



Silent Meditation

"If we learn to love the earth, we will find labyrinths, gardens, fountains, and precious jewels!
A whole new world will open itself to us. We will discover what it means to be truly alive."

—Teresa of Avila

Love all of God's creation, the whole of it and every grain of sand. Love every leaf,
every ray of God's light! Love the animals, love the plants, love everything.

—Fyodor Dostoyevsky

When a group of people are sailing in a boat,
one of them has a right to bore a hole under his own seat.

—Israel Meir ha-Kohen

Give me fellowship with the beast and bird. Let me enter into sympathy with their hunger,
their thirst, their weariness, their cold, their frequent homelessness.

Let me give their wants a place in my prayers....

Let me be to them what Thou hast been to me—a protector, a Providence.

—George Matheson

"I love to think of nature as an unlimited broadcasting station through which God speaks to
us every hour, if we will only tune in."

—George Washington Carver

HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

April 25, 2021, 11am

Prelude "Terra Beata" arr. M. Hayes

Welcome and Announcements Fred Robinson

and Offertory Invitation

One: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Many: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Introit "Morning Has Broken" BUNESSAN

**Morning has broken like the first morning,
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!**

**Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven,
Like the first dewfall on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,
Sprung in completeness where God's feet pass.**

**Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning
Born of the one light Eden saw play!
Praise with elation, praise every morning,
God's re-creation of the new day!**

Call to Worship (*from Global Ministries*) Cheri Dennis

One: Lord, we knew we would find you in gardens. We knew we would find you in water. We knew we would find you on mountaintops. We knew we would find you in the wilderness.

Many: **But God, we never expected to find you in a trough. ...in a marketplace. ...among women. ...at dinner parties. ...on a cross.**

One: We expected to find you in a tomb. And we still struggle to believe we can find you in our midst.

Many: **We still struggle to believe that the matter of this world really matters to you.**

One: Still, you show up in your physical body with messy wounds to eat a real meal in the material world.

Many: You show up in a world that is degraded and scarred by the same forces that mocked and broke your body on the cross.

One: You show up preaching a word of repentance and forgiveness to those who are broken and to those who break.

Many: Lord, we are the broken. Lord, we are the ones who break.

One: Make us healers as you heal us.

Many: Bind us in creaturely solidarity with you and with all of creation.

One: Impel us to permeate the world with justice, equity, sustainability and hope.

All: Impel us to join you in co-creating your kin-dom on earth as it is in heaven. Impel us to join you in restoring the Earth.

Hymn 21

“God Reigns o’er All the Earth”

TERRA BEATA

God reigns o’er all the earth! Green hills and valleys low,
The farms and towns in golds and browns God’s grace and beauty show.
God reigns o’er all the earth! Stone banks and spreading plains,
In rainbow hues—reds, yellows, blues—of streams and country lanes.

God reigns o’er human life! Through youth and aging years,
In death, in birth, in grief, in mirth, in all our hopes and fears.
God reigns o’er human life! Our inspiration still.
Through all our schemes, in all our dreams, we see God’s reigning will.

God reigns! Emmanuel! God with us every day,
In all our past and to the last, our comfort and our stay.
God reigns! Emmanuel! Let praise to Christ be sung!
God’s presence here makes all things dear. Let joyful bells be rung!

Children’s Message

Cheri Dennis

For the beauty of the earth, for the splendor of the skies,
For the love which from our birth over and around us lies,

God of all, to you we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

For the wonder of each hour of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale, and tree and flower, sun and moon, and stars of light,

God of all, to you we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

For the good that love inspires, for a world where none exclude,
For a faith that never tires, and for every heart renewed,

God of all, to you we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

Pastoral Prayer

Fred Robinson

Hebrew Scripture Psalm 104 (Selected Verses)

Tom Magraw

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

O Lord my God, you are very great.

You are clothed with honor and majesty,
wrapped in light as with a garment.

You stretch out the heavens like a tent,
you set the beams of your chambers on the waters,
you make the clouds your chariot,

you ride on the wings of the wind,
you make the winds your messengers,
fire and flame your ministers.

You set the earth on its foundations,
so that it shall never be shaken.

You cover it with the deep as with a garment;
the waters stood above the mountains.

You make springs gush forth in the valleys;
they flow between the hills,
giving drink to every wild animal . . .

