



## Silent Meditation

(Perhaps this is a story) “about the extravagance of a sower ...who flings seeds everywhere, wastes it with holy abandon, who feeds the birds, whistles at the rocks, picks a way through the thorns, shouts hallelujah at the good soil and just keeps on sowing, confident that there is enough seed to go around, that there is plenty, and that when the harvest comes at last it will fill every barn in the neighborhood to the rafters...The focus is not on us and our shortfalls but on the generosity of our maker, the prolific sower who does not obsess about the condition of the fields, who is not stingy with the seed but who casts it everywhere, on good soil and bad, who is not cautious or judgmental or even very practical, but who seems willing to keep reaching into the seed bag for all eternity, covering the whole creation with the fertile seed of truth.”

~ Barbara Brown Taylor

HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
SIXTH SUNDAY IN PENTECOST

July 16, 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 friendship pads so that all worshippers  
might have the opportunity to sign them)*

Opening Voluntary

Jared Fischer

\* Call to Worship *(adapted from Isaiah 55)*

Barbara Schneller

One: Hey there! All who are thirsty, come to the water of life!  
Are you penniless? Come anyway—buy and eat!

Many: **We can come, get drinks, take wine and milk, take it all  
without money?**

One: Everything's free!

Many: **Why spend our money on junk food, our hard-earned cash on  
tasteless toast?**

One: Don't! You can eat only the best bread, fill yourself with only  
the finest if you will listen carefully to my life-giving words:  
"Your God, the Holy One of Israel has honored you." Do you  
know what to do next?

Many: **Seek God while God can be found, pray while God is close at  
hand. Let all come to God, who is merciful, who is lavish with  
forgiveness.**

One: Yes! Living in God's love, you'll go out in joy, you'll be led into a  
whole and complete life.

Many: **Let us drink the water of life and eat the bread of heaven.  
Let us sow our seed in every soil, that others might reap the  
fruit of our labor.**

\* *All rise in body or spirit* ☩ *Sing Response* ✕ *Hymnals located below pews*

\* 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.

\* Hymn

"Gather Us In"

by Marty Haugen

Here in this place, new light is streaming,  
Shadows of doubt are vanished away:  
See in this space our fears and our dreamings  
Brought here to you in the light of this day.  
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken,  
Gather us in, our spirits inflame.  
Call to us now and we shall awaken,  
We shall arise at the sound of our name.

Here we receive new life in the waters,  
Here we receive the bread of new birth:  
Here you shall call your sons and your daughters,  
Call us anew to be salt for the earth.  
Give us to drink, the wine of compassion,  
Give us to eat the bread that is you:  
Nourish us well and teach us to fashion  
Lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

"Rising Sun"

*written by P. Mabury, D. Leonard, K. Lee, & L. Jordan*

Lift your hearts, ye broken / Sing oh sing, ye weary  
Your love has made us children of God  
We lift high Your glory / Shown throughout our stories  
We praise You as Your children, oh God

*Chorus:* Our Great Redeemer, Glorious Savior  
Your love is brighter than the rising sun  
Light of the morning, You shine forever  
[Your love is brighter than the rising sun] 2x

Praise God's love forever / speak it loud and clear now  
Your love has made us children of God  
(*Chorus, Interlude, Chorus*)

Children's Message & Offering Nancy Ellett Allison

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

Song of Preparation

"Come as You Are"

by David Crowder

**Come out of sadness from wherever you've been  
Come broken hearted, let rescue begin  
Come find your mercy, oh sinner come kneel  
Earth has no sorrow that heaven can't heal.**

Prayers of the People

Steven Burleson

\* Gospel Lesson

Matthew 13:1-9

Kristin Andes

*by John Ballenger, adapted by Nancy Ellett Allison*

So, Jesus swiftly split from the stately house where he was staying sequestered and sat instead on the sand by the seashore. The masses soon assembled and Jesus was summarily forced to seek shelter on a ship. Enconced on this sailing sanctuary, Jesus said seriously, "Listen—listen to this special, instructive, but super simple story."

