



Silent Meditation

“Thank you’ is the best prayer that anyone could say. I say that one a lot.

Thank you expresses extreme gratitude, humility, understanding.”

– Alice Walker

“If one sees self-sufficiency and individualism as highly valuable traits, feeling grateful can be perceived as uncomfortable, weak, and perhaps demeaning.”

– Diana Butler Bass

“Grace and gratitude belong together like heaven and earth.

Grace evokes gratitude like the voice an echo.

Gratitude follows grace like thunder lightening.”

– Karl Barth

HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

March 14, 2021, 10:55 AM

Prelude "What Wondrous Love Is This" arr. A. Bemiss
Kristin Andes

Welcome and Announcements Cheri Dennis
and Offertory Invitation

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

Many: And also with you.

One Great Hour of Sharing Video Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson

Introit "The Summons" KELVINGROVE

**"Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?"**

Call to Worship Cheri Dennis

One: Beloved in Christ, why have you come to worship this morning?

Many: **We are called to celebrate the love of God in the form of Jesus Christ.**

One: This love reaches through the shadows of our lives to embrace us. Our challenge is to trust the light of God's love in the midst of our struggles.

Many: **We are called to celebrate the light of God in Jesus who offers love and acceptance, not judgment and rejection.**

One: If only we will trust, Jesus leads us in the way of light and love.

All: **We are called to celebrate our God who loved and loves us so much!**

There’s a wideness in God’s mercy, like the wideness of the sea;
 There’s a kindness in God’s justice, which is more than liberty.
 There’s no place where earthly sorrows are more felt than in God’s heaven;
 There’s no place where earthly failings have such kindly judgment given.

For the love of God is broader than the measures of our minds;
 And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.
 If our love were but more faithful, we would gladly trust God’s word;
 And our lives would show thanksgiving for the goodness of our God.

Prayer of Confession

Cheri Dennis

One: O God of Comfort and God of Challenge, we come to you this morning the way the Israelites did, full of complaints and dissatisfaction. Nothing is enough; we do not recognize your blessing at work in our day to day lives.

Many: Forgive us, O God.

One: O God of Comfort and God of Challenge, we come to you this morning the way Nicodemus came to Jesus, wanting to believe the Gospel message, yet not ready to accept the responsibilities of the Gospel message.

Many: Forgive us, O God.

One: In our complaints, challenge us as you did the Israelites, to consider the bigger picture of oppression, injustice, and inequality around us. In our doubting faith, hold us in your grace until our doubt is replaced by trust in you.

Many: Forgive us when we close our eyes for fear of what you might show us. Forgive us when we fail to live up to the responsibilities to which the gospel invites us.

All: Open our ears, our hearts, our minds until we see what you see in our world. Amen.

Song

“Create in Me a Clean Heart”

Psalm 51

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
 And renew a right spirit within me. (2x)

Cast me not away from your presence, O Lord,
 And take not your Holy Spirit from me.
 Restore unto me the joy of your salvation,
 And renew a right spirit within me.

Assurance of Pardon

Cheri Dennis

We are forgiven because of Jesus. We are blessed because God's image resides deep within each of us. We are free to share God's blessing by the way we love others.

Response

"Oh, How Good Is Christ the Lord"

OH QUE BUENO

**Oh, how good is Christ the Lord! On the cross he died for me.
He has pardoned all my sin. Glory be to Jesus.
Glory be to Jesus. Glory be to Jesus.
In three days, he rose again. Glory be to Jesus.**

Children's Message

Laura Hankins

Pastoral Prayer

Cheri Dennis

Anthem

"Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross"

arr. G. M. Martin

Hebrew Scripture

Numbers 21: 4-9

Von McQueen-Simmons

From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

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

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

Prayer for Illumination (*sung*)

OPEN OUR EYES

**Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus,
To reach out and touch you and say that we love you.
Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen.
Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus.**

Gospel Lesson

John 3:14-21

Cheri Dennis

And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

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

"So Loved"

Cheri Dennis

Hymn 223

"What Wondrous Love Is This"

WONDRIOUS LOVE

**What wondrous love is this, O my soul! O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this! That Christ should come in bliss
To bear the heavy cross for my soul, for my soul,
To bear the heavy cross for my soul!**

**To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing,
To God and to the Lamb, I will sing.
To God and to the Lamb who is the great I Am,
While millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing;
While millions join the theme, I will sing.**

**And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on,
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on!
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be,
And through eternity I'll sing on, I'll sing on,
And through eternity I'll sing on!**

Benediction

Cheri Dennis

Benediction Response

“The Summons”

KELVINGROVE

Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.
In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

Postlude

“Have Your Own Way, Lord”

arr. J. Cook

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

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

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

Portions of this service are adapted from: So Loved: Service Prayers for the Fourth Sunday of Lent was written by the Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel, Conference Minister for Missouri Mid-South Conference, UCC.



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WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

THIS IS GOD'S HOUSE WHERE ALL ARE WELCOME

At this time, with consultation with our staff and church leadership, Sunday Worship will be live-streamed every Sunday at 11:00 a.m. until further notice. Please know the leadership of Holy Covenant will be closely monitoring developments and will keep you informed of future decisions. Our greatest priority is the safety and well-being of our neighbors and members of our congregation. Our actions impact the world around us so practicing physical distancing is not only necessary but it is an act of kindness and love. To paraphrase a verse from the Talmud, "Anyone who saves one life it is as if she has saved the whole world."



