



Silent Meditation

Lord, catch me off guard today. Surprise me with some moment of beauty or pain so that at least for the moment, I may be startled into seeing that you are here in all your splendor, always and everywhere, barely hidden, beneath, beyond, within this life I breathe.

~Frederick Buechner

HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

April 15, 2018

Gathering Music

Jared Fischer

Welcome and Announcements ✕

Barbara Thomas

One: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Many: Christ is risen indeed!

One: May the joy of the Living Christ be with you.

Many: May the risen Christ be with your spirit.

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

Opening Voluntary

Jared Fischer

* Call to Worship

Kevin Decker

One: We celebrate the living Christ who has rescued us from darkness and death.

Many: We are the Easter People! We are the people of the Resurrection!

One: We gather in hope and delight, waiting to be surprised by the God of the unexpected.

Many: We are the Easter People! We are the people of hope and second chances!

One: We gather to know the living spirit of God that dances joyfully among us and within us.

All: We are the Easter People. We are the people who worship the God who is light, love and joy. Thanks be to God!

* Passing of the Peace

Kevin Decker

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

Many: Thanks be to God.

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

Refrain: Lift high the cross, the love of Christ pro-claim;
Let all a-dore and praise that sa-cred name.

1. Come, Chris-tians, fol-low where our Sav-ior trod,
The Lamb vic-to-rious, Christ the Child of God. *(Refrain)*
2. Each new-born ser-vant of the Cru-ci-fied
Bears on the brow the seal of Christ who died. *(Refrain)*
3. O Christ, once lift-ed on the glo-rious tree,
Your death has brought us life e-ter-nal-ly. *(Refrain)*
4. Set up your throne, that earth's de-spair may cease,
Be-neath the shad-ow of its heal-ing peace. *(Refrain)*
5. So shall our song of tri-umph ev-er be:
Praise to the Cru-ci-fies for vic-to-ry. *(Refrain)*

“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.

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

And when before the throne I stand in Christ complete,
"Christ is risen from the dead" my lips shall still repeat. *(Refrain)*

Children's Message

Barbara Thomas

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

New Life Story

Anne Hayes

Pastoral Prayer

Silent Prayer

Words of Assurance

All: We are the beloved children of God. The promise is sure that all who come in prayer will receive the grace, peace and love of the author of all of life. Thanks be to God!

Epistle Lesson

1 John 3:1-5

Lloyd Spencer

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

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

Many: Alleluia! Open our ears, our hearts, our minds.

Gift of Music

"Lord of the Dance"

Hankins Family

* Gospel Lesson

Luke 24: 36-48

Cheri Dennis

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence. Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.' Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

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

Many: Alleluia! Open our ears, our hearts, our minds.

Sermon

“Surprise!”

Barbara Thomas

Offertory Invitation

Cheri Dennis

Offering Music

"All My Hope"

David Crowder

(Please fill in your worship feedback form & place in offering plate.)

**I've been held by the Savior / I've felt fire from above
I've been down to the river / I ain't the same, I'm a prodigal returned**

**Chorus: All my hope is in Jesus / Thank God that yesterday's gone
All my sins are forgiven / I've been washed in the flood**

**I'm no stranger to the prison / I've worn shackles and chains
But I've been freed and forgiven / And I'm not going back,
I'll never be the same / That's why I sing (Chorus)**

**There's a kind of thing that just breaks you down
Breaks you down to your knees
God, I've been broken more than a time or two
Yes, Lord, then you picked me up and showed me
What it means to be your child (Chorus)**

* Response of Thanksgiving

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

Cheri Dennis

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

*(Communion liturgy adapted from
William L. Wallace: Celebrating Mystery. 2015)*

Invitation

- One:** All are invited to receive the gifts of the table. Holy Communion allows us to look at life differently; so that we see all water as wine, all air as breath of God, all sunlight as the fire of the Spirit, all earth as womb.
- Many:** **Together we enter the world of mystery where the play of symbols creates a world of vitality, humor, reverence and delight.**
- One:** As we allow ourselves to be embraced by mystery, we find peace.
- Many:** **Through accepting others we find acceptance. In giving love, we find love.**
- One:** This is a celebration of life in the form of bread and wine: a celebration of God - parent, and creative spirit.
- All:** **This is not only a celebration of the past and the future, it is a pattern for living in which love conquers brokenness through the sharing of self and bread.**

