



Then each of them went home, while Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. **Essential Questions** Early in the morning the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone her. Now what do you say?' They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' And once again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, sir.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.' *John 8:1-11*

## Silent Meditation

Every time you feel hurt, offended, or rejected, you have to dare to say to yourself: 'These feelings, strong as they may be, are not telling me the truth about myself.'

The truth, even though I cannot feel it right now, is that I am the chosen child of God, precious in God's eyes, called the Beloved from all eternity, and held safe in an everlasting belief." ~ Henri Nouwen

We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are. ~Anaïs Nin

*I love myself when I am laughing. . .*

*and then again when I am looking mean and impressive.*

*~Zora Neale Hurston*

HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT: ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

March 4, 2018

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

Opening Voluntary

Jared Fischer

\* Call to Worship

Patti Key

One: Come! Come and worship, you who woke early and you who slept late; you who come often, and you who don't.

**Many: Whether we are first or last or somewhere in between, there is more than enough grace to go around.**

One: Come, all you who are struggling.

**Many: Come, all you who are crippled by pain and suffering.**

One: Come to worship a God who heals your pain.

**Many: Come to worship a God who offers forgiveness.**

One: Come, you who grieve this day, bringing the broken pieces of your heart.

**Many: Loved by one another, we discover God's love for us.**

One: Come those who rejoice, know that your melody will find harmony.

**Many: Accepting God's love for us, we are called to love one another.**

**ALL: Let us worship God, who welcomes all and gives us new life!**

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

\* Hymn 382

“Come, We Who Love God’s Name”  
(verses 1, 3, 4, and 5)

MARCHING TO ZION

Come, we who love God's name, and let our joys be known;  
To-geth-er God's great love pro-claim, (2x)  
and thus sur-round the throne. (2x)

*Refrain:*

We're march-ing to Zi-on,  
beau-ti-ful, beau-ti-ful Zi-on;  
We're march-ing on-ward to Zi-on,  
the beau-ti-ful cit-y of God.

God's grace on earth is found, the seeds of glo-ry sown;  
Ce-les-tial fruits on earth-ly ground, (2x)  
from faith and hope have grown. (2x) *Refrain:*

The hill of Zi-on yields a thou-sand sa-cred sweets  
Be-fore we reach the heav-en-ly fields, (2x)  
or walk the gold-en streets. (2x) *Refrain:*

Then let our songs a-bound, and ev-ery tear be dry;  
We're trav-el-ing through Em-man-uel's ground, (2x)  
to great-er world on high. (2x) *Refrain:*

\* Hymn

“Rising Sun”

*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)*

Great Redeemer, God above all  
Simply to love is the greatest praise  
Great Redeemer, now and always  
Forever we lift that hymn of praise  
Great redeemer, love will reign  
Simply to love is the greatest praise *(Chorus)*

Children’s Message

Nancy Ellett Allison

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

The Psalter

Psalm 27:4-9

Keith Dennis

*(paraphrased by Jim Taylor)*

All I ever asked for was peace and harmony. I would love to live serenely in God's presence. But instead of protecting me from the tragedies of life God gives me strength to cope with them.

When wild-eyed beasts with slavering jaws glare at me out of the gloom, God gives me fire; Its flickering brightness keeps fears at bay. When the fiery furnace of petty tribulation consumes my tolerance, God sends a cooling breeze. When daily duties clash like ignorant armies God raises me above the swirling dust of strife, I can see clearly again. I don't want to fight anyone. I would rather praise the one who saves me. So don't stop now, Lord. When beasts with glowing eyes get me down, come to my rescue. "Turn to me," you say. "Do things my way." From the bottom of my heart, God, I have turned to you. Don't turn away from me. You are my only hope.

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

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

Call to Prayer

"Sanctify"

by M. Smith and Stu G.

Here I am, In that old place again / Down on my face again  
Crying out, I want you to hear my plea / Come down and rescue me  
How long will it take? / How long will I have to wait?

*Chorus:* And all I want is all you have  
Come to me, rescue me, fall on me with your love  
And all you want is all I have  
Come to me, rescue me, fall on me with your love

Sanctify, I want to be set apart / Right to the very heart  
Prophecy to the four winds / And breathe life to this very place  
How long will it take? / How long will I have to wait?

