



(Photo by Magnus Olsson_Unsplash)

Silent Meditation

In a very real sense not one of us is qualified,
but it seems that God continually chooses
the most unqualified to do his work,
to bear his glory.

If we are qualified, we tend to think that we
have done the job ourselves. If we are forced
to accept our evident lack of qualification,
then there's no danger that we will confuse
God's work with our own,
or God's glory with our own.

- Madeleine L'Engle

Our Faith is over 2000 Years Old. Our thinking is not.

**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

September 12, 2021, 10:55am

Prelude "Sun of My Soul" arr. S. Nielson

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements Cheri Dennis

One: May the Peace of God be with you.

Many: And also with you.

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 Cheri Dennis

One: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Many: Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;

One: Though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with
its tumult.

Many: There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the
holy habitation of the most high.

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

One: God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
Many: **God will help it when the morning dawns.**
One: The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; God utters his voice, the earth melts.
Many: **The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.**
One: Come, behold the works of the Lord; see what desolations he has brought on the earth.
Many: **God makes wars cease to the end of the earth; God breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; God burns the shields with fire.**
One: “Be still and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations; I am exalted in the earth.”
Many: **The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.**
All: **Come, let us worship our God.**

* Hymn 42

“O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing”

AZMON

**O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer’s praise,
The glories ever echoing
The triumphs of God’s grace!**

**My gracious Savior and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad
The honors of your name.**

**Jesus! the name that calms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease
Is music in the sinner’s ears,
Is life, and health, and peace!**

**Glory to God, and love and praise
Be ever, ever given
By all the saints in every age,
The church in earth and heaven.**

Prayer of Confession (*in unison*)

Cheri Dennis

Christ calls on us to “lose our life in order to save it”; to “take up our cross and follow” in the ways of justice and peace. Like the disciples before us, we are often amazed and overwhelmed by this command. We close our ears to such challenge and our hearts to such risk.

Words of Assurance

Cheri Dennis

God’s words and actions are never careless; in sending Jesus Christ to the world, God offers a model and a companion, a source of ever-flowing love and acceptance and wisdom. In Christ we are forgiven all our failings, and given strength to start again. Amen.

Song

“Know That God Is Good”

MUNGU NI MWEMA

Know that God is good. (3x) God is good; God is good.

Pastoral Prayer

Jon Heaslet

Song

GOODNESS IS STRONGER

**Goodness is stronger than evil; love is stronger than hate;
Light is stronger than darkness; life is stronger than death.**

Victory is ours; victory is ours through God who loves us. (2x)

Children’s Message

Laura Hankins

Prayer for Illumination

OPEN MY EYES

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

Hebrew Scripture

Genesis 12: 1-3

Ed Vickery

Now the Lord said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’

One: May we hear what the Spirit is saying;

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

Hymn 503

“O Savior, Let Me Walk with You”

MARYTON

O Savior, let me walk with you in the early paths of service true;
Tell me your secret, help me bear the strain of toil, the fret of care.

Help me the slow of heart to move by some clear winning word of love.
Teach me the wayward feet to stay, and guide them in the homeward way.

Teach me your patience; let me be in closer, dearer company,
In work that keeps faith sweet and strong, in trust that triumphs over wrong.

In hope that sends a shining ray far down the future’s broadening way,
In peace that only you can give, with you, O Savior, let me live.

* Gospel Lesson Luke 4: 16-21 Jon Heaslet

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

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

“The Metrics of Faith”

Jon Heaslet

* Offering Dedication (*in unison*)

Cheri Dennis

All-knowing God, teach us to use these gifts to create greater access, insights, and wisdom for people within and outside of these walls. So be it!

* 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.

* Hymn 423

"Great Is Your Faithfulness"

FAITHFULNESS

Great is your faithfulness, O God Creator,

With you no shadow of turning we see.

You do not change, your compassions they fail not;

All of your goodness forever will be.

Refrain: Great is your faithfulness! Great is your faithfulness!

Morning by morning new mercies I see;

All I have needed your hand has provided,

Great is your faithfulness, God, unto me.

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,

Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above,

Join with all nature in manifold witness

To your great faithfulness, mercy, and love. (*Refrain*)

Pardon for sin and a peace so enduring,

Your own dear presence to cheer and to guide.

Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,

Blessings all mine with ten thousand beside. (*Refrain*)

* Benediction

Jon Heaslet

* Benediction Response

SHALOM CHAVERIM

Shalom, chaverim! Shalom, chaverot! Shalom, shalom!

Lehitraot, lehitraot, shalom, shalom.

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

*Songs in this service are used by Permission.
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WHAT’S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

A Note on In-Person Worship

Due to the increase in COVID cases, and the new or restated guidelines from the CDC and the NC Department of Health, the Holy Covenant COVID Response Team is keeping constant watch on public health updates.

Out of an abundance of caution, please remember to:

- **Wear a mask when in the church building, as mandated by Mecklenburg County officials.**
- **Wash hands or use hand sanitizer often.**
- **Follow the usher’s directions for seating in the sanctuary.**
- **Gather outdoors for fellowship before or after the service.**

Thank you for your cooperation.

WELCOME REV. JON HEASLET

We are delighted to welcome Rev. Jonathan (Jon) Heaslet to our pulpit today. Rev. Heaslet & his wife of 53 years, Linda, returned to Charlotte in 2014 following 20 years of ministry, most recently as Senior Pastor of St. John’s UCC in Richmond VA. He has been fortunate to experience three careers – as a health economist, an ordained minister, and in retirement, a writer. A graduate of University of Iowa, University of North Carolina, and Eden Theological Seminary, Jon was ordained at Pilgrim Congregational UCC Charlotte in 1994, having been mentored by Holy Covenant member Rev. Jim Humphrey and Rev. Banks Shepherd, father of Holy Covenant member Robert Shepherd. Jon and Linda have five children, eleven grandchildren, two great grandchildren (and two more on the way!)

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 Ever wonder why we do what we do? Ponder who we are and how we got there? Curious about the UCC and its traditions?

Whether you are planning to join, or maybe not, had already joined and still have questions, or just want to get to know each other better, this will be the place for you! We are looking forward to our time together! Questions & RSVP's Jo Ann Jellison, joannjellison@yahoo.com or Pastor Cheri, cherid@holycovenantucc.org.

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.

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

SOJOURNERS CLASS, SUNDAYS AT 9:45AM

The Sojourners Class continues to explore See No Stranger. 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

STAY CONNECTED!

Be sure to connect with us through Constant Contact. Find new articles of interest each Friday in the weekly newsletter, important updates, and links for the live-streaming and bulletin before worship. Sign up at

<https://holycovenantucc.org/newsletters/>. This week's edition includes content from the Racial Justice & Equity Team, and update from the Pastoral Search Team, and Community Outreach links.

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

Brian Hankins, Henry Hankins, Laura Hankins,
Meg Houlihan, Jo Ann Jellison, Shakti Subramanian, Ed Vickery

A huge thanks to those who have been participating as ushers, greeters, and readers. You need not be a member. Instruction, guidance and camaraderie will be available each Sunday. Use the link below to the Sign Up Genius already partially populated by Consistory members. It would do our hearts good to see your name added!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0f4daea928a0fbc70-hcucc>

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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