



Silent Meditation

Sleep is a surrender, a laying down of arms. Whatever plans you're making, whatever work you're up to your ear in, whatever pleasure you're enjoying, whatever sorrow or anxieties or problems you're in the midst of, you set them aside, find a place to stretch out somewhere, close your eyes, and wait for sleep.

All things that make you the particular person you are stop working – your thoughts and feelings, the changing expressions of your face, the constant moving around, the yammering will the relentless or not so relentless purpose. But all the other things keep on working with a will and purpose of their own. You go on breathing in and out. Your heart goes on beating. If some faint thought stirs somewhere in the depths of you, it's converted into a dream so you can go on sleeping and not wake up to think it through before it's time.

Whether you're just or unjust, you have the innocence of a cat dozing under the stove. Whether you're old or young, homely or fair, you take on the serenity of marble. You have given up being in charge of your life. You have put yourself into the hands of the night.

It is a rehearsal for the final laying down of arms, of course, when you trust yourself to the same unseen benevolence to see you through the dark and to wake you when the time comes – with new hope, new strength – into the return again of light.

~Frederick Buechner

HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

November 8, 2020, 10:55 AM

Gathering Music “Be Still, My Soul” (FINLANDIA) arr. P. Rodriguez

Welcome and Announcements Cheri Dennis
and Offertory Invitation

One: May the Spirit of the Living Christ be with you all!

Many: And also with you.

Introit GATHER US IN

**Gather us in and hold us forever;
Gather us in and make us your own;
Gather us in, all peoples together,
Fire of love in our flesh and our bone.**

* Call to Worship (*written by Rev. Stephen M. Fearing*) Keith Dennis

One: Come, however you are, and lay your burdens on the Lord -

Many: **burdens of fear and anger, of anxiety and uncertainty.**

One: Come, however you are, and turn your heart to scripture's
mandate:

Many: **to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly. (*Micah 6:8*)**

One: Come, however you are, and remember the promises of God's
word:

Many: **that we shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the
living. (*Ps. 27:13*)**

One: Come, however you are, no matter who you are, and no matter
where you are,

Many: **and let us gather to lean on the everlasting arms of Christ Jesus.
Amen.**

What a covenant, what a joy divine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Refrain:

Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms;
Leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms.

Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.
Oh, how bright the path grows from day to day,
Lean-ing on the everlasting arms. (*Refrain*)

What have I to dread, what have I to fear,
Leaning on the everlasting arms?
I have blessed peace with my Savior near,
Leaning on the everlasting arms. (*Refrain*)

Pastoral Prayer

Fred Robinson

Special Music

“It Is Well with My Soul”

arr. J. N. Beck

Alas for you who desire the day of the Lord!

Why do you want the day of the Lord?

It is darkness, not light;

as if someone fled from a lion,

and was met by a bear;

or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall,

and was bitten by a snake.

Is not the day of the Lord darkness, not light,

and gloom with no brightness in it?

I hate, I despise your festivals,

and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

Even though you offer me your burnt-offerings and grain-offerings,

I will not accept them;

and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals

I will not look upon.

Take away from me the noise of your songs;

I will not listen to the melody of your harps.

But let justice roll down like waters,

and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

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

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

Prayer for Illumination (*sung*)

LIVING GOD

Spirit of the living God fall fresh on me,

Spirit of the living God fall fresh on me.

Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me;

Spirit of the living God fall fresh on me.

Gospel Lesson

Matthew 25: 1-13

Cheri Dennis

'Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, "Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him." Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out." But the wise replied, "No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves." And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, "Lord, lord, open to us." But he replied, "Truly I tell you, I do not know you." Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

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

"Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning"

Cheri Dennis

Hymn 369

"Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning"

KEEP YOUR LAMPS

**Keep your lamps trimmed and burning (3x)
for the time is drawing nigh.**

***Sisters, don't grow weary; brothers, don't grow weary;
Children, don't grow weary, for the time is drawing nigh.***

**It's our faith makes us happy (3x)
for the time is drawing nigh.**

Benediction

Cheri Dennis

Benediction Response "Thuma Mina" (*Send Me, Lord*)

