Silent Meditation

"To put it boldly, compassion for Jesus was political. He directly and repeatedly challenged the dominant sociopolitical paradigm of his social world and advocated instead what might be called a politics of compassion."

- Marcus J. Borg

"The important question to ask is not, 'What do you believe?' but 'What difference does it make that you believe?' Does the world come nearer to the dream of God because of what you believe?"

- Verna J. Dozier

"Transgender people, whoever they are, they’re ordinary people. They deserve respect. They’re just human beings."

- Inez Rau
November 22, 2020, 10:55 AM

Gathering Music
“A Medley of Thanks”
arr. K. Keil

Welcome and Announcements
Fred Robinson

and Offertory Invitation
One:  May the Spirit of the Living Christ be with you all!
Many:  And also with you.

Introit

We praise you, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;
In grateful devotion our tribute we bring.
We lay it before you, we kneel and adore you;
We bless your holy name, glad praises we sing.

Call to Worship
Cheri Dennis

One:  Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.
Many:  Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing.
One:  Know that the Lord is God. It is he that made us, and we are his;
Many:  We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
One:  Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to God, bless his name.
ALL:  For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

Hymn 422

“Come, O Thankful People, Come”  ST. GEORGE’S WINDSOR

Come, O thankful people, come, raise the song of harvest home.
All is safely gathered in as the winter storms begin.
God our Maker does provide for our wants to be supplied.
Come to God’s own temple, come, raise the song of harvest home.

All the blessings of the field, all the stores the gardens yield,
All the fruits in full supply, ripened ‘neath the summer sky,
All that spring with bounteous hand scatters o’er the smiling land,
All that liberal autumn pours from its rich o’er-flowing stores,
These to you, our God, we owe, source from whom all blessings flow;
And for these our songs we raise, grateful vows and solemn praise.
Come, then, thankful people, come, raise the song of harvest home.
Come to God’s own temple, come, raise the song of harvest home.

Transgender Day of Remembrance
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=--dTb7Io43Tk

We pause to remember, honor and mourn the lives of transgender people lost to violence in the last year, and to remember our beloved members

**ISLEY MAE WHITFIELD**  **MARCH 19, 1964 - OCTOBER 14, 2018**
**PAMELA RENEE JONES**  **AUGUST 24, 1943 - JULY 19, 2011**

Pastoral Prayer  Melissa McQueen-Simmons

Prayer Response  “I Love the Lord”

I love the Lord, who heard my cry and pitied every groan.
Long as I live and troubles rise, I’ll hasten to God’s throne.

I love the Lord, who heard my cry and chased my grief away.
O let my heart no more despair while I have breath to pray.

Hebrew Scripture  Ezekiel 34: 11-16, 20-24

For thus says the Lord God:
I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.

Therefore, thus says the Lord God to them:
I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your
horns until you scattered them far and wide, I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken.

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

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

Special Music “Behold the One” L. Fleming

Gospel Lesson Matthew 25: 31-46 Fred Robinson

‘When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” Then he will say to those at his left hand, “You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.” Then they also will answer, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?” Then he will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.’

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

Many: Thanks be to God. Open our ears, our hearts, our minds.
Crown with your richest crowns the Lamb upon the throne;
Hark! How the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing of Christ who died for you,
And to your risen Savior bring your thanks for life made new.

Crown Christ the truth, the life who triumphed o’er the grave
And rose victorious in the strife, this fallen world to save.
Christ’s glories now we sing, Christ’s name we magnify,
Who died eternal life to bring and lives that death may die.

Crown Christ who holds the years, embracing space and time,
Creator of the rolling spheres, ineffably sublime:
All hail, Redeemer, hail! For you have died for me;
Your praise shall never, never fail throughout eternity.
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, Kathleen Smith

Please note new office hours in November and December:
Tuesday through Friday, 8am-4pm

Saturday, November 21
And
Sunday, November 22
From 1 until 3PM
Come drive through the parking lot—we have a set of Advent Candles for each household so we can experience this Advent tradition together each Sunday.

If you aren’t able to join us but would like a set of candles, call the church office so that we can set aside a set for you.
STEWARDSHIP 2021

Beloved, let us love one another... (1 John 4:7)

Thanks to all who participated in our 2020 Annual Meeting last Sunday via Zoom and unanimously approved our 2021 Spending Plan. Our Budget and Finance team will continue to keep you updated on financial matters at the church and appreciate your support of our work. If you have not yet pledged towards our 2021 Stewardship campaign, we ask you to prayerfully consider joining us with a pledge today to contribute towards our mission and ministries next year. You may email your pledge to Dawn Simmons at office@holycovenantucc.org where it will be confidentially recorded or you may use this link to pledge online holycovenantucc.org/make-your-pledge-online. Thank you for your prayers and financial pledges in supporting Holy Covenant's work in our community and beyond.