By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation;
they sing among the branches.
From your lofty abode you water the mountains;
the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.
You cause the grass to grow for the cattle,
and plants for people to use,
to bring forth food from the earth,
and wine to gladden the human heart,
oil to make the face shine,
and bread to strengthen the human heart.
The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly,
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.
In them the birds build their nests;
the stork has its home in the fir trees.
The high mountains are for the wild goats;
the rocks are a refuge for the coney.
You have made the moon to mark the seasons;
the sun knows its time for setting.
O Lord, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.
When you hide your face, they are dismayed;
when you take away their breath, they die
and return to their dust.
When you send forth your spirit, they are created;
and you renew the face of the ground.
May the glory of the Lord endure forever;
may the Lord rejoice in his works—
who looks on the earth and it trembles,
who touches the mountains and they smoke.
I will sing to the Lord as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.
One: For the word of God in scripture, for the word of God among us, for
the word of God within us.
Many: **Alleluia! Thanks be to God.**

Sermonic Scripture

Exodus 23: 10-11

Fred Robinson

For six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield; but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, so that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the wild animals may eat. You shall do the same with your vineyard, and with your olive orchard.

Romans 8: 18-24

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen?

One: For the word of God in scripture, for the word of God among us, for the word of God within us.

Many: **Alleluia! Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

“Love as Ecological-Economic Vocation”

Fred Robinson

Hymn 433

“In the Bulb There Is a Flower”
(Hymn of Promise)

PROMISE

In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree;
In cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be,
Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

There's a song in every silence, seeking word and melody;
There's a dawn for every darkness, bringing hope to you and me.
From the past will come the future; what it holds, a mystery?
Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

In our end is our beginning; in our time, infinity;
In our doubt there is believing; in our life, eternity.
In our death, a resurrection; at the last a victory,
Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

Benediction

Fred Robinson

Benediction Response 581

WORLD PEACE PRAYER

Lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth,
From despair to hope, from fear to trust,
Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace;
Let peace fill our hearts, let peace fill our world,
Let peace fill our universe.

Postlude

“Variation on *Dix*”

arr. J. Carter

(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, Meg Houlihan, Kathleen Smith

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."

THE MICHAEL G. BROOKS SCHOLARSHIP 2021-2022 APPLICATIONS E NOW AVAILABLE.

The purpose of this Fund is to encourage Youth in both their educational growth as well as their service to God. Scholarship funds of \$2000 will be considered annually for all applicants.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION *see application

- Must be considered a youth: defined as a high school graduate, within the ages of 17 - 25.
- Must be a member of Holy Covenant for a minimum of 1 year. If not a member, at least one parent must be. (Preference will be given to youth who are members).
- Must show evidence of participation in activities at Holy Covenant and/or throughout the greater community. (Examples: Sunday School, Choir, Youth Group, Room In The Inn, clean-up days, Scouts, Clubs). Participation can be reported based on pre-COVID participation in church & community activities.
- Must show evidence of academic pursuits. (Examples: GPA, evidence of desire to learn and achieve excellence)

PROCEDURES FOR APPLICATION AND DISBURSEMENT:

- Obtain an application from the church office or [download here](#)
- Complete and submit no later than June 1, 2021 to Cheri Dennis, cherid@holycovenantucc.org.
- Members of the Christian Education Team will review all applications.
- Applicants will be notified no later than July 31, 2021.
- Disbursement of scholarship fund will be made to the recipients' educational organization by the Holy Covenant Financial Department upon receipt of the scholarship funding, anticipated early August, 2021.

See application for additional information.

CELEBRATING OUR GRADUATES

If you, or someone you know, will be graduating soon, please contact the office, office@holycovenantucc.org. We would love to have a photo, and a short bio, so we can share the good news, and celebrate their success!
The Class of 2021 is Twenty Twenty Done!!



MeckMIN invites youth!

IN OUR OWN BACKYARD INTERFAITH YOUTH CAMP, JUNE 10-13, 2021

Rising 9th - 12th graders who participate will visit several houses of faith including the Hindu Center, the Muslim Community Center of Charlotte, Friendship Missionary Baptist Church and the synagogues at Shalom Park. They'll have service opportunities at the Galilee Center and Roof Above -- and an eye-opening tour led by staff at QC Family Tree. And, of course, they'll have fun and lots of opportunities for conversation with a diverse group of new friends. [Click here for the flier.](#)

We've also planned two information sessions open to you, interested youth and their parents or guardians. One will be held April 22 at 5 p.m. and the other on April 24 at 11 a.m. [The attached flyer has full details.](#) Contact LeDayne McLeese Polaski, Exec Dir of MeckMIN, 704-965-9241

MECK. COUNTY OFFERS COVID-19 HOMEBOUND PROGRAM

Are you homebound due to an ongoing physical or mental disability and unable to travel to a COVID-19 vaccination clinic? You may be eligible to receive the vaccine at your residence. Complete the request form available on Mecklenburg County's vaccine web page www.MeckNC.gov/COVID-19 OR CALL 980-314-9400.