THUMA MINA

**Thuma mina (3x) Somandla.
Send me, Jesus. (3x) Send me, Lord.
Thuma mina (3x) Somandla.**

Postlude

**"Leaning on the Everlasting Arms"
Arr. J. Mansfield**

SHOWALTER

(Songs in this service are used by Permission. CCLI License #11439355; CSPL164710)

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

THIS IS GOD'S HOUSE WHERE ALL ARE WELCOME

UPDATE TO THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

September 4, 2020

Dear Holy Covenant United Church of Christ community:

We very much look forward to being together in worship but, in good conscious, we can only take that step when we can do so safely. We miss worshiping and having fellowship together as a congregation. Quarantine has been hard on all of us. In the meantime, the COVID-19 Response Team has been thinking creatively about some outdoor gatherings such as a Vesper Service and a parking lot picnic. We will revisit these ideas when the Governor of North Carolina moves us to Phase 3 at which time more people will be allowed to gather. However, we have concluded that it is NOT yet time to return to in-person worship and will reassess that decision around Thanksgiving.

Our decision is based on the following reasons:

- Social distancing of at least 6 feet is recommended. This means the sanctuary will hold many fewer attendees than pre-COVID-19.
- Singing can project an airborne spray of tiny droplets that travel farther than 6 feet and hang in the air longer than the droplets resulting from talking in a normal voice. This means not being able to sing as a congregation or assemble a choir although we will certainly provide music.
- Wearing masks will be necessary, even after the Governor's order expires, because we have many in our community who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19, given underlying medical conditions and age.
- Entering and leaving the building will have to be monitored in order to help keep social distancing during the process.
- Children are not apt to be true to social distancing.
- There can be no hugging, even in the parking lot, except by family members living together.
- If we reconvene while only 25 people are allowed in the building, and we have two pastors, a musician, and a sound system operator, that limits attendees to 21. No one wants to be the one standing at the door telling the 22nd person who arrived that they cannot come in.

It is our responsibility as a church to ensure health and safety. While we are committed to getting back to in-person worship as soon as reasonably possible, as you can see, that time is not now based on the limitations listed above.

Enjoy our streaming services this fall. Even after we restart in-person worship we will continue to offer virtual activities such as live streaming worship and Zoom meetings (e.g. Sojourners' Class, Bible Study and our periodic WISE meetings). We will provide an update before Thanksgiving regarding how we will celebrate Advent, what the New Year will look like, and when we will have the opportunity to worship in person again.

Sincerely,

Fred Robinson, Interim Senior Pastor
Fredrick@HolyCovenantUCC.org

Tom Magraw, Consistory President
TomM@HolyCovenantUCC.org

Join us live Sundays in worship at 10:55am
<http://holycovenantucc.org/virtual-hc/>

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

Lisa Cloninger, Brian Hankins, Henry Hankins,
Laura Hankins, Kathleen Smith

*Please note new office hours in November and December:
Tuesday through Friday, 8am-4pm*

STEWARDSHIP 2021

Beloved, let us love one another... (1 John 4:7)

As our Stewardship campaign enters our last week, please prayerfully consider supporting our church by raising your hand to serve and/or submitting your pledge through email or the church website at holycovenantucc.org/make-your-pledge-online/. With your help, our mission of sharing God's love will continue. Thank you to everyone for sharing your time, talents and treasure.

You may email your pledge to the church office at office@holycovenantucc.org, mail the pledge card to the church (see address below), or submit your pledge online through the church website at holycovenantucc.org/make-your-pledge-online/.



HOLY COVENANT UCC'S ANNUAL MEETING, NOVEMBER 15

Please check your email messages for "Special Announcement - 2020 Annual Meeting". We do need your voice to count! Virtual Worship followed by the Virtual Meeting.

November 15th:

- Join us in worship at 10:55am [VIA LIVE STREAM](#) where we will integrate reports of the missions of the church during the service.
- Then join us at 12 noon [VIA ZOOM](#) for the business reports and voting which fall to the later part of the meeting.

Voting will be held in the later part of the meeting (beginning at noon) conducted via Zoom. The 2020 Annual Report, and the Proposed 2021 Annual Budget, is in progress and we will send that link out prior to the meeting. Absentee Ballots are available, however, will not count for a quorum.

