



## Silent Meditation

*We are called to assist the earth to heal her wounds and in the process heal our own -- indeed, to embrace the whole creation in all its diversity, beauty, and wonder.*

*~Wangari Maathai*

**Those who contemplate the beauty of earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. To know God's creation is to, in some fashion, know more intimately the Creator.**

**~Rachel Carson**

Private ownership of land is also a very recent concept. The original inhabitants of the U.S. thought it ludicrous to imagine that a person could "possess" a segment of the land, which so obviously belonged to all living things and therefore to no one in particular. Human beings lived off the land on this planet for millions of years before anyone was arrogant enough to claim ownership.

*~Philip Slater*

**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**SEASON OF CREATION EARTH SUNDAY**

**September 2, 2018**

Gathering Music

Kathleen Smith

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

Kathleen Smith

\* Call to Worship

Frank Wright

One: Planet Earth, enveloped in the breath of God:

Many: **May the life-giving Spirit of God sustain all your creatures this  
day,**

One: Planet Earth, our precious, fragile home:

Many: **We celebrate, with all your children, God's presence in our  
planet home.**

One: Planet Earth, spinning silently through space:

Many: **We celebrate your beauty and your grace, your special place  
in our solar system.**

One: Planet Earth, pulsing with life:

Many: **We join in praise with all your fauna and flora, as together we  
sing songs of praise for the beauty of the earth.**

\* Passing of the Peace

One: Let us now greet one another as a sign of 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*

For the beau-ty of the earth,  
for the splen-dor of the skies,  
For the love which from our birth  
o-ver and a-round us lies,  
God of all, to you we raise  
this our hymn of grate-ful praise.

For the won-der of each hour  
of the day and of the night,  
Hill and vale, and tree and flower,  
sun and moon, and start of light,  
God of all, to you we raise  
this our hymn of grate-ful praise.

For the joy of hu-man love,  
broth-er, sis-ter, par-ent, child,  
Friends on earth, and friends a-bove,  
for all gen-tle thoughts and mild,  
God of all, to you we raise  
this our hymn of grate-ful praise.

For the good that love in-spires,  
for a world where none ex-clude,  
For a faith that nev-er tires,  
and for ev-ery heart re-newed,  
God of all, to you we raise  
this our hymn of grate-ful praise.

**When a word from God was heard. Alleluia!  
Let the Earth arise and be. Alleluia!  
Filled with living mystery. Alleluia!**

**Hail the rainbow flying high. Alleluia!  
Spun by God across the sky. Alleluia!  
Giving Earth a solemn word. Alleluia!  
Never to unleash a flood. Alleluia!**

**Hail the planet blue and green. Alleluia!  
Where the face of God is seen. Alleluia!  
Glory filling all the Earth. Alleluia!  
Celebrating every birth. Alleluia!**

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.)*

Prayers of the People

Lloyd Spencer

**One:** God of the Universe, we thank You for Your many good gifts -

**Many:** For the beauty of Creation and its rich and varied fruits, for clean water and fresh air, for food and shelter, animals and plants.

**One:** We have come as followers of Jesus to commit ourselves anew to one another and to heal injustice and poverty.

**Many:** We have come to stand together against all threats to life.

**One:** We have come to discover some new beauty every day in God’s creation:

**Many:** the sunrise and sunset, birds, flowers and trees, rainbows in the sky, the stars, the many forms of life in the forest.

**One:** We have come to breathe in your grace,

**Many:** to answer your call to revere all creation.

**One:** Forgive us for the times we have taken the earth’s resources for granted and wasted what You have given us.

*(During the silent reflection, breathe in the rosemary and allow your mind and spirit to absorb its earthiness and blessing.)*

One: Forgive us our greed and our grasping for more.

Many: Transform our hearts and minds so that we would learn to care and share, to touch the earth with gentleness and with love, respecting all living things.

One: We pray for all those who suffer as a result of our waste, greed and indifference,

Many: We pray and commit to working toward the day when everyone has enough food and clean water.

One: Help us respect the rights of all people and all species; help us willingly share your gifts with all;

All: Today and always. Amen.

Readings from Genesis 1, John 1

Decker Family

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

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

\* Hymn

“Blue Green Hills of Earth”  
*by Kim Oler, arr. David Hoss*

For the earth forever turning, For the land, for skies and seas,  
For our lives, for all we cherish, Sing we our joyful song of peace.