Lifted up, I've climbed with the strength I have  
Right to this mountain top  
Looking out, the cloud's getting bigger now  
It's time to get ready now

Prayer of Confession

Darin Spencer

One: Savior, font of forgiveness, enable us to live as those who are both forgiven and repentant. Should any of us begin to curse those who injure us, and limit love to only those who are kind,

**Many: Bring us to account, write in the dust, and lift us up with your words: "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."**

One: Should any of us, when confronted with the victims of aggressive greed, walk by on the other side of the road,

**Many: Bring us to account, write in the dust, and lift us up with your words: "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."**

One: Should any of us forget that the neighbor, whom we are to love as we love ourselves, includes folk in Syria, or Iraq, detention centers and jails,

**Many: Bring us to account, write in the dust, and lift us up with your words: "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."**

One: O God incarnate, look us in the eye each day, and say to each of us:

**Many: "Let those who are without sin, cast the first stone."**

*Silent Confession*

Assurance of Pardon

Darin Spencer

One: We are grateful that over and over we are given the chance to begin again and that nothing we have done can separate us from God's love. May Jesus' words of forgiveness ring in our hearts: "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

**Many: Thanks be to God!**

\* Gospel Lesson

John 8:1-8

Barbara Thomas

Early in the morning Jesus came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?' They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him.

Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him.

Jesus straightened up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, sir.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.'

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

"Am I Accepted?"

Nancy Ellett Allison

One Great Hour of Sharing

Cheri Dennis

Offertory Invitation

Barbara Thomas

Offertory

\* Doxology

OLD HUNDREDTH

☩ **Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God all creatures here below,  
Praise God above all heavenly hosts,  
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

\* Offertory Dedication

Barbara Thomas

## SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

\* One: We invite all who celebrate Christ's life and love to join us at this table of fellowship.

\* Many: ☩ *As we gather at your table,* BEACH SPRING  
*as we listen to your word,*  
*help us know, O God, your presence;*  
*let our hearts and minds be stirred.*  
*Nourish us with sacred story*  
*till we claim it as our own;*  
*teach us through this holy banquet*  
*how to make Love's victory known.*

One: Merciful God, as sisters and brothers in faith, we recall anew these words and acts of Jesus Christ. As they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it and broke it, and gave it to the disciples saying: "Take, eat: This is my body, broken for you." In like manner, Jesus took the cup, and after giving thanks, gave it to the disciples and said: "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

Many: ☩ *Give us, Christ, your great compassion*  
*to forgive as you forgave;*  
*may we still behold your image*  
*in the world you died to save.*  
*Turn our worship into witness*  
*in this sacrament of life;*  
*send us forth to love and serve you,*  
*bringing peace where there is strife.*

One: Come, Holy Spirit, come. Bless this bread, and bless this fruit of the vine. Bless all of us in our eating and drinking at this table that our eyes may be opened, and we may recognize the risen Christ in our midst, in each other, and in all for whom Christ died.

Many: Amen.

One: The gifts of God for the people of God. Come, for all things are ready.

*Communion is received by intinction. Please take bread or a gluten free wafer and dip it into the cup to receive both elements.*  
*The Communion elements are bread and grape juice.*



Music during Communion

**All:**   ϕ *Gracious Spirit, help us summon  
other guests to share that feast  
where triumphant Love will welcome  
those who had been last and least.  
There no more will envy blind us,  
nor will pride our peace destroy,  
as we join with saints and angels  
to repeat the sounding joy.*

\* 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.



### LENT 2018: ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Sunday, March 11 *What Is God's Nature?* John 3:14-21

Sunday, March 18 *What Brings Fulfillment?* John 13: 1-5, 13-17

### LENTEN OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

**WILDERNESS STORIES**, SUNDAYS, 4 PM @ home of Sally Duffy

Group led by Barbara Thomas and Sally Duffy.

**RE-IMAGINING PRAYER**, TUESDAYS, 7 PM @ home of Anne Findlay-Chamberlain

Participatory experience, led by Anne.