Thanksgiving

- One:** Let us give thanks for creation.
- Many:** **O God, All things of earth are holy. All things are one in you, The earth is filled with beauty, and vitality; charged with your love.**
- One:** Let us give thanks for liberation.
- Many:** **Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus we are freed from death and darkness. We are liberated from lives of imprisonment. We give thanks for the liberating power of love.**
- One:** Let us give thanks for Jesus the Christ.

Many: Sign of God, Child of God, Presence of God, The most compassionate, Prophet and Mystic. His life-- a sign of fully alive humanity, His death - a symbol of inextinguishable love, and his continuing presence - a doorway to divine radiant mystery.

One: Let us give thanks for the Holy Spirit:

Many: Holy Spirit, whom we experience whenever there is life, love, justice or peace, grant us an awareness which sees beyond the surface to the eye of the symbol; beyond the certainties to the wonder and delight of the unknown;

One: May the spirit be present with us so that the feast of bread and wine be Christ with us, Christ in us, Christ through us. Now and always.

Words of Institution

One: We thank you that at Christ's last Passover Meal, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and sharing it with his disciples said: "take, eat, this Bread is my being, a being for all". After supper, Christ took the Cup, gave thanks and invited them to share his life-force, a life- force poured out for the new way of forgiveness.

Many: We rejoice that we also stand in the tradition of Christ's Resurrection Meals, meals of the mystical presence, meals of fulfillment, meals of the Spirit's empowering love.

Sharing of the Elements

The communion elements will be passed to all worshippers.

Please turn to your beloved neighbor and offer them the bread and the cup saying: "This is Christ's body, broken for you." "This is the cup of new life for you." Communion is received by intinction: bread or a gluten free wafer is dipped into the cup to receive both elements.

Music during Communion

John Rapp, bass

“Agnus Dei,” (Lamb of God)

O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world,
Have Mercy upon us; (2x)

O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world,
Grant us Thy peace. A-men

“Seraphic Hymn” A.P. Howard, 1838-1902

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth;
Heaven and earth are full, are full of the majesty of Thy Glory,
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord,
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest!

Closing Prayer

All: In the midst of suffering and death we find hope, though the gift of new life we share in God’s wholeness. Beyond all our endings, we encounter the mystery of God’s love. Claim us God, that we become the sign of your new way. Purify us that all life may be holy communion and the whole creation alive with your presence. To the creative, liberating, empowering God be all glory and praise here and everywhere, now and forever. Amen.

1. Crown with your rich-est crowns the Lamb up-on the throne;
Hark! How the heaven-ly an-them drowns all mu-sic but its own,
A-wake, my soul, and sing of Christ who died for you,
And to your ris-en Sav-ior bring your thanks for life made new.
2. Crown Christ whose love has flowed down hands and feet and side.
Look past the peak of Cal-vary’s road to Christ the glo-ri-fied.
The sun that lights the sky is pale be-fore that sight.
At prayer we glimpse then turn the eye from mys-ter-ies so bright.
3. Crown Christ the truth, the life who tri-umphed o’er the grave
And rose vic-to-rious in the strife, this fal-len world to save.
Christ’s glo-ries now we sing, Christ’s name we mag-ni-gy,
Who died e-ter-nal life to bring, and lives that death may die.
4. Crown Christ who rules in peace, whose power a scep-tre sways
From pole to pole, that wars may cease, and all be prayer and praise:
Christ’s reign shall have no end, for ‘round those wound-ed feet a
fra-grant gar-den shall ex-tend for-ev-er green and sweet.
5. Crown Christ who holds the years, em-brac-ing space and time,
Cre-a-tor of the roll-ing spheres, in-ef-fa-bly sub-lime:
All hail, Re-deem-er, hail! For you have died for me:
Your praise shall nev-er, nev-er fail through-out e-ter-ni-ty.