A sower swiveled his solitary self through his fields sowing seeds. This eccentric sower soon scattered scads of seeds, and some seeds sort of settled on solid soil, and various and sundry soaring scavengers celebrated their surprise discovery of a tasty snack supper sitting sweetly in the roads. Some seeds settled amidst stacks of miscellaneous stones. Those seeds sprouted—sprang skyward, but weren't able to establish roots, so when the sun rose, those sprouted seeds that sprung skyward were scorched. Scratch that seed!

Some seed scattered by the sower was scattered amongst thorns and as it sprouted, was scarred by their sharply serrated stems and was unceremoniously strangled.

But some seed was scattered amongst sound soil and sprouted sprouts of magnificent abundance. Some say in the hundreds, some the sixties and some say a little less. Shhhh...Stay still. Sit silently. Listen.

If you have ears to hear, absorb the sacred surrounding you.

**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

"The Sweet Swiveling Sower"

Nancy Ellett Allison

Offertory Invitation

Steven Burleson

Offering Music

Jared Fischer

\* Offering Response

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

☩ Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below:  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Praise God, the source of all our gifts!  
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!  
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

\* Offertory Dedication

Steven Burleson

## Expressions of Welcome & Farewell

Questions of the Candidates for Membership

Response of the Congregation

One: Will the members of Holy Covenant United Church of Christ please rise and join in the mutual promise and welcome?

\* Many: **We welcome each of you and celebrate your journey of faith. We promise to search with you for truth in Scripture, word and witness; to walk with you in life's joys and sorrows; to support you when life is shaken; to laugh with you when life lifts your spirit; to share silence, song and sacrament; and to grow in Christian love and mutual appreciation. We will rely on God's sustaining presence as we journey forward together.**

Greeting of Christian Love

Hosts: *On behalf of the entire congregation, it is our pleasure to welcome you as full members of Holy Covenant United Church of Christ. In the name of Jesus Christ, we extend to you the hand of Christian love and welcome.*

Not just in buildings, small and confining,  
Not in some heaven light-years away,  
Here in this place the new light is shining,  
Now is God present, and now is the day.  
Gather us in and hold us forever,  
Gather us in and make us your own,  
Gather us in, all peoples together -  
Fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

Litany of Departure

Nancy Ellett Allison

*One: Our church family is constantly changing....*

*Steven Burleson is deepening his service as Chaplain with the Regional Aids Interfaith Network, now ministering full time.*

**Steven:** I thank Holy Covenant United Church of Christ, its members and friends, for the love, kindness, and support shown me these last few years. I ask forgiveness for the mistakes I have made. I am grateful for the ways my leadership has been accepted. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here.

**ALL:** We receive your thankfulness, offer forgiveness, and accept that you now leave to minister elsewhere. We express our gratitude for your time among us. We ask your forgiveness for our mistakes. Your influence on our faith and faithfulness will not leave us at your departure.

**Steven:** I forgive you and accept your gratitude, trusting that our time together and our parting are pleasing to God.

*One: Do you Holy Covenant offer your encouragement for Steven's ministry as Chaplain for RAIN?*

**ALL:** We do, with the help of God.

*One: Do you, Steven Burleson, release this local church from turning to you and depending on you?*

**Steven:** I do, with the help of God

*One: Do you offer your encouragement for the continued ministry here and on the relationship with others who will come to serve?*

**Steven:** I do, with the help of God.

## Prayer of Blessing

O God, we give thanks for remembered times when we together, have shared the life of faith. We thank you for the moments we have shared with Steven in worship, in learning, in service. We pray that he will be aware of your Spirit's guidance as he moves to a new place of service. We are grateful that Steven, Brittany and Matthew remain a part of our family of faith. We lift our prayers with gratitude and love. Amen.

Expressing our Gratitude

Nancy Ellett Allison

\* Hymn 497

“Guide My Feet”  
(verses 1,3, & 4)

GUIDE MY FEET

Guide my feet while I run this race, (3x)  
For I don't want to run this race in vain.

I'm your child while I run this race, (3x)  
For I don't want to run this race in vain.

Stand by me while I run this race, (3x)  
For I don't want to run this race in vain.

\* 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. 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.

### WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome new members Eric & Edy Bergstrom, Aviva Dintenfass-Dodge, Nishita Griffin, JoAnn Jellison, and Isley Mae Whitfield. Many thanks to our hosts, Bill & Connie Hildebrand, Lisa Cloninger and Kathleen Smith, Cheryl Milam, Keith Dennis, and Kristin Andes for guiding our new members.

