



Silent Meditation

“Legalism has killed more faith than doubt ever has.”

— Andrena Sawyer

“It’s discouraging to think how many people are shocked by honesty and how few by deceit.”

— Noël Coward, *Blithe Spirit*

“The Holy Spirit did not go into such detail about the Pharisees in the New Testament just so we could understand a group unique to the first century. Pharisaism is a poisonous weed that grows in every garden of orthodox religion. Pharisaism is every bit the threat to the orthodox today that it was then.”

— J.D. Greear

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

March 27, 2022 10:55 am

Prelude "Near the Cross" arr. L. Shackley

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements Cheri Dennis

One: May the Peace of God be with you.

Many: And also with you.

<https://www.ucc.org/giving/ways-to-give/our-churchs-wider-mission/one-great-hour-of-sharing/>

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 Dawn Robinson

One: Life is a journey, an everyday workshop for learning love, a continual opportunity to learn the way of peace.

Many: We travel together, "seeking to do justice, to act mercifully, to walk humbly with God."

One: We cherish this community, which offers us a context for our personal transformation and support for our political and social involvement in the transformation of the world.

Many: We are brought together in the Spirit of God, to listen to each other's stories, to share each other's pain, to celebrate each other's joys, to acknowledge our complicity in the state of the world, to grow in grace, to receive forgiveness and to offer it to one another, to practice reconciliation and to demonstrate the authentic community of God.

All: Let us worship together. Let us sing; let our hearts dance; let our spirits weep; let our hearts laugh, let our minds clear, let our bodies be renewed; let our lives flow; let the journey continue.

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

* Hymn 423

"Great Is Your Faithfulness"

FAITHFULNESS

Great is your faithfulness, O God, Creator
With you no shadow of turning we see.
You do not change, your compassions they fail not;
All of your goodness forever will be.

Refrain: Great is your faithfulness! Great is your faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed your hand has provided,
Great is your faithfulness, God, unto me.

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To your great faithfulness, mercy, and love. (R)

Pardon for sin and a peace so enduring,
Your own dear presence to cheer and to guide.
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine with ten thousand beside. (R)

Call to Confession

Cheri Dennis

Prayer of Confession "In an Age of Twisted Values"

CHURCH UNITED

We have built discrimination on our prejudice and fear.
Hatred swiftly turns to cruelty if we hold resentments dear.
For communities divided by the walls of class and race,
Hear our cry and heal our nation; show us, Lord, your love and grace.

Assurance of Pardon

Cheri Dennis

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

Cheri Dennis

"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.

* Gospel Reading Part 1

Luke 15:1-10

Dawn Robinson

Now all the tax-collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, 'This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.' So, he told them this parable: 'Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost." Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance. 'Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost." Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.'

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

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

Then Jesus said, ‘There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, “Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.” So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, “How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.’ ” So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.” But the father said to his slaves, “Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!” And they began to celebrate.

‘Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, “Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.” Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, “Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!” Then the father said to him, “Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.” ’

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.

Offering Dedication

Dawn Robinson

One: Even when our gifts become dormant, God our Divine Parent stirs our hearts, calling us to bring to life our gifts once again. As we return to our sanctuary, let us ask of ourselves, “What gifts, what talents, what time, may God be challenging us to revive? How can they be used to further God’s work in our community and our world?” as together we pray:

All: Loving God, Holy Fountain of Blessings, with gratitude, we celebrate the offerings we share with you and this community. May they enliven our spirits, building excitement around us, and creating a culture of giving. Open us to new possibilities for using our gifts to build the dignity of all and to strengthen our neighborhoods. Amen.

* 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 449 “Softly and Tenderly”

Softly and tenderly, Jesus is calling,
Calling for you and for me;
See at the portals Christ waiting and watching,
Watching for you and for me.

Refrain: Come home, come home,
All who are weary, come home;
Earnestly, tenderly Jesus is calling—
Calling, “O sinner, come home!”

Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading,
Pleading for you and for me?
Why should we linger and heed not God’s mercies,
Mercies for you and for me? (R)

Time is now fleeting, the moments are passing,
Passing from you and from me;
Shadows are gathering, death-beds are coming,
Coming for you and for me. (R)

O for the wonderful love Jesus promised,
Promised for you and for me;
Though we have sinned Jesus offers us pardon,
Pardon for you and for me. (R)

* Benediction

Cheri Dennis

* 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

“Near the Cross”

arr. W. Hornibrook

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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

IN-PERSON WORSHIP UPDATES

We are pleased to welcome in-person activities back to our church building. Masks are optional for worship services and other activities in the building; however, we encourage members who may be immunocompromised or in a high-risk group to continue to wear a mask. We also ask that you mask if you have had exposure to others with respiratory illness or are awaiting COVID test results. We continue to spread out seating in the sanctuary during worship and 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 or 704-516-0322.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING SPECIAL OFFERING TODAY

One Great Hour of Sharing, helps the UCC 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*. You may access the "Give Button" in our weekly newsletter or go directly to our website, <https://holycovenantucc.org/give-2/>. Checks are welcomed, please notate the memo with OGHS. Thank you.

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

<https://www.ucc.org/global-h-o-p-e/ukraine-emergency-appeal/>

CUSTOM CHURCH APP

We were recently informed by the software vendor, *Subsplash*, that the **Custom Church App (CCA)** mobile device application will be discontinued as of **April 1**. HCUCC made an investment in this app several years ago in an effort to expand our reach using more contemporary technologies, however, the app never really made an impact as we had hoped. We apologize for any inconvenience. The *Subsplash* vendor has many technology offerings that enable churches to participate in the digital age of today, including a very robust but more costly replacement for CCA. HCUCC will continue to use the *Subsplash Giving "Wallet"* software actively to accept donations - *this feature is not impacted by the CCA change*. The Communications Team and church leadership will review and consider other *Subsplash platforms/features* for HCUCC in the future. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dominic Ciciollo, dominic@holycovenantucc.org, or the church office.

CHARLOTTE KNIGHTS GAME, SATURDAY MAY 14, 7PM

Play ball! The evening game starts at 7pm; Charlotte Knights vs Indianapolis Indians. Tickets may be \$21 each for a group of 20+ people and loaded with a \$2 concession stand credit. Sign up by April 11! Payment info will be sent in an email then. Questions? Please contact Martha Bomely, martha.bomely@gmail.com. Sign up genius:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C44ACAD23A2FE3-charlotte>

CARING FOR OUR LOCAL STUDENTS

Support the Backpack Ministry at David Cox Elementary. We are collecting ready to eat healthy foods that a young student can prepare. Backpacks filled at UMC are distributed so the students have food for weekend/holidays away from their regularly prepared meals at the school. Often, younger siblings benefit from this program too! Drop off your contributions 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.

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.

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. Meeting ID: 876 7340 9762 and Passcode: 523903. For more information, contact Cheri Dennis (704-519-6016, cherid@holycovenantucc.org)

If you wish to add someone to the list, please send a note to
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), Keith Decker (Kevin Decker), Gretchen Calder (Martha Bomely), Keith Decker (Kevin Decker), Nikki Echeverri (Melissa Noll), Alicia Gibson (Jim Hong), Marquis Glenn (Dawn Simmons), David & Cecelia Griffin (JP Griffin), Donetta Halley (Ed Vickery), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Pat Key (Patti Key), Alec Kirchhofner (Melissa Noll), Bob Lyon (Melissa Noll), Geraldine Mobley (Jeff Edwards-Knight), Joe Parks (Beth Christian Sharp) Janey Pernice (Dawn Simmons), Betty Rivenbark (Jeff Rivenbark), Barbara Rutelonis (Eric Miner), Kyle Simmons (Dawn Simmons), Sylvia Smith (Laura Hankins), Kathryn Vickery (Ed Vickery), Tamber Watson (Jeff Edwards-Knight), Wanda Williams (John Rapp), John Zastrow (Barb Schneller), Steve Zrebeic & Calvin (Jeff Edwards-Knight)

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

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

Rev. Cheri Dennis, Interim Pastor

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

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