

HOLY COVENANT
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Advent Journeys



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

Rev. Fred Robinson, Associate Pastor

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In Matthew's Gospel There Are Five.

**In Matthew's Gospel there are five faith-mothers called by name,
all ancestors of Jesus Christ, each held in some disdain.**

**Now who would think such women would do all that God had willed?
How strange that they were chosen so God's plan might be fulfilled!**

**Poor Tamar, wife unwanted and a widow once again,
determined she would not depend on whims of faithless men,
so wily woman that she was, she did more than complain,
and, taking matters in her hands, soon turned her loss to gain.**

**Fair Rahab lived in Jericho, a woman of the night.
When Joshua sent his men to spy, she hid them out of sight.
She told the king that they had left and gone another way.
She trusted that God's people were in Jericho to stay.**

**The widow Ruth, a Moabite, left her own land behind.
She went to live in Bethlehem, and wed a farmer kind.
The son she bore to Boaz caused Naomi's heart to sing,
and made this foreign Moabite grandmother to a king.**

**Uriah's wife was beautiful, Bathsheba was her name.
King David claimed her as his own, and loved her, to his shame.
To this unholy union then was born a little son
who carried on the line that led unto the Promised One.**

**Young Mary lived in Nazareth where she was to be wed
to Joseph, village carpenter, but then an angel said,
"Dear Mary, you are now with child." She smiled, "Let it be so.
Our God has done great things for me." And Joseph said, "I know."**

**If God could find a use for them, their faithfulness ignite,
then surely God can use us too, as bearers of the light.**

~Mary Nelson Keithahn

HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 1, 2019

Please silence cell phones

Prelude & Chiming of the Bell

Jon Weddell

Welcome and Announcements ☩

Nancy Ellett Allison

One: May the peace of the coming 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

Jon Weddell

* Call to Worship

Jeff Edwards-Knight

One: What will set us journeying in search of the Christ this Advent?

**Many: How far are we prepared to go out of our way to look for the
signs of Christ's coming, and to prepare a path?**

One: How will we travel through this season?

**Many Will we be burdened by responsibilities and tasks, loaded
with others' expectations, overwhelmed by their needs? Will
we be full of joy or weary with grief?**

One: What will guide our steps in these weeks?

**Many Will we follow a thread of longing, the hint of an alternative
pathway, the words and music of the gathered community?**

One: Siblings in Christ, Advent awaits us.

**Many Let us place our feet on the road and begin the journey. May
we find in familiar words, rituals and customs the birth of the
new thing that awaits us.**

One: May we find in this Advent journey, the gift of new life and the
courage to live with love as our guide.

Many: May we walk in the light of the Living God!

* Passing of the Peace

Jeff Edwards-Knight

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

“Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus”

HYFRYDOL

**Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.
Israel’s Strength and Consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
Dear desire of every nation, enter every longing heart.**

**Born all people to deliver, born a child you came to reign.
Born to rule on earth forever, come be known in us again.
By Thine own eternal Spirit, come to claim us as your own;
By Thine all-sufficient merit, let us share your cross and crown.**

Lighting the Advent Candle

Christine & Mel Andersen

**One: In this season of Advent, we long for God’s presence through
Christ our light.**

**Many: In this season of Advent, we search for God’s truth through
Christ the source of our hope.**

**One: In this season of Advent, we seek God’s guidance through Christ
our light.**

**Many: In this season of Advent, we remember God’s promise
through Christ our light and the source of our hope.**

**One: Today we light the candle of hope. This candle reminds us that
God’s promises give us reason to be filled with hope - hope for
unity in a world of division, hope for healing in a world of pain,
and hope for peace in a world filled with anger and strife. We
rejoice that Christ is our light and the source of our hope.**

**All: Loving God, as we enter this Advent season, we open all the
dark places in our lives and memories to the healing light of
Christ. Show us the creative power of hope. Prepare our
hearts to be transformed by you, that we may walk in the
light of Christ.**

One Candle is lit.

Advent Carol

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

GESU BAMBINO

O come, o come, Emmanuel, and end this gloom of night.

Bring hope to the world, bring peace to the earth,

And fill us with love’s pure light.

