



Silent Meditation

Without the quest, there can be no epiphany.

~Constantine E. Scaros

Truth, by which the world is held together, has sprung from the earth, in order to be carried in a woman's arms.

~ St Augustine

'I know what I am planning for you,' says the Lord. 'I have plans to give you hope and a good future.'

~Jeremiah 29:11

Goodbye always makes my throat hurt.

~Charlie Brown

HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SECOND SUNDAY IN CHRISTMAS

January 5, 2020, 10:55 AM

Please silence cell phones

Prelude 10:55 AM

Kathleen Smith

Welcome and Announcements ☩

Fred Robinson

One: May the peace of the Christ Child be with you.

Many: And also with you.

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

Introit & Chiming of the Bell

Kathleen Smith

* Call to Worship

Eileen Howe

One: We gather wondering, 'Where will we find the Babe born in Bethlehem?'

Many: We will find the Babe in the laughter of children, in the wisdom of grandparents.

One: We gather asking, 'where will we find the Child of Christmas?'

Many: We will find the Child where the needy are gifted with hope, where the oppressed are set free.

One: We gather wanting to know, 'where will we find the Christ who has come for us?'

Many: We will find our Hope where fear is overwhelmed by grace, where hatred is overwhelmed by love, where all people are overwhelmed by joy.

* Passing of the Peace

Eileen Howe

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

“We Three Kings”

KINGS OF CHRIST

We three kings from Orient are; Bearing gifts we travel afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain, Following yonder star.

Refrain:

O star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light.

Born a King on Bethlehem’s plain/ Gold I bring to crown Him again,
King forever, ceasing never, Over us all to reign.

Frankincense to offer have I; Incense owed a Deity nigh;
Prayer and praising, Gladly raising, Worship Him, God on high.

Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume Breathes a life of gathering gloom;
Sorr’wing, sighing, bleeding, dying, Sealed in the stone cold tomb.

(Refrain)

Glorious now behold Christ arise; Chris and God and Sacrifice;
“Alleluia, Alleluia!”, Sounds through the earth and skies.

(Refrain)

Children’s Offering & Message

Fred Robinson

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

* Gospel Lesson

Matthew 2:1-12

Laura Hankins

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, ‘Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.’ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: “And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among

the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.” ’

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, ‘Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.’ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

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

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

Prayers of the People

Cheri Dennis

* Hymn 154

“Go Tell It in the Mountain”

SPIRITUAL

Refrain: Go tell it on the mountain, over the hill and everywhere.
Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching o’er silent flocks by night,
Behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. *Refrain*

The shepherds feared and trembled when lo! above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior’s birth. *Refrain*

Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain*

ENTRY LITURGY

Leader: We are called by the Holy Spirit to offer ourselves to the God of all creation in thanksgiving for what God has done and is doing among us. Today, we give special thanks for the ministry of HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST and for the faithful service of its members and former pastors. Today, we also ask for God's guidance as we begin this new part of our journey, this time we call the interim period.

Let us pray together.

All: Almighty God, we thank you for having blessed us and sustained us and given us life together as a faith community. We pray that as we now enter into this interim period that your Spirit will continue to nurture and guide us as your people. May we celebrate our rich heritage and be comforted as we grieve those exciting and challenging years to which we cannot return. May we sense your forgiveness where we have failed to take the lead in this confused and chaotic world. May we see again that the journey to this spot has not been without our many connections with the greater faith community, and may we learn to clearly identify how you want us to move into the future. Help us in our moments of anxiety and impatience. Give us courage and vision as we strive to be your hands and feet and voice in this world. Grant that our dreams will only be those guided by you. Amen.

Minister: Today is the beginning of a new relationship. You have called me to be your interim pastor, to be God's servant among you as you prepare to call your next permanent pastor. Although our journey will be short, I pledge to serve your pastoral needs, faithfully preach the gospel message, pray for you, listen to you, encourage and challenge you, as together we look at what it means to be a whole and healthy community of faith.

Members: We gladly receive you today as God's servant sent to be with us in our ministries of this faith community, and to prepare to call our next pastor. We pledge to pray for you and to support the work of this interim time.

Leader: May God bless us and lead us during this time of learning and renewal and preparation for what God's Spirit is nudging us and

preparing us to do at this particular moment in history, at this particular gathering place and beyond. Amen.

New Testament Lesson Philippians 1:3-6; 27-30 Cheri Dennis

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.

Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well— since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

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 “Gratitude and Love in the Church” Fred Robinson

Offertory Invitation Cheri Dennis

Offertory Music Kathleen Smith

* Offertory Dedication Cheri Dennis

* Offering Response 139 “First Nowell” FIRST NOWELL

ϕ Then entered in those magi three,
And bending low upon their knee
They offered there, in great reverence,
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense.
Nowell - Born is the King of Israel.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation to Communion

Fred Robinson

One: We gather at this table, God's table;

Many: **The table has been set long before we were born.**

One: There are places for all who have gone before us,

Many: **We take their hands as we approach to be received.**

One: You are welcome at this table, Christ's table.

ALL: **The faithful ones are gathered with us from all generations. We lift up the memories of loved ones we no longer see, we open our hearts to the presence of loved ones who are with God, for God is present with us. This is the table of reconciliation, of forgiveness, of restoration. This is the table for all the saints of God.**

One: We lift our hearts in gratitude and unity as together we pray,

ALL: **Our God, in whom is heaven, blessed be your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

Words of Institution

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

(Communion is received by intinction. Take a wafer or bread and dip it into the cup to receive both elements. Gluten free wafers are available.)

