



Silent Meditation

"Ought one to surrender to authority even if one believed that
that authority was wrong?

If the answer was yes, then I knew that I
would always be wrong, because I could never do it. Then how
could one live in a world in which one's mind
and perceptions meant nothing and
authority and tradition meant everything?

There were no answers."

Richard Wright

"Authority is not a power, it is a responsibility."

Amit Kalantri

"It is the first responsibility of every citizen
to question authority."

Benjamin Franklin

**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

September 27, 2020, 10:55 AM

Gathering Music

Jon Weddell

Welcome and Announcements
and Offertory Invitation

Cheri Dennis

One: May the Spirit of the Living Christ be with you all!

Many: **And also with you.**

Introit

“The Steadfast Love of the Lord”

E. McNeill

* Call to Worship

Laura Hankins

One: Watch and listen for the wonders of our God.

Many: **Our God is among us.**

One: Watch and listen for the goodness of our God.

Many: **Our God moves among us.**

One: Watch and listen, for God is here.

Many: **Our God dwells among us.**

One: God, the encourager, God, the compassionate, God, the merciful, holy, blessed: Disturb us. Rouse us from our sleep. Lift us into consciousness of your presence.

Many: **Change us, move us, mold us for the better;**

One: So that, at the sound of your voice, at the call of our name,

Many: **We will never be the same.**

All: **May this worship do this and so much more, in the name of Jesus. Amen.**

Moment in Missions - Neighbors in Need

<https://youtu.be/FA6DwPGO9iA>

Hymn 18

“Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer”

CWM RHONDDA

Guide me, O my great Redeemer, pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but you are mighty; hold me with your powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more.
Feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain, where the healing waters flow.
Let the fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through.
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer, ever be my strength and shield.
Ever be my strength and shield.

When I reach the River Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside.
Death of death, and hell's destruction, land me safe on heaven's side.
Songs of praises, songs of praises I will ever sing to you.
I will ever sing to you.

Pastoral Prayer

Fred Robinson

Hymn 283

IVERSON

Spirit of the living God, fall a-fresh on me. [2x]
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.
Spirit of the living God, fall a-fresh on me.

Children's Message

Fred Robinson

Prayer for Illumination (sung)

THY WORD

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

New Testament Reading Philippians 2: 1-13

Laura Hankins

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death-- even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

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

“To God Be the Glory (My Tribute)”
Felicia Robinson

Andrae Crouch

Gospel Lesson

Matthew 21:23-32

Cheri Dennis

When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. "What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

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

“By Whose Authority”

Cheri Dennis

Hymn

“Song of Hope”
Argentine folk melody

CANTO DE ESPERANZA

**May the God of hope go with us every day,
Filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.
May the God of justice speed us on our way,
Bringing light and hope to every land and race.**

**Praying, let us work for peace; singing, share our joy with all;
Working for a world that's new, faithful when we hear Christ's call.**

Benediction

Cheri Dennis

Benediction Response “Make Me a Servant”

K. Willard

Make me a servant, humble and meek,

God, let me lift up those who are weak.

And may the prayer of my heart always be:

Make me a servant, make me a servant, make me a servant today.

Postlude

If you wish to add someone to the list, please send a note to
prayers@holycovenantucc.org.

**Rick & Cheryl Milam wish to share their new address:
9028 Treetop Way NW
Concord NC 28027**

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Kevin Decker, Linn Finger, Tom & Kathy Habel, Julie Klever, Helen Lambert, Karen Long, Irene Mikkelson, Rick & Cheryl Milam, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Jerry & Marion Rhyne, Yvette Stewart-Ross, Mamie Stokes, Anita Taylor

Friends & Family Members

Gretchen & Chris Calder (Martha Bomely), David & Cecelia Griffin (JP Griffin), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Will Hong (Jim Hong), George Jongeling (Darline Warren), Bob Lyon (Melissa Noll), Robert Marcial (Aida Marcial), Michael Morse (Beth & Ed Sharp), Thibault Ossenbühl (Melissa Noll), Roshani Parikh (Nishi Griffin), Nick Pernice (Dawn Simmons), Vernon & Andrea Powell (Robert Shepherd), Darrell & Jackie Reichert, Jeff (Diane Neese), Lauren Reisenberger (Ida Mangione), Renee & Aiden Rohn (Debbie Davis), John & Marisa Sizemore (Tina Ettesen), Gene Sullivan (Jason Sullivan), Kathryn Vickery (Ed Vickery), Wanda Williams (John Rapp)

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

THIS IS GOD'S HOUSE WHERE ALL ARE WELCOME

UPDATE TO THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

September 4, 2020

Dear Holy Covenant United Church of Christ community:

We very much look forward to being together in worship but, in good conscious, we can only take that step when we can do so safely. We miss worshiping and having fellowship together as a congregation. Quarantine has been hard on all of us. In the meantime, the COVID-19 Response Team has been thinking creatively about some outdoor gatherings such as a Vesper Service and a parking lot picnic. We will revisit these ideas when the Governor of North Carolina moves us to Phase 3 at which time more people will be allowed to gather. However, we have concluded that it is NOT yet time to return to in-person worship and will reassess that decision around Thanksgiving.

