



## Silent Meditation

"If you think God's not finished with you yet, guess what? God's not even finished with God yet. God isn't finished with you, or finished with the church or our world, or even letting us know more about God's own compassion, justice, hope, and truth. If you are open, if you listen carefully, you'll discover what God is saying to this generation at this time in history. There's more good news to be heard!

We believe that God was revealed in the past, but also in the present and the future. Throughout history, in moments of compassion, justice, and peace, in our worship, sacraments, prayer, seeking, action, and silence, God continues to speak."

*UCC.org/WhoWeAre: "We Listen for a Still-speaking God."*

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

**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT**

March 20, 2022 10:55 am

Prelude "My Jesus, I Love You" arr. L. Shackley

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements Gregg Walker

One: May the Peace of God be with you.

Many: And also with you.

Introit "I Want Jesus to Walk with Me" SOJOURNER

I want Jesus to walk with me; (2x)

All along my pilgrim journey,

Oh, I want Jesus to walk with me.

\* Call to Worship Kristin Andes

One: Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters. Come to the wells.

All: Our souls thirst for you, O God. We lift up our hands and call on your name.

One: Come as you are. Incline your ears and listen for good news.

All: Our flesh faints for you, O God. Our lips sing praises, beholding your glory.

One: Come, take it all in. Come, feast upon true riches. Be filled with that which sustains you.

All: Our souls are satisfied in you, O God. In the shadow of your wings, we sing with joy.

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

\* Hymn 23

"There's a Wideness in God's Mercy"

IN BABILONE

There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea;  
There's a kindness in God's justice, which is more than liberty.  
There's no place where earthly sorrows are more felt than in God's heaven;  
There's no place where earthly failings have such kindly judgment given.

For the love of God is broader than the measures of our minds;  
And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.  
If our love were but more faithful, we would gladly trust God's word;  
And our lives would show thanksgiving for the goodness of our God.

Prayer of Confession & Invitation to Change

Kristin Andes

One: God, you call us to step more deeply into ourselves  
as we amend and awaken to who you desire us to be.

Many: We confess that we have not always brought forth good fruit.  
In the midst of chaos and frenzy and even pandemic, we have  
often lost our way. Our feet have strayed from the place where  
we met you. Our egos have kept us from seeing our missteps; Yet,  
with you, we know there's another chance for change. There is  
another opportunity to respond to your redeeming word. We are  
called to be the change that sustains generations. Let us lean with  
you into this chance for transformation.

Hymn

"In an Age of Twisted Values"

CHURCH UNITED

We who hear your word so often choose so rarely to obey.  
Turn us from our willful wandering; give us truth to light our way.  
In the power of your Spirit, come to cleanse us, make us new;  
Hear our cry and heal our nation;  
Till our nation and hearts honor you.

Assurance of Pardon

Kristin Andes

God's grace and mercy abounds. God is with us in the change. God's  
everlasting arms embrace us. Each of us is beloved, affirmed, and set free.

Response

"Nothing Can Trouble"

TAIZE

Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten.  
Those who seek God shall never go wanting.  
Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten. God alone fills us.

Children's Message

Laura Hankins

Pastoral Prayer

Gregg Walker

"When Armies Scourge the Countryside"

PACE MIO DIO

Where armies scourge the countryside, and people flee in fear,  
Where sirens scream through flaming nights, and death is ever near.

*O God of mercy, hear our prayer. Bring peace to earth again!*

Where anger festers in the heart, and strikes with cruel hand;  
Where violence stalks the troubled streets, and terror haunts the land: (R)

O God, whose heart compassionate bears every human pain,  
Redeem this violent, wounding world till gentleness shall reign. (R)

Lord's Prayer (*in unison*)

Our Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed 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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Prayer for Illumination

"Return to God"

M. Haugen

Return to God with all your heart, the source of grace and mercy.

Come seek the tender faithfulness of God.

Scripture Reading

Psalm 63:1-8

Kristin Andes

O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. So I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call on your name.

My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast, and my mouth praises you with joyful lips when I think of you on my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night; for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy. My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.

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

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

Song

“Change My Heart, Oh God”

E. Espinosa

*Change my heart, oh God, make it ever true.*

*Change my heart, oh God, may I be like you.*

**You are the potter; I am the clay.**

**Mold me and make me, this is what I pray. (R)**

Sermonic Scripture

Isaiah 55:1-11

Gregg Walker

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

**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

“Pandemic Exile & God’s Ever-Redeeming Word”

Gregg Walker

Offering Dedication

Kristin Andes

\* Doxology "Give Thanks"  
Give thanks with a grateful heart; give thanks to the Holy One;  
Give thanks because God's given Jesus Christ, God's Son. (2x)

And now let the weak say, "I am strong,"  
Let the poor say, "I am rich because of what the Lord has done for us." (2x)  
Give Thanks.

\* Hymn 256 "We Live by Faith and Not by Sight" DUNLAP'S CREEK  
We live by faith and not by sight;  
No gracious words we hear,  
From Christ who spoke as none e'er spoke,  
Who still we know is near.