For the mountains, hills and pastures, In their silent majesty  
For the stars, for all the heavens, Sing we our joyful praise of peace.

For the sun, for rain and thunder, For the seasons’ harmony,  
For our lives, for all creation, Sing we our joyful praise to Thee.

For the world we raise our voices, For the home that gives us birth,  
To our Source we sing returning, Home to the blue-green hills of earth.

Sermon

Nancy Ellett Allison

Offertory Invitation

Lloyd Spencer

\* Offering Response 55

MARION

☩ **Praise God who rules all worlds, the risen Christ adore,  
Praise God the Spirit, Holy Fire, one God forevermore  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing!**

\* Offertory Dedication

Lloyd Spencer

**SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

\* One: The Light of the World invites to this table all who celebrate life and love, seeking to follow Jesus and live in peace with one another. Therefore, in the spirit of unity, let us confess together our faith:

\* An Affirmation of Faith

**All: We believe that God creates all things, renews all things, and celebrates all things. We believe that Earth is a sanctuary, a sacred planet filled with God's presence, a home for us to share with all creatures. We believe that God became incarnate, a part of Earth, like Adam, a human being called Jesus Christ, who lived and breathed and ministered among us. We believe the Holy Spirit is now renewing all creation, and filling the cosmos.**

**One: In company with all creation, we come to this table to know the risen Christ in the sharing of this life-giving bread.**

**Many: We come with thanks and praise, for it is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to God, creator of heaven and earth. God formed us in God's very image and breathed into us the breath of life.**

**One: Merciful God, as sisters and brothers in faith, we recall anew your acts through Jesus Christ. On the night of his betrayal, as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it and broke it, and gave it to the disciples saying: "Take, eat: This is my body, broken for you." In like manner, Jesus took the cup, and after giving thanks, gave it to the disciples and said: "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for all for the forgiveness of sins." And so, in remembrance of Jesus, we offer**

ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Many: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

**One:** Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Bless all of us in our eating and drinking at this table that our eyes may be opened, and we may recognize the risen Christ in our midst, in each other, and in all for whom Christ died.

**Many: Amen.**

**One:** The gifts of God for the people of God. Come, for all things are ready.

*((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

**All:** We give thanks, Almighty God, that You have refreshed us at Your table by giving us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us into the world in courage and peace. Amen.

1. Pray for the wil-der-ness, van-ish-ing fast,  
pray for the rain forest, open and vast;  
Pray for the waterfalls, pray for the trees,  
pray for the planet brought down by degrees.
  
2. Learn from the elephant, eagle, and whale,  
learn from the dragonfly, spider, and snail;  
Learn from the people in neighboring lands,  
learn from the children who play in their sands.
  
3. Work for the justice created things need,  
work for the health of each plant and its seed;  
Work for the creatures abuse has betrayed,  
work for the garden God’s wisdom once made.
  
4. Trust that God’s Christ over-came nails and wood,  
trust that earth’s people will turn to the good;  
Trust that creation forever will grow,  
trust that God’s goodness to us overflows.
  
5. Pray for the atmosphere, pray for the sea,  
learn from the river, the rock, and the tree;  
Work till shalom in full harmony rings.  
Trust the connection of all living things.

\* Benediction

Nancy Ellett Allison

\* Benediction Response 581

WORLD PEACE PRAYER

φ Lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth,  
From despair to hope, from fear to trust,  
Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace;  
Let peace fill our hearts, let peace fill our world,  
Let peace fill our universe.

Postlude

Kathleen Smith

## 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.

### MINISTRY DURING OUR INTERIM: THANK YOU TO KATHLEEN SMITH

Kathi Smith has been a member of Holy Covenant since 2002 and throughout her membership has been engaged in our music ministries. We are grateful to Kathi for leading us in worship today as we begin this interim time together.

### HOLY COVENANT MINISTRY TEAM FAIR, SEPTEMBER 9

Friends - Snacks - Door Prizes! Join us following worship to Learn about HCUCC's Ministries and how you can be a part! Your engagement in the life of HC is what keeps us moving forward. Have fun learning about ways to be serve God through Holy Covenant.

### NEW MEMBER/INQUIRER CLASSES

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

September 16 9:30 am Who We Are and What We Believe

September 23 9:30 am History of UCC & Holy Covenant

September 30 12:30 pm Consistory-Led Luncheon on Ministry

Teams Organization & Opportunities for Involvement

October 14 WELCOME SUNDAY welcoming new members into membership at Holy Covenant. Please contact Debbie Davis, [Debbiekdavisnc@gmail.com](mailto:Debbiekdavisnc@gmail.com) with questions or to let her know you plan to attend. Childcare is available if needed.

