



Jesus

The Peace of the World



Silent Meditation

"Peace is not something you wish for; it's something you make, something you do, something you are and something you give away."

~ John Lennon

"For some, Christ's [second] coming is terrifying. Old verities give way at his arrival. Those who make their living by the status quo do not rejoice when the status quo is threatened. Caesar trembles, empires topple, and the earth shakes. For those tied to the old age and its gods, its armies, its delusions of immortality, its false securities, the arrival of the Son of Man is bad news.

'Apocalypse now,' cry the prophets of doom. Let us put away these prophets, close our eyes and speak optimistically of tomorrow. But those who have watched, who have heeded the signs, who have never made peace with the status quo, who have lived as if there were no tomorrow prick up their ears, straighten, stand on tiptoes. The Anointed One comes, their redemption is near and the world's doom becomes their deliverance."

~ William Willimon

HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

December 6, 2020, 10:55 AM

Gathering Music “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence” arr. J. Purifoy

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

One: What will set us journeying in search of the Christ this Advent?

Many: How far are we prepared to go out of our way to look for the signs
of Christ’s coming, and to prepare a path?

One: How will we travel through this season?

Many: Will we be burdened by responsibilities and tasks, loaded with
others’ expectations, overwhelmed by their needs? Will we be
full of joy or weary with grief?

One: What will guide our steps in these weeks?

Many: Will we follow a thread of longing, the hint of an alternative
pathway, the words and music of the gathered community?

One: Siblings in Christ, Advent awaits us.

Many: Let us place our feet on the road and begin the journey. May we
find in familiar words, rituals and customs the birth of the new
thing that awaits us.

One: May we find in this Advent journey, the gift of new life and the
courage to live with love as our guide.

All: May we walk in the light of the Living God!

Lift up your heads, O mighty gates; behold the glorious Ruler waits!
The Sovereign One is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here.

Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple, set apart
From earthly use for heaven's employ,
Adorned with prayer and love and joy.

Redeemer, come! I open wide my heart to you; here, Christ, abide!
Let me your inner presence feel; your grace and love in me reveal.

So come, my Sovereign, enter in! Let new and nobler life begin.
Your Holy Spirit guide us on, until the glorious crown be won.

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 2 ~ PEACE (PURPLE CANDLE)

The McQueen-Simmons Family

One: Our lists are long, even in this strange mess where we live these days. And we want to do it right, we want to be safe, but we want to be able to enjoy the season. We've got work to do to put right what has gone wrong, to heal what is broken, to mend the relationships, and to prepare for the peace that will come.

Many: The prophet Isaiah reminded us that there is work to be done. “Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” When God comes in, then healing is to be found, but we need to make the way; we need to open the door into our lives.

One: So, we light these candles as a sign of our belief that the God we worship is not far from us and that we can clear the way for that God to come and dwell with us. We light these candles in faith that peace is coming.

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

Fred Robinson

Children’s Message

Cheri Dennis

Hymn 121

“Toda la Tierra (All Earth is Waiting)”
Lisa Cloninger will sing the Spanish verses.

TAULÉ

Toda la tierra espera al Salvador y el surco abierto, la obra del Creador;
Es el mundo que lucha por la libertad, reclama justicia y busca la verdad.

All earth is waiting to see the Promised One,
And open furrows, the sowing of our God.
All the world, bound and struggling, seeks true liberty;
It cries out for justice and searches for the truth.

Dice el profeta al pueblo de Israel: “De madre virgin ya viene Emmanuel,”
Será “Dios con nosotros,” semilla será, con él la esperanza al mundo volverá.

Thus says the prophet to those of Israel,
“A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel”:
One whose name is “God with us,” our Savior shall be,
Through whom hope will blossom once more within our hearts.

Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

A voice says, “Cry out!”

And I said, “What shall I cry?”

All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.

The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand forever.

Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;

say to the cities of Judah,
“Here is your God!”

See, the Lord GOD comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.

He will feed his flock like a shepherd;

he will gather the lambs in his arms,
and carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead the mother sheep.

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

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

Anthem

“Like a Child”

arr. D. Cherwien

Gospel Lesson

Mark 1:1-8

Fred Robinson

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,

who will prepare your way;

the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight,’”

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

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

“Good News”

Fred Robinson

COMMUNION

Invitation to Communion

Community of saints, beloved of God, as we come to this table, we are reminded that this is the table of Jesus Christ, a banquet prepared for everyone. All who seek to be nourished and sustained in the journey of faith, all who seek wholeness and compassionate paths to peace and justice, are welcome here.

