



Silent Meditation

I am not saying that suffering exists in order for God to reveal himself. I am only saying that *where* suffering exists and is consciously accepted, *there* divine love shines forth brightly.... I have often suspected that the most profound product of this world is tears. I don't mean that to be morbid. Rather, I mean that tears express that vulnerability in which we can endure having our heart broken and go right on loving.

~Cynthia Bourgeault

In becoming flesh, God touched the dirt, water, and air and joined all living reality to the divine life. What will become of it and us waits for the finality of our redemption...

We have been joined to a God who cares deeply about the creaturely body, both ours and the body of the world—because God's own body is now and forever joined to the world.

– Willie James Jennings

**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SEVENTH SUNDAY IN PENTECOST**

July 23, 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

One: God is Light,

Many: in whom there is no shadow or darkness.

One: God is Love,

Many: those who love are newborn from God.

One: God is Spirit,

Many: may we worship in Spirit and in truth.

* 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.

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

* Hymn 38

“Lift Up Your Hearts”

WOODLANDS

Lift up your hearts! We lift them, up to you
For in your presence it is right to do;
Lift up your hearts! In joy to gather laud,
We lift them up, we lift them to God.

Above the level of the former years,
The mire of sin, the weight of guilty fears,
The mist of doubt, the blight of loves decay,
O God of life, lift all our hearts today!

Lift every gift that God to us has given;
Low lies the best till blessed by God in heaven;
Low lie the bounding heart, the teeming brain,
Till, once more, they return to God again.

Then, as the trumpet call, in after years,
Lift up your hearts! rings pealing in our ears,
With spirits one, with hearts inspired and awed,
We lift them up, we lift them to God!

“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
Your love is brighter than the rising sun**

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

**Hallelujah God above all
Simply to love is the greatest praise
Hallelujah now and always
Forever we lift your name in praise
Hallelujah love will reign
Simply to love is the greatest praise (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.)

* Gospel Lesson

Matthew 11:2-35

Sally Duffy

Jesus put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, "Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?" He answered, "An enemy has done this." The slaves said to him, "Then do you want us to go and gather them?" But he replied, "No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn." '

He put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.'

He told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.'

Jesus told the crowds all these things in parables; without a parable he told them nothing. This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet: 'I will open my mouth to speak in parables; I will proclaim what has been hidden from the foundation of the world.'

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

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

1. **Breathe on me, Breath of God, fill me with life a-new;
That I may love the way you love and do what you would do.**
2. **Breathe on me, Breath of God, until my heart is pure,
Until with you I will one will, to do and to endure.**
3. **Breathe on me, Breath of God, stir in me one desire:
That every earthly part of me may glow with holy fire.**
4. **Breathe on me, Breath of God, so shall I never die,
But live with you the perfect life of your eternity.**

Prayers of the People

Nancy Ellett Allison

Epistle Lesson Romans 8:18-27

Michael Baldonado

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of 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

“XXX”

Nancy Ellett Allison

Offertory Invitation

Michael Baldonado

Offering Music

* Offering Response

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

φ **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

Michael Baldonado

* Hymn 290

“Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart”
(verses 1-2 & 4-5)

MORECAMBE

Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;
Wean it from earth, through all its pulses move;
Stoop to my weakness, mighty as you are,
And make me love you as I ought to love.

I ask no dream, no prophet ecstasies,
No sudden rending of the veil of clay,
No angel visitant, no opening skies;
But take the dimness of my soul away.

Teach me to feel that you are always nigh;
Teach me the struggles of the soul to bear,
To check the rising doubt, the rebel sigh;
Teach me the patience of unanswered prayer.

Teach me to love you as your angels love,
One holy passion filling all my frame;
The baptism of the heaven descended dove,
My heart an altar, and your love the flame.

* Benediction

Nancy Ellett Allison

Postlude

Jared Fischer

*No matter who you are
or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here!*

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.

SPECIAL OFFERING, CHRISTMAS IN JULY

Today, 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 David Cox Elementary 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.

SANDWICH MINISTRY

Each day hundreds of our neighbors stand in line for a meal. For them, hundreds of challenges; for us- hundreds of opportunities. Linn Finger presents us with several opportunities:

First, we can always use sandwich makers! We gather each third Saturday of the month at Holy Covenant UCC at 10:00 a.m. and we gather each fourth Wednesday at South Park Christian Church (Disciples) at 10:00 a.m. With our *patented Assembly Line Method* we will knock out 100 healthy, hearty sandwiches in about 30 minutes!

Second: \$\$\$\$. The Sandwich Ministry is now a line-item expense in our budget- but since we are now making 200 sandwiches per month this doesn't quite cover all our expenses. (We can make 100 hearty sandwiches for \$60- \$70.00). Contributions are always welcome- just enter "Sandwich Ministry" in the memo of your check.

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.

BOOK CLUB HAS GROWING PARTICIPATION!

Our membership is growing! We have increased our book club with four new members (two from each church family). Join us at 10:30 am at SouthPark Christian Church, 6650 Park South Road, Charlotte.

We have a good variety of reading for the next four months. They are:

- August 14 - *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood
- September 11 - *A Stillness at Appomattox* by Bruce Catton
- October 9 - *The Leavers* by Lisa Ko
- November 13 - *A Full Life* by Jimmy Carter

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: Suzanne Lamorey

Greeters: Donna Collins, Laura Hankins

Ushers: Joe Kiser, Eileen Howe, Shakti Subramanian

Media: Brian Hankins, Lisa Cloninger, Keith Dennis

Tabulators: Debbie Davis, Terry Raley Dennis

Refreshments: Terry Raley Dennis

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

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

Friends & Family Members

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

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

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