



Silent Meditation

In beauty I walk
With beauty before me I walk
With beauty behind me I walk
With beauty above me I walk
With beauty around me I walk
It has become beauty again.

~from the Navajo Way Blessing Ceremony

The best time to plant a tree was twenty-five years ago.

The second best time to plant a tree is today.

~ Tree Nursery Sign

The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely. Hence, there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person's face.

~ Pope Francis

HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER ~ EARTH DAY

April 22, 2018

Gathering Music

Jared Fischer

Welcome and Announcements ✕

Nancy Ellett Allison

One: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Many: Christ is risen indeed!

One: May the peace 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)*

Land Acknowledgement Statement

Phil Kaveler

One: As we gather today, we acknowledge that we are on the traditional lands of Indigenous peoples, specifically the Catawba Nation. We remember that we share this land with other parts of God's good creation: the dogwood and oak trees, the nuthatch and hummingbird, squirrels, deer and coyotes. May we be good neighbors.

Opening Video "Creation Care: A Story of 3 Great Loves"

* Call to Worship

Suzanne Lamorey

One: Come, let us dwell in God's shelter.

Let us dwell in God's work of art.

Come, because the Earth is the Lord's,

And God's Earth is our home.

Many: We live in God's World; we are not alone.

We share this life with the heavens and the earth,

With the waters and the land,

With trees and grasses,

With fish, birds, and animals,

With minerals and creatures of every form,

And with all our brothers and sisters.

One: God is good and everything God makes is good.

God is love and everything God makes is love's fruit.

Come, let us worship God!

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

* Passing of the Peace

Suzanne Lamorey

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.

* Hymns 567

“Stars and Planets Flung in Orbit”
(verses 1, 3, & 4)

LAUDA ANIMA

Stars and planets flung in orbit,
Galaxies that swirl through space
Powers hid within the atom,
Cells that form an infant's face:
These, O God in silence praise you;
By your wisdom they are made.

Life in wondrous sunset splendor,
Silent peaks in flower and tree,
Beast and fish and swarming insect,
Soaring bird, rejoicing free:
These, your creatures, trace your image,
Praising you in wordless song.

Human-kind, earth's deepest mystery,
Born of dust by touched by grace.
Torn apart by tongue and color,
Yet a single, striving race:
We, in whom you trace your image,
Add our words to nature's song

“The Earth Is Yours”

**Your voice it thunders, the oaks start twisting
The forest sounds with cedars breaking
The waters see you, and start their writhing
From the depths a song is rising
Now it’s rising from the ground.**

***Chorus:* Holy, holy, holy, holy Lord, the earth is yours and we sing;
Holy, holy, holy, holy Lord, the earth is yours, the earth is yours.**

**Your voice it thunders, the ground is shaking
The mighty mountains now are trembling
Creation sees you and starts composing.
The fields and trees they start rejoicing**

**Now it’s rising from the ground, now it’s rising from the ground.
Hear us crying out, hear us crying out... *Chorus***

LAUDA ANIMA

**Skies adorned with sunset splendour, silent peaks in calm repose,
Golden fields awaiting harvest, foaming surge and fragrant rose:
Earth, its bounty clothed with beauty, echoes all creation’s praise!**

WE ARE STEWARDS

Children's Message

Nancy Ellett Allison

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

Hebrew Lesson

selections from Proverbs 11

Tom Magraw

(Translation from The Message)

One: God hates cheating in the marketplace;

Many: God loves it when business is aboveboard.

One: The integrity of the honest keeps them on track;

Many: the deviousness of crooks brings them to ruin.

One: A thick bankroll is no help when life falls apart,

Many: but a principled life can stand up to the worst.

One: Moral character makes for smooth traveling;

Many: an evil life is a hard life.

One: The desires of good people lead straight to the best,

Many: but wicked ambition ends in angry frustration.

One: The world of the generous gets larger and larger;

Many: the world of the stingy gets smaller and smaller.

One: The one who blesses others is abundantly blessed;

Many: those who help others are helped.

One: A life devoted to things is a dead life, a stump;

Many: a God-shaped life is a flourishing tree.

Reflection

“The World of the Generous”

Nancy Ellett Allison

Offertory Invitation

Barbara Thomas

Holy Covenant Cooperative

Oh the vapor of it all, it's a chasing of the wind
The substance of the form, so pale and thin
Let the veil of earth be stretched again

Holy / All behold the holy
Trees clap their hands for you / Oceans, they dance for you

Heaven breathes through humankind
We can feel the intertwine/ The beauty of it all
The mystery / The swelling of a voice / A rising sea

Holy / All behold the holy
Trees clap their hands for you / Oceans, they dance for you
You are holy / Infinite and holy

A billion suns rise for you / Clouds paint the skies for you
Mountains stand tall for you / Valleys bow down to you
Everything rising to / Sing all our songs to you (*Interlude*)

Holy / The impossible and holy
Kings become fools for you / Kingdoms to ruins for you
Vapor finds ground in you / Music finds sound in you
Everything rising (x5) (*Interlude*)

Come like dawn / Like grace / Like sunlight
Bring this world to life
Come like rain / Like breath / Like springtime
Bring this world to life

* 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

Barbara Thomas

WE ARE NEIGHBORS

Prayers of the People

Hebrew Lesson

Jeremiah 29:4-7

Shirley Moder

Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Living God on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

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

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

Reflection

“Seeking Charlotte’s Welfare”

Nancy Ellett Allison

1. Now the green blade ris-es from the bur-ied grain;
Wheat that in dark earth for man-y days has lain;
Love lives a-gain, that with the dead has been:
Love is come a-gain like wheat that ris-es green.