So let us come to the table, expectant, eager, and open to sharing in the rich blessings of heaven born from unexpected places, and people, and experiences.

In this meal, shared from home to home, may we remember the life, death, and resurrection of the One who still takes on flesh among us today.

Prayer of Consecration

Loving God, we thank you for this meal, a meal that nourishes us, body and soul. We thank you for Advent and for the hope, peace, joy and love it calls us to. May this communion meal sustain us on our journey and enable us to freely live into the persons you called us to be. Where any social norm or imbalance of power limit our ability to thrive, may we be a witness for Christ and pursuer justice for all your people. Amen.

Words of Institution

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Prayer after Communion

We give thanks to you our God for sustaining us in this New Year; For bringing us closer to you, For knowing you are with us in our Advent waiting. Amen

Hymn 345

“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

PICARDY

Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand;
Ponder nothing earthly-minded, for with blessing in the hand,
Christ our God to earth descending, our full homage to demand.

Monarch great, yet born of Mary, as of old on earth Christ stood,
Lord of all, in human vesture—in the body and the blood—
Christ will give to all the faithful bread of life for heavenly food.

At Christ’s feet the six-winged seraphs, cherubim with sleepless eye,
Veil their faces to the Presence, as with ceaseless voice they cry,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, God most high!

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

“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly”

arr. T. Osman

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

SANCTUARY OPEN FOR MEDITATION AND SILENCE

As of today, it has been 40 Sundays that we have worshiped only virtually at Holy Covenant. Many of you have expressed how much you miss being at the church, especially to see church family members but also just to BE AT the church. To offer some solace for that situation, Holy Covenant's sanctuary will be open on four selected days and times in December. You are invited follow the link below to sign up to visit for silence and meditation, either alone or with a member of your family with whom you have been quarantining.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C44ACAD23A2FE3-sanctuary>

Holy Covenant Advent/Christmas 2020

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

***Zoom Link for Wednesday, December 9, 7 PM
Mid-week Meditation***

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82030833534>

Meeting ID: 820 3083 3534

**Wednesday, December 16, 7:30 PM
Blue Christmas Service**

We invite you to join us for a Blue Christmas service on Wednesday evening, December 16, at 7:30PM. We offer this as a time to come together to acknowledge the "blue" feelings we have at Christmas time and the reasons for them and offer them to God.

This time has been called the "long dark night of the soul" and "the winter of our discontent" in which memories of past experiences and the pain of present experiences can become overwhelming. In recent years, this service has come to be a time of remembrance and grieving for losses. It is an alternative way to celebrate Jesus' birth, to celebrate that God is with us in our sorrow and grief when we cannot celebrate with joyous songs and carols.



In this year of COVID, racial violence, and political warring, when family gatherings can't be held, graduations and proms and weddings and parties have been cancelled, when jobs have been lost, and lives have been needlessly lost to violence, we have much to grieve. This year, more than ever, we feel the tension between grieving and celebrating. This year, we leave room for both.

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

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

THIS IS GOD'S HOUSE WHERE ALL ARE WELCOME

UPDATE TO THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

December 4, 2020

Dear Holy Covenant Family,

As we continue to monitor the Coronavirus pandemic, it is time to provide you with another update. Because of an uptick in cases everywhere, including in the Charlotte metro area, the HCUCC COVID-19 Response Team has agreed that we will not likely have in-person worship until spring, at the earliest. Along with the rest of the nation, we are excited about the two or three Coronavirus vaccines that hold promise. However, because the general population will have to wait for months before being able to get immunized against the virus, the CDC expects cases to continue rising through the winter.

In the meantime, the COVID-19 Response Team continues to consider ways in which we can safely be together as a congregation. For instance, we recently allowed members to drive through the parking lot to pick up Advent candle kits. Unfortunately, some earlier ideas, such as a Vespers Service and a parking lot picnic, had to be cancelled because of a rapid rise in the number of cases. Of course, we will revisit this issue and see how things are faring in the spring.

