



Mary is who we are.

She is a person of faith who does not always understand but who seeks to put her trust in God.

She is one who is blessed not because she sins less or has keener insights into the things of God.

She is instead blessed, as we are,  
because she is called by God  
to participate in the work of God. . . .

To call Mary blessed  
is to recognize the blessedness of ordinary people  
who are called to participate in that which is extraordinary.

~Beverly Roberts Gaventa & Cynthia L. Rigby

HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

*advent conspiracy - breathing in joy*

*fourth sunday in advent*

December 18, 2016

10:55 AM

Gathering Music

Jared Fischer

Welcome and Announcements ☩

Nancy Ellett Allison

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

All: **And also with you.**

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

Opening Voluntary

“Lo, How A Rose E’er Blooming”  
*Claire Houlihan, Meg Houlihan*

ES IST EIN’ ROS

\* Call to Worship

Barbara Schneller

One: With prophets old, we seek Emmanuel.

Many: **In the half spent night, young Mary, Mother kind, gives God’s  
love birth.**

One: Sing aloud, daughters of hope and sons of peace!

Many: **We rejoice in the God of our salvation.**

**With all the saints we celebrate God’s “Joy to the World!”**

One: Emmanuel is in our midst.

Many: **With shouts of praise, we sing God’s “Joy to the World!”**

One: Proclaim Christ’s love for all to hear.

Many: **With hearts of laughter, we share God’s love.**

**Again we say, “Joy to the World!”**

\* Passing of the Peace

Barb Schneller

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*

Joy to the world! The Lord is come, Let earth receive her King.  
Let every heart, Prepare Him room  
And heaven and nature sing, And heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the world, the Savior reigns, Let men their songs employ.  
While fields and floods, Rocks, hills and plains,  
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow, Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make His blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,  
Far as, far as, the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the nations prove.  
The glories of His righteousness,  
And wonders of His love; And wonders of His love,  
And wonders, wonders of His love.

Lighting the Advent Candle

Jana Harrison, Jeff Hughes  
Jocelyn, Justine

One: We have lit three candles—for peace, hope and love. Today we light the fourth candle—the candle of joy. Joy is like an underground spring that wells up within us, but joy is also a choice, an attitude.

Many: Today we open ourselves to joy, trusting that God has already planted it in us. May we tend our joy from busyness, welcome it in song and lights dancing in the night. May we enlarge our joy by sharing it with others.

One: God, we open ourselves to you, knowing you delight in our being, that You created us for joy-filled hearts and lives.

Many: Fill us with the kind of joy that cannot be contained, but must be shared. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you that we may walk in the light of Christ.

*(Four candles are lit.)*

φ **The cloudless Sun of Joy Christ is,  
Who bringeth pure delight and bliss.  
Whose splendid beams by this are shone:  
That God in mortal flesh is known.**

Children’s Offering & Message

Nancy Ellett Allison

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

Gift of Music

“The Friendly Beasts”

Music Cooperative

\* Gospel Lesson

Luke 1:46-55

Gregg Walker

And Mary said, ‘My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.’

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

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

Carol

“Bogoróditse Djévo”

by Arvo Pärt

*Chancel Choir*

Translation:

*Rejoice, O mother of God.*

*Virgin Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee;*

*blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb,*

*for thou hast borne the Savior of our souls.*

Pastoral Prayer

Nancy Ellett Allison

Carol

“How Great Our Joy”  
*Chancel Choir*

arr. Craig Courtney

While by the sheep we watched at night,  
Glad tidings brought an angel bright. How great our joy!

There shall be born, so he did say,  
In Bethlehem a Child today. How great our joy!

There shall the Child lie in a stall, This Child who shall redeem us all.  
This gift of God we'll cherish well, That ever joy our hearts shall fill.  
Praise we the Lord! Praise we the Lord! In heav'n on high!  
How great our Joy!

Words of Joy

“God Says Yes To Me”  
*by Kaylin Haught*

Donna Collins

I asked God if it was okay to be melodramatic  
and she said yes  
I asked her if it was okay to be short  
and she said it sure is  
I asked her if I could wear nail polish  
or not wear nail polish  
and she said honey  
she calls me that sometimes  
she said you can do just exactly  
what you want to  
Thanks God I said  
And is it even okay if I don't paragraph  
my letters  
Sweetcakes God said  
who knows where she picked that up  
what I'm telling you is  
Yes Yes Yes

One: And all God's people said:

**All: Yes, Yes, YES!**

Sermon "God's Great Yes!" Nancy Ellett Allison

Offertory Invitation Gregg Walker

Offertory Music Jared Fischer

\* Song of Thanksgiving "What Can I Offer?" CRANHAM

φ What can I offer, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.  
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;  
Yet what I can, I give him: give my heart.

\* Offertory Dedication Gregg Walker

Carol "Ding! Dong! Merrily on High" arr. Mack Wilberg  
*Chancel Choir*

Ding! dong! merrily on high, In heav'n the bells are ringing!  
Ding! dong! verily the sky Is riv'n with angel singing!  
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

E'en so here below, below, Let steeple bells be swungen,  
And "I-o, i-o, i-o!" By priest and people sungen!  
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

Pray you, dutifully prime, Your matin chime, ye ringers!  
May you beautifully rime, Your evetime song, ye singers!  
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

\* Benediction Nancy Ellett Allison

\* Hymn "Angels We Have Heard on High" Congregation

Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply, Echoing their joyous strains.

