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### Silent Meditation

“The apostles remembered what many modern Christians tend to forget—that what makes the gospel offensive isn’t who it keeps out but who it lets in.”

~Rachel Held Evans

“The kingdom of God as proclaimed by Jesus is a vision of how the world would be if God, not Caesar or Herod, sat on the throne. It is a vision of the governing style of God as an antidote to the ancient domination system based on wealth, power, exclusivity, and violence. It is a focus on the creation of a just society. When a church is committed to the vision of Jesus, the eucharist can take on new meaning. It can be seen as a feast of justice, not a sacrament of sacrificial atonement.”

~Kurt Struckmeyer

*\* Please take a comfortable posture that supports your worshiping, reading, and singing.*

# HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

September 5, 2021, 10:55am

Prelude "Beneath the Cross of Jesus" arr. M. Hayes  
ST. CHRISTOPHER

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements Cheri Dennis  
One: May the Peace of God be with you.  
Many: And also with you. Amen.

Introit "Let Us Adore" J. Chajes

*Lower Voices:*  
Let us adore  
the ever-living God  
and render praise  
unto God,  
who spread out the heavens  
and established the earth  
and whose glory  
is revealed in the heavens above  
and whose greatness

*Upper Voices:*  
Let us adore  
the ever-living God  
and render praise  
unto God,  
who spread out the heavens  
and established the earth  
and whose glory  
in the heavens above  
and whose greatness

*All:* Is manifest throughout all the earth.  
You are our God. There is none else.

\* Call to Worship Terry Raley-Dennis

One: We are called here this morning to learn of Christ's healing love.  
Many: Help us, O Lord, to learn your lessons of compassion.  
One: Every day there are many ways in which we can offer help to others.  
Many: Help us, O Lord, to be ready to reach out to all in need.  
One: Come, let us worship the One who prepares us for service.  
Many: Let us sing our songs of praise to the One who has healed us.  
One: Lord of mercy and compassion, be with us this day as we hear of the healing love of Jesus. Remind us that we are also recipients of his compassion and we are called to bring the same hope and love to others.  
All: Prepare us for service in His Name. Amen.

\* Hymn

“We Gather Here in Jesus’ Name”

COME SHARE THE LORD

We gather here in Jesus’ name.

Christ’s love is burning in our hearts like living flame.

For through Christ’s sacrifice the whole wide world unites.

Come, take the bread; come, drink the wine; come, share the Lord.

No one is a stranger here; everyone belongs.

Finding our forgiveness here, we in turn forgive all wrongs.

Christ joins us here and breaks the bread.

Our God who pours the cup is risen from the dead.

The one we love the most is now our gracious host.

Come, take the bread; come, drink the wine; come, share the Lord.

We are now a family of which our God is Head.

Though unseen, Christ meets us here in the breaking of the bread.

We’ll gather soon, in glory rise.

We’ll see the wonder of our God and of our Christ.

Now we anticipate the feast for which we wait.

Come, take the bread; come, drink the wine; come, share the Lord.

Prayer of Confession (*in unison*)

Patient Lord, you know us so well. We are fascinated by healing and can talk all day about the miracles, but we do not understand the compassion of Christ. We often say, “Just heal us; or Just make me rich; or Just make things go better at work” or other such deals and then we promise our faithfulness and witness. But in our hearts, we just don’t get it. Please forgive us, Lord, when our greed and fear get in the way of understanding. Help us to know the transformational power of your love. Get us ready to be faithful witnesses to you in all that we say and do. It is in Jesus’ Name that we pray. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Cheri Dennis

In the Name of Jesus Christ, you have been healed. Praise be to God who has given you new life. Amen.

Song

“Know That God Is Good”

MUNGU NI MWEMA

Know that God is good. [3x] God is good; God is good.