BAGGED LUNCHESES, APRIL 29

We're planning another sandwich lunch prep morning on April 29 for the Men's Shelter (only needing to make 75 lunches for this group). Please let me know if you would like to join us! Contact Suzanne at suzlam@yahoo.com and thanks in advance!

AIDS WALK CHARLOTTE 2021, MAY 1

All are invited to join our Holy Covenant team as we come together to end HIV in the Charlotte community. We will be virtually walking this year on May 1 to make a positive impact to RAIN and those impacted by HIV. By being a part of our team, you are empowering persons living with HIV and those at risk to be healthy and stigma free. Sign up on our Holy Covenant Team site [AIDS WALK CHARLOTTE 2021 - Holy Covenant United Church of Christ](https://www.onecause.com) (onecause.com). All funds raised will benefit [Charlotte R.A.I.N.](#) and their work with those living with AIDs or at risk. Questions? Please contact Debbie Davis at Debbiekdavisnc@gmail.com.



MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY VIA ZOOM, WEDNESDAYS *12:30PM*

NEW TIME! NEW LINK!

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/81153885298?pwd=ZXIzVG80Yko5N2dWNnloVG12ckJndz09>

Meeting ID: 811 5388 5298 Passcode: 750474

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

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

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.



UCC Mental Health Network

Welcoming • Inclusive • Supportive • Engaged

Resilience

Resilience; The ability to deal with and bounce back from a difficult situation or event. The American Psychological Association (APA) defines resilience as the process of effectively adapting to adversity or sources of significant stress. Resilience is important to develop at any time but even more so during this time of pandemic and the stresses associated with it including virtual schooling, working, inability to meet with friends and extended family in person, inability to go to the movies, out to eat, or engage in sporting events; and the impact of these stresses on weight, sleep, alcohol usage, level of physical activity, and increased TV and screen time.

Self-efficacy is a key element of resilience and is the belief that we have the ability to influence things or outcomes even if some things are unchangeable such as the death of a loved one. That is, we can do something to feel better in the face of such an unchangeable event, such as doing something to memorialize a loved one.

Positive memories have been found to foster resilience such as remembering a successful achievement, a wonderful experience, or coping effectively with a tough situation or loss in the past. Scheduling pleasant activities and exercise helps resilience.

Having close relationships are important in resilience; no one needs to “go it alone” and we all need someone to talk to and to feel understood and supported when facing a significant difficulty.

A sense of humor is always helpful in coping with difficulties. This can help with cognitive perspective and realizing that even extremely difficult things will end and life will go on, and even if changed, we can persevere. Keeping a journal during a difficult time can be useful. Resilience is also enhanced by gratitude; even in the face of adversity and stress there are always things that we can be grateful for, whether it is the support of family and friends, the enjoyment and escape of a good book, a kindness witnessed, and such basics as a job, decent home, food, and a reliable car.

And, remember that nature heals and we live in a wonderful environment of our church.

Sally Duffy



"Comfort food"
style choices

Electronic methods available for your offerings

Schedule offerings, one time or recurring, through your bank's online payment system. Many financial institutions offer free services to its customers.

Mailing a check? Please use this secure address:

Holy Covenant UCC
PO Box 481285
Charlotte NC 28269

Donate on our website
HolyCovenantUCC.org,
via Subsplash Wallet®* or PayPal®*.
*Fees may apply to these types of transactions

GIVE TODAY

For gifts of stock or additional funding opportunities, please contact the church office
office@holycovenantucc.org or 704-599-9810

Holy Covenant United Church of Christ is a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code. Contributions may be tax deductible.

Activate Windows
Go to Settings to activate Windows

Try the **My Church App**, download it here!

<http://customchurchapps.com/my-church-app/>

Find the **Give** button at the bottom of the home page, that will allow you to make a one time, or recurring contribution of any amount, and designate where those funds are to be used.

We will be adding new features to the My Church App. Check it out!



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, Karen Long, Irene Mikkelson, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Jerry & Marion Rhyne, Cynthia Simpson, Mamie Stokes, Anita Taylor

Friends & Family Members

Louis & Bonnie (Kathleen Wagner), Linda Angstrom (Beth Sharp), Michael & Beth Bliss (Robert Shepherd), 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), Bob Lyon (Melissa Noll), Nevin Milan (Kathleen Wagner), Thibault Ossenbühl (Melissa Noll), Vernon & Andrea Powell (Robert Shepherd), Darrell & Jackie Reichert (Diane Neese), Kyle Simmons (Dawn Simmons), Kathryn Vickery (Ed Vickery), Wanda Williams (John Rapp), Deborah Wingard (Melissa Noll)

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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