We may not touch Christ's hand and side,  
Nor follow where Christ trod;  
But in confessing we rejoice:  
Our Savior and our God!

Help then, O Christ, our unbelief:  
And may our faith a bound  
To call on you when you are near  
And seek where you are found:

That, when our life of faith is done,  
In realms of clearer light  
We may behold you as you are,  
With full and endless sight.

\* Benediction Gregg Walker

\* Benediction Response 497 "Guide My Feet"  
Guide my feet while I run this race, (3x)  
For I don't want to run this race in vain.

Postlude "Beneath the Cross of Jesus" arr. L. Larson

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## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

### **IN-PERSON WORSHIP UPDATES**

We are pleased to welcome in-person activities back to our church building. Now that we have reached low community spread (under 5%), Consistory has voted to move to mask optional during worship services and other activities in the building starting Sunday, March 20, 2022. We encourage any members to wear masks indoors who are immunocompromised or fall into any other higher risk groups. We also ask that you mask if you know you have had exposure to others with respiratory illness or are awaiting COVID testing results. We will continue to spread out seating in the sanctuary during worship and will have cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer available at several points in the building. We look forward to seeing you soon! Please direct any questions or concerns to Consistory President, Lisa Cloninger at [lisacmsw@hotmail.com](mailto:lisacmsw@hotmail.com) or 704-516-0322

### **WELCOME BACK REV. GREGG WALKER**

Rev. Gregg Walker is ordained in the UCC and is a member of Holy Covenant. He and Pastor Cheri are fellow alumni of Union Presbyterian Seminary. Gregg works as a chaplain at Novant Health Matthews Medical Center. Gregg is married to Ann and they have 3 sons, all of whom got married in 2021.

### **ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING SPECIAL OFFERING**

The United Church of Christ's churches collect 5 special offerings each year. The first, *One Great Hour of Sharing*, helps us to deploy resources to people in need, from those in our own communities to those all around the world. When you give to OGHS, you are working alongside families to restore not only structures, but hope. Your giving ensures that no matter how difficult the situation, *Love remains*. We will take this offering now through March 27. You may access the "Give Button" above in this newsletter or go directly to our website, <https://holycovenantucc.org/give-2/>. Thank you.

*And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. -1 Cor. 13:13*

**HAVE YOU SEEN THE LONG HAUL: LENTEN [DAILY MEDITATIONS](#)** from the UCC's StillSpeaking Writer's Group? They are posted daily on the Holy Covenant UCC Community Facebook group & also the church's [website](#), HolyCovenantUCC.org.

### **CARING FOR OUR LOCAL STUDENTS**

HCUCC's Missions & Justice Team partners with our neighbors at University City UMC to support the Backpack Ministry at David Cox Elementary. We are collecting ready to eat healthy foods that a young student can prepare. Backpacks will be filled at UMC and distributed so the students have food for weekend and holidays away from their regularly prepared meals at the school. Often, younger siblings benefit from this program too. Your food contributions can be placed in the grocery cart of the gathering room. We'll do the rest!

### **TUESDAY ACTIVITIES AT HCUCC!**

#### **LENTEN LABYRINTH WALK AND MEDITATION TUESDAYS, 12:00 TO 12:30**

We'll meet in the Memorial Garden at noon for quiet mediation and labyrinth time. In the event of rain, we'll gather in the sanctuary.

#### **CRAFTER'S CIRCLE TUESDAYS 1:30 - 3:30**

Join us in the gathering room on Tuesdays at 1:30. Bring a craft, share a craft, or learn a craft in a judgement free zone. Masks are required.

### **SOJOURNERS CLASS SUNDAYS AT 9:45AM**

Everyone is welcome to join us both in-person or via Zoom at 9:45 Sunday mornings by clicking [here:](#) or go to [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us). Meeting ID: 876 7340 9762 and Passcode: 523903. For more information, contact Cheri Dennis (704-519-6016, [cherid@holycovenantucc.org](mailto:cherid@holycovenantucc.org))

### **MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY, MOVES TO EVENINGS, TUESDAYS, 7-8 PM**

We'll be studying the book of Galatians. All are welcome! Join us on Zoom: Meeting ID: 863 0293 0259 Passcode: 837569 Questions? Contact Laura Hankins, [laura@hankins-clt.us](mailto:laura@hankins-clt.us).



If you wish to add someone to the list, please send a note to  
[prayers@holycovenantucc.org](mailto:prayers@holycovenantucc.org).

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER**

**Members**

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**

Family & friends, in the death of Sam Jones (Jeff Edwards-Knight)  
Emily (Kim Tyler), Faye Blakely (Diane Neese), Gretchen Calder (Martha Bomely), Keith Decker (Kevin Decker), Nikki Echeverri (Melissa Noll), Alicia Gibson (Jim Hong), 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), 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**

**Rev. Cheri Dennis, Interim Pastor**

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

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