



Silent Meditation

Life's short. Anything could happen, and it usually does,
so there is no point in sitting around thinking
about all the ifs, ands and buts.

~Amy Winehouse

The only limits to the possibilities in your life tomorrow
are the buts you use today.

~Les Brown

If Ifs and Buts were candy and nuts,
we'd all have a Merry Christmas.

Anonymous

**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
OPEN AND AFFIRMING SUNDAY**

June 26, 2022 10:55 am

Prelude "In Moments Like These" D. Graham

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements

One: May the peace of God be with you.

Many: And also with you.

Introit "As the Deer" M. Nystrom

* Call to Worship Terry Raley-Dennis

One: The way of our God is holy.

Many: Holy One, we seek your presence in our midst.

One: The way of our God is wondrous.

Many: Wondrous God, we marvel at your works and marvelous deeds.

One: The way of our God is awesome.

All: Awesome God, we call out to you in hope.

* Hymn "There's a Spirit of Love in This Place" arr. M. A. Miller

There's a spirit of love in this place. (2x)

You can't see it, but it's there, just as precious as the air.

There's a spirit of love in this place.

There's the presence of peace in this room. (2x)

In God's tenderness is found peace that passes human bounds.

There's the presence of peace in this room.

O, Alleluia, sing alleluia, we bless your holy name.

O, Alleluia, sing alleluia, there's a spirit of love in this place.

There's a space for grace in our hearts. (2x)

It's in learning to forgive that our spirits truly live.

There's a space for grace in our hearts.

O, Alleluia, sing alleluia, we bless your holy name.

O, Alleluia, sing alleluia, there's a space for grace;

There's the presence of peace; there's a spirit of love in this place.

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

* Invocation (*unison*)

Terry Raley-Dennis

Liberating One, we keep you before us. Our souls rejoice and our hearts are gladdened. Our very beings find safety and security in your presence. We approach you with thanksgiving and anticipation. Enliven us to be your people in the world. Embolden us to live in freedom. Empower us to be your good news. Stand up in us and show us the path of life. Amen.

Special Music

“Rainbow”

K. Musgraves

Kathi Smith, Lisa Cloninger, vocalists

Prayer for Transformation and New Life

Cheri Dennis

Restoring God, too often we accept the conditions of the world around us and impose limitations on what is possible. We bind ourselves to societal conventions, norms, and pressure rather than follow you and your way. We conform to the values of this world rather than pursue the fruit of the Spirit. Show us the path of life and freedom in you. Teach us to plant seeds of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. May we perennially bear that fruit.

Words of Grace

Cheri Dennis

The Guiding Spirit opens us to new life and leads us to right paths. Hear the voice that continually calls, leads, and companions with us. Life in the Spirit is constantly renewed and restored. Let the grace of God nurture our roots and allow our flourishing.

Special Music

“Unredeemed”

Petak, Cates & Wood

Lisa Cloninger, Eric Miner, vocalists

Message for All Ages

Debbie Davis

Song of Preparation

“Rain Down”

J. Cortez

Rain down, rain down, rain down your love on your people.

Rain down, rain down, rain down your love, God of life.

Pastoral Prayer

Cheri Dennis

The Prayer of Jesus (*unison*)

Loving God, through the Spirit’s revelation, may Your true nature be honored everywhere. May Your reign of love come. May desire of Your heart for the world be done, in us, by us and through us in the power of the Spirit. Give us the bread we need for each day. Forgive us. Enable us to forgive others. Keep us from all anxiety and fear. For You reign in the power that comes from love which is Your glory forever and ever. Amen.

Prayer for Illumination

OPEN MY EYES

**Open our ears, that we may hear voices of truth you send so clear
And while the wave notes fall on our ears, everything false will disappear
Silently now we wait for you, ready, our God, your will to do.
Open our hearts; illumine us, Spirit divine!**

New Testament Reading

Galatians 5:1, 13-25

Terry Raley-Dennis

For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.

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

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

* Gospel Lesson

Luke 9:51-62

Cheri Dennis

When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; but they did not receive him, because his face was set towards Jerusalem. When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, 'Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?' But he turned and rebuked them. Then they went on to another village.

As they were going along the road, someone said to him, 'I will follow you wherever you go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.' To another he said, 'Follow me.' But he said, 'Lord, first let me go and bury my father.' But Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.' Another said, 'I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home.' Jesus said to him, 'No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'

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

"But..."

Cheri Dennis

Invitation to Generosity

Terry Raley-Dennis

Jesus invites us to follow him in all ways, including the use and sharing of our resources. An accounting of our time, talent, and treasure that reflects our active citizenship in the kingdom brings glory to the Holy One. These seeds bear fruit.

Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving (*unison*)

Giver of Gifts, receive the resources we bring. May they bless our community and our world. May the bonds of scarcity be broken as we meet the needs around us with the gifts that you have first given to us. May we be gladdened by giving and rejoice in generosity. Amen.

* Doxology

"Confitemini Domino"

TAIZÉ

(translation: Give thanks to the Lord for God is good, Psalm 118:1)

Confitemini Domino quoniam bonus.

Confitemini Domino alleluia!

* Hymn "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)

* Benediction Cheri Dennis

* Benediction Response "Song of Hope" ARGENTINA
May the God of hope go with us every day,
Filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.
May the God of justice speed us on our way,
Bringing light and hope to every land and race.

Praying, let us work for peace; singing, share our joy with all;
Working for a world that's new, faithful when we hear Christ's call.

Postlude "Send Us Out" J. M. Talbot

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and invite others into the fellowship of our congregation. Some pictures/video
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please contact the church office by phone or email.*

WE COULDN'T PROVIDE OUR WARM WELCOME