JOURNALING DURING THE PANDEMIC, MARCH 18 VIA ZOOM

The year that COVID-19 changed everything has been difficult in more ways than we can count. Journaling can help you take an objective and compassionate look at your experiences and create ways to maintain a healthy perspective -- or regain it if you lost it in a pandemic fog.

Professional development coach and journaling teacher Alix Felsing will lead this interactive conversation in this program offered by Holy Covenant's WISE Team. All are welcome to participate, whether you currently journal or just want to learn more. We'll meet via Zoom from 7 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, March 18. [Click here to join the meeting](#). Meeting ID 889 1733 5475, passcode 925360. Questions? Contact Alix at alixfelsing@gmail.com.



YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS THIS NEWS! NATURE HEALS!

In this unusual time when COVID-19 causes us to social distance and the pandemic results in deep and prolonged anxiety, we want to hear some positive news. And along these lines a February 14th Wall Street Journal article reports:

"The physical and mental damage inflicted by COVID has doctors, researchers, and others racing to tap into nature's therapeutic effects." The author describes how just 2 hours a week spent out-of-door shows dramatic positive effects. That's an average of less than 20 minutes a day! The author goes on to cite reports of increased resilience and decreased stress when people spent 120 minutes per week in nature. Consider spending a few minutes with the [attached Wall Street Journal article](#) and then head into the great outdoors.



Tom Magraw

HOLY COVENANT: WHO WE ARE CONNECTED TO IN MINISTRY:

Holy Covenant is connected to many organizations that are interdenominational and many that are secular. Meaningful ministry takes place with all of them.

- Roof Above: Formerly known as Urban Ministry Center, this group provides many social services including housing and food distribution. A website is available: www.roofabove.org
- Church World Services [Charlotte CROP Hunger Walk](#): International and interfaith organization that sponsors walks with the proceeds going for projects dealing with hunger locally and around the world.
- David Cox Elementary School: An [elementary school](#) near Holy Covenant. We have provided school supplies and backpack supplies (groceries) for needy children.
- University of North Carolina Charlotte: We have provided food and clothing (professional interview style) to help needful students. <https://ninerpantry.uncc.edu/>
- [Charlotte Pride](#): This group celebrates and lifts up information about the LGBTQ+ community. Holy Covenant provides a presence and support for their efforts.
- [Time Out Youth](#): Provides a safe haven for Transgender youth. Holy Covenant has provided food for their participants and support for their efforts.



BAGGED LUNCHES, MARCH 15

We will be making 330 bagged lunches on March 15 for Roof Above clients across the city and we would like to invite you to participate. Can you spare a couple hours on the 15th to make sandwiches and pack lunches in our double-masked and socially distanced setting? Please email Suzanne at suzlam@yahoo.com if you are interested.

SPRING CLEANING? WE NEED VCR TAPES AND DVD'S!

Assisted Living Centers are asking for donations of your used VHS and DVD movies as they try to find ways to manage COVID restrictions. If you have any that you could part with, please drop them at the church. We'll deliver them.

MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY VIA ZOOM, WEDNESDAYS 12:15PM

Join the discussion as we delve into the beginnings of Paul's missionary journey in the book of Acts. Join the Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89642315861>

Meeting ID: 896 4231 5861

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

The Sojourners Class is currently studying Paul's Letter to the Philippians. Feel free to join us anytime. There are no pre-requisites for this class, only a curiosity about scripture and an eagerness to see how God is still speaking to the church. For more information and a copy of the study guide, please contact Cheri Dennis at cherid@holycovenant.ucc.org or 704-519-6016. All are welcome to join us a 9:45 every Sunday via Zoom.

[Click here to join the Zoom meeting.](#)

Meeting ID: 876 7340 9762 Passcode: 523903

REACH THE PASTORS

Pastor Fred Robinson, 770-344-8002, fredrick@holycovenantucc.org

Pastor Cheri Dennis 704-519-6016, cherid@holycovenantucc.org

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

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Kevin Decker, Linn Finger, Tom & Kathy Habel, Helen Lambert, Sharon Landis, Karen Long, Irene Mikkelson, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Jerry & Marion Rhyne, Mamie Stokes, Anita Taylor

Friends & Family Members

Family and Friends of Sarah Wallace, Aunt of Pastor Fred Robinson

Family and Friends of Craig Sharp (Jean & Terry Raley-Dennis)

Louis & Bonnie (Kathleen Wagner), Linda Angstrom (Beth Sharp), Cecelia Ciciollo (Dominic Ciciollo), Sally Cloninger (Lisa Cloninger), David & Cecelia Griffin (JP Griffin), Cindy Hedrick (Barb Schneller), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Will Hong (Jim Hong), Pauline Jones and James & Neisy Williams (Jeff Edwards-Knight), George Jongeling (Darline Warren), Bob Lyon (Melissa Noll), Linda Matkins (Robert Shepherd), Nevin Milan (Kathleen Wagner), Thibault Ossenbühl (Melissa Noll), Vernon & Andrea Powell (Robert Shepherd), Darrell & Jackie Reichert (Diane Neese), Lauren Reisenberger (Ida Mangione), Jimmy Tucker (Diane Neese), Kathryn Vickery (Ed Vickery), Wanda Williams (John Rapp)

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

Rev. Fred Robinson, Interim Pastor

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