



Silent Meditation

*Once we have come to the deep inner knowledge—
a knowledge more of the heart than the mind—
that we are born out of love and will die into love,
that every part of our being is deeply rooted in love,
and that this love is our true Father and Mother,
then all forms of evil, illness, and death
lose their final power over us.*

~Henri Nouwen

*Bright Sadness is the true message and gift of Lent:
... the sadness of my exile, of the waste I have made of my life;
the brightness of God's presence and forgiveness,
the joy of the recovered desire for God, the peace of the recovered home.*

~ Alexander Schmemmann

**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT**

March 31, 2019

Gathering Music

Music Cooperative

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

Bridget Green

* Invocation *(in unison)*

Sally McLester

Eternal God, we come into your presence with all the burdens and blessings of our lives. May we be open to your word in song, prayer, and Scripture. Lighten our burdens with hope. Deepen our blessings as we share with one another. Unite us into one body in Christ's name, that we may be a light of hope in a world of fear. Amen.

* Passing of the Peace

Sally McLester

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*

Call to Prayer

“Return to God” (Soloist sings, congregation sings)

by Marty Haugen

Refrain

Re - turn to God with all your heart, the
Source of grace and mer - cy; come seek the ten - der
faith - ful - ness of God.

Silent Prayer

Fred Robinson

Prayer of Confession

All: Loving God, there is enough ill will within us to dampen our confidence; there is enough doubt in us to swamp our faith. There is enough weariness in us to overwhelm our hopefulness; there is enough apathy within us to smother our compassion. Yet, there is also enough hunger in us to keep us unhappy and enough discontent to cause us return home to your love. God of our Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us, lead us to the fountain of your grace, and wash us thoroughly from all that defiles us as together we pray, Our God in whom is heaven, hallowed be your name... (*Lord's Prayer, using sins/sinner*)

Assurance of Pardon

One: Hear the words of Jesus: “Then the father said: Bring quickly the best clothes and put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet, and kill the fattened calf, and let us eat and celebrate, for this my child was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found.” My friends, welcome home! This fellow Jesus, and his remarkable household, welcomes sinners who repent and celebrates with the likes of us!

Many: Thanks be to God!

Special Music

“Reckless Love”
Music Cooperative

by Cory Asbury

Before I spoke a word, You were singing over me
You have been so, so good to me
Before I took a breath, You breathed Your life in me
You have been so, so kind to me

Chorus: Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God
Oh, it chases me down, fights 'til I'm found, leaves the ninety-nine
I couldn't earn it, and I don't deserve it, still, You give Yourself away
Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God, yeah

When I didn't know, still Your love fought for me
You have been so, so good to me
When I felt no worth, You paid it all for me
You have been so, so kind to me *(Chorus)*

Bridge (4x): There's no shadow You won't light up
Mountain You won't climb up, Coming after me
There's no wall You won't kick down, Lie You won't tear down
Coming after me *(Chorus)*

* Gospel Lesson Luke 15:1-7 Fred Robinson
Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to Jesus. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.” So Jesus told them this parable: “Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”

Luke 15:8-10

“Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it?

When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

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 "God the Finder" Nancy Ellett Allison

Offertory Invitation Fred Robinson

Offertory Music Shea Watts

* Doxology OLD HUNDREDTH

φ Our God is making all things new,
A promise that we know is true.
Through eyes of faith we long to see
A love-transformed community. Amen.

* Offertory Dedication Fred Robinson

Closing Hymn "'Tis So Sweet" Music Cooperative

'Tis so sweet to trust you, Jesus, just to take you at your word
Just to rest upon your promise, just to know that you are good.

Refrain: Jesus, Jesus, how I trust you! How I've proved you o'er and o'er,
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus! O, for grace to trust you more!

From your well of love unceasing, streams a mighty river's flow,
Deep, I plunge, with full abandon, 'neath the healing, cleansing flood.
(Refrain)

Though the world may fall around me, precious Jesus, Savior, Friend,
This I know, that you are with me, will be with me to the end.
(Refrain)

* Benediction Nancy Ellett Allison

Postlude Music Cooperative

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.

WELCOME ANDY LANG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UCC ONA COALITION

Andy has been the Coalition's executive director since 2010: in that capacity, he leads the UCC's Open and Affirming Program, the largest LGBTQ-affirming church movement in the world. His passion is to reach the nearly 3,500 UCC congregations that have not yet adopted an ONA covenant.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING: MORE THAN WE CAN IMAGINE

One Great Hour of Sharing, received today, is the Lenten Offering of the United Church of Christ that supports disaster, refugee, and development activities. Imagination is essential to God's hope for creation; let's join God in imagining and supporting a world where all are safe, all are loved, all are fed.

MICHAEL G. BROOKS SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship was created to encourage youth in both their educational growth and service to God. This scholarship is a result of the lives and generosity of Barry Holcomb and his partner, the late Michael G. Brooks - for whom the scholarship is named. Applications must be submitted by April 30. Applicants will be notified no later than May 31, 2019, and the scholarship will be awarded on a Sunday soon afterward. Obtain the application by contacting Associate Pastor Fred Robinson, fredrick@holycovenantucc.org, or the church office, office@holycovenantucc.org.

