



Silent Meditation

“Seeing and acting with mercy: that is holiness.”

~Pope Francis

“The law works fear and wrath; grace works hope and mercy.”

~Martin Luther

“Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.”

~Corrie Ten Boom

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

JEREMIAH 29:1

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

**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT ~ HOPE**

November 28, 2021, 10:55am

Prelude "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" J. Carraway

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 121 "All Earth Is Waiting" TAULE

(TODA LA TIERRA)

**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.**

* Call to Worship Terrence Hayes

One: How shall we prepare this house of worship for the coming of the Prince of Peace?

Many: **With colors of blue and the beauty and truth of God's Word.**

One: How shall we prepare this house of worship for the coming of our Savior?

Many: **With garlands of pine and fir, with holly and ivy whose leaves are ever living, ever green.**

One: How shall we prepare this house of worship for the coming of the Light of the World?

Many: **With trees of light, which shine in the darkness, calling us to hope.**

One: How shall we prepare this house of worship for the Son of God?

Many: **With a wreath of green and candles of celebration, which lead us through this season of waiting.**

One: How shall we prepare our hearts for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Many: **By hearing the words of the prophets, by opening our spirits to the songs of the season, by receiving the Word of God in our lives.**

All: **Come, let us worship our God who is, who was, and who is to come.**

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

* Hymn 103

“Watcher, Tell Us of the Night”

ABERYSTWYTH

Watcher, tell us of the night, what its signs of promise are.
Traveler, O a wondrous sight! See that glory-beaming star!
Watcher, does its beauteous ray news of joy or hope foretell?
Traveler, yes; it brings the day, promised day of Israel!

Watcher, tell us of the night, higher yet that star ascends.
Traveler, blessedness and light, peace and truth its course portends.
Watcher, will its beams alone gild the spot that gave them birth?
Traveler, ages are its own; see, it bursts o'er all the earth!

Watcher, tell us of the night, for the morning seems to dawn.
Traveler, shadows take their flight, doubt and terror are withdrawn.
Watcher, you may go your way; hasten to your quiet home.
Traveler, I rejoice today, for Emmanuel has come!

Prayer of Confession (*in unison*) Gregg Walker

We confess, Gracious God, that we have not always turned to you for guidance. At times, we have allowed the world's time to dominate your time. Forgive us for our sins of hurriedness and impatience. Forgive us when we have slumbered instead of remaining alert, waiting and watching for you. Forgive us for allowing the world's fears to become our fears. Shine upon us this Advent season so that we may be restored to you. Guide us into your time. As we call upon your name, hear our prayers and give us life. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

Words of Assurance

And now may our God make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all. Christ promises to strengthen our hearts in holiness that we may be blameless before our God and Creator. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are all forgiven. Alleluia! Amen.

Hymn

“Canticle of the Turning”

STAR OF THE COUNTY DOWN

My soul cries out with a joyful shout
That the God of my heart is great,
And my spirit sings of the wondrous things
That you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight,
And my weakness you did not spurn,
So from east to west shall my name be blest.
Could the world be about to turn?

*My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,
And the world is about to turn.*

Lighting of Advent Candle Martha Bomely & Lila Taormina

There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." (Luke 21: 25-28)

When the world seems scary, when we try to escape and hide;
The Holy invites us to confront fear, that we may find Hope.

(Light candle of Hope)

Where in the world do we find Hope these days?

Song

“Light One Candle”

TIF IN VELDELE

Light one candle to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.
Christ shall bring salvation to Israel; God fulfills the promise.

Children's Message

Cheri Dennis

Hymn

“O Come, Advent”

VENI EMMANUEL

O come and be the hope in all our lives
though chaos and confusion still survive.
We know the path of hate all too well.
We need our God with us, Emmanuel!
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to us
and all things shall be well.

Pastoral Prayer

Gregg Walker

Lord's Prayer (*in unison*)

Our God, in whom is heaven, blessed be your name. Your kingdom come,
Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily
bread, and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And
lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the
kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Prayer for Illumination “Jesus, Let Us Come to Know You”

M. Card

Jesus, let us come to know you. Let us see you face to face.
Touch us, hold us, use us, mold us, only let us live in you.

Hebrew Scripture

Psalm 25:1-10

Terrence Hayes

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put
to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me. Do not let those who wait for
you be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.
Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths.
Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for
you I wait all day long. Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast
love, for they have been from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth or
my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for your
goodness' sake, O Lord! Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs
sinners in the way. He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the
humble his way. All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

One: May we hear what the Spirit is saying;

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

Anthem

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”
Bridget Green, flute

arr. P.M. Liebergen

* Scripture Lesson

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Gregg Walker

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith. Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

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

“Hope, Holiness & Wholeness”

Gregg Walker

* Offering Dedication (*in unison*)

Cheri Dennis

The day of redemption draws near for all who labor but do not eat, for all who are hated for how they love, for all who live with a sense of foreboding, wondering what injury will be inflicted on their bodies because of their bodies. We dedicate our gifts as a taste of the equitable world to come. Amen.

* Doxology

“You Came Down”

Cameroon

You came down that we may have hope. (3x)

Hallelujah forevermore.

* Hymn 114

“Return, My People”

REPTON

Return, my people, Israel, with penitential tear;

Just as the prophet did foretell the advent of Emmanuel,

God’s reign on earth is near! God’s reign on earth is near!

Fear not, beloved, hearken now: our God has done great things!

