

HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS DAY

December 31, 2017

Gathering Music

Jared Fischer

Welcome and Announcements

Barbara Thomas

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: And also with you.

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

Opening Voluntary

Jared Fischer

*Call to Worship

Gregg Walker

One: Christmas has just begun. God has been born into our hearts;
into our world.

**Many: God's wondrous light is given to us in the form of a young
child so that we may know God's tender loving care.**

One: Christmas has just begun. God continually reaches out in love
and hope to all of creation.

**Many: Though the darkness is deep, the light of the world is here
and guides our way.**

One: Christmas has just begun. We stand together eagerly, hopefully
looking into the new world to which God calls us.

**All: God's love and light has come. God is with us, now and
always. Come let us worship Emmanuel.**

Passing of the Peace

Gregg Walker

One: Let us now greet one another as a sign of God's peace, for the
peace of God is here to stay.

Many: Thanks be to God.

**All rise in body or spirit ♪ Sing Response*

*Carol

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

ADESTE FIDELES

O come, all ye faithful joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him born the King of angels;

*Refrain: O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

Highest, Most Holy, Light of Light Eternal
Born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Very God, begotten not created: *Refrain*

Sing choirs of angels sing in exultation
Sing all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God, all glory in the highest: *Refrain*

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
Word of our God is now in flesh appearing: *Refrain*

Lighting the Advent & Christ Candles

One: We lit our advent candles of hope, peace, love, and joy to remind us of our vision for the world.

Many: We light them again committing joyfully to cherish hope, to work to establish peace, to extend love in the world.

One: We lit the Christ candle on Christmas Eve to remind us that Christ came, and comes to us again and again, so that all people might know peace and have an abundant life.

Many: Gladly we proclaim: Christ is the light of the world!

All: A light no darkness can extinguish. May the light of Christ be kindled in us, and lead us to the shining truth of God with us, God for us, God in us. Amen.

(Lighting of all candles)

Children’s Message

Barbara Thomas

(Childcare for children 6 and under is available. There is no Children’s Church today.)

*Hymn 126

“Angels, from the Realms of Glory”

REGENT SQUARE

Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
As you sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth:

Refrain: Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, give thanks and sing.

Shepherds, in the fields abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing, yonder shines the infant light: *Refrain*

Sages, leave your contemplations, brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great Desire of Nations, guided by Christ's natal star: *Refrain*

Saints, before the altar bending, watching long in hope and fear,
Suddenly, your prayers attending, Christ beside you shall appear. *Refrain*

Pastoral Prayer

Cheri Dennis

LESSONS AND CAROLS FOR CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR

Lesson I:

Jesus is Born
Luke 2:1-14

John Rapp

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

Gift of Music

“The Friendly Beasts”

Music Cooperative

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.

*Carol

"We Three Kings"

KINGS OF ORIENT

We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.

Refrain O star of wonder, star of light, 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. *Refrain*

Frankincense to offer have I; incense owns a Deity nigh;
Prayer and praising, voices raising, worshiping God on high. *Refrain*

Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume, breathes a life of gathering gloom;
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in a stone-cold tomb. *Refrain*

Glorious now behold him arise; King and God and sacrifice:
Alleluia, Alleluia, sounds through the earth and skies. *Refrain*

Lesson V:

Jesus the Light of God
Hebrews 1:1-4

Barbara Thomas

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Meditation

Watching for a New Tomorrow

Barbara Thomas

***Carol**

"Joy To the World"

ANTIOCH

Joy to the world! The Lord is come; let earth receive her king!
Let every heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing!

Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns; let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains 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.

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

Offertory Invitation

Cheri Dennis

Offertory Music

Jared Fischer

***Song of Thanksgiving**

"In the Bleak Mid-winter"

CRANHAM

☩ 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; but
What can I offer: all my heart.

***Offertory Dedication**

Cheri Dennis

***The Blessing**

Barbara Thomas

One: Go now, and be a new beginning for others in the new year!

Many: To be a singer to the songless, a storyteller to the wanderer;

One: To become a beginning of hope for the despairing, of healing for the hurting:

Many: Of assurance for the doubting, of reconciliation for the divided.

One: Go forth believing in beginnings, making beginnings, being beginnings,

Many: So that we may not just grow old, but grow new each day of this amazing life God calls us to live with each other.

One: In the name of the God who creates, in the presence of the Word made flesh, sustained by the Spirit of Life, go into the mystery of the new year.

All: Amen!

***Hymn 154**

“Go Tell it on 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***

Benediction

Barbara Thomas

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.

LESSONS AND CAROLS

The service of Lessons and Carols traditionally focuses on the sweep of God's redemptive work from creation forward. Our service today has a focus on the light of Christ coming into the world and into our lives, blessing our human form as fully as Christ's was blessed.

HEALING SERVICE - January 7, 2018

Join us for this service of healing and new beginnings which will include Communion and the opportunity for specific prayers of healing. Cheri Dennis will be our preacher for the morning.

