



(State Dept./Photo: © Saul Loeb/AP Images)

Silent Meditation

“The best way to find yourself is
to lose yourself in the service of others.”
~Unknown

“Pioneering spirit should continue,
not to conquer the planet or space...
but rather to improve the quality of life.”
~Bertrand Piccard

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

**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY**

January 30, 2022 10:55 am

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

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 love the "you" you hide if I but call your name?

Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?

Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around?

Through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?

* Call to Worship Cheri Dennis

One: O God of Change and Stillness, of Wounds and Repair,

All: in you we find our sense of balance—a place to land and to breathe.

One: May we grow our attention towards that which gives life,

All: and cultivate connections of community and care.

One: May grace touch all that changes us,

All: and all that we hold unfold with peace.

One: May we gather in this space claiming healing as our birthright,

All: and bring with us the medicines of service and compassion.

One: On this Health and Human Service Sunday, let us come together to transform ourselves to transform the world,

All: and move like living water—ever adapting, ever faithful, ever full of all that can be. Amen.

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

Meditation

Cheri Dennis

O God of Flesh and Bone,
your Word echoes deep within us
and turns our heartbeat into a song.
May we linger for a moment in this embodied blessing.

I invite you to rub your hands together
and create some heat between them.
Bring to life the movement of our Creator,
the Spark of All Life, into your hands.

Feel the heat you just created.

Now place your hands on your chest.
Feel the rhythm of your heartbeat,
notice the warmth you brought to your heart space.

Take a deep breath to simply feel yourself alive in this moment.

Perhaps, imagine your heart within the heart of Christ.
Perhaps, envision your ancestors at your back,
how you have generations behind you.

Now once again, rub your hands together, and then open them up.
Feel the coolness of air caress them, the wind of the Spirit hover over them.

Now once again, rub your hands together, and then open them up

May this blessing take shape in you and all that you hold.
May you enter this time of worship with an embodied awareness of God's
sacredness within you. Amen.

Hymn 407 "How Firm a Foundation"

FOUNDATION

**How firm a foundation for you has been laid,
By God in the Word, in the sacrifice paid!
What more can God say than to you has been said,
To you, who for refuge to Jesus have fled?**

Fear not, I am with you, oh, be not dismayed,
For I am your God, I will still give you aid;
I'll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand
Upheld by my gracious, omnipotent hand.

When through the deep waters I call you to go,
The rivers of woe shall not over you flow;
For I will be with you, your troubles to bless,
Delivering you from your deepest distress.

When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie,
My grace all sufficient shall be your supply;
The flame shall not hurt you; for I have designed
Your soul to make pure just as gold is refined.

The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake!

Prayer of Confession

Cheri Dennis

One: O God of Becoming, we claim ourselves as your beloved, and name
the messy reality of being human.

All: In your presence, we do not shy away from our struggles, failings,
or regrets.

One: By your invitation, we come to you not in shame, but with courage,
seeking right relationship,

All: with you, with ourselves, each other, and all of creation.

One: Guide us in your ways of accountability,

All: with remedies of repair and reconciliation.

One: May our sense of self be vast enough for our faults and deep enough
to let go,

All: to make space to learn from our wrongdoing, without spiraling
into self-hate.

One: Spirit of Creation, teach us the grace of generative conflict,

All: that we may be open to the tension underneath authentic
connection.

One: Help us to believe change is possible, in ourselves and others,

All: so our healing can ripple outwards and our shared power can
break forth anew.

Hymn 531

“God, Speak to Me, That I May Speak”

CANONBURY

God, speak to me, that I may speak in living echoes of your tone;
As you have sought, so let me seek your erring children lost and lone.

O lead me, God, that I may lead some wanderers along life’s way;
O feed me so that I may feed your hungry ones without delay.

O fill me with your fullness, God, your overflowing love to know;
In glowing word and kindling thought, your love to tell, your praise to show.

O use me, God, use even me just as you will, and when, and where,
Until your blessed face I see, your rest, your joy, your glory share.

Children’s Message

Laura Hankins

Pastoral Prayer

Melissa McQueen-Simmons

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

“Be Now My Vision”

SLANE

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

Jeremiah 1:4-10 (*Inclusive version*)

Cheri Dennis

Now the word of YHWH came to me and said:

"Before I formed you in the womb, I chose you. Before you were born, I
dedicated you. I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

I said, "But Sovereign YHWH! I don't know how to speak! I'm too young!"