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

Elder for April: Suzanne Lamorey, SuzLam@yahoo.com or 704-654-7267

Deacons for April: Martha Bomely, Lisa Sherman

Greeters: Donna Collins, Lisa Sherman

Ushers: Jim Hong, Suzanne Lamorey, Tom Magraw

Media: Brian Hankins, Olivia Carney

Acolyte: Elena Houlihan

Tabulators: Joy Decker, JoAnn Jellison

Refreshments: Debbie Davis

Recyclers: Linn Finger, Phil Kaveler

WORSHIP FEEDBACK

I appreciate having Communion on a weekly basis: (Please circle)

Highly Agree

Agree

Highly Disagree

For me, the right frequency is:

Once a quarter, Easter & Christmas Eve

First Sunday of each month, Easter & Christmas Eve

Weekly

Worship can extend to 12:10 or 12:15 to accommodate weekly communion: (Please circle)

Highly Agree

Agree

Highly Disagree

Because we have added weekly communion to our schedule, I would hate to lose: _____

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.

RECEIVING COMMUNION AT HOLY COVENANT

All are welcome to receive communion at the table of the Living Christ. We observe communion by intinction. Please take a piece of bread or a wafer and dip the bread into the cup to receive both elements at once. Gluten free wafers are available in small ramekin.

NEW MEMBER/INQUIRER CLASSES

If you would like to learn more about our congregation or become a member at Holy Covenant, join our Inquirer's Classes!

April 22, 9:30 AM Organization & Opportunities for Involvement

NEW LIFE STORIES

What is bringing you New Life in this Easter Season? Speak to Nancy or Barbara and we will find a time for you to share that story with others.

WELCOMING SACRED SOULS COMMUNITY CHURCH INTO UCC!

This Sunday we will celebrate their induction with representatives from Holy Covenant joining them in worship and the Rev. Dr. Nancy Ellett Allison serving as their guest preacher.

COME CELEBRATE EARTH DAY! APRIL 21-22, 10AM-4PM

Explore over a mile and a half of trails and many natural arches. Campfire all day (weather permitting) with marshmallows and hotdogs. Challenging all comers to Horseshoes!

SEARCHING FOR DEEPER SPIRITUAL GROWTH? JOIN US APRIL 24

Want to be involved in an on-going spiritual formation group? Questions and RSVP by April 23 with Anne at kahuanne@gmail.com or Rev. Barbara: Barbarat@holycovenantucc.org

RAFTING RETREAT AT YMCA RETREAT CENTER, BLACK MOUNTAIN, AUG 10-12

Everyone is welcome! We will have group sessions on Friday and Saturday nights and Sunday morning. Folks can raft or tube. Cost is approximately \$130 per person not including the rafting/tubing fee. Contact **Barbara Schneller** or **Rev. Barbara Thomas** for additional information.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Susan Bennett Stiles, Gail Bushman, Frank & Charlotte Carbone, Cindy Coble, Linn Finger, Laura Hankins, Helen Lambert, Irene Mikkelson, Melissa Noll, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Yami Senturias, Ed Sharp, Caroline Utz

Friends & Family Members

Ray Adams (Linda Burby), Diane Brown (Renee Brown & Kelly Gimlin), Baby Girl Cregan (Barb Schneller), Ann Ebright (Julie Klever), Bill Funderburk, Kim Hobbs (Melissa Noll), Alice Huskins (Jared Fischer), George & Judy Jongeling (Darline Warren), Judah Jones, Pauline McCowan (Martha Bomely), Beth Poyer Meyer, Jessie Sharp (Terry Raley-Dennis), Cynthia & Tommy Simpson, Becky Neese Smith (Diane Neese), Luz Soto (Aida Marcial), Norma Thomas (Barbara Thomas), Kathryn Vickery (Ed Vickery), Gary & Wanda Gilbert West (John Rapp), Jason Wingard (Cynthia Simpson)

HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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

Rev. Barbara Thomas, Interim Minister for Church & Family Life

Mr. Jared Fischer, Director of Music

Mrs. Dawn Simmons, Executive Assistant

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