We encourage you to continue to be a part of our online worship services. In addition to our Sojourners classes, Wednesday Bible Study, Covenant Group meetings, and occasional WISE events, we will be holding evening Advent Meditation services on Wednesdays at 7 pm until December 16. Our Christmas Eve service will also be offered via ZOOM.

During this time of extended crisis, let us pray for our global family and those across our nation whose lives and livelihoods continue to be impacted by this virus. Again, let's do everything we can to stay in community and reach out to each other in love through phone calls, video chats, emails, text messages and other creative ways. For this, God will be pleased.

Sincerely,

Fred Robinson, Interim Senior Pastor
Fredrick@HolyCovenantUCC.org

Tom Magraw, Consistory President
TomM@HolyCovenantUCC.org

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*

UPCOMING ORDINATION FOR GREGG WALKER TODAY 1:30PM

The service will be live-streamed from Holy Covenant. Gregg has been called to hospital chaplaincy and is currently a chaplain with Atrium Health. Congratulations Gregg!

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

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 TOMORROW 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.



Are the Holidays a stressful time? Do you struggle with the Holiday Blues? While the visions of the holidays in the media are of joy and family connection, many people instead find the holidays a time of loneliness and grief. Know that you are not alone. Reach out to chosen family, church members and friends. Take care of your physical health. Participate in Holy Covenant's Blue Christmas service on Dec. 16th.

Check out this podcast from the American Psychological Association:

<https://www.apa.org/research/action/speaking-of-psychology/holiday-blues>

ANGEL TREE GIVING

For the second year, we will support 30 senior residents of Pelican Health, a skilled nursing facility in Charlotte. They ask for sweat suits for the women and hoodies for the men, plus warm scarves for all. There are many ways we can accomplish this!

- Make a purchase through Amazon's Wish List for around \$20 per senior and they will ship directly to the church.
https://smile.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/dl/invite/0XTLaQV?ref=cm_sw_em_r_wl_dp_1i41kEryTMbQs
- If you enjoy shopping in person, bring your unwrapped gifts to us at the church!
- Make a donation someone's name, contact Suzanne Lamorey, suzlam@yahoo.com, and she'll send out a special note "(Someone) received a special gift in your name").
- Donate online at <https://holycovenantucc.org/give-2/> and chose Angel Tree Giving from the Designated Gifts button.

Thank you for sharing Christmas love with others!

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HELPING OUR COMMUNITY

The Racial Justice and Equity team at Holy Covenant has signed up to deliver 130 lunch bags to Roof Above (formerly [Urban Ministry Center](#)) on Thursday, December 10 for our most vulnerable homeless neighbors. We will have the supplies at Holy Covenant and need volunteers to help us put the lunch bags together. Contact Phil Kaveler,

pwkaveler@yahoo.com if you would like to help assemble the lunches in socially distanced work stations between noon and 4:30 pm at the church on December 10, so we can deliver them to Roof Above between 5-6 PM.

We have also committed to make 260 cookies (22 dozen) for Roof Above on Wednesday, December 16. Please let Phil Kaveler know if you can bring Christmas cookies for our yet to be housed neighbors.



MOVERS AND SHAKERS AT HCUCC!

The North Carolina AIDS Action Network ([NCAAN](#)) elected new board member Jeffery Edwards-Knight to join the organization's board of directors in October 2020. Jeff is the supervisor of the HIV/STD Community Testing and Outreach program at Mecklenburg County Public Health. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Jeffery was selected to attend and graduated from the African American HIV University in Los Angeles, sponsored by the Black AIDS Institute in collaboration with the University of California, Los Angeles. He was featured in the POZ 100 Celebration of 100 long-term survivors. He started his work in the HIV field with the Metrolina AIDS Project as the MSM health educator in 2006. Jeffery has served on the board in the past, including three years as board chair from 2014-2016.

We are grateful for Jeff's leadership, both at Holy Covenant, and in our Community. Jeff is a church Elder, and served as our Consistory President in 2018.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER:

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

Members

Jason & Aline Sullivan, in the death of Jason's father, Gene Sullivan.
Kevin Decker, Linn Finger, Tom & Kathy Habel, Helen Lambert, Sharon Landis, Karen Long, 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

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), Michael Morse (Beth & Ed Sharp), Jennifer Funderburk Owens (Diane Neese), Thibault Ossenhühl (Melissa Noll), 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), Kathryn Vickery (Ed Vickery), Wanda Williams (John Rapp)

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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