2. In the grave they laid their Love whom hate had slain,
Think-ing that their Love would nev-er wake a-gain,
Laid in the earth like grain that sleeps un-seen:
Love is come a-gain like wheat that ris-es green.

3. Christ came forth at Eas-ter, like the ris-en grain,
Je-sus, who for three days in the grave had lain,
Quick from the dead the ris-en One is seen:
Love is come a-gain like wheat that ris-es green.

4. When our hearts are win-try, griev-ing, or in pain,
Christ’s warm touch can call us back to life a-gain,
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:
Love is come a-gain like wheat that ris-es green.

WE ARE CONNECTED

Hebrew Lesson

Psalm 104

Kristin Andes

Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, you are very great. You are clothed with honor and majesty...

You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills, giving drink to every wild animal; the wild asses quench their thirst. By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation; they sing among the branches. From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work. You cause the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for people to use, to bring forth food from the earth, and wine to gladden the human heart, oil to make the face shine, and bread to strengthen the human heart.

You make darkness, and it is night, when all the animals of the forest come creeping out. The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God. When the sun rises, they withdraw and lie down in their dens. People go out to their work and to their labor until the evening. O Living God, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. May the glory of God endure forever; may God rejoice in all!

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

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

Reflection

“When God is Good to the Crocodiles” Nancy Ellett Allison

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION ~ EARTH DAY

Prayer for Communion

* One: Let us give words to our feelings.

Many: Spirit of the Universe, our souls are in need of nourishment. When we think of ourselves as only consumers, return us to a nourishing generosity of spirit. When we find ourselves isolated, remind us that we are surrounded by people longing for love. When our ego elevates our ease and desires above care for all, connect us again with the beauty, order and harmony of your glorious creation.

One: With our spirits and our hearts wide open we come to the table. Nourish us for our sake and for the sake of all creation. As Christ is risen, may beauty and harmony be restored.

Many: Christ is risen! Beauty is restored. Love is broken open and poured out for all.

Words of Institution

Nancy Ellett Allison

(Please come forward as directed by the ushers.

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

Jared Fischer

Prayer of Thanksgiving (*unison*)

We have been fed. Each of our spirits have been united by the bread and the cup. Let us feel the energy of wholeness with our neighbor, with all creation. We are nourished and connected, and we are grateful. Amen

* 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.

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.

COME CELEBRATE EARTH DAY! Campfire today until 4pm with marshmallows and hotdogs. Explore over a mile and a half of trails and many natural arches.

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:

Highly Agree

Agree

Highly Disagree

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

RECEIVING COMMUNION AT HOLY COVENANT

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CARE AND SUPPORT FOR CARE GIVERS, APRIL 29

A monthly group of support begins Sunday, April 29th at 9 am at Holy Covenant UCC - a safe place for sharing of stories, information and resources for those who are caring for, or are concerned about, the health of a relative or someone close. Everyone interested is invited to the first organizing session. Contact co-facilitators Alix Felsing, alixfelsing@gmail.com or Rev. Barbara, BarbaraT@HolyCovenantUCC.org with questions or comments.

MISSIONS & JUSTICE INVITES YOU!

Look for our weekly news in via Constant Contact! We will meet Sunday, May 6 following worship. All involved are urged to attend as we have much to talk about. May 12: AIDS WALK; June 32: SALIBURY PRIDE; AUGUST 18-19 CLT PRIDE; CLIMATE CHANGE; and much more!

CHARLOTTE KNIGHTS, JULY 21

The Bold and Beautiful Covenant Group invites all to a night at the Charlotte Knights, July 21st at 7 pm, against Indianapolis Indians. Tickets are \$16-\$19 to be ordered by May 7. Signup in the gathering room Contact Lisa Sherman, 704-737-8263, or Martha Bomely, 704-804-0640 or martha.bomely@gmail.com to RSVP or if you have questions.

ALL CHURCH RAFTING RETREAT AT YMCA RETREAT CENTER, 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.

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: Aida Marcial, Susan Pascucci

Ushers: Eileen Howe, Michael Sladek, Shakti Subramanian

Media: Brian Hankins, Keith Dennis

Tabulators: Terry Raley Dennis, Karen Long

Refreshments: Holly Middleton, Sarah Sladek

Recyclers: Suzanne Lamorey

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, Alice Phelan, 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 (Barbara Schneller), Ann Ebright (Julie Klever), Bill Funderburk, Kim Hobbs (Melissa Noll), Alice Huskins (Jared Fischer), Judah Jones, George & Judy Jongeling (Darline Warren), Beth Poyer Meyer, Jessie Sharp (Terry Raley-Dennis), Cynthia & Tommy Simpson, Becky Neese Smith (Diane Neese), Luz Soto (Aida Marcial), Norma Spencer (Donna Collins), 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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