**LEARNING FROM ST. FRANCIS**, WEDNESDAY'S, 1 PM @ Holy Covenant

Group led by Nancy Allison and Julie McElmurry.

### REFRESHMENTS FOR FELLOWSHIP

Thank you to all who provide snacks after worship, part of providing our extravagant welcome! **SignUpGenius**. <https://tinyurl.com/hcuccsnacks>

## **SAVE THE DATES FOR HCUCC 2018 RETREATS!**

### **June 1-3 Women's Retreat at Blowing Rock Conf Center, Blowing Rock, NC.**

Please sign up in the gathering room so we can reserve a room for you! All women are invited. Look for more information in the upcoming weeks. We look forward to having you there. For more information see **Suzanne Lamorey** or **Rev. Barbara**. Retreat leader is our own Anne Findlay-Chamberlain.

### **August 10-12 All Church Rafting Retreat at YMCA Retreat Center, Black Mountain, NC**

Everyone is welcome! We will have group sessions on Friday and Saturday nights and Sunday morning. Folks can raft or tube - cost and specific details to follow soon! **Barbara Schneller, Rev. Barbara**

### **YOGA4ALL AT HOLY COVENANT, WEDNESDAYS 7:30 pm**

Improve your strength and flexibility while developing a better mind/body/spirit balance. If you have questions, contact David Smith [davidsmith02b@gmail.com](mailto:davidsmith02b@gmail.com) or 704-533-2142.

### **SOJOURNERS CLASS - NOT YOUR TYPICAL SUNDAY SCHOOL**

We're discussing Anne Lamott's book *Hallelujah Anyway*. Come and join us for some lively discussion, interesting perspectives, and great fellowship at 9:45 in the Conference Room. All are welcome and no preparation is needed.

### **SANDWICH MINISTRY, MARCH 10**

Join us at 10am, at HCUCC to make healthy sandwiches for our neighbors of Urban Ministry Center. Contact Julie McLelland, [j.mclelland@att.net](mailto:j.mclelland@att.net).

### **ROOM IN THE INN, MARCH 11**

There are still some volunteer opportunities remaining to complete our needs for this neighbor hosting. We're in need of volunteers to provide breakfast sandwiches and fruit, to help with Sunday set up and cleanup crew for Monday, laundry, and returning the neighbors to UMC. Contact Suzanne Lamorey, [SuzLam@yahoo.com](mailto:SuzLam@yahoo.com), if you have questions.

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

Elder for March: Jeff Edwards-Knight, jeff763@aol.com or 704-651-4838

Deacons for March: Sally Duffy, Diane Rogers

Greeters: Carl Johnson, Phyllis Johnson

Ushers: Kelly Gimlin, Jill Gregg, JP Griffin, Barbara Schneller

Acolyte: Riley Moder

Media: Brian Hankins, Suzanne Lamorey, Renee Brown

Tabulators: Kelly Gimlin, Alice Phelan

Refreshments: Barbara Schneller, Aida Marcial

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER**

**Members**

Susan Bennett Stiles, Gail Bushman, Frank & Charlotte Carbone, Cindy Coble, Linn Finger, Laura Hankins, Eileen Howe, Helen Lambert, Sharon Landis, Irene Mikkelson, Melissa Noll, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Yami Senturias, Ed Sharp, Caroline Utz

**Friends & Family Members**

Ray Adams (Linda Burby), Ann Ebright (Julie Klever), Bill Funderburk, Kristy Howe (Eileen Howe), Alice Huskins (Jared Fischer), Pauline McCowan (Martha Bomely), Beth Poyer Meyer, Jessie Sharp (Terry Raley-Dennis), Cynthia & Tommy Simpson, Becky Neese Smith (Diane Neese), Luz Soto (Aida Marcial), Larry Weidner (Dawn Simmons) Gary & Wanda Gilbert West (John Rapp), Jason Wingard (Cynthia Simpson)

**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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

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

**Mrs. Cheri Dennis, Ministry Intern**

**Mr. Jared Fischer, Director of Music**

**Mrs. Dawn Simmons, Executive Assistant**

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