LOVE OFFERING FOR OUR HCUCC STAFF

If you would like to make a love offering for staff in appreciation for service during a difficult year, the church treasurer, Kathleen Smith, will collect the donations. These monies must be kept separate from the church finances, so please follow the instructions below and try to have your love offerings in by December 7.

Checks can be made out to Kathleen Smith but she would prefer cash transfers via PayPal, Venmo or Zelle.
  Here's how to find her apps:
   PayPal: @kathilouwho
   Venmo: @Kathleen-Smith-91
   Zelle: kathleenie53@msn.com

If you send a check made out to Kathleen Smith and you plan to mail the check to the church, please add the word "LOVE" prominently on the front or back of the envelope. These envelopes will be given to Kathi, who will work with Consistory members to distribute the gifts.

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.
UPCOMING ORDINATIONS FOR HOLY COVENANT MEMBERS

Joy Johnson will be ordained on Tuesday, Dec. 1, 2020 at noon Eastern time. Her ordination will be at Sanford Medical Center, Fargo, ND to which she has been called as a chaplain. A Zoom link will be provided at a later date. Joy’s mailing address is: 34491 390th Ave, Richville, MN 56576. Joy is a former member of Holy Covenant. Please share congratulations with her via mail or email: joy.johnson1977@gmail.com.

Gregg Walker, a current member of Holy Covenant, will be ordained on Sunday, Dec. 6, 2020, at 1:30 pm. The service will be live-streamed from Holy Covenant. Gregg has been called to hospital chaplaincy and is currently a chaplain with Atrium Health. Gregg's contact information is available in the church directory, if needed.

International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day is a time for those who have lost someone to suicide to come together for hope, healing and connection. This year's Charlotte/Southern Piedmont event will be held virtually on Saturday, November 21st from 9:30-11:00am. The event includes viewing of a short documentary, hearing from a panel of loss survivors and mental health experts and more. This event is FREE. All participants must register ahead of time to receive the Zoom information.
Here's the registration link:
https://isosld.afsp.org/charlotte-southern-piedmont/

CONFIRM NOT CONFORM: A DISCUSSION GROUP FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Dec. 1 is our next Zoom meeting for 6th through 10th graders. We meet at 7:00 PM on every other Tuesday. It's not too late to join! “Confirm not Conform UCC” is the guide for the discussions geared toward letting kids make up their own minds and allowing them to see beliefs as changing throughout life. Contact Jo Ann Jellison at joannjellison@yahoo.com or Dawn Robinson at drrobinson0415@gmail.com for more information and access to the Zoom link.
(We’re having a good time! Guaranteed to put a smile on your face.)

MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS AT 12:15PM

The Wednesday Bible study group will not be meeting the week of Thanksgiving, but will resume on Wednesday, December 2, at 12:15.

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

Today, we began a new book study on the Rev. Dr. William Barber's book The Third Reconstruction; How a Moral Movement is Overcoming the Politics of Division and Fear. Everyone is welcome to join us. If you aren't able to purchase the book (available on Amazon, Kindle, Audible and other places) before Sunday, please contact Pastor Cheri and she can email a copy to you.
Click here to join.
Or use Meeting ID: 876 7340 9762  Passcode: 523903
Cheri Dennis, 704-519-6016 or cherid@holycovenantucc.org
PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER:

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

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

Friends & Family Members
Jennifer Funderburk Owens in the death of her husband, and the death of her father. David & Cecelia Griffin (JP Griffin), Cindy Hedrick (Barb Schneller), 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), Nick Pernice (Dawn Simmons), Vernon & Andrea Powell (Robert Shepherd), Kevin & Tracy Reed (Dawn Simmons), 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)

REACH THE PASTOR
During this pandemic, Pastor Fred and Pastor Cheri are keeping office hours, though maybe not at the church. You can arrange a personal meeting through Zoom or a regular phone call. Have questions? Just want to chat, catch up? Discuss a personal matter. Call us! Pastor Fred Robinson, 770-344-8002 or Pastor Cheri Dennis 704-519-6016.

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

Please note new office hours in November and December:
Tuesday through Friday, 8am-4pm

3501 West W.T. Harris Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28269-8510
www.holycovenantucc.org    704-599-9810