and Let It Be”

Take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to Thee.
Take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless praise.
Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of Thy love.
Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice and let me sing, to you alone my offering.
Take my lips and let them be filled with messages from Thee.
Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect and use every power as You choose.

Refrain: Here am I, all of me. Take my life, it's all for Thee.

Take my will and make it Thine, it shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is Thine own, it shall be Thy royal throne.
Take my love, my God, I pour at Your feet it's treasure store.
Take myself and I will be ever, only, all for Thee. *(Refrain)*

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Nancy Ellett Allison

We give thanks to you our God for sustaining us for the journey;
For bringing love, life, health and holiness,
For bringing us closer to you,
For knowing you are with us in our waiting;
You are with us in our living. Amen.

* Benediction

Nancy Ellett Allison

☩ Guide my feet while I run this race;
For I don't want to run this race in vain.

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. Members, please indicate any changes in your contact information. We invite our visitors and members to linger following worship and join us in light refreshments and conversation.

12x12 SERVE. STAND UP. SHARE.

Take action with Missions & Justice! We need to be heard; we need to act! M&J wants to know how the people of Holy Covenant are responding to the many issues facing our people and our society today.

- Sandwich Ministry; be a sandwich builder on April 15th at HCUCC or April 26 at SouthPark Church. Financial gifts welcomed. Note Sandwich Ministry on your check.
- Backpack Ministry; food items can be dropped in the grocery cart in the gathering room. These easy fix offerings support local elementary school children with weekend nourishment. Offerings- notate Backpack Ministry.
- Bring food to support the UNCC student pantry. Remember those days of little to no money? Drop your items in the basket. Groceries of all types are welcomed!



HOLY WEEK SERVICES
PALM & PASSION SUNDAY, APRIL 9

As we journey through the final week of Jesus' life, we will examine the ways he lived out and modeled non-violent resistance as the spiritually powerful way to undermine the ruling "powers."

MAUNDY THURSDAY, APRIL 13, 6:30 PM

Join us for our Maundy Thursday supper and shared communion around the tables at 6:30 PM.

EASTER WORSHIP SERVICES, APRIL 16
BRING FRESH FLOWERS FOR THE CROSS
8:00 AM WORSHIP

Join us for a brief and joyful worship and communion in the Memorial Garden (weather permitting).

10:55 AM WORSHIP

Through Song and Word, we will celebrate the joy of the resurrection and new life. Special music will feature the Women's Ensemble, the Music Cooperative, vocalists and instrumentalists

BRING YOUR EGGS BY APRIL 9 FOR THE EASTER EGG HUNT

For this year's Easter Egg Hunt we are asking folks to bring 1-2 dozen plastic eggs with goodies (no chocolate please). There is a drop box the gathering room to leave your filled eggs. If you can help, contact Caryn Capps in the Nursery.

EASTER EGG HUNT

The Easter Egg Hunt with separate search sites for our older and younger children will follow our 10:55 worship service.



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

Elder for April: Faye Humphrey, fghumpghrey@yahoo.com or 704-618-2750

Recyclers: Kristin Andes, Tom Magraw

Greeters: Barb Schneller, Lisa Sherman

Ushers: Kelly Gimlin, Jill Gregg, Barb Schneller, Moses Taylor

Media: Brian Hankins, Keith Dennis, Olivia Carney

Tabulators: Kelly Gimlin, Terry Raley-Dennis

Refreshments: Plaza Midwood CG

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Gregg & Ann Walker, in the death of Ann's mother.

Gail Bushman, Frank & Charlotte Carbone, Ginny & Bob Fisher, Marianne Gannon, Jim Humphrey, Helen Lambert, Melissa Noll, Irene Mikkelson, Yami Senturias, Isabelle Reddy Powell, Caroline Utz

Friends & Family Members

Ray Adams (Linda Burby), Mildred Edenfield (Donna Collins), Kathy Gibson (Jeff Edwards-Knight), Bill Funderburk, Sara Hamrick (Beth Sharp), Alice Huskins (Jared Fischer), John Jacobsen (Holly Middleton), Aaron Johnson (Joy Johnson), Ashley Jones (Annette Shoop), Urban Linn (Julie McLelland), Chuck McAllister (Donna Collins), Carrie McLelland (Joe McLelland), John Sizemore (Tina Ettesen), Jessie & Craig Sharp (Terry Raley-Dennis), Luz Soto (Aida Marcial), Tommy Simpson, Cynthia Simpson, Christina Mary Smith (Kathi Smith), Doris Storie (Garrett Barlow)

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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