But YHWH said, "Do not say, 'I am too young!'" Now, go wherever I send you.

And say whatever I command you. Do not fear anyone, for I am with you to
protect you. It is YHWH who speaks."

Then YHWH touched my mouth; and said to me,

“Look, I am putting my words in your mouth. This day I appoint you over nations and territories, to uproot and to tear down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”

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

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

Gospel Lesson

Luke 4:21-22, 24-30 Melissa McQueen-Simmons

Then he said to them, "Today, in your hearing, this scripture passage is fulfilled." All who were present spoke favorably of him; they marveled at the eloquence of the words on Jesus' lips. They said, "Surely this isn't Mary and Joseph's son!" But the truth is prophets never gain acceptance in their hometowns. "The truth is, there were many women who were widowed in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens remained closed for three and a half years and a great famine spread over the land. It was to none of these that Elijah was sent, but to a woman that had been widowed in Zarephath, near in Sidon. Recall, too, that many had leprosy in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one was cured except Naaman the Syrian." There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." At these words, the whole audience in the synagogue was filled with indignation. They rose up, and dragged Jesus out of the town, leading him to the brow of the hill on which the city was built, with the intention of hurling him over the edge. But he moved straight through the crowd and walked away.

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

“History has its Eyes on Us” Melissa McQueen-Simmons

Offering Dedication (*in unison*)

Cheri Dennis

O God of loaves and fishes, of bread and of wine, we've digitally and in-person brought our diversity of gifts before you, knowing that they will be multiplied for the benefit of many. O God of resurrection, who makes all things new, accept our offerings for we trust that there is abundance in togetherness, and generosity in you. 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 354 “God, When I Came into This Life”

LAND OF REST

God, when I came into this life, you called me by my name;
Today I come, commit myself, responding to your claim.

You give me freedom to believe; today I make my choice,
And to the worship of the church, I add my learning voice.

Within the circle of the faith, as member of your cast,
I take my place with all the saints of future, present, past.

In all the tensions of my life, between my faith and doubt,
Let your great Spirit give me hope, sustain me, lead me out.

So help me in my unbelief and let my life be true:
Feet firmly planted on the earth; my sights set high on you.

* Benediction

Melissa McQueen-Simmons

* Benediction Response

Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my 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

“Be Now My Vision”

arr. J. Vogt

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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. **Live-stream worship Sunday mornings at 10:55 AM**
<https://holycovenantucc.org/virtual-hc/>

WELCOME BACK REV. MELISSA MCQUEEN-SIMMONS

We welcome back to the pulpit Rev. Melissa McQueen-Simmons. Melissa is a native of Greensboro, NC, an Iraqi-Veteran, a first-generation college graduate, and a member of Holy Covenant UCC. She earned her Master of Divinity (M.Div.) with an emphasis in Pastoral Care at Howard University. She is a mother to a charismatic toddler, and the spouse to the beautiful and graceful Vondalyn McQueen-Simmons. Melissa is ordained in the UCC and is installed as pastor and teacher to Many Voices: A Black Church Movement for Gay and Transgender Justice. She is the Spiritual Director / Virtual Pastor for Wholy Ground Spiritual Center, an intentional, virtual, wholistic faith experience. Melissa is a lover of international cuisines, travel, and music. Melissa says of herself, "As I continue on my path to living authentically, I am committed to helping others do the same - I am initiating the change I want to see."

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

Join Zoom Meeting by clicking [here:](#) or go to www.zoom.us and use this Meeting ID: 876 7340 9762 and Passcode: 523903.

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

MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY TUESDAYS AT 12:15PM - Virtually

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, Brian Hankins, Laura Hankins, Meg Houlihan,
Jo Ann Jellison, Kathi Smith, Ed Vickery, Eric Miner

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

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

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

Carly, Justin, Codie, Levi and Layla (Kevin Decker), Faye Blakely (Diane Neese),
Aurora, Rachel & Ryan Christian (Beth Sharp), David & Cecelia Griffin (JP
Griffin), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Pat Key (Patti Key), Alec
Kirchhoefner (Melissa Noll), Bob Lyon (Melissa Noll), Geraldine Mobley (Jeff
Edwards-Knight), Robbie Middleton (Holly Middleton & Dawn Schmitz), Barbara
Rutelonis (Eric Miner), 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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