



Silent Meditation

I am not saying that suffering exists in order for God to reveal himself. I am only saying that *where* suffering exists and is consciously accepted, *there* divine love shines forth brightly.... I have often suspected that the most profound product of this world is tears. I don't mean that to be morbid. Rather, I mean that tears express that vulnerability in which we can endure having our heart broken and go right on loving.

~Cynthia Bourgeault

Things falling apart is a kind of testing and also a kind of healing. We think that the point is to pass the test or to overcome the problem, but the truth is that things don't really get solved. They come together and they fall apart. Then they come together again and fall apart again. It's just like that. The healing comes from letting there be room for all of this to happen: room for grief, for relief, for misery, for joy."

~ Pema Chödrön

HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
FIFTH SUNDAY IN PENTECOST

July 9, 2017

10:55 AM

Gathering Music

Jared Fischer

Welcome and Announcements ✕

Nancy Ellett Allison

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: And also with you!

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

Opening Voluntary

Jared Fischer

* Call to Worship

Jeff Edwards-Knight

One: Welcome this day to a time of rest.

Many: We come, bearing burdens and cares.

One: Place your lives in the loving hands of God.

Many: May God heal our spirits and strengthen us.

One: Trust in God who is always with you.

Many: Living God, we come to you in faith and trust for your healing mercies. May this day of worship renew our souls.

* Passing of the Peace

One: We are renewed by the love of God and the love of our sisters and brothers in Christ. So 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*

1. Guide me, O my great Re-deem-er,
pil-grim through this bar-ren land;
I am weak, but you are might-y;
hold me with your power-ful hand.
Bread of heav-en, bread of heav-en,
feed me till I want no more,
feed me till I want no more.

2. O-pen now the crys-tal foun-tain,
where the heal-ing wa-ters flow.
Let the fire and cloud-y pil-lar
lead me all my jour-ney through.
Strong de-liv-erer, strong de-liv-erer,
ev-er be my strength and shield,
ev-er be my strength and shield.

3. When I reach the Riv-er Jor-dan,
bid my anx-ious fears sub-side.
Death of death, and hell’s de-struc-tion,
land me safe on heav-en’s side.
Songs of prais-es, songs of prais-es
I will ev-er sing to you,
I will ev-er sing to you.

“I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say”

KINGSFOLD

I heard the voice of Jesus say “Come unto me and rest
Lay down, O weary one, lay down your head upon my breast”
I came to Jesus as I was weary, worn, and sad
I found him in a resting place and he has made me glad

I heard the voice of Jesus say, “Behold, I freely give
The living water, thirsty one, stoop down and drink and live”
I came to Jesus, and I drank of that life-giving stream
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived and now I live, redeemed

I heard the voice of Jesus say “I am this dark world’s light
Look unto me, your morn shall rise and all your day be bright”
[I looked to Jesus, and I found my guiding star, my sun
And in that light of life I’ll walk till traveling days are done] 2x

Children’s Message & Offering

Nancy Ellett Allison

(Following the Children’s Message, preschoolers go to extended care and those in kindergarten through fifth grade to Children’s Church.)

Epistle Lesson

Romans 7:15-25 (*The Message*)

Meg Houlihan

“I know that all God’s commands are spiritual, but I’m not. Isn’t this also your experience?” Yes. I’m full of myself—after all, I’ve spent a long time in sin’s prison. What I don’t understand about myself is that I decide one way, but then I act another, doing things I absolutely despise. So if I can’t be trusted to figure out what is best for myself and then do it, it becomes obvious that God’s command is necessary. But I need something *more!* For if I know the law but still can’t keep it, and if the power of sin within me keeps sabotaging my best intentions, I obviously need help! I realize that I don’t have what it takes. I can will it, but I can’t *do* it. I decide to do good, but I don’t *really* do it; I decide not to do bad, but then I do it anyway. My decisions, such as they are, don’t result in actions. Something has gone wrong deep within me and gets the better of me every time. It happens so regularly that it’s predictable. The moment I decide to do good, sin is there to trip me up. I truly delight in God’s commands, but it’s pretty obvious that

not all of me joins in that delight. Parts of me covertly rebel, and just when I least expect it, they take charge. I've tried everything and nothing helps. I'm at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn't that the real question?

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

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

Gift in Song

Holy Covenant Cooperative

“Slow Your Breath Down”

by Eric Owyong

This chest is full of memories
Of gold and silver tears
I'll give you more to own than all of this
And I'll give you more than years
For you were once a child of innocence
And I see you just the same
Your burdens couldn't win or lose a thing
Oh, I'd tell you once again, but you're always on the run

*Chorus: Slow your breath down, just take it slow
Find your heart now, oh... You can trust and love again
Slow your breath down, just take it slow
Find your smile now, oh... You can trust and love again, oh.*

If you leave I'll still be close to you
When all your fears rain down
I'll take you back a thousand times again
I'll take you as my own
I will sing you songs of innocence
'Til the light of morning comes
'Til the rays of gold and honey cover you
In the sweetness of the dawn, but you're always on the run (*Chorus*)

You're not alone! You're now a part of me
You feel the cure, I'll feel the toil it brought you

Prayers of the People

Steven Burleson

* Gospel Lesson

Matthew 11:2-30

Nancy Ellett Allison

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?’ Jesus answered them, ‘Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. Blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.’

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: ‘What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, “See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.” Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; ... Let anyone with ears listen! To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market-places and calling to one another, “*We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.*” For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, “He has a demon”; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, “Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!” Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.’...

‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’

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

“‘*To Be*’ is to be Misunderstood”

Nancy Ellett Allison

Offertory Invitation

Steven Burleson

Offering Music "Rising Sun" Holy Covenant Cooperative
written by P. Mabury, D. Leonard, K. Lee, & L. Jordan

Lift your hearts, ye broken
Sing oh sing, ye weary
Your love has made us children of God
We lift high Your glory
Shown throughout our stories
We praise You as Your children, oh God

*Chorus: Our Great Redeemer, Glorious Savior
Your love is brighter than the rising sun
Light of the morning, You shine forever
Your love is brighter than the rising sun
Your love is brighter than the rising sun*

Praise God's love forever, speak it loud and clear now
Your love has made us children of God (*Chorus, Instrumental*)

Hallelujah God above all
Simply to love is the greatest praise
Hallelujah now and always
Forever we lift your name in praise
Hallelujah love will reign
Simply to love is the greatest praise (*Chorus*)

* Offering Response

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

φ **Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God, the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

* Offertory Dedication

Steven Burleson

* Hymn 471

“What a Covenant”

LEANING

1. 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.

2. Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.
Oh, how bright the path grows from day to day,
Leaning on the everlasting arms. (*Refrain*)
3. 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*)

* Benediction

Nancy Ellett Allison

Postlude

Jared Fischer

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

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 MEMBER/INQUIRER CLASSES

If you would like to get more involved, learn more about our congregation and the United Church of Christ, and join our church, we encourage you to attend our **Inquirer's luncheon following worship today, Organization & Opportunities for Involvement**. We will welcome new members July 16. Childcare is available for all age children.

CELEBRATION SUNDAY JULY 16!

Join us in worship and stay for a picnic as we celebrate the ministry of Steven Burleson and welcome new members into the congregation.



LOVE OFFERING FOR STEVEN BURLESON

We are so grateful for the faithful ministry Steven has provided to our youth and young adults for these last six years! If you would like to contribute a financial gift to celebrate Steven's ministry, **please provide your donation to Martha Bomely prior to July 16.**

SPECIAL OFFERING, CHRISTMAS IN JULY

On July 23, 2017, we will receive the UCC Christmas Fund offering to show appreciation for the many pastors who have helped carry our burdens. Many of these aging and retired pastors have served small churches in rural areas that simply do not have the means to financially support them once they retire. These dedicated men and women served selflessly, and we have a chance to give them the thanks they deserve. This is the one time we are asked to match our appreciation with our resources for those who have retired from faithful service to the church. Please memo your offering "UCC Christmas Fund".

12x12 SERVE. STAND UP. SHARE.

Take action with Missions & Justice! We need to be heard; we need to act! M&J wants to know how the people of Holy Covenant are responding to the many issues facing our people and our society today. Write your mission, drop it in the basket in the Gathering Room and M&J will track them as the year goes along.

- Drop off school supplies for local children in the collection bin in the Gathering Room during July.
- Support the Back Pack Ministry with food items which benefit young children at David Cox Elementary school. Look for the grocery cart in the Gathering Room.
- Contact local and State representatives about budget and need for non-partisan redistricting. Contact Federal Representative and Senators about healthcare and budget.

SOJOURNERS CLASS~NOT YOUR TYPICAL SUNDAY SCHOOL GATHERING

The Sojourners will be discussing Linda Tirado's book, *Hand to Mouth: Living in Bootstrap America*. We start at 9:45 in the Conference Room, and everyone is welcome, no preparation necessary.

BOOK CLUB TOMORROW

The book club will be meeting at 10:30 a.m. on the second Monday of the month at SouthPark Christian Church. We hope you can join us for great discussions and fellowship. July 10, *Lab Girl* by Hope Jahren, discussion leader Diane Burleson.

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

Elder for July:

Michael Baldonado, michaelbaldonado@hotmail.com or 502-541-5957

Deacons for July: Renee Brown, Cheryl Milam

Recyclers: Diane Rogers

Greeters: Eileen Howe, Aida Marcial

Ushers: Kevin Edwards Knight, Tom Magraw

Media: Brian Hankins, Debbie Davis, Olivia Carney

Tabulators: Sally McLester, Kathleen Smith

Refreshments: Debbie Davis, Ann Watkins

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Gail Bushman, Frank & Charlotte Carbone, Ginny & Bob Fisher, Helen Lambert, Irene Mikkelson, Melissa Noll, Yami Senturias, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Caroline Utz

Friends & Family Members

Ray Adams (Linda Burby), Linda Burby, Mildred Edenfield (Donna Collins), Kathy Gibson (Jeff Edwards-Knight), Peace Hale (Ben Hale), Bill Funderburk, Alice Huskins (Jared Fischer), Ashley Jones (Annette Shoop), Chuck McAllister (Donna Collins), David McLelland (Joe McLelland), Aldo Sanchez (Alice Phelan), Jessie & Craig Sharp (Terry Raley-Dennis), Luz Soto (Aida Marcial), Cynthia & Tommy Simpson, Virginia Tomlinson (Tommy Tomlinson & Alix Felsing), Wayne & Libby Walters (Barry Holcomb)

Candid photographs and/or video recording share our work and witness and invite others into the fellowship of our congregation. Some pictures/video may be published in church print publications, on our website or on our official social media sites. If you do not wish to have your image published, please contact the church office by phone or email.

Holy Covenant United Church of Christ

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

Mr. Jared Fischer, Director of Music

Mr. Steven Burleson, Youth & Young Adult Pastor

Mrs. Dawn Simmons, Executive Assistant

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

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