### PICNIC TODAY!

Following worship our hospitality team is providing a picnic with all the fixin's so we can share summer stories, Steven stories and welcome the new members coming into our congregation! All are welcome!

### SPECIAL OFFERING, CHRISTMAS IN JULY

On July 23, 2017, we will receive the UCC Christmas Fund offering to show appreciation for the many pastors who have helped carry our burdens. Many of these aging and retired pastors have served small churches in rural areas that simply do not have the means to financially support them once they retire. These dedicated men and women served selflessly, and we have a chance to give them the thanks they deserve. This is the one time we are asked to match our appreciation with our resources for those who have retired from faithful service to the church. Please memo your offering "UCC Christmas Fund".

## **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. Write your mission, drop it in the basket in the Gathering Room and M&J will track them as the year goes along.

- **Drop off school supplies** for local children in the collection bin in the Gathering Room during July.
- **Support the Back Pack Ministry** with food items which benefit young children at David Cox Elementary school. Look for the grocery cart in the Gathering Room.
- Contact local and State representatives about budget and need for **non-partisan redistricting**. Contact Federal Representative and Senators about healthcare and budget.

## **GOT PRIDE?**

In June this year, for the first time, Holy Covenant UCC had a booth at the Salisbury Pride Celebration. The success was attributed to several individuals and to everyone involved we extend a *Big Thank You!* We distributed over 700 of our new "Love Buttons" that will also be distributed at Charlotte Pride in August. Personal contact was made with many individuals from several states as well as several hundred local individuals. The message that *Everyone is welcome at Holy Covenant* is brought to our local communities and exhibits "we say what we do" but more importantly "We Do What We Say"! PRIDE events give us this opportunity.

Visors are available for \$15 in the gathering room and from Bob Saylor and Joe Kiser. Adult size, black only. Proceeds defer expenses for HCUCC's PRIDE participation.

## **SOJOURNERS CLASS~NOT YOUR TYPICAL SUNDAY SCHOOL GATHERING**

The Sojourners will be discussing Linda Tirado's book, *Hand to Mouth: Living in Bootstrap America*. We start at 9:45 in the Conference Room, and everyone is welcome, no preparation necessary.

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

Elder for July:

Michael Baldonado, michaelbaldonado@hotmail.com or 502-541-5957

Deacons for July: Renee Brown, Cheryl Milam

Recyclers: Lynn Chavarria

Greeters: Suzanne Lamorey, Judi Lord

Ushers: Barry Holcomb, Suzanne Lamorey, Sue Pascucci

Media: Brian Hankins, Suzanne Lamorey, Keith Dennis

Tabulators: Lori Cipot, Terry Raley Dennis

Refreshments: Hospitality

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER**

**Members**

Gail Bushman, Frank & Charlotte Carbone, Ginny & Bob Fisher, Helen Lambert, Irene Mikkelson, Melissa Noll, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Yami Senturias, Caroline Utz

**Friends & Family Members**

Charles Edenfield (Donna Collins), Bill Funderburk, Kathy Gibson (Jeff Edwards-Knight), Peace Hale (Ben Hale), Alice Huskins (Jared Fischer), Ashley Jones (Annette Shoop), Elise King (Tina Ettesen), Chuck McAllister (Donna Collins), David McLelland (Joe McLelland), Aldo Sanchez (Alice Phelan), Jessie & Craig Sharp (Terry Raley-Dennis), Cynthia & Tommy Simpson, Becky Neese Smith (Diane Neese), Luz Soto (Aida Marcial), Doris Storie (Garrett Barlow), Virginia Tomlinson (Tommy Tomlinson & Alix Felsing), Wayne & Libby Walters (Barry Holcomb)

**Holy Covenant United Church of Christ**

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

**Mr. Jared Fischer, Director of Music**

**Mr. Steven Burleson, Youth & Young Adult Pastor**

**Mrs. Dawn Simmons, Executive Assistant**

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

[www.holycovenantucc.org](http://www.holycovenantucc.org) [office@holycovenantucc.org](mailto:office@holycovenantucc.org) 704-599-9810