



Silent Meditation

“Love waits behind the silence of prayer
for my yes to a deepening capacity to love –
every love informing a greater love,
every lesser love a forerunner of the Great Love
sensed but never seen to whom Mary once said yes.
In some mysterious way, Mary’s yes to bear this love
implies that I, too, can bear my loves.”

-Suzanne Guthrie

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

**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT ~ LOVE**

December 19, 2021, 10:55am

Prelude "Infant Holy" arr. S. Woods
Kristin Andes, harp

Chiming of the Hour

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

Choral Introit "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" arr. P. M. Liebergen
Bridget Green, flute

* Call to Worship Jeff Edwards-Knight
One: Enwombed one! Dependent one!
Many: **Triumphant one! Mighty one!**
One: Toppling-expectations-one!
Many: **Magnified one! Satisfying-with-Justice one!**
All: **We are hungry for you. Fill us with your good things.**

* Hymn 135 "O Come, All You Faithful" ADESTE FIDELES
O come, all you faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come now, O come now to Bethlehem.
Come and behold the ruler of all angels:
O come in adoration, O come in adoration,
O come in adoration: Christ is Lord!

God of true God - Light of true Light -
Born of the Virgin's womb in human form;
Truly our God, begotten, not created:
O come in adoration, O come in adoration,
O come in adoration: Christ is Lord!

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

**Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing all you messengers of heavenly love:
“Glory to God, all glory in the highest”:
O come in adoration, O come in adoration,
O come in adoration: Christ is Lord!**

**Amen, Lord, we greet you, born this happy morning;
Jesus to you shall all glory be given;
Word of our God now in flesh appearing:
O come in adoration, O come in adoration,
O come in adoration: Christ is Lord!**

Lighting of Advent Candle (*Luke 1:23-40*) Cheryl Milam, Barbara Schneller
[When Zechariah’s time of service in the temple] was ended, he went to his home. After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, "This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favorably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people."

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."

Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."

But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age

has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God."

Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

Then the angel departed from her. In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

When we feel invisible, ineffective, too small to make a difference, the Holy invites us to be God-Bearers and we shall find love.

(Light candle of Love)

Where in the world do we find Love these days?

Song "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah" arr. R. Erickson

Light one candle to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.

Christ shall bring salvation to Israel; God fulfills the promise.

Light two candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.

Christ shall feed the flock like a shepherd, gently lead them homeward.

Light three candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.

Lift your heads and lift high the gateway for the God of glory.

Light four candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.

Christ is coming, tell the glad tidings. Let your lights be shining!

Children's Message

Laura Hankins

Choral Anthem

"Manger Carol"

arr. L. Sowerby

Pastoral Prayer

Cheri Dennis

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.

Choral Anthem

“In the Bleak Midwinter”

arr. A. C. Whitworth

Scripture Lesson

Micah 5:2-5

Jeff Edwards-Knight

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore, he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace. If the Assyrians come into our land and tread upon our soil, we will raise against them seven shepherds and eight installed as rulers.

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

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

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?

*Refrain: 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.*

Though I am small, my God, my all,
You work great things in me,
And your mercy will last from the depths of the past
To the end of the age to be.
Your very name put the proud to shame,
And to those who would for you yearn,
You will show your might, put the strong to flight,
For the world is about to turn. (R)

From the halls of power to the fortress tower,
Not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears
Every tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more,
For the food they can never earn;
There are tables spread; every mouth be fed,
For the world is about to turn. (R)

Though the nations rage from age to age,
We remember who holds us fast:
God's mercy must deliver us
From the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard
Is the promise which holds us bound,
Till the spear and rod can be crushed by God,
Who is turning the world around. (R)

* Gospel Lesson

Luke 1:41-56 Cheryl Milam, Barbara Schneller

Elizabeth: When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

Mary: And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever." And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

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 Radical Song of Mary”

Cheri Dennis

Choral Anthem

“Christmas Lullaby”

J. Rutter

Offering Dedication: *(in unison)*

God, take these gifts and with us create a new world here we allow the “them” to become the “us”, the “those” to become the “us”, the “really?” to become the “really us!” We are one body and always must be. May our gifts be pledges to live in covenant with you, our God of Peace. Amen.

Bell Anthem

“Sing We Now of Christmas”

arr. M. L. Thompson

* Hymn

“Jesus, the Light of the World”

ELDERKIN

Hark! The herald angels sing. Jesus, the light of the world.
Glory to the Christ-child bring, Jesus, the light of the world.

*Refrain: We'll walk in the light, beautiful light.
Come where the dewdrops of mercy shine bright.
O, shine all around us by day and by night.
Jesus, the light of the world.*

Joyful all you nations, rise. Jesus, the light of the world.
Join the triumph of the skies. Jesus, the light of the world. (R)

Christ by highest heaven adored; Jesus, the light of the world.
Christ, the everlasting Lord; Jesus, the light of the world. (R)

Hail, the Bearer of God's peace! Jesus, the light of the world.
Hail, the Sun of righteousness! Jesus, the light of the world. (R)

* Benediction

Cheri Dennis

* Benediction Response 136

WONDERFUL CHILD

Jesus, Jesus, O what a wonderful child.
Jesus, Jesus, so holy, meek, and mild.
New life, new hope the child will bring.
Listen to the angels sing:
“Glory, glory, glory!” Let the heavens ring!

Postlude

“Silent Night”

arr. M. W. Smith

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Candid photographs and/or video recording share our work and witness and invite others into the fellowship of our congregation. Some pictures/video may be published in church print publications, on our website or on our official social media sites. If you do not wish to have your image published, please contact the church office by phone or email.

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.



5:30 PM – Candlelight Christmas Eve Service with Communion

7:30 PM – Candlelight Christmas Eve Service with Communion and Choir

No RSVP is required. Both services will also be live-streamed.

Please remember that we continue to follow the Mecklenburg County mask requirement that all persons over the age of five (vaccinated or not) must wear a face mask indoors.

We look forward to seeing you on Christmas Eve.

SOJOURNERS CLASS SUNDAYS AT 9:45AM

For more information, contact Cheri Dennis (704-519-6016, cherid@holycovenantucc.org)

MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY ON HAITUS, RETURNS JAN 4

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

Brian Hankins, Keith Dennis, Shakti Subramanian,
Deborah Winston, Laurence Winston, Sally Duffy

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, 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

Don Carver in the death of his wife, Debbie; 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), Bob Lyon (Melissa Noll), 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)

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

Rev. Cheri Dennis, Interim Pastor

cherid@holycovenantucc.org, 704-519-6016

Jon Weddell, M.Div, MSW, Minister of Music

jon@holycovenantucc.org, 609-558-1637

Dawn Simmons, BSBF, Executive Assistant

office@holycovenantucc.org, 704-599-9810

Mailing address: PO Box 481285, Charlotte NC 28269

3501 West W.T. Harris Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28269-8510

www.holycovenantucc.org 704-599-9810