Our decision is based on the following reasons:

- Social distancing of at least 6 feet is recommended. This means the sanctuary will hold many fewer attendees than pre-COVID-19.
- Singing can project an airborne spray of tiny droplets that travel farther than 6 feet and hang in the air longer than the droplets resulting from talking in a normal voice. This means not being able to sing as a congregation or assemble a choir although we will certainly provide music.
- Wearing masks will be necessary, even after the Governor's order expires, because we have many in our community who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19; given underlying medical conditions and age.
- Entering and leaving the building will have to be monitored in order to help keep social distancing during the process.
- Children are not apt to be true to social distancing.
- There can be no hugging, even in the parking lot, except by family members living together.
- If we reconvene while only 25 people are allowed in the building, and we have two pastors, a musician, and a sound system operator, that limits attendees to 21. No one wants to be the one standing at the door telling the 22nd person who arrived that they cannot come in.

It is our responsibility as a church to ensure health and safety. While we are committed to getting back to in-person worship as soon as reasonably possible, as you can see, that time is not now based on the limitations listed above.

Enjoy our streaming services this fall. Even after we restart in-person worship we will continue to offer virtual activities such as live streaming worship and Zoom meetings (e.g. Sojourners' Class, Bible Study and our periodic WISE meetings). We will provide an update before Thanksgiving regarding how we will celebrate Advent, what the New Year will look like, and when we will have the opportunity to worship in person again.

Sincerely,

Fred Robinson, Interim Senior Pastor
Fredrick@HolyCovenantUCC.org

Tom Magraw, Consistory President
TomM@HolyCovenantUCC.org

Join us live Sundays in worship at 10:55am

<http://holycovenantucc.org/virtual-hc/>

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

Lisa Cloninger, Brian Hankins, Henry Hankins,
Laura Hankins, Felicia Robinson, Kathleen Smith

VIRTUAL GATHERING! OCTOBER 4 - 1PM

You are invited to join your church family for a Virtual After Service Gathering via Zoom on Sunday, October 4th at 1pm. This is not a meeting. There's no business to discuss. No decisions to make. We just need to see each other's beautiful faces and hear each other's voices. And you are invited to virtually share your favorite finger food, or not. No pressure. Just sign on and say "hello".



Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87093761929?pwd=QWhXeVVmSmNlMVVMxOXNvSVVaeKJtUT09>

Meeting ID: 870 9376 1929 Passcode: 381399

REACH THE PASTOR

During this pandemic, Pastor Fred still keeps office hours. Although setting up an appointment to meet me in the office is not a possibility at this time, you can still arrange a meeting with me through Zoom or a regular phone call. I invite you to reach out if you have questions, just want to chat, catch up or to discuss a personal matter. If you wish to meet via Zoom, contact the church at 704-599-9810 and a meeting will be arranged. Or if you wish to reach me by phone, call 770-344-8002. The same goes for Pastor Cheri. Her contact number is 704-519-6016 and a Zoom meeting can be arranged with her as well.

CHARLOTTE'S C.R.O.P. WALK FOR HUNGER 2020

This year the annual [Charlotte Crop Walk](#) on October 11 will be a virtual walk, in which we can walk in our own neighborhood or nearest park, either alone or in a small group. The need is great this year. 25% of all donations will stay in Mecklenburg County and be split between Loaves & Fishes, Second Harvest Food Bank and Crisis Assistance Ministries. If you want to participate, please contact Tina Dickens, taichitina@gmail.com or 704.965.7708. Donations can be made to the HC team online at: <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/charlottenc/TinaDickens>. If you prefer to mail a check, please send Tina an email and I will send you my address. Thank you in advance!

**“HUNGER
is not an issue of
CHARITY.
It is an issue of
JUSTICE.”**

- Jacques Diouf, Former FAO Director-General



Join the Racial Justice and Equity Team
For a
Zoom discussion on restorative justice
October 1 from 7 pm - 8:30 pm
Meeting ID: 842 4110 2608
Passcode: 909816

We will discuss the difference between Reparations and Restorative Justice. The reparations movement calls for national redress while restorative justice focuses on instances in local communities where African Americans were harmed by policies and it seeks to make redress in those areas. Slavery, Jim Crow segregation, anti-Black practices like redlining, and other discriminatory public policies in criminal justice and education have robbed Black Americans of the opportunities to build wealth and the Restorative Justice movement in Charlotte gives us an opportunity to make a difference in the Queen city. As Sekinah Hamlin, Minister for Economic Justice for the United Church of Christ says, "In order to heal both old and new wounds, our nation must repent for its exploitation of human beings in deed as well as in word, and that means sincere financial investment." [Shareable flier click here.](#)

Questions that will be answered include: What's the moral/theological case for reparative justice? As a church, how can we make a difference? After an introduction and framing from the moderator, panelists will make 10-minute presentations after which the floor will be opened to questions from the audience.