## **BRAINSTORMING AND PLANNING MEETING!**

**Wednesday, Sept. 19 from 6:30-7:30 pm at HCUCC**

All are welcome to help us plan a meaningful music and worship during Advent.

## **YOGA4ALL AT HCUCC RESUMES SEPTEMBER 12**

Classes are geared toward inclusivity of all levels of experience and abilities.... Beginners and those who are yoga-curious are encouraged to attend. If you have questions, contact David Smith at 704-533-2142 or [davidsmith02b@gmail.com](mailto:davidsmith02b@gmail.com). Join us Wednesdays at 7:30 PM

## **HCUCC BOOK CLUB**

September 12; Pachinko by *Min Jin Lee* discussion leader Barbara Schneller. **October 17; 1984 by George Orwell** discussion leader Sue Pascucci. November 14; Varina by *Charles Frazier* discussion leader is Jon Heaslet. We meet on the second Wednesday of the month at 10:30 at SouthPark Christian Church, 6650 Park South Drive, Charlotte.

## **MISSIONS & JUSTICE NOTES**

With the beginning of a new school year we need to lift up our efforts for the **backpack ministry and the food pantry** for the UNCC students. Many young people are reliant on our efforts. Collection bins are in the Gathering Room year round for our food ministries.

**The Backpack Ministry** supports children at David Cox Elementary School and Morehead Academy. **UNCC pantry supports college students.** **The Sandwich Ministry** for the south side needs someone to deliver the sandwiches once they're put together. If you're interested in helping please contact **Barb Schneller**, [bschneller@wcupa.edu](mailto:bschneller@wcupa.edu).

## **WNCA 51<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL GATHERING, OCTOBER 6**

*The Future of the Local Church-Following Christ in a Changing World*

Saturday, October 6 from 9:00am - 3:00pm Abernathy Laurels Retirement Community in Newton, NC

## **Winter Youth Retreat 2019, January 18-21**

*Act Justly, Love Mercy, Walk Humbly (Micah 6:8)*

Blowing Rock Retreat Center. Contact Dawn in the church office if you plan to attend. More information at [www.UCCWinterYouthRetreat.org](http://www.UCCWinterYouthRetreat.org).

*The church office will be closed on Monday, September 3rd  
in observance of the Labor Day Holiday.*

**WE COULDN'T PROVIDE OUR WARM WELCOME WITHOUT THE HELP OF:**  
Elder for September: Jeff Edwards-Knight, jeff763@aol.com or 704-651-4838  
Deacons for September: Lisa Sherman, Gregg Walker  
Greeters: Donna Collins, Sue Pascucci  
Ushers: JP Griffin, Kelly Gimlin, Jill Gregg, Barbara Schneller  
Media: Brian Hankins, Lisa Cloninger  
Tabulators: Kelly Gimlin, Alice Phelan  
Refreshments: Lisa Sherman, Jim Sherman  
Recycler: Kristin Andes, Tom Magraw

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER**

**Members**

**Friends and Family in the death of the Rev. Susan Bennett Stiles**

Gail Bushman, Frank & Charlotte Carbone, Kevin Decker, Linn Finger, Julie Klever, Helen Lambert, Karen Long, Irene Mikkelson, Melissa Noll, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Ed Sharp, Caroline Utz

**Friends & Family Members**

Ray Adams (Linda Burby), Caryn Capps, Ashley & Baby Evelyn Kate Cregan (Barbara Schneller), Ann Ebright (Julie Klever), Caroline Herdle (Beth Sharp), Alice Huskins (Jared Fischer), George & Judy Jongeling (Darline Warren), Sue Ann Kominski (Dawn Simmons), Beth Poyer Meyer, Joe Robinson (Bill & Kim Tyler), Jessie Sharp (Terry Raley-Dennis), Anne Sherrill (Donna Collins), Cynthia & Tommy Simpson, Beckye Neese Smith (Diane Neese), Luz Soto (Aida Marcial), Kathryn Vickery (Ed Vickery), Gary & Wanda Gilbert West (John Rapp), Wanda Williams (John Rapp)

**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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

**Mrs. Dawn Simmons, Executive Assistant**

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