MIGRANT BUS MINISTRY

Winter outerwear, snacks, toiletries and diapers are being collected to give to migrants as they pass through Charlotte on the Greyhound bus route on their journey to pursuit asylum. A collection box is available in the Gathering Room. See Suzanne Lamorey with questions or to participate in this welcoming.

PHOTO SESSION MAKEUP DAY, APRIL 8, 2:30-7:30 PM

The makeup day for photographs for our church directory is Monday, April 8th. Sessions will begin at 2:30 PM and will end at 7:30 PM. Contact Terry for scheduling, tldennis2@hotmail.com or 704-785-7150. An alternative to have your photo in the church directory is by sending your photo to Dawn, office@holycovenantucc.org, in a JPEG or PDF format, (landscape please).

HCUCC YOGA4ALL, WEDNESDAYS at 7:30 pm, April 3 & April 24

REFRESHMENTS FOR FELLOWSHIP - KEEP IT SIMPLE!

To help keep us organized, we use an electronic signup for volunteers called SignUpGenius. You can use the link below to sign up, and you can still sign up on paper if you prefer.

<https://tinyurl.com/hcuccsnacks2019>

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

Elder for March: Kathleen Smith, kathleenie53@msn.com or 704-614-7674

Deacons for March: Jim Hong, Ed Vickery

Greeters: Debbie Winston, Lisa Sherman

Ushers: JP Griffin, Kevin Edwards-Knight, Tom Magraw, Shakti Subramanian

Media: Brian Hankins, Lisa Cloninger, Renee Brown

Tabulators: Debbie Davis, Terry Raley-Dennis

Refreshments: Alix Felsing, Tommy Tomlinson, Rebecca MacNair-Semands

Recyclers: Eileen Howe

Season of Lent

Lenten Meditations “Stacking Up the Stones” are posted daily on Facebook! Join the “Holy Covenant UCC” Facebook page to get each day’s meditation during Lent. facebook.com/groups/61370940062/

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

PALM & PASSION SUNDAY, APRIL 14

We begin in celebration with our palms and the coming of Jesus into Jerusalem. We will then transition to Passion Sunday as the Music Cooperative and Chancel Choir lead us in worship. Join us for this service of remembering the seven last words of Jesus.

MAUNDY THURSDAY, APRIL 18, SUPPER 6 PM, WORSHIP 7 PM

Join us for supper at 6 PM and worship at 7 PM with a 'Service of Shadows' or Tenebrae service. We will celebrate communion as we prepare our hearts for the receiving of the message of Holy week and Easter.

The Hospitality Committee will be providing supper before our Maundy Thursday worship service. We are providing baked spaghetti, salad, bread and beverages. We would like the congregation to bring dessert - finger type foods such as cookies or bars to keep clean-up easy. You may bring a bottle of wine if you would like. Dinner will start at 5:45 and will continue until shortly before the service starts at 7 PM.

EASTER WORSHIP SERVICES, APRIL 21

BRING FRESH FLOWERS FOR THE CROSS

10:55 AM RESURRECTION SUNDAY WORSHIP

Join us as we worship through song and Word to celebrate the joy of the resurrection and new life. Special music will feature the Chancel Choir, the Music Cooperative, vocalists and instrumentalists.

(We will not have an early service this year.)

BRING YOUR FILLED EGGS BY APRIL 14 FOR THE EASTER EGG HUNT

For this year's Easter Egg Hunt we are asking folks to bring 1-2 dozen plastic eggs with goodies (no chocolate please). There will be a drop box the gathering room to leave your filled eggs. If you can help, contact Caryn Capps or Jennifer Curlee in the Nursery.

EASTER EGG HUNT

The Easter Egg Hunt with separate search sites for our older and younger children will follow our 10:55 worship service.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Gail Bushman, Frank & Charlotte Carbone, Kevin Decker, Linn Finger, Phyllis Johnson, Julie Klever, Helen Lambert, Karen Long, Irene Mikkelson, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Caroline Utz

Friends & Family Members

Ray Adams (Linda Burby), Shane Christian (Beth Sharp), Ann Ebright (Julie Klever), Tammie & Charles Edenfield (Donna Collins), David Griffin (JP Griffin), Will & Addie Mae Hong (Jim Hong), Ron Mann (Robert Shepherd), Becki Minich & Heather O'Donnell (Eileen Howe), Tony Morand (Lloyd & Gussie Spencer), David Owens (Donna Collins), Roshani Parikh (Nishi Griffin), Joe Robinson (Bill & Kim Tyler), Ken & Evelyn Sell (Robert Shepherd), Jessie Sharp (Terry Raley-Dennis), Chris Shepherd (Robert Shepherd), Cynthia & Tommy Simpson, Luz Soto (Aida Marcial), John Teague (Donna Collins), Kathryn Vickery (Ed Vickery), Gary West (John Rapp), Wanda Williams (John Rapp)

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

Rev. Nancy Ellett Allison, Ph.D., Pastor	pastor@holycovenantucc.org
Rev. Fred Robinson, Associate Pastor	fredrick@holycovenantucc.org
Mr. Shea Watts, Director of Music Ministries	music@holycovenantucc.org
Mrs. Dawn Simmons, Executive Assistant	office@holycovenantucc.org

Holy Covenant United Church of Christ
3501 West W.T. Harris Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28269-8510
www.holycovenantucc.org ~ 704-599-9810