Music during Communion

Kathi Smith

Prayer after Communion (in unison)

In deep gratitude for this moment, this meal, and these people, we give ourselves to you. Lead us forward to live as changed people because we have shared the Living Bread and cannot remain the same. Ask much of us, expect much from us, enable much by us, and encourage many through us. And thus Living God, may we live as your saints in this world. Amen.

* Hymn 526

“We Are Marching in the Light of God”

SIYAHAMBA

We are marching in the light of God;
We are marching in the light of God. *(repeat)*
We are marching (marching, we are marching)
Oh, we are marching in the light of God. *(repeat)*

Si-ya-hamb' e-ku-kha-nyen' kwen-khos',
Si-ya-hamb' e-ku-kha-nyen' kwen-khos'. *(repeat)*

Si-ya-ham-ba (ham-ba, si-ya-ham-ba)
Oh, Si-ya-hamb' e-ku-kha-nyen' kwen-khos'. *(repeat)*

* Benediction

Fred Robinson

* Benediction Response 144

MENDELSSOHN

φ Hail the Bearer of God's peace! Hail the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life our Savior brings, risen with radiant, healing wings.
Mildly laying glory by, born that we no more may die,
Born to raise us all from earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the Christ-child bring!"

Postlude

Kathleen Smith

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

Rev. Fred Robinson, Interim Pastor

Ms. Kathleen Smith, Accompanist

Mrs. Dawn Simmons, Executive Assistant

3501 West W.T. Harris Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28269-8510

www.holycovenantucc.org office@holycovenantucc.org 704-599-9810

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

PLEASE SEE USHERS FOR LARGE PRINT BULLETINS

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.

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; 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.

LET'S GET W.I.S.E. TOGETHER! TODAY FOLLOWING WORSHIP

In the spirit of welcome and inclusion, Consistory has set a goal of better supporting those with mental health issues in our congregation and our community. We're fortunate that the UCC has developed a program called **WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, Engaged)** that helps congregations identify and take practical steps to address these concerns. We gather monthly to identify issues and present a plan to the congregation. Join us after worship in the conference room. All are welcome! Questions? Please contact Meg Houlihan, 704-957-8738 or megmhoulihan@gmail.com.

CONSISTORY RETREAT, JANUARY 11 & 12

Our Consistory will be gathering the weekend of January 11 & 12 to begin discussing ways to best serve Holy Covenant. If you have any ideas, projects or concerns you would like to share with the leadership team, please feel free to contact one of them. Officers for the New Year are: Tom Magraw, President, JoAnn Jellison, Vice-President, Lisa Sherman,

Secretary, and Kathi Smith, Treasurer. Other members of Consistory include: Suzanne Lamorey, Robert Shepherd, Cheri Dennis, Joy Decker, JoAnn Jellison, Holly Middleton, and Ed Vickery, and incoming Class of 2022, Lisa Cloninger, Jeff Hughes, Kathy Habel, Jim Dwiggins, and Vondalyn McQueen-Simmons.

CONSISTORY ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION

We will ordain our new elders and deacons of the Class of 2022 and install our officers during worship on January 12, 2020.

CELEBRATE FOUNDER'S SUNDAY, JANUARY 12, 2020

The First Reformed Church of Charlotte met for its first Sunday of worship on January 16, 1916; join us on this day of celebration to remember what has been and to anticipate what is yet to be!

HOLY COVENANT TO HOST ROOM IN THE INN, JANUARY 19

HCUCC 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. Contact Suzanne Lamorey TODAY, suzlam@yahoo.com if you are able to assist.

HCUCC SEEKS INTERIM ASSOCIATE PASTOR

The Personnel Committee is accepting applications for the position of Interim Associate Pastor. This is a part-time temporary position which will run concurrently with the Interim Pastor position which has been filled. We would like to receive applications from interested persons within the congregation. Please mail your resume with a letter of interest to the attention of the church office, or email contactus@HolyCovenantUCC.org. Job description is available upon request. Term will be approximately 12 months in duration, but not guaranteed.

RECYCLE RIGHT PRESENTATION, JANUARY 26

Your HCUCC Environmental Team invites everyone to join us in the conference room at 12:30, for an interactive presentation and dialogue with Mecklenburg County Residential Recycling Educator, Maitri Meyer, on how to *Recycle Right*. The program is about 30 minutes, and questions

following are welcomed. She has been a sustainability enthusiast for over 20 years and has a strong passion to educate others on reduced consumption and renewable energy. All are welcomed!

Annual giving statements will be mailed through the postal service for your use in 2019 tax preparation. If you have any questions regarding your statement, please contact Dawn in our church office. Your generosity in sharing your gifts in support of our ministries are helping to transform our community and beyond. Thank you!

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

Elder for January: Tom Magraw, tmagraw@aol.com or 704-614-5405

Deacons for January: JoAnn Jellison, Lisa Sherman

Greeters: Suzanne Lamorey, Lisa Sherman

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

Family & Friends of Donna Collins

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

Friends & Family Members

Andrew Bomely (Martha Bomely), David & Cecelia Griffin (JP Griffin), Faye Grumbles (Linda Clark), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Will & Addie May Hong (Jim Hong), Carolyn Marshall (Linda Clark), Roshani Parikh (Nishi Griffin), Renee & Aiden Rohn (Debbie Davis), Colin Spencer (Lloyd & Gussie Spencer), Gene Sullivan (Jason Sullivan), Dorothy Underwood (Keith & Cheri Dennis), Kathryn Vickery (Ed Vickery)