



"Before he was Dr. King, he was Rev. King"

Silent Meditation

"Not everybody can be famous.
But everybody can be great because greatness is determined by service...
You only need a heart full of grace
and a soul generated by love."

"Our goal is to create a beloved community
and this will require a qualitative change in our souls
as well as a quantitative change in our lives."

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

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

**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. SUNDAY**

January 16, 2022 10:55 am

Prelude

Kathleen Smith

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements

Cheri Dennis

One: May the Peace of the Christ Child be with you.

Many: And also with you.

Introit

“The Summons”

KELVINGROVE

Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?

Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?

Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?

Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

Call to Worship

Cheri Dennis

One: Our Mother-Father God has made us to be One Body with many members.

Many: **United and uniting. This is our calling.**

One: God calls us to share our diverse gifts activated by the one and same Spirit.

Many: **United and uniting. This is our redemption.**

One: God longs for us to be united in love and to manifest the Spirit in our different ways.

Many: **United and uniting. This is our worship.**

All: Let us gather in this hour to offer praise and worship to our Holy God, who challenges us and calls us to *create the Beloved Community.*

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

Lift every voice and sing, till earth and heaven ring
 Ring with the harmonies of liberty;
 Let our rejoicing rise, high as the listening skies,
 Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
 Sing a song full of the faith that the harsh past has taught us,
 Sing a song full of the hope the present has brought us;
 Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
 Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod,
 Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
 Yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet,
 Come to the place for which our people sighed?
 We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,
 We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
 Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last
 Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,
 God who has brought us thus far on the way;
 God, who by your might, led us into the light,
 Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
 Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met you,
 Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, forget you;
 Shadowed beneath your hand, may we forever stand,
 True to our God, true to our native land.

Prayer of Confession (*in unison*)

Barbara Thomas

One: O God, we long to co-create with you the Beloved Community which looks to the common good; privileges all equally, and creates societal systems which celebrate the humanity and the gifts of all.

Many: And yet we focus on our differences, envy each other's gifts, devalue manifestations of you, O God, that are not like our own.

One: Perhaps our sin is a slow wait for justice: We allow the voices of brothers and sisters who do not look like us, love like us, or worship like us to be silenced.

Many: We have told them to wait for freedom, justice and equality. We foster in them *a denigrating sense of nobodiness*.

All: Lord, have mercy.

One: Or perhaps we have kept silence ourselves in the face of their struggle for full human life.

Many: ***For it is not solely hateful words and actions, but also appalling silence that follows the path of oppression.***

All: **Christ, have mercy.**

One: Perhaps our sin is to give in to weariness, discouragement, bitterness: You have called us to be *drum majors for justice, peace and righteousness*, yet the work of peace and justice overwhelms us at times, to build with God the Beloved Community seems impossible, and we grow weary.

Many: **We cry, “Peace, peace,” but there is no peace within us or around us. We find ourselves on the path of hatred and oppression, violence and war.**

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Words of Assurance

Barbara Thomas

One: Sisters and brothers, God is at work in us and with us! God has promised: “I will not keep silent and I will not rest until the vindication of my beloved people shines out like the dawn and their salvation like a burning torch. My people shall no more be termed ‘forsaken’ and their land shall no more be termed ‘desolate.’” We remember that you have given your Beloved people a new name: “My delight is in them.”

All: **Thank you, God for delighting in us even now, for forgiving us our slow action, our silence and our weariness, for empowering our work and inviting us once again to create with you the Beloved Community you long for.**

Invocation

Cheri Dennis

O God, all people are your Beloved, across races, nationalities, religions, sexual orientations and all the ways we are distinctive from one another. We are all manifestations of your image. *We are bound together in an inescapable network of mutuality and tied to a single garment of destiny.* You call us into your unending work of justice, peace and love. Let us know your presence among us now: Let us delight in our diversity that offers glimpses of the mosaic of your beauty. Strengthen us with your steadfast love and transform our despairing fatigue into hope-filled action. Under the shadow of your wings in this hour may we find rest and strength, renewal and hope. We ask this, inspired by the example of your disciple, Martin Luther King, Jr., and in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Hymn 476

“How Can I Keep from Singing”

ENDLESS SONG

My life flows on in endless song;
Above earth's lamentations,
I hear the real, tho' far-off hymn
That hails a new creation;
Through all the tumult and the strife
I hear its music ringing;
It sounds an echo in my soul—
How can I keep from singing?

Although the tempest loudly roars,
I hear the truth, it liveth.
What though the darkness 'round me close,
What in the night it giveth.
No storm can shake my inmost calm
While to that rock I'm clinging;
Since love is lord of heaven and earth,
How can I keep from singing?

When tyrants tremble, sick with fear,
And hear their death-knell ringing,
When friends rejoice both far and near,
How can I keep from singing?
In prison cell and dungeon vile,
Our thoughts to them are winging;
When friends by shame are undefiled,
How can I keep from singing?

Children's Message

Laura Hankins

Pastoral Prayer

Barbara Thomas

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 451 “Be Now My Vision”

**Be now my vision, O God of my heart;
nothing surpasses the love you impart.
You my best thought by day or by night,
waking or sleeping, your presence my light.**

Hebrew Scripture

Isaiah 62: 1-5

Cheri Dennis

For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give. You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your builder marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

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

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

Hymn 177

“God of Change and Glory”

KATHERINE

**God of change and glory, God of time and space,
When we fear the future, give to us your grace.
In the midst of changing ways give us still the grace to praise.**

***Refrain:* Many gifts, one Spirit, one love known in many ways.
In our difference is blessing, from diversity we praise
One Giver, one Word, one Spirit, one God
Known in many ways, hallowing our days.
For the Giver, for the gifts, praise, praise, praise!**

**God of many colors, God of many signs,
You have made us different, blessing many kinds.
As the old ways disappear, let your love cast out our fear. (R)**

**Freshness of the morning, newness of each night,
You are still creating endless love and light.
This we see, as shadows part, many gifts from one great heart. (R)**

Sermonic Scripture

1 Corinthians 12: 1-11

Barbara Thomas

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. Therefore, I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says 'Let Jesus be cursed!' and no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

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

“Activated!”