[For details, click here.](#)

CONFIRM NOT CONFORM: A DISCUSSION GROUP FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

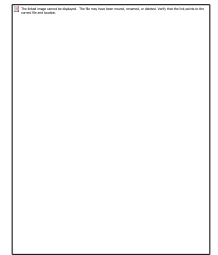
Calling all 6th through 10th graders!! Hear ye, hear ye, parents and grandparents! The next Confirmation class via Zoom will be Tuesday, Nov. 17 at 7 PM. They will continue every other week. Kids do not have to be regular attenders at Holy Covenant. We hope this will be a supportive discussion group. [Click here](#) for more information and a sharable invitation. Contact Jo Ann Jellison at joannjellison@yahoo.com or 804-937-1180.

MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS AT 12:15PM

All are welcomed to join our weekly Bible Study through the [Book of Acts](#). We will continue in chapter 10 as we look at the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles. This is a picture of God's radical inclusiveness. In what ways are we called to express God's love and spirit of inclusiveness to our neighbors today?

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81830620353?pwd=QUNmS0dMdEV5K1BRd2VmMWpFQIIVQT09>

Lead by Pastor Fred Robinson, Fredrick@holycovenantucc.org.



SOJOURNERS CLASS - NOT YOUR TYPICAL BIBLE STUDY SUNDAYS AT 9:45AM

Come join us via Zoom at 9:45 on Sunday morning for our Sojourners Class. For the next four weeks we'll be taking a look at the book of Ezekiel from the Hebrew Scriptures. Ezekiel was a prophet of God like no other! This coming Sunday we'll explore chapters 33-48. In these chapters, Ezekiel turns his focus to hope - hope for the Hebrew exiles in Babylon, hope that they will return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. [Click here to join.](#)

Or use Meeting ID: 876 7340 9762 Passcode: 523903

RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN

If any Holy Covenant families or friends are interested in receiving supplemental materials and activities for children, please contact Laura Allison at Education@holycovenantucc.org.



If you wish to add someone to the list, please send a note to
prayers@holycovenantucc.org.

Members

Micheal Hall and Dickie Lamm in the death of Micheal's mother, Creola Hall.

Diane Burleson in the death of her mother, and the death of her son.

Kevin Decker, Linn Finger, Tom & Kathy Habel, Julie Klever, Helen Lambert, Sharon Landis, Karen Long, Von & Melissa McQueen-Simmons, Irene Mikkelsen, Rick & Cheryl Milam, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Alice & Sally Phelan-Young, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Jerry & Marion Rhyne, Yvette Stewart-Ross, Mamie Stokes, Anita Taylor, Ed Vickery

Friends & Family Members

Jennifer Funderburk Owens in the death of her husband, and the death of her father.

David & Cecelia Griffin (JP Griffin), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Will Hong (Jim Hong), George Jongeling (Darline Warren), Bob Lyon (Melissa Noll), Robert Marcial (Aida Marcial), Michael Morse (Beth & Ed Sharp), Thibault Ossenbühl (Melissa Noll), Nick Pernice (Dawn Simmons), Vernon & Andrea Powell (Robert Shepherd), Kevin & Tracy Reed (Dawn Simmons), Darrell & Jackie Reichert, Jeff (Diane Neese), Lauren Reisenberger (Ida Mangione), Renee & Aiden Rohn (Debbie Davis), John & Marisa Sizemore (Tina Ettesen), Gene Sullivan (Jason Sullivan), Kathryn Vickery (Ed Vickery), Wanda Williams (John Rapp)

REACH THE PASTOR

During this pandemic, Pastor Fred and Pastor Cheri are keeping office hours, though maybe not at the church. You can arrange a personal meeting through Zoom or a regular phone call. Have questions? Just want to chat, catch up? Discuss a personal matter. Call us! Pastor Fred Robinson, 770-344-8002 or Pastor Cheri Dennis 704-519-6016.

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

Rev. Fred Robinson, Interim Pastor

fredrick@holycovenantucc.org

Rev. Cheri Dennis, Interim Associate Pastor

cherid@holycovenantucc.org

Mr. Jon Weddell, M. Div., Minister of Music

jon@holycovenantucc.org

Mrs. Dawn Simmons, Executive Assistant

office@holycovenantucc.org

*Please note new office hours in November and December:
Tuesday through Friday, 8am-4pm*

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