Prayer for Illumination

OPEN MY EYES

**Open my eyes, that I may see glimpses of truth you have for me;  
Place in my hands the wonderful key that shall unclasp and set me free.**

**Silently now I wait for you, ready, my God, your will to do;  
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!**

Hebrew Scripture

Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23

Terry Raley-Dennis

A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold. The rich and the poor have this in common: the Lord is the maker of them all. Whoever sows injustice will reap calamity, and the rod of anger will fail. Those who are generous are blessed, for they share their bread with the poor. Do not rob the poor because they are poor, or crush the afflicted at the gate; for the Lord pleads their cause and despoils of life those who despoil them.

**One: May we hear what the Spirit is saying;**

**Many: Open our ears, our hearts, our minds.**

**(Sung) Open my ears, that I may hear voices of truth you send so clear;  
And while the wave notes fall on my ear, everything false will disappear.**

**Silently now I wait for you, ready, my God, your will to do;  
Open my ears, illumine me, Spirit divine!**

Epistle Lesson

James 2:1-10

Robert Shepherd

My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, 'Have a seat here, please', while to the one who is poor you say, 'Stand there', or, 'Sit at my feet', have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?

You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are

convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.

**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.

*(Sung)* Open my mouth, and let me bear gladly the warm truth everywhere;  
Open my heart, and let me prepare  
Love with your children thus to share.

Silently now I wait for you, ready, my God, your will to do;  
Open my heart, illumine me, Spirit divine!

\* Gospel Lesson

Mark 7:24-37

Cheri Dennis

From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. He said to her, 'Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' But she answered him, 'Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.' Then he said to her, 'For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter.' So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, 'Ephphatha', that is, 'Be opened.' And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. They were astounded beyond measure, saying, 'He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.'

**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.

\* Offering Dedication (*in unison*) Cheri Dennis  
Generous God, you have made rich and poor, powerful and vulnerable alike in your image. Bless the gifts we have gathered that we may use them to protect the afflicted and bring greater justice to your world. Amen.

\* Doxology GIVE THANKS  
Give thanks with a grateful heart,  
Give thanks to the Holy One.  
Give thanks because God's given Jesus Christ, God's Son. [2x]

And now let the weak say, "I am strong,"  
Let the poor say, "I am rich"  
Because of what the Lord has done for us. [2x]

Give thanks.

## SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Preparation Cheri Dennis  
One: Let us prepare our hearts, open our minds, and give thanks to our God.  
Many: For the power of love in human life and history, we give thanks and praise.

Eucharistic Prayer & Words of Institution by Kurt Struckmeyer  
([www.followingjesus.org](http://www.followingjesus.org))

Prayer of Thanksgiving  
One: Let us pray.  
All: God of love, we give you thanks for satisfying our hungry hearts with this meal. Send us from here to reveal your love in the world. Inspire in us the resolve and the courage, the compassion and the passion, to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with you. Amen.

\* Hymn "You Satisfy the Hungry Heart" FINEST WHEAT  
*You satisfy the hungry heart with gift of finest wheat;  
Come give to us, O saving Lord, the bread of life to eat.*

As when the shepherd calls his sheep, they know and heed his voice;  
So when you call your family, Lord, we follow and rejoice. (R)

With joyful lips, we sing to you our praise and gratitude  
That you should count us worthy, Lord, to share this heavenly food. (R)

Is not the cup we bless and share the blood of Christ outpoured?  
Do not one cup, one loaf, declare our oneness in the Lord? (R)

The mystery of your presence, Lord, no mortal tongue can tell:  
Whom all the world cannot contain comes in our hearts to dwell. (R)

You give yourself to us, O Lord; then selfless let us be,  
To serve each other in your name in truth and charity. (R)

\* Benediction Cheri Dennis

\* Benediction Response SHALOM CHAVERIM  
Shalom, chaverim! Shalom, chaverot! Shalom, shalom!  
Lehitraot, lehitraot, shalom, shalom.