*Refrain: Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!*

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song?  
*Refrain*

Come to Bethlehem and see Him, whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn King.  
*Refrain*

See Him in a manger laid, whom the choirs of angels praise;  
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, while our hearts in love we raise.  
*Refrain*

Postlude

Jared Fischer

## 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.

### NEW LIFE IN GUATEMALA

Can you make a life sustaining contribution to the Village of Chuk Muk, Guatemala? In partnership with Piedmont UU congregation we are working to raise \$10,000 for this community for two consecutive years. Purchase an ear of corn for \$100.\* Purchase a cup full of Cocoa for \$10.\* Make checks payable to HCUCC, with Guatemala in memo line. (\*If your organization does matching gifts, give through the Sinapi Foundation.)

## **GOODIES FOR GUATEMALA FOR SALE FOLLOWING WORSHIP**

Your purchase of these baked goods will help fund Barry Holcomb's service trip to Guatemala.

## **BOOK CLUB GATHERING**

Join us at 11am, SouthPark Christian Church, 6650 Park South Drive, for a discussion of Graham Moore's *Last Days of Night*. January 9<sup>th</sup>, we'll review, *Only Yesterday: An Informal History of 1920s in America*, by Frederick Lewis Allen. All are welcome!

## **ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS, 9:45**

Class will not meet on December 25 or on January 1. We will begin the New Year January 8 with discussion of *The Hundred Story Home* by Kathy Izzard.

## **ROOM IN THE INN, JANUARY 8**

Please take time to look at the sign up board and help us by giving a little of your time to make this ministry available. ***We do have needs for our comfort packets:*** Individually wrapped toothbrushes, razors (Bic), combs; TRAVEL SIZE toothpaste, deodorant, hand sanitizers, tissue packs and lip balms. Men's winter gloves, knit hats and heavy socks are needed as well. Please leave them by the table that has the RITI sign up board and they will be put to good use.

## **YEAR-END GIVING**

Holy Covenant's fiscal year ends on Saturday, December 31 so any contributions for 2016 or prepayments for 2017 must be dated on or before 12/31/2016, and be received or post-marked by Saturday, December 31. Questions about year-end contributions, stock gifts or electronic giving may be directed to Dawn Simmons at [office@holycovenantucc.org](mailto:office@holycovenantucc.org). We are grateful for the generosity of all at Holy Covenant.



## *advent conspiracy*

**CONSPIRE:** Make secret plans jointly to commit a hidden action

LATE MIDDLE ENGLISH- from Latin *conspirare* agree & plot, from *con-* together with + *spirare* breathe.

**CONSPIRACY:** Make Advent plans jointly to breathe in peace, hope, love and joy

LATE HOLY COVENANT- from Latin lighting candles to songs of celebration  
let us conspire to bring our souls into  
the Christmas season.

*December 24, 5:00 pm*

*chili & soup supper*

**Bring your favorite chili, soup or desert and join us for a relaxed evening.**

Hospitality will provide all the fixings (crackers, sour cream, etc.)

All are welcome!

*December 24, 7:00 pm*

*christmas eve*

Candlelight service welcoming the Christ child

*December 25, 10:55 am*

*christmas day*

Celebrating in scripture & song

*We will have a fully staffed nursery / preschool  
each Sunday & Christmas Eve!*

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

Elder of the Month: Yvette Ross

Greeters: Laura Hankins, Suzanne Lamorey

Media: Brian Hankins

Ushers: Kim Cobb, Scotty Foster, Barry Holcomb, Sue Pascucci

Tabulators: Lori Cipot, Terry Raley-Dennis

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER**

**Members**

Tina Dickens and family in the death of her brother, Joseph Condon

The Bushman family in the death of Leanne Bushman

Charlotte Carbone, Ginny & Bob Fisher, Marianne Gannon, Diane Garvey,  
Karen Griffin, Helen Lambert, Irene Mikkelson, Yami Senturias

**Friends & Family Members**

Rose Bouchonville (John Maze), Matthew Christian, (Beth Sharp), Mildred  
Edenfield (Donna Collins), Bill Funderburk (Donna Collins), CD & Alice  
Huskins (Jared Fischer), John Jacobsen (Holly Middleton), Aaron Johnson  
(Joy Johnson), Ashley Jones (Annette Shoop), Urban Linn (Julie  
McLelland), Chuck McAllister (Donna Collins), Carrie McLelland (Joe  
McLelland), Jay Patel (Karen Griffin), Tommy Simpson (Cynthia Simpson),  
Jessie & Craig Sharp (Terry Raley-Dennis), Luz Soto (Aida Marcial), Charles  
Weaver (Susan Rettberg)

**Holy Covenant United Church of Christ**

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

Mr. Jared Fischer, *Music Director*

Mr. Steven Burleson, *Youth & Young Adult Pastor*

Mr. Gregg Walker, *Ministry Intern*

Mrs. Dawn Simmons, *Executive Assistant*

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