



A Christmas Prayer

O Lord, the gift of new life, new light,
can be a gift truly only if we open ourselves to receive it.
So this is our prayer, Lord: that thou wilt
open our eyes to see thy glory in the coming again of light each
day,
open our ears to hear the angels' hymn in the stirring within us
of joy at the coming of the child,
open our hearts to the transforming power of thy love as it
comes to us through the love of all those who hold us most
dear and have sacrificed most for us.
Be born among us that we may ourselves be born.
Be born within us that by words and deeds of love we may bear
the tidings of thy birth to a world that dies for lack of love.
We ask it in the child's name. Amen.

~ Frederick Buechner

**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
WITH JOYFUL PRAISE!
CHRISTMAS DAY**

December 25, 2016

Prelude 10:55 AM

Kathleen Smith

Chiming of the Bells 10:55 AM

Welcome and Announcements

Nancy Ellett Allison

One: May the Child of Bethlehem be born in you today!

Many: And in your heart as well.

(Please pass the information pads for all worshippers to sign.)

Opening Voluntary “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day”

by JB Calkin

Bridget Green, flute; Kathleen Smith, piano

Invocation *(in unison)*

Nancy Ellett Allison

Child of Bethlehem, be born in us today: forgive us, heal us, make us new as we join the angels in singing your praises this Christmas Day. Christ our light, shine within us; Christ our light, live among us, Christ our light, lead us to truth and justice. Amen.

* Choral Call to Worship “My Heart Sings out with Joyful Praise”

ELLACOMBE

ϕ **My heart sings out with joyful praise to God who raises me,
Who came to me when I was low and changed my destiny.
The Holy One, the Living God, is always full of grace
To those who seek their Maker’s will in every time and place.**

**The promise made in ages past at last has come to be,
For God has come in power to save, to set all people free.
Remembering those who wait to see salvation’s dawning day,
Our Savior comes to all who weep to wipe their tears away.**

* *All rise in body or spirit ϕ Sing Response ✕ Hymnals located below pews*

* Call to Worship

Laura Hankins

One: This Christmas Day, we celebrate the Christ who came to us from the heart of God's own being, taking the form of a servant, being born in human likeness.

Many: We celebrate God's entering into our lives in human form, to bring light to all the world.

One: God-Who-Walks-Among-Us, transform each aspect of our lives as we live in Your new light.

Many: Giver of Life, lift our vision beyond this day, beyond our confining circumstances, into Your eyes of love so that we may see as You see, love as You love, and serve as You served.

One: This Christmas Day, we celebrate!

All: We are not alone. God is with us and for us forever!

* Passing of the Peace

One: Let us now greet one another as a sign of Christ's coming. For the peace of Christ is here to stay.

Many: Thanks be to God.

* Hymn 129

“Good Christians Friends, Rejoice”

IN DULCI JUBILO

1. Good Chris-tian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
Now give heed to what we say: Je-sus Christ is born today;
Ox and ass be-fore him bow, a-sleep with-in the man-ger now.
Christ is born to-day, Christ is born to-day!
2. Good Chris-tian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
Now you know of end-less bliss: Je-sus Christ was born for this!
God has o-pened heav-en's door, and you are blessed for-ev-er-more.
Christ was born for this, Christ was born for this!
3. Good, Chris-tian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
Now you need not fear the grave: Je-sus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev-er-last-ing hall.
Christ was born to save, Christ was born to save!

Lighting the Advent & Christ Candles

Micheal Hall & Dickie Lamm

One: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

We light the Advent Candles of hope, peace, joy and love anticipating the Light of Christ.

We light the Christ Candle to honor the One who has come into the world, showing us the true light.

Many: As we light these candles, we remember the words of Jesus the Christ: 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life....If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.'

* Hymn 135

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

ADESTES FIDELES

**Oh, come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant!
Oh, come ye, oh, come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him, Born the king of angels:
Oh, come, let us adore him...Christ the Lord.**

**Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, Glory In the highest:
Oh, come, let us adore him...Christ the Lord.**

**Yea, Lord, we greet thee, Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory given! Word of our God,
Now in flesh appearing!
Oh, come, let us adore him...Christ the Lord.**

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.)

(stanza 1)

1. What child is this, who, laid to rest,
 on Mar-y’s lap is sleep-ing?
 Whom an-gels greet with an-thems sweet
 while shep-herds watch are keep-ing?
 This, this, the an-gels sing,
 is Christ, God’s ho-ly of-fer-ing;
 Haste, haste your praise to bring
 the babe, the child of Mar-y!

Special Music “Do You Have Room for the Savior” *by SB Edwards*
Lisa Cloninger, Kathleen Smith, vocals; Terry Parrish, piano

- * Gospel Lesson John 1:1-14 Nancy Ellett Allison
- In the beginning was Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all the people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.
- There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.
- He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.
- And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.
- One: May we hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.
 Many: Thanks be to God. Open our ears, our hearts, our minds.

MORAVIAN LOVE FEAST

One: We invite all to join us in sharing the fullness of God's love poured out to us on this Christmas Day. As we share in this Love Feast, we celebrate the abundance of life and the generosity of God.

