



Silent Meditation

“There is a strength, a power even, in understanding brokenness, because embracing our brokenness creates a need and desire for mercy, and perhaps a corresponding need to show mercy. When you experience mercy, you learn things that are hard to learn otherwise. You see things you can’t otherwise see; you hear things you can’t otherwise hear. You begin to recognize the humanity that resides in each of us.”

“The power of just mercy is that it belongs to the undeserving. It’s when mercy is least expected that it’s most potent—strong enough to break the cycle of victimization and victimhood, retribution and suffering. It has the power to heal the psychic harm and injuries that lead to aggression and violence, abuse of power, mass incarceration.”

— Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*

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

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

February 20, 2022 10:55 am

Prelude "There Is a Balm in Gilead" arr. C.B. Putnam

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 Ed Vickery

One: Where do we find you, Holy One, and how do we follow? Find me at your table,

Many: We'll share your food.

One: Find me in your resources,

Many: We'll share your riches.

One: Find me in your power,

Many: We'll share your mercy.

One: Find me in your pain,

Many: We'll share your forgiveness.

One: Find me in your generosity,

Many: We'll share all, and expect nothing in return.

One: In community, seek my holiness,

Many: We follow you in love, generosity, and joy.

One: In the world, share my desire,

Many: We follow you in justice, mercy, peace for all.

All: Holy One, you are deep within our world, calling us to join you in creating abundant life for all. Open our hearts to recognize you. Free us to trust your call and follow; Enable us to repent, and forgive, and join in your work to make "all things new". In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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

Hymn

“Give Me Jesus”

In the morning when I rise (3x), give me Jesus.

Refrain:

Give me Jesus, give me Jesus, You can have all this world,
give me Jesus.

And when I want to sing (3x), give me Jesus. (R)

And when we come to praise you, give us Jesus. (R)

Prayer of Confession

Cheri Dennis

One: Our God is good, and generous, and loving. Trust in Jesus promise:
Holy One, your call is deceptively simple: “Do to others as you
would have them do to you”;

**Many: and yet we cling to self-serving ways which separate us from your
beloved creation.**

One: You call us to turn our lives around, to risk repentance and learn
forgiveness, to work with patience and diligence to prepare the way
for your Reign,

Many: but we get discouraged and give up too soon. Lord, have mercy.

One: You call us to be full of joyful confidence to create community
where all have enough for abundant life,

**Many: but we burden ourselves with anxiety and fear. Christ, have
mercy.**

One: You call us to speak out in the presence of injustice,

**Many: but too often we do not challenge words and actions rooted in
hate. Holy One, have mercy.**

Words of Assurance

Our God is good, and generous, and loving. Trust in Jesus promise: “Forgive,
and you will be forgiven.” Now you are forgiven. Forgive others as you have
been forgiven. Amen.

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.

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 6:27-38

Ed Vickery

But I say to you that listen, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.

One: For the word of God in scripture, for the word of God among us, for the word of God within us.

Many: Thanks be to God.

* Song "We've Come This Far by Faith" arr. R. Smallwood

Refrain:

**We've come this far by faith, leaning on the Lord,
Trusting in God's holy Word—God's never failed us yet.
Oh, can't turn around, we've come this far by faith.**

**Don't be discouraged with trouble in your life;
God will bear your burdens and remove all misery and strife. (R)**

Hebrew Scripture Genesis 45:3-11, 15 Cheri Dennis

Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?' But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'Come closer to me.' And they came closer.

He said, 'I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither ploughing nor harvest. God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, "Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty." And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

One: For the word of God in scripture, for the word of God among us, for the word of God within us.

Many: Thanks be to God.

Sermon "Mercy & Hope" Cheri Dennis

Offering Dedication (*in unison*)

Holy One, when we give our tithes and offerings, we are witnesses to your transforming love through Jesus Christ. Accept the gifts we offer. May they give you honor and glory and serve the needs of your people. And let the called and redeemed of God say, Amen.

* Doxology

THANK YOU LORD

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

Hymn

“Lead Me, Guide Me”

Refrain:

Lead me, guide me, along the way, for if you lead me, I cannot stray.
Lord, let me walk each day with you. Lead me, O Lord, lead me.

I am weak and I need your strength
And power to help me over my weakest hour.
Help me through the darkness your face to see.
Lead me, O Lord, lead me. (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

“Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child”

arr. J. Carter

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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

The 7 Day COVID positivity rate in Mecklenburg County was 12.6% as of Feb. 16th, and heading in the right direction. At this point, our worship will remain virtual for this Sunday and next, Feb. 20th & 27th. Watch for a decision to be made soon about the worship services in March.

Pastor Cheri

Live-stream worship Sunday mornings at 10:55 AM

<https://holycovenantucc.org/virtual-hc/>

REMEMBERING AHMAUD ARBERY - MAUD 2.23 - VIRTUAL RUN

Join Together We Stand NC virtually in commemorating the death of Ahmaud Arbery, a Black man who was murdered while out on a run in Brunswick, GA on February 23rd, 2019. This run/walk will be held to honor his memory and encourage our participants and greater community to speak about the senseless violence against Black communities in America. From February 20-26, 2022, Together We Stand will again host the Maud 2.23 event to shine a spotlight on racism and injustice and to unite toward hope in the future. [Click here for more details](#) When you register, you are committing to running or walking 2.23 miles during the week of February 18-26, 2022 and we encourage you to share your run/walk with your friends and family to engage in a conversation about race.

<https://runsignup.com/Race/NC/Durham/Maud223VIRTUALRUN>

THE SOUTHERN CONFERENCE INVITES YOU TO ISAIAH BIBLE STUDY, FEB 20, 21, 22 7:00-9:00PM

Mid-Winter Bible Study with [Julia M. O'Brien](#) (Ph.D.), Old Testament Scholar and Professor of Hebrew Bible at Lancaster Theological Seminary. This Mid-Winter Bible Study will offer a time of focused expositional study of Scripture that will enrich your spiritual journey. There will be time for questions each evening. The sessions will also be recorded for future viewing. The cost for the event is only \$10, and participants will need to register in advance.

[Register HERE](#) Zoom links will be sent by email upon registration.

[More information HERE](#)

MORE THAN JUST A SANDWICH BUILD, MARCH 3, 9:30AM

Looking for a socially distanced time of fun and fellowship? Join us the morning of March 3rd for the making of 300 bagged lunches including sandwiches for Roof Above. We'll be done by 11:30! Contact Suzanne Lamorey, SuzLam@yahoo.com for more information or to let her know of your interest.

JOHNS RIVER VALLEY CAMP ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR 2022

[Johns River Valley Camp](#) is making plans to provide Outdoor Ministry opportunities during the summer of 2022. COVID protocols are still being determined but we will put Camper safety first. Camps will be provided for Campers grades 4-12. Church youth groups and others are asked to inquire about our “Hospitality Model” in which you work with our staff to plan and provide a retreat experience which meets your group’s unique needs. We also continue to invite groups to plan Mission Camps involving meaningful projects and ministry opportunities. [Read / download camp brochure](#)

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

All are welcome!

Zoom Meeting ID: 838 2132 7252 Passcode: 942373

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, Brian Hankins, Laura Hankins, Henry Hankins,
Jo Ann Jellison, Eric Miner, 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), Donetta Halley (Ed Vickery), 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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