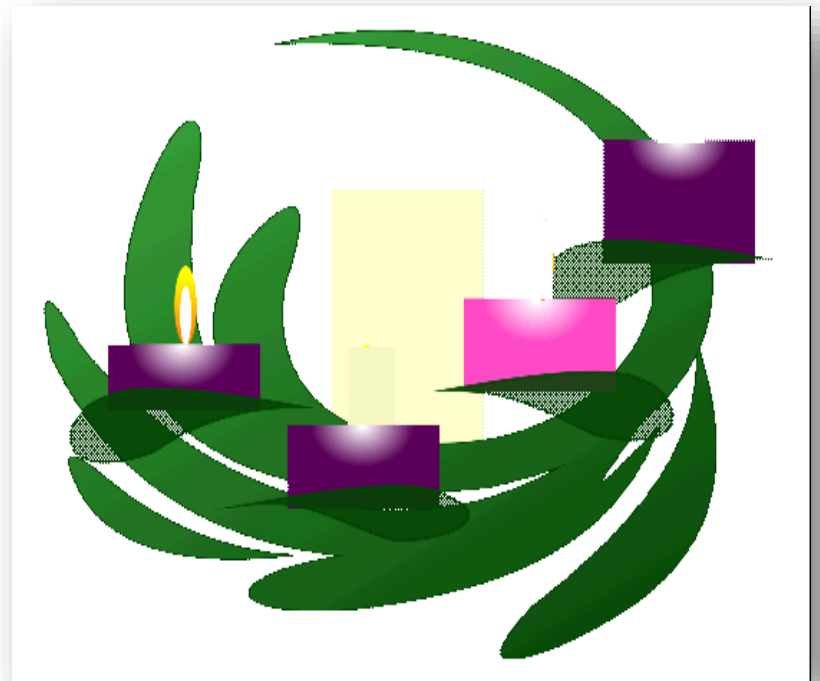




# Jesus

The Hope of the World



## Silent Meditation

"Advent is concerned with that very connection between memory and hope which is so necessary. Advent's intention is to awaken the most profound and basic emotional memory within us, namely, the memory of the God who became a child. This is a healing memory; it brings hope. The purpose of the Church's year is continually to rehearse her great history of memories, to awaken the heart's memory so that it can discern the star of hope....

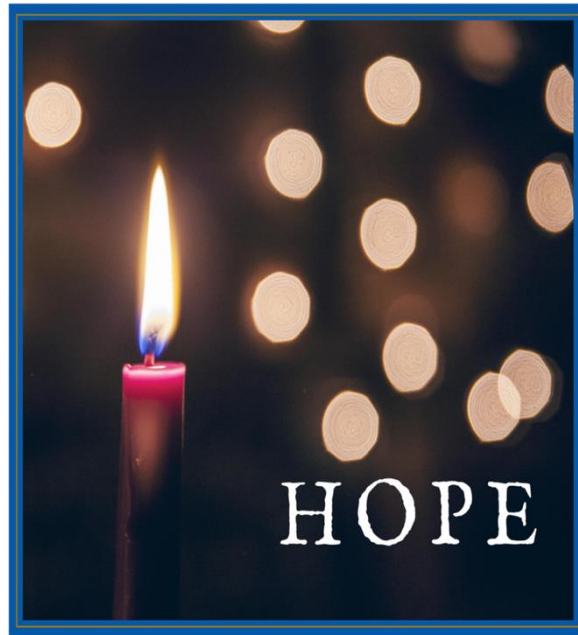
- Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger

"Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come. You wait and watch and work: You don't give up."

-Anne Lamott

"A prison cell in which one waits, hopes... and is completely dependent on the fact that the door of freedom has to be opened from the outside, is not a bad picture of Advent."

-Dietrich Bonhoeffer



**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT**

**November 29, 2020, 10:55 AM**

Gathering Music                      “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”                      arr. J. Carraway

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                      B. McGee  
**Emmanuel, Emmanuel, your name is called Emmanuel.  
God with us, revealed in us, your name is called Emmanuel.**

\* Call to Worship                      Cheri Dennis

One:    Where crooked roads need straightening,  
**Many:   Prepare the Way for the Lord.**  
One:    Where people walk in darkness,  
**Many:   Prepare the Way for the Lord.**  
One:    Where busy lives need stilling,  
**Many:   Prepare the Way for the Lord.**

One: Where minds are full of tinsel, presents and parties,  
Many: **Prepare the Way for the Lord.**  
One: And now, in this place and among your people gathered,  
All: **O Come, Lord Jesus, and help us find room for you in our hearts.  
Amen.**

Hymn 116                                      “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”                                      VENI EMMANUEL  
**O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel.  
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Child of God appear.**

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.*

**O come, O Wisdom from on high, and order all things far and nigh;  
To us the path of knowledge show, and help us in that way to go. (R)**

**O come, O Day-spring, come and cheer our spirits by your advent here.  
Love stir within the womb of night,  
And death’s own shadows put to flight. (R)**