Barbara Thomas

Offering Dedication (*in unison*)

Cheri Dennis

O God, we commit to use all our gifts --wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discernment, tongues, administration, hospitality, and finances--in the service of acting as co-workers with you and each other for *peace and justice to flow like a mighty stream.* Amen.

* Doxology

OLD HUNDREDTH

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God all creatures here below,
Praise God above all heavenly hosts,
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

* Hymn 570

“We Shall Overcome”

TRADITIONAL

We shall overcome, we shall overcome,
We shall overcome some day;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.

We'll go hand in hand, . . .
We are not afraid, . . .
Our God will see us through, . . .
The truth shall make us free. . .
We shall I live in peace. . .

Benediction

Barbara Thomas

Let us go forth to celebrate and strengthen our *inescapable network of mutuality*, and become *the radiant hope* needed in the world. As we go forth in this mutuality, may we experience our God rejoicing over us and with us. Let us go forth confident that *unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word*. Amen!

Benediction Response

“The Summons”

KELVINGROVE

Lord, your summons echoes true when I but call Your name!
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.
In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

Postlude

Kathleen Smith

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*Phrases from the speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr. have been woven into the prayer texts. They are identified by italics. Texts of King's work are available in **A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.**, edited by James M. Washington; © 1986 Coretta Scott King. A brief essay on King's understanding of the term "Beloved Community" is available at <http://www.wilpf.org/mlksbelovedcommunity> .*

Creating the Beloved Community: Service Prayers for the Second Sunday after Epiphany, Martin Luther King, Jr., Weekend was written by the Rev. Dr. Cari Jackson, Founder and Director of the Center for Spiritual Light, New York City.

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

Members of Holy Covenant's Consistory, Worship & Music Team, and Covid Response Team met Jan. 4th to discuss options regarding in-person worship, meetings, and classes in light of COVID. With a current COVID positivity rate of 30% in Mecklenburg County, it was decided to suspend in-person worship, classes, and meetings through January. We will continue to monitor the positivity rate, looking for a rate of under 10% and on a downward trend. Rest assured that we all want to have in-person worship as soon as possible but we also need to look out for the health and welfare of all who worship with us. Thank you & God's blessings on the New Year. **Live-stream worship Sunday mornings at 10:55 AM** <https://holycovenantucc.org/virtual-hc/>

WELCOME BACK REV. BARBARA THOMAS

Formerly Associate Pastor at HCUCC, Barbara has devoted much of her ministry to walking with the underserved. She is currently Program Director of Charlotte Rescue Missions' Dove's Nest, which provides addiction treatment for women & their children who have experienced homelessness. Prior positions include 8 years as Director of Services at Urban Ministry Center (now A Roof Above) & several years as SE Regional Director of Church World Service, supporting efforts to provide solutions for poverty & hunger. Barbara previously pastored a Presbyterian church in upstate New York. She also remains active as a psychotherapist & coach at the Counseling Center of Charlotte, offering training & visioning services for local non-profits. Rev. Thomas has an M.Div. from Duke and a Master's in Organizational Development from Queens. Barbara has been in Charlotte for 14 years; she is a member of & sings in the choir at New Emmanuel UCC.

THE ANNUAL GIVING STATEMENTS have been mailed through the US Postal Service for your use in 2021 tax preparations. If you have any questions regarding your statement, please don't hesitate to contact Dawn in our church office, 704-599-9810 or office@holycovenantucc.org. You truly make a difference in support of our ministries that are helping to transform our community and beyond.

SOJOURNERS CLASS SUNDAYS AT 9:45AM - Virtually Sundays in January

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 TUESDAYS AT 12:15PM - Virtually

We'll discuss Romans 9:27-33 and all of Chapter 10.

Zoom Meeting ID: 813 0509 4538 Passcode: 728201

For more information, contact Laura Hankins 704-724-1105, laura@hankins-clt.us)

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

Lisa Cloninger, Keith Dennis, Brian Hankins, Henry Hankins, Laura Hankins,
Meg Houlihan, Eric Miner, Kathi Smith, Ed Vickery

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

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Cynthia Simpson and Mamie Stokes in the recent death of Mamie's sister-in-law, Edna Floyd; Kevin Decker, Linn Finger, Tom & Kathy Habel, Jon & Linda Heaslet, Jim Hong, Helen Lambert, Karen Long, Irene Mikkelson, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Jerry & Marion Rhyne, Anita Taylor

Friends & Family Members

Aurora, Rachel & Ryan Christian (Beth Sharp), David & Cecelia Griffin (JP Griffin), Pat Key (Patti Key), Alec Kirchhoefner (Melissa Noll), Bob Lyon (Melissa Noll), Geraldine Mobley (Jeff Edwards-Knight), Robbie Middleton (Holly Middleton & Dawn Schmitz), Janey Pernice (Dawn Simmons), Barbara Rutelonis (Eric Miner), Kyle Simmons (Dawn Simmons), Richard Tiche (Anita Taylor), Kathryn Vickery (Ed Vickery), Tamber Watson (Jeff Edwards-Knight), Wanda Williams (John Rapp), John Zastrow (Barb Schneller) Steve Zrebeic & Calvin (Jeff Edwards-Knight)

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

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