(Our servers will offer each person a sweet bun and a cup of cocoa as music is played. When all are served, we will join in prayer.)

Moravian Chorale 158

“O Morning Star”

1. O Morn-ing Star, how clear and bright,
your beam shines forth in truth and light!
My Sov-ereign meek and low-ly!
O Root of Jes-se, Prom-ised One, my God and Rul-er,
you have won my heart to serve you sole-ly!
You are ho-ly, great and glo-rious, all-vic-to-rious,
Rich in bless-ing, rule and might o'er all pos-sess-ing.
2. Come heaven-ly Bright-ness, Light di-vine,
and deep with-in my heart now shine,
there make your-self an al-tar!
Fill me with joy and strength to be your mem-ber,
joined e-ter-nal-ly in love that can-not fal-ter;
Long-ing for you does pos-sess me; turn and bless me;
Here in sad-ness eye and heart long for your glad-ness.

Prayer (*in unison*) Come Lord Jesus our Guest to be,
Bless these gifts bestowed by Thee.
Bless our dear ones everywhere;
And keep them in thy loving care. Amen.

Music during the Love Feast

(As you enjoy both music and food, offer to God prayers of gratitude.)

Special Music "One Bright Star" *by John Jarvis*
Lisa Cloninger, Kathleen Smith, vocals; Terry Parrish, piano

Hymn 158 "O Morning Star How Clear and Bright" WIE SCHON LEUCHTET
(stanza 1)

1. O Morn-ing Star, how clear and bright,
your beam shines forth in truth and light!
My Sov-ereign meek and low-ly!
O Root of Jes-se, Prom-ised One, my God and Rul-er,
you have won my heart to serve you sole-ly!
You are ho-ly, great and glo-rious, all-vic-to-rious,
Rich in bless-ing, rule and might o'er all pos-sess-ing.

Hymn 159 "As With Gladness Those of Old"

DIX

As with gladness those of old
Did the guiding star behold;
As with joy they hailed its light
Leading onward, beaming bright;
So, true Morning Star, may see
Evermore your splendor see.

As with joyful steps they sped
To that lowly manger bed,
There to bend the knee before
One whom heaven and earth adore;
So may we with willing feet
Ever seek your mercy seat.

As they offered gifts most rare
At that manger plain and bare,
So may we with holy joy,
Pure and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring
Christ to you from whom they spring.

Holy Jesus, every day
Keep us in the narrow way;
And when mortal things are past,
Bring our ransomed souls at last
Where they need no star to guide,
Where no clouds your glory hide.

Offertory Invitation

Gregg Walker

Offertory Music

Kathleen Smith

* 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 one, I would do my part;

Yet what I can, I give him: give my heart.

Offertory Dedication

Gregg Walker

* Hymn 125

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

GLORIA

Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply,
Echo back their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo;
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say what may the tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song.
Gloria in excelsis Deo;
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see
Christ whose birth the angels sing;
Come adore on bended knee,
God our world now entering.
Gloria in excelsis Deo;
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

See the babe in manger laid
Whom the choirs of angels praise
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,
While our hearts in love we raise.
Gloria in excelsis Deo;
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

* Benediction

Nancy Ellett Allison

* Benediction Response (144)

MENDELSSOHN

☉ **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

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

We kindly ask that all cell phones be turned off prior to the service.

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.)

SANDWICH MINISTRY DECEMBER 28

Changes are coming to our SANDWICH MINISTRY. Starting Wednesday, December 28, at 10:00 AM (please note change of time) the "Faithful Few" will gather at South Park Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) 6650 Park South Drive. They have a large, bright, Fellowship Hall just waiting for us. If you are able to make it you will be welcomed and blessed!

Contact Linn Finger for more information, linn.finger@att.net.

JOIN OUR NEW MEMBER - INQUIRER'S CLASSES THIS JANUARY

If you would like to learn more about our congregation and the United Church of Christ, we would encourage you to attend our Inquirer's Classes. **January 22, 9:30 AM: Who We Are & What We Believe, January 29, History of UCC & Holy Covenant, February 5: Organization & Opportunities for Involvement.** We will welcome new members on February 12. Please contact the church office if you are interested in joining the church and/or attending these classes.

CONSISTORY RETREAT

Our Consistory will gather the weekend of January 20 & 21 to begin discussing ways to best serve Holy Covenant. If you have any concerns you would like to share with the leadership team, please feel free to contact one of them. Officers for the new year are: Jeff Hughes, President; Jeff Edwards-Knight, Vice-President, Cheryl Milam, Secretary, & Diane Neese, Treasurer. Other members of Consistory include: Yvette Ross, Renee Brown, Micheal Hall, Karen Long, Michael Baldonado, Faye Humphrey, Joe Behr-Stenzel, Lynn Chavarria, Sally Duffy, Kathleen Smith, Martha Bomely, and Jim Hong.

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. We are grateful for the generosity of all at Holy Covenant.

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

Elder of the Month: Yvette Ross

Greeters: Lisa Sherman

Media: Brian Hankins

Ushers: Eileen Howe, Tom Magraw

Tabulators: Kathi Smith, Terry Raley-Dennis

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

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

Friends & Family Members

Arline Bomely (Martha Bomely), 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*

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

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