Moderator: Rev. Fred Robinson
Panelists:



Rev. Dr. Willie Keaton
Chair of
Restorative Justice



Rev. Sekinah Hamlin
UCC's Minister for
Economic Justice



Rev. Dr. Ben Boswell
Sr. Pastor of
Myers Park Baptist Church

NEIGHBORS IN NEED (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the [Council for American Indian Ministry](#) (CAIM). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants. Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. These grants fund projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice. This year, special consideration will be given to projects focusing on serving our immigrant neighbors and communities.

Holy Covenant will receive the NIN offering on **October 4, 2020** as part of our World Communion Sunday observance. Please check out our Designated Funds options of giving online, <https://holycovenantucc.org/give-2/>.

Hope Station Nogales to Provide Reverse Sanctuary to Deportees in Mexico

A United Church of Christ sanctuary church offering immigrants refuge in the Arizona borderlands will soon be offering a place of hospitality, support and hope on the Mexican side of the border for people who find themselves deported from the United States. The Shadow Rock UCC Sanctuary Action Team and the Rev. Ken Heintzelman, in an extension of the spirit and intent of their ministry of sanctuary in Phoenix, are in the process of establishing Hope Station Nogales, in Sonora, Mexico. The thought is Hope Station, which was funded in part by a \$10,000 grant from Neighbors in Need, can be a place of transition, a place where people who are deported but have family in the U.S. can find a meal, safe lodging and assistance.

DIAPER DISTRIBUTION MINISTRY

We have completed our September distribution with much success. Contributions from Presbyterian Women, and MAP exceeded \$2500, and with your help we are approaching \$3000. We are well on the way to our goal of supporting this ministry through December 2020. Donations, in any amount, can be designated by visiting holycovenantucc.org/give-2/ and choosing Diaper Distribution Ministry under the Designated Gifts Fund. Many thanks to all who have supported this ministry!



MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS AT 12:15PM

All are welcomed to join our weekly Bible Study through the [Book of Acts](#). This coming Wednesday at 12:15 pm we will pick up at Acts chapter 8. In the early chapters of Acts, we saw how persecution began against the Christians in Jerusalem and how it intensified until finally Stephen was killed.

Stephen's murder kicks off a series of attacks, led by Saul, that forces the Christian community to scatter. However, what was intended to crush the Christian movement instead became fuel for its growth. We'll explore how this text speaks to us today.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81830620353?pwd=QUNmS0dMdEV5K1BRd2VmMWpFQIIVQT09>

Lead by Pastor Fred Robinson, Fredrick@holycovenantucc.org.



Thank you Aline!
The drive up flu shot clinic
was a great success!



Above: images of some participants from the flu shot clinic, and others who volunteered at the church this past Monday.

SOJOURNERS CLASS - NOT YOUR TYPICAL BIBLE STUDY SUNDAYS AT 9:45AM

All are invited to join the Sojourners Class on Sunday mornings at 9:45 am via Zoom. We are currently discussing *Revolution of Values* by Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove. Questions, contact Cheri Dennis at cherid@holycovenantucc.org.

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87673409762?pwd=VnVGZDNTOEtycnoycWJ6RTVKTjF4UT09>

Meeting ID: 876 7340 9762

Passcode: 523903

RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN

If any Holy Covenant families or friends are interested in receiving supplemental materials and activities for children, please contact Laura Allison at Education@holycovenantucc.org.



In case you needed any proof of the power of community, consider the scene last weekend in the church parking lot of the drive-through vaccine clinic offered by Aline Sullivan: people drove up, didn't even get out of their cars, got a painful shot in the arm, and yet it was a highlight for many, as they were able to see a few church friends through car windows! People spoke of the joy they felt, just laying eyes on church friends. So reach out in whatever way you can (phone, email, snail mail) and be assured that we're looking for more ways to get together safely in small groups. We are social creatures and our mental health requires contact with others in our "tribe."

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

Rev. Fred Robinson, Interim Pastor
fredrick@holycovenantucc.org

Rev. Cheri Dennis, Interim Associate Pastor
cherid@holycovenantucc.org

Mr. Jon Weddell, M. Div., Minister of Music
jon@holycovenantucc.org

Mrs. Dawn Simmons, Executive Assistant
office@holycovenantucc.org

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