**O come, Desire of Nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind.  
Make envy, strife, and quarrels cease;  
Fill the whole world with heaven’s peace. (R)**

*Throughout the centuries, people have used candles to light dark places. As a congregation and family, we light the Advent candles to prepare us for the celebration of the coming of Jesus, the light that illuminates our dark world. Each Sunday in Advent has a different focus: hope, peace, joy, and love. The purple candles are for the first, second and fourth Sundays; the pink candle is for the third Sunday. As the candles are lit on progressive Sundays, the light becomes brighter - first one candle, then two, then three, then four - until on Christmas Eve, when the white candle is lit, celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, bringing light into the dark world.*

*Join us in our virtual worship services as we journey through Advent to Christmas. May you remember that God **did** send Jesus into the world, that God **is sending** Jesus into the world, and that God **will send** Jesus into the world to bring light to the darkness.*

## ADVENT 1 ~ HOPE (PURPLE CANDLE)

**One:** If ever there was a year we needed Advent, this is the year. We hardly know how to describe the year we have lived through. We hesitate to reflect on all the mess around us in 2020. All we know is that nothing seems right, nothing seems like it used to be, nothing. We need Advent hope!

**Many:** The prophet Isaiah cried out for us, “O that you would tear open the heavens and come down ... To make your name known ... so that nations might tremble at your presence.” So tear through the mess, O God, and come down to us again. We long to be your people, a people of hope.

**One:** We light this first candle as a sign of our hope. Hope that you can meet us, even in the mess of our world. Hope that you still see us, though we feel we are lost in the rubble. Let this light be the guide that brings us to Emmanuel once more.

**Many:** Jesus, the Light of the World!

*Sung Response: We'll walk in the light, beautiful light.  
Come where the dewdrops of mercy shine bright.  
Oh, shine all around us by day and by night.  
Jesus, the light of the world.*

Pastoral Prayer

Scripture Lesson

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Jeff Edwards-Knight

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**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

“No Eye Had Seen”  
*Lisa Cloninger, Jon Weddell*

M. S. Smith

Gospel Lesson

Isaiah 64: 1-9

Fred Robinson

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,  
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—  
as when fire kindles brushwood  
and the fire causes water to boil—  
to make your name known to your adversaries,  
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!  
When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,  
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.  
From ages past no one has heard,  
no ear has perceived,  
no eye has seen any God besides you,  
who works for those who wait for him.  
You meet those who gladly do right,  
those who remember you in your ways.  
But you were angry, and we sinned;  
because you hid yourself we transgressed.  
We have all become like one who is unclean,  
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.  
We all fade like a leaf,  
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.  
There is no one who calls on your name,  
or attempts to take hold of you;  
for you have hidden your face from us,  
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.  
Yet, O Lord, you are our Father;  
we are the clay, and you are our potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.  
Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord,  
and do not remember iniquity forever.  
Now consider, we are all your people.

**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 "Hope Through Despair" Fred Robinson

Hymn 103 "Watcher, Tell Us of the Night" ABERYSTWYTH

Watcher, tell us of the night, what its signs of promise are.  
Traveler, O a wondrous sight! See that glory-beaming star!  
Watcher, does its beauteous ray news of joy or hope foretell?  
Traveler, yes; it brings the day, promised day of Israel.

Watcher, tell us of the night, for the morning seems to dawn.  
Traveler, shadows take their flight, doubt and terror are withdrawn.  
Watcher, you may go your way; hasten to your quiet home.  
Traveler, I rejoice today, for Emmanuel has come!

Benediction Fred Robinson

Benediction Response "Born in the Night" MARY'S CHILD

Born in the night, Mary's Child, a long way from your home;  
Coming in need, Mary's Child, born in a borrowed room.

Clear shining light, Mary's Child, your face lights up our way.  
Light of the world, Mary's Child, dawn on our darkened day.

Postlude "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" arr. J. Carter

*(Songs in this service are used by Permission. CCLI License #11439355; CSPL164710)*

Kristen ITC – font – need boarder to add in zoom links

## Holy Covenant Advent/Christmas 2020

Sunday, November 29, 11AM: Advent 1—Hope

Wednesday, December 2, 7PM: Midweek Meditation

Sunday, December 6, 11AM: Advent 2—Peace

Wednesday, December 9, 7PM: Midweek Meditation

Sunday, December 13, 11AM: Advent 3—Joy

Wednesday, December 16, 7PM: Blue Christmas

Sunday, December 20, 11AM: Advent 4—Love

Thursday, December 24, 7PM: Christmas Eve

Sunday, December 27, 11AM: Christmas 1

## 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 worshipping 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](mailto:Fredrick@HolyCovenantUCC.org)

Tom Magraw, Consistory President  
[TomM@HolyCovenantUCC.org](mailto: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*

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:joannjellison@yahoo.com) or Dawn Robinson at [drrobinson0415@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:cherid@holycovenantucc.org)

## **PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER:**

If you wish to add someone to the list, please send a note to  
[prayers@holycovenantucc.org](mailto: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 in law.  
Lori Copeland (Martha Bomely), 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**