*(Farewell, good friends. Till we meet again, peace and farewell.)*

Postlude “Finest Wheat” arr. A.M. David

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# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

## COMMUNION CHOREOGRAPHY

Because of COVID restrictions, our communion distribution is different from pre-COVID times. There is only one station for receiving communion - a table on the floor in front of the chancel steps. The bread is on the left side in individual paper cups. The juice is on the right, also in individual cups. Please follow the usher's directions. There is an elder on both sides of the table. Please pick up your own bread first and partake as the elder says, "The bread of life given for you." Then pick up your own juice as the second elder says, "The wine of the new covenant given for you." There is a trash can beside the table for the used cups. If you would prefer to receive communion at your seat, please let an usher know.

## UPDATE FROM PASTORAL SEARCH TEAM

At the end of June, the Pastoral Search Team had identified three very strong candidates that we interviewed via Zoom twice. When we contacted them to pursue next steps, two had already accepted calls to other churches. We then brought the third candidate to Charlotte for a day of face-to-face interviews, informal discussion, and a sermon. The team unanimously agreed that that person was not the right fit for us. We have since reviewed 22 additional profiles, viewed online sermons, and scheduled Zoom interviews with two of the candidates, and possibly a third. We are meeting weekly now, and when necessary twice weekly. It is a slow process, and many are anxious, just as we are, but with renewed energy, commitment, and prayers, we will find the right pastor for Holy Covenant. We ask for your patience and prayers!

## MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY RESUMES TUESDAYS

Bible study resumes on Tuesday, September 14th at 12:15 pm. We'll be studying the book of Romans. Please contact the office if you'd like a study guide. Also, if you're interested in an evening bible study group, please contact Laura Hankins, [Laura@hankins-clt.us](mailto:Laura@hankins-clt.us).

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85497779201>

## NEW MEMBER/INQUIRER CLASSES - ALL ARE WELCOME!

Both in-person and virtual classes, so everyone can attend.

*September 12 & 26 - 9:45 AM, October 10 & 24 - 9:45 AM, Welcome Sunday November 7 during worship* Questions & RSVP's Jo Ann Jellison, [joannjellison@yahoo.com](mailto:joannjellison@yahoo.com) or Pastor Cheri, [cherid@holycovenantucc.org](mailto:cherid@holycovenantucc.org)

## SOJOURNERS CLASS, SUNDAYS AT 9:45AM

The Sojourners Class is continuing to read See No Stranger. "The great social reformers in history did not only resist oppressors - they held up a vision of what the



world ought to be. Nanak sang it. Muhammad led it. Jesus taught it. Buddha envisioned it. King dreamed it. Dorothy Day labored for it. Mandela lived it. Gandhi died for it. Grace Lee Boggs fought for it for seven decades.” How can we reimagine the world as it ought to be? Join us Sundays at 9:45 in-person or via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87673409762?pwd=VnVGZDNTOEtycnoycWJ6RTVkTjF4UT0909#success> Meeting ID: 876 7340 9762 Passcode: 523903

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

Lisa Cloninger, Brian Hankins, Henry Hankins, Laura Hankins,  
Meg Houlihan, Kathi Smith, Jo Ann Jellison, Shakti Subramanian, Tom Magraw

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER**

**Members**

Kevin Decker, Jeff Edwards-Knight, Linn Finger, Tom & Kathy Habel, Jana Harrison, Jim Hong, Helen Lambert, Karen Long, Irene Mikkelson, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Jerry & Marion Rhyne, Cynthia Simpson, Mamie Stokes, Anita Taylor, Deb Winston

**Friends & Family Members**

Cecelia Ciciollo (Dominic Ciciollo), Dennis Cloninger (Lisa Cloninger), Kath (Basco) Craton (Diane Neese), Nikki Echeverri and infant son (Melissa Noll), David & Cecelia Griffin (JP Griffin), Cindy Hedrick (Barb Schneller), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Will Hong (Jim Hong), Harper Little (Karen Long), Bob Lyon (Melissa Noll), Cindy Andes Nance (Kristin Andes & Tom Magraw), Darrell & Jackie Reichert (Diane Neese), Joyce Tyler (Bill & Kim Tyler), Kathryn Vickery (Ed Vickery), Wanda Williams (John Rapp)

**OUR MINISTRY TEAM**

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