ROOM IN THE INN - January 14, 2018

Thanks to all who have signed up! The first RITI of the season was a big success! **To complete our needs for the second neighbor hosting, we're in need of drivers to return neighbors to UMC Monday morning, cleanup crew for Monday, to be complete by 9am, and volunteers to help with laundry needs.** Contact Suzanne Lamorey TODAY, suzlam@yahoo.com if you are able to assist.

CELEBRATE FOUNDER'S SUNDAY - January 21, 2018

The First Reformed Church of Charlotte met for its first Sunday of worship on January 16, 1916. We celebrate this anniversary with a special guest preacher, Rev. Julie Peeples, Pastor of Congregational UCC in Greensboro.

CAMPING GEAR COLLECTION FOR URBAN MINISTRY CENTER

UMC is seeking donations for clients who are unsheltered, whether they are camping somewhere or sleeping in Uptown. Any item that would be useful for campers is helpful- sleeping bags, sleeping pads, tents, tarps, backpacks, etc. Also, warm coats and socks! Look for the collection area in the gathering room. Questions? Contact Suzanne Lamorey, suzlam@yahoo.com or 704-654-7267.

SOJOURNERS CLASS

NOT YOUR TYPICAL SUNDAY SCHOOL GATHERING

The Sojourners will not meet on New Year's Eve, Dec. 31. We will resume discussing *Biblical Literalism* on January 7 with Chapters 29, 30, and 31. All are welcome to join us at 9:45--no preparation necessary.

CONSISTORY RETREAT

Our Consistory will be gathering the weekend of January 26 & 27 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.

CONSISTORY ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION

We will ordain our new elders and deacons of the Class of 2018 and install our officers during worship on January 28, 2018.

5 WEEKS TO A BETTER RELATIONSHIP

Sundays 9:45 - 10:45, Jan. 14 to Feb. 11. For couples and singles that want to improve their relationship. Prepare yourself for Valentine's Day in 2018! For more information, contact Kevin Decker, Certified Relationship Coach, Marriage Educator, and Speaker. 704-579-1693

CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM WOMENS GROUP

HCUCW women are invited to join a group of Christian and Muslim women meeting to share the joys and hardships of our daily lives and how our faith guides each of us. Our next meeting is **Thursday, Jan. 11th** at Wedgewood Church, 4800 Wedgewood Dr, Charlotte, NC 28210. For more information, contact Cheri Dennis, 704-519-6016, cdennis2@carolina.rr.com.

INSTALLATION OF REV. TERRY PARRISH - January 7, 2018

The WNCA announces the installation of Rev. Parrish as Pastor & Teacher of Hebron UCC (129 Hebron Church Rd, Winston Salem, NC) on Jan. 7th at 2pm. All are invited.

FINANCIAL REMINDER

Thank you, one and all, for the many gifts you bring to Holy Covenant through the year. For financial contributions to be counted in 2017 as tax deductions, please ensure all offering checks are dated, received or post marked no later than December 31, 2017. Any receipts for

reimbursements or gifts in kind should be received in the office by December 27th, to ensure timely processing.

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

Elder for December:

Kathi Smith, kathleenie53@msn.com or 704-614-7674

Deacons for December: Renee Brown, Micheal Hall

Recyclers: Phil Kaveler

Greeter: Lisa Sherman

Ushers: Volunteers

Media: Brian Hankins, Renee Brown, Keith Dennis

Tabulators: Debbie Davis, Terry Raley-Dennis

Refreshments: Hospitality

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Susan Bennett Stiles, Gail Bushman, Frank & Charlotte Carbone, David Cable, Donna Collins, Linn Finger, Phil Kaveler, Helen Lambert, Irene Mikkelson, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Jean Raley-Dennis, Yami Senturias, Ed Sharp, Anita Taylor, Caroline Utz, Kathleen Wagner

Friends & Family Members

The family of Bob Adams (Ed Vickery), Ray Adams (Linda Burby), Bill Bennett (Kathleen Wagner), Marj Carmine (Donna Collins), Bill Funderburk, Kathy Gibson (Jeff Edwards-Knight), Alice Huskins (Jared Fischer), Alex Kiker & Tiffany Kiker (Jean Raley Dennis), Chuck McAllister (Donna Collins), Sabrina McKnight (Deb Winston), Beth Poyer Meyer, Aldo Sanchez (Alice Phelan), Naomi Scheiperpeter, Jessie Sharp (Terry Raley-Dennis), Cynthia & Tommy Simpson, Becky Neese Smith (Diane Neese), Luz Soto (Aida Marcial), Doris Storie (Garrett Barlow), Gary & Wanda Gilbert West (John Rapp), Elizabeth Wilson (Donna Collins), Larry & LuAnn Weidner and their granddaughter Anna (Dawn Simmons)



Silent Meditation

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

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

Ms. Cheri Dennis, Ministry Intern

Mr. Jared Fischer, Director of Music

Mrs. Dawn Simmons, Executive Assistant

Rev. Barbara Thomas, Interim Minister for Church & Family Life

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