Your vindication shall pour down like rain upon the barren ground,

Glad tidings to you bring, glad tidings to you bring.

Then to the faithful of the earth the call of God rings clear:

“Return, my people, claim your worth, preparing for your Savior’s birth;

My reign on earth is near. My reign on earth is near.”

- * Benediction Gregg Walker
- * Benediction Response KEEP YOUR LAMPS
Keep your lamps trimmed and burning; (3x)
For the time is drawing nigh.
- Postlude “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” J. Purifoy

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OUR MINISTRY TEAM

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WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

Please remember to wear your mask when indoors as mandated by Mecklenburg County officials. Thank you for your cooperation.

WELCOME BACK REV. GREGG WALKER

Rev. Gregg Walker is ordained in the UCC and is a member of Holy Covenant. He and Pastor Cheri are fellow alumni of Union Presbyterian Seminary. He had been working in a part-time role with Novant Health Hospice but has just been hired full-time as a chaplain for Novant's hospital, Matthews Medical Center, where he will start on Dec. 6. Gregg is married to Ann and they have 3 sons, all of whom got married in 2021.

HOLIDAY LOVE OFFERING FOR OUR STAFF AND CLERGY

During this joyful time of year, we ask those of you who are able to consider contributing to a Holiday Love Offering for our HCUCC clergy and staff. The offering will be divided across all of our dedicated staff members. We have wonderful, dedicated leadership and support who work very hard to make Holy Covenant a place of welcome, warmth, and spiritual renewal. Please direct your gifts to either Martha Bomely or Kathi Smith, by December 12th which will allow time to organize and distribute gifts on December 19. Thank you for considering our church staff as you plan out your holiday giving plans. Offerings can be made electronically at [Venmo](#): @kathilouwho; [PayPal](#): @kathilouwho; [Cashapp](#): \$kathilouwho; [Zelle](#): 704-614-7674 **Or by cash or check made out Martha Bomely or Kathi Smith** (NOT the church) and either given to one of them at church, or mailed to **Martha Bomely, 10918 Loudoun Lane, Charlotte, NC 28262**

SANDWICH BUILD, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 10 AM AT HCUCC

Come and join us! Contact Suzanne at suzlam@yahoo.com if you have any questions.

IT'S ANGEL TREE TIME AGAIN!

We have adopted two refugee families headed by single moms this year who would love some gifts for their children. We will have Angel Tree tags with gift ideas at church as well as a Holy Covenant Angel Tree wish list on Amazon. The moms have asked for unwrapped gifts and we would like to have them ready for delivery on Sunday, December 19. If you have any questions, please email Suzanne at suzlam@yahoo.com or Lisa at lisacmsw@hotmail.com. Thank you in advance for your Holy Covenant generosity!

IT'S TIME TO THINK ABOUT GIVING TUESDAY!

Holy Covenant's [DonorsChoose giving page](#) offers a way for members to directly donate to classroom projects at David Cox Elementary, a Title I school. On the HC DonorsChoose page choose a classroom project, make a donation of any amount, track our giving as a congregation, and provides us with feedback on our impact in real time. The DonorsChoose giving page will be

available year-round and you can even set up a monthly donation. Consider making your first donation by Giving Tuesday, November 30. Let's make a big impact on David Cox Ele. by Christmas! See projects on HC's [DonorsChoose giving page](#). Also, consider buying books from **Shelves**, Charlotte's only Black-owned bookstore <https://shelvesbookstore.com/>. Questions or comments? Email Holly Middleton at hsmiddleton@gmail.com.

SOJOURNERS CLASS SUNDAYS AT 9:45AM

Come join the Sojourners in our temporary stay in *Freeing Jesus: Rediscovering Jesus as Friend, Teacher, Savior, Lord, Way, and Presence*, a new book by Diana Butler Bass. Come wonder with us about what Jesus could possibly need to be freed from. For more information, contact Cheri Dennis (704-519-6016, cherid@holycovenantucc.org)

MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY ON HAITUS UNTIL DECEMBER 7

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

Lisa Cloninger, Brian Hankins, Henry Hankins, Laura Hankins,
Meg Houlihan, Kathi Smith,
Shakti Subramanian, Anne Hayes, Terrence Hayes

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

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Carl & Phyllis Johnson, and the Carter family, in the death of Carl's sister, Ann Carter; Kevin Decker, Linn Finger, Tom & Kathy Habel, Jim Hong, Helen Lambert, Karen Long, Irene Mikkelson, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Jerry & Marion Rhyne, Cynthia Simpson, Mamie Stokes, Anita Taylor

Friends & Family Members

Family and friends in the death of Omari Alexander (Kevin & Joy Decker)
Joyce & Roy, Amanda & Jeremy (Ed Vickery), Kathy (Basco) Craton (Diane Neese), Nikki Echeverri (Melissa Noll), Alicia Gibson (Jim Hong), David & Cecelia Griffin (JP Griffin), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Will Hong (Jim Hong), Pat Key (Patti Key), Alec Kirchhoefner (Melissa Noll), Geraldine Mobley (Jeff Edwards-Knight), Michael & Chris Mele-Wagner (Dominic Ciciollo), Robbie Middleton (Holly Middleton & Dawn Schmitz), Robert Plummer (Martha Bomely), Kathryn Vickery (Ed Vickery), Tim & Shannon Ward (Laura Hankins), Tamber Watson (Jeff Edwards-Knight), Wanda Williams (John Rapp), Steve Zrebeic & Calvin (Jeff Edwards-Knight)