Bring hope and joy and peace,

And fill us with love’s pure light.

Children's Offering & Message

Nancy Ellett Allison

(Following the Children's Message, children below first grade may go to extended care or return to sit with their parents.)

Hebrew Scripture Lesson

Isaiah 2:1-5

Cheri Dennis

In days to come the mountain of the Living God's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples shall come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Living God, to the house of the God of Jacob; that God may teach us God's ways and that we may walk in God's paths....'

God shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Living 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.**

Pastoral Prayer

Fred Robinson

Anthem

"The Word"

Music Cooperative

The word, the word, the word/There has always been the word
But then the word took on flesh/Like a homeless baby in distress.
Jesus walked into the fray/To prove a reconciling way
The word, the word, the living, saving word

My heart, my heart, my heart,/Like the sea that once did part
To keep the devils at bay/From left to right it sways
Like a tired ocean wave/All my heart now craves is
The word, the word, the living, saving word

*Chorus: From darkness, to darkness, to darkness, to light
The word became flesh to bring dead things to life*

Yet it's a groaning, groaning world/ Where even the trees are begging for
A new place to lay their roots/ Where wars for oil will not destroy.
We know a peace that lasts beyond a day, A hope that's deep enough to stay
The world, the world. The living, saving word. (*Chorus*)

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation to Communion

Nancy Ellett Allison, Fred Robinson

* One: We invite all who celebrate Christ's life and love to join us at this table of fellowship. As we join together in Holy Communion we invite all to join in singing our faith as Christians:

* Many: *φ As we gather at your table,
as we listen to your word,
help us know, O God, your presence;
let our hearts and minds be stirred.
Nourish us with sacred story
till we claim it as our own;
teach us through this holy banquet
how to make Love's victory known.*

BEACH SPRING

One: Merciful God, as sisters and brothers in faith, we recall anew these words and acts of Jesus Christ. 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."

Many: *φ Give us, Christ, your great compassion
to forgive as you forgave;
may we still behold your image
in the world you came to save.
Turn our worship into witness
in this sacrament of life;
send us forth to love and serve you,
bringing peace where there is strife.*

One: Come, Holy Spirit, come. Bless this bread, and bless this fruit of the vine. 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.

Music during Communion

Jon Weddell

Communion is received by intinction. Please take bread or a gluten free wafer and dip it into the cup to receive both elements.

**All: φ Gracious Spirit, help us summon
other guests to share that feast
where triumphant Love will welcome
those who had been last and least.
There no more will envy blind us,
nor will pride our peace destroy,
as we join with saints and angels
to repeat the sounding joy.**

Prayer of Thanksgiving (*unison*)

**We give thanks to you our God for sustaining us in this new year;
For bringing us closer to you,
For knowing you are with us in our Advent waiting. Amen**

* Benediction

Nancy Ellett Allison

* Benediction Response 104

ELLACOMBE

**φ We hail you God's anointed, the long awaited One!
Hail in the time appointed, your reign on earth begun!
You come to break oppression, to set the captive free;
To take away transgression, and rule in equity.**

* Postlude

Jon Weddell

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

PLEASE SIGN OUR ATTENDANCE REGISTER

WELCOME to all who worship today at Holy Covenant! Guests and members- please sign an attendance register and then pass it back to its starting point, taking note of who is worshipping near you and greet them.

ALL ARE WELCOME TO CHRIST'S TABLE

Jesus made it a practice to eat with those identified as both saints and sinners. Because each of us carries that dual identity: saint and sinner, we welcome all to Christ's table of celebration. Communion is received by intinction so we invite you to take a piece of bread or a gluten free wafer and dip it into the communion cup (containing juice) to receive both elements.

DECEMBER 1 WORLD AIDS DAY

World AIDS Day takes place on 1 December each year. It's an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, to show support for people living with HIV, and to commemorate those who have died from an AIDS-related illness. Founded in 1988, World AIDS Day was the first ever global health day.

