



Silent Meditation

“The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them.”
Ida B. Wells (1862-1931) – Journalist, Activist, Researcher

“We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes.”
Ella Baker (1903-1986) – Civil and Human Rights Activist

“True integration involves being open to the other. In a healthy relationship, your story impacts my story and vice versa. We embrace and are changed by each other, and what emerges is something new.”
Rev. Traci Blackmon – UCC Associate General Minister,
Justice & Local Ministries

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

HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY ~ BLACK HISTORY MONTH

February 13, 2022 10:55 am

Prelude "Lord, I Want to Be a Christian" arr. J. Carter

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements Cheri Dennis

One: May the Peace of God be with you.

Many: And also with you.

Introit "Praise God's Holy Name" K. Hampton

Sing till the power of the Lord come down.

Shout Hallelujah! Praise God's Holy Name! (2x)

* Call to Worship Anne Hayes

(Written by Rev. Dr. Velda Love, UCC Minister for Racial Justice.)

One: In a beginning before humans were formed and nature knew God's great presence, the Spirit moved over the universe

People of God: **Ashe! The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for God has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers. (Psalm 24:1-2)**

One: In quiet peace God created humans, women and men, colorful, balanced and creatively diverse and the beauty of God's love filled the earth

People of God: **Ashe! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, with all your mind; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Matthew 22: 37-39)**

One: In honor of Black History Month, we remember names because of the ancestors who made a way out of no way with God before them, beside them, and lovingly guiding succeeding generations:

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

- Nana Yaa Asantewa of Ashanti, Taharqa, ruler of Napatan Kush, Queen Nzingha,
- West African military ruler, Mansa Musa I, Emperor of the West African Islamic Empire

People of God: Ashe!

- Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, Gabriele Prosser, Nate Turner and Denmark Vesey
- Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth and Jerena Lee
- WEB DuBois, Thurgood Marshall, and Martin Luther King, Jr
- Ida B. Wells, Fannie Lou Hamer, and Ella Baker

These and more represent the great cloud of witnesses. Their spirits linger with us creating new generations of warriors, preachers, prophets, teachers, activists, organizers, mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters of the African Diaspora.

People of God: Ashe! After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed with palm branches in their hands. (Rev. 7:9)

One: Let everything that has breath, praise the Lord!

People of God: Ashe and Amen

Hymn 382

“Come, We Who Love God’s Name”

MARCHING TO ZION

**Come, we who love God's name, and let our joys be known;
Together God's great love proclaim, (2x) and thus surround the throne. (2x)**

Refrain:

**We're marching to Zion, beautiful, beautiful Zion;
We're marching onward to Zion, the beautiful city of God.**

**Let those refuse to sing who never knew our God;
But we our thanks and praise will bring, (2x) for love so deep and broad. (2x) (R)**

**God's grace on earth is found, the seeds of glory sown;
Celestial fruits on earthly ground, (2x) from faith and hope have grown. (2x) (R)**

**Then let our songs abound, and every tear be dry;
We're traveling through Emmanuel's ground, (2x) to greater worlds on high. (2x) (R)**

Prayer of Confession (*in unison*)

We try to care for each other, especially when there is pain and sorrow, and when we witness injustice. But we cannot find blessing in poverty and hunger. Sometimes it feels just too hard to offer relief or to work for change. We prefer to stay in our comfortable spaces or choose to walk past those in need. Sometimes we are afraid. Forgive us when we serve ourselves more often than we serve you, O God. We come to you with humble hearts.

Words of Assurance

Cheri Dennis

One: God knows your mind and knows your heart. God forgives those who seek forgiveness with sincere hearts and minds. God offers grace of hope and courage to change our ways and confront injustice. Blessed are those who trust in God, whose trust is in God. Know that you are loved and forgiven.

Many: Thanks be to God.

Response "Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me" GLORY TO GOD

Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me,
And to the Christ, whose grace has pardoned me,
And to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

World without end, without end, Amen. (3x)
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

Children's Message

Laura Hankins

Song "I Love the Lord" R. Smallwood

I love the Lord, who heard my cry, and pitied every groan.
Long as I live and troubles rise, I'll hasten to God's throne.

I love the Lord, who heard my cry, and chased my grief away.
O let my heart no more despair while I have breath to pray.

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.

Special Music

“Here's One”
Lisa Cloninger, vocals

arr. M. Hayes

Prayer for Illumination

“Listen, God Is Calling”

NENO LAKE MUNGU

Listen, **Listen, God is calling, through the Word inviting,
Offering forgiveness, comfort, and joy.**

Gospel Reading

Luke 6:20-26

Cheri Dennis

Then he looked up at his disciples and said:

Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice on that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets. But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.

One: For the blessings of God in scripture, for the blessings of God among us, for the blessings of God we experience.

Many: Alleluia! Thanks be to God.

Hebrew Scripture

Jeremiah 17:5-10

Meg Houlihan

Thus says the Lord:

Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals and make mere flesh their strength, whose hearts turn away from the Lord. They shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when relief comes. They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land.

Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit.

The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse— who can understand it? I the Lord test the mind and search the heart, to give to all according to their ways, according to the fruit of their doings.

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

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

Reading from the Psalms

Psalm 1

Meg Houlihan

Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law, they meditate day and night. They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore, the wicked will not stand in the judgement, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

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

“Be A Tree”

Cheri Dennis

Challenges to Holy Covenant

Anne Hayes

(From Rev. Dr. Velda Love's Sermon at Holy Covenant, Oct. 20, 2019)

These are the challenges she issued at the end of the sermon to which the congregation responded with a fervent “Amen”.

I want to leave you with a challenge. I want to leave you with inspiration in spite of the difficult words. If we are going to call ourselves Christian, amen, then we must restore justice, amen. And so, therefore, we who call ourselves Christians, who want to restore justice, ‘cause I heard you say AMEN, this is your charge and your challenge. Are you up for it? (Congregation responds Yes & Amen). Alright.

We are going to educate others and speak up when people are assaulted and verbally or physically harmed. Amen? **AMEN!**

We're going to advocate for and with historically oppressed and underrepresented communities. Amen? **AMEN!**

We're going to strategize and organize to eradicate hate speech and shut down white nationalism threats. Amen? **AMEN!**

We're going to engage in direct nonviolent social actions to correct and eliminate racist policies and behaviors. Amen? **AMEN!**

We're going to respond and assist families experiencing anti-Black, anti-Immigrant, anti-Native American, anti-Arab, anti-Jewish terrorism and militarized police violence. Amen? **AMEN!**

We're going to learn and teach from culture-centered Biblical and theological resources. Amen? **AMEN!**

We're going to develop meaningful relationships across ecumenical traditions. Amen? **AMEN!**

We are going to restructure capitalism and create more equitable systems of economic access and sustainability. Amen? **AMEN!**

We are going to resist patriarchy at all costs and create models of equitable leadership across all gender identities. Amen? **AMEN!**

We're going to eradicate constructed race categories within the Christian church and society. Amen? **AMEN!**

We are going to dismantle economic systems of inequality. Amen? **AMEN!**

And we are going to restore God's human family equally valuing all identities and peoplehood. Amen? **AMEN!**

We affirm God's creation if we call ourselves Christians. Racism must never be taught as a Biblical principle because God did not create race. God created human beings and we are very good in the sight of God.

* Song

"I Shall Not Be Moved"

SPIRITUAL

I shall not be, I shall not be moved; (2x)

Like a tree planted by the water, I shall not be moved.

When my cross is heavy, I shall not be moved, (2x)

Like a tree planted by the water, I shall not be moved.

When my burden's heavy, I shall not be moved, (2x)

Like a tree planted by the water, I shall not be moved.

If my friends forsake me, I shall not be moved, (2x)

Like a tree planted by the water, I shall not be moved.

I shall not be, I shall not be moved; (2x)

Like a tree planted by the water, I shall not be moved.

Offering Dedication (*in unison*)

How shall we show your love, your pardon to believe? You bid us share as we are blessed and give as we receive. Gracious and loving God, who blesses us with so many good gifts, we dedicate the offerings this church has to the work of your kingdom on earth. May they turn tears to laughter, and sorrow to joy. May they truly be a blessing. Amen.

* Doxology

THANK YOU LORD

Thank you, Lord. (3x) I just want to thank you, Lord.

Hymn 553

“There Is a Balm in Gilead”

BALM IN GILEAD

Refrain: There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole.
There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.

Sometimes I feel discouraged, and think my work's in vain,
But then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again. (R)

If you cannot preach like Peter, if you cannot pray like Paul,
You can tell the love of Jesus, who died to save us all. (R)

* Benediction

Cheri Dennis

* Benediction Response

AMEN, SIAKUDUMISA

Translation: Let's say, “Amen, We Praise Your Name, O God.”

Masithi! Amen, siakudumisa!
Masithi! Amen, saikudumisa!
Amen, bawo. Amen, bawo.
Amen, siakudumisa!

Postlude

“Give Me Jesus”

arr. M. Hayes

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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

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/>

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

Everyone is welcome to join us via Zoom at 9:45 Sunday mornings 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:

Beth Sharp, Lisa Cloninger, Brian Hankins, Laura Hankins, Henry Hankins, Anne Hayes, Meg Houlihan, Jo Ann Jellison, 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

Anita Taylor and family in the death of her brother, Richard Piche
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, Kathleen Wagner

Friends & Family Members

Carly, Justin, Codie, Levi and Layla (Kevin Decker), Faye Blakely (Diane Neese),
Aurora, Rachel & Ryan Christian (Beth Sharp), Nikki Echeverri (Melissa Noll), 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),
Janey Pernice (Dawn Simmons), Mary Ellen Rice (Kathleen Wagner), Barbara
Rutelonis (Eric Miner), Kyle Simmons (Dawn Simmons), 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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