ROOM IN THE INN MINISTRY BEGINS DECEMBER 8

HCUC will again host our yet to be housed neighbors to keep them warm, give them a place to shower, and feed them hot meals. Can you help with this ministry? Check the signup sheets in the Gathering Room...there are many ways you can help to welcome our neighbors in need! Suzanne Lamorey, coordinator SuzLam@yahoo.com

DON'T LET THE FLU BUG YOU! TODAY IN THE PRAYER CHAPEL

Aline Sullivan, BS, PharmD, R.Ph., is making vaccines available to us today *in the Prayer Chapel*, for Flu, Shingles, Tetanus (tdaP) boosters, and Pneumonia.

ANGEL TREE & SILVER BELLS

Next week we will have our Christmas giving tree and giving box ready for contributions. Pastor Ra'Shawn Flournoy of Movement Church, a Pilgrim Legacy Fund grantee, is filling their outreach bus with toys for young children. We will have a big box ready for unwrapped toys for toddlers and young children under the age of 8, in order to help "fill the bus"! Our giving tree will also have Silver Bells ornaments with gift ideas for seniors in nursing homes who have no family to remember them at Christmas. Stay tuned!

HOLIDAY LOVE OFFERINGS FOR HCUCC STAFF AND REV. FRED ROBINSON

During this joyful time of year, we ask those of you who are able to consider contributing to a Holiday Love Offering for our Associate Pastor Rev. Fred Robinson and staff (a separate love offering is listed below for Pastor Nancy). Thank you for considering our church staff as you plan out your holiday giving plans. Love Offerings will be collected by December 15th in person to Tom Magraw, by mail (3238 Tatting Road Matthews, NC 28105) or at worship (payable to Tom, or in cash). In his absence, Cheryl Milam will receive the offerings on Tom's behalf.

TWO SEPARATE OFFERINGS WILL BE TAKEN FOR PASTOR NANCY

1. A Love Offering for Pastor Nancy will be collected by December 15th in person to Cheryl Milam, by mail (10004 Falmouth Lane, Charlotte, 28369), or at worship (checks payable to Cheryl, or in cash).
2. A Solar Panel Fund will be established so gifts can be made in honor of Pastor Nancy through the church and will be tax deductible - those can be made payable to Holy Covenant UCC.

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

Elder for December: Joy Decker, Joylikerain@gmail.com or 704-579-1694

Deacons for December: Cheri Dennis, Tom Magraw

Greeters: Laura Hankins, Suzanne Lamorey

Ushers: JP Griffin, Jill Gregg, Laurence Winston, Barb Schneller

Media: Brian Hankins, Lisa Cloninger

Tabulators: Eileen Howe, JoAnn Jellison

Recyclers: Kristin Andes, Tom Magraw

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Frank & Charlotte Carbone, Kevin Decker, Linn Finger, Julie Klever, Helen Lambert, Karen Long, Irene Mikkelson, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Jerry & Marion Rhyne, Deb & Yvette Ross, Beth Sharp, Mamie Stokes

Friends & Family Members

Ray Adams (Linda Burby), Andrew Bomely (Martha Bomely), Ann Ebright (Julie Klever), Jennifer Edenfield (Donna Collins), Judy Furr (Robbie Furr & Peter Jawidzik), Alma Gordon (Kevin & Joy Decker), David & Cecelia Griffin (JP Griffin), Faye Grumbles (Linda Clark), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Will & Addie May Hong (Jim Hong), Marilyn Lafferty (Kim Tyler), Bob Lyon (Melissa Noll), Ron Mann (Robert Shepherd), Carolyn Marshall (Linda Clark), Thibault Ossenbühl (Melissa Noll), Roshani Parikh (Nishi Griffin), Joe Robinson (Bill & Kim Tyler), Jack Ross (Anne Findlay-Chamberlain), Rev. Jeanette Salley (JoAnn Jellison), Ken & Evelyn Sell (Robert Shepherd), Deborah Selma (Kathleen Wagner), Irene Sharpe (Robert Shepherd), Luz Soto (Aida Marcial), Gene Sullivan (Jason Sullivan), John Teague (Donna Collins), Dorothy Underwood (Keith & Cheri Dennis), Kathryn Vickery (Ed Vickery), Gary West (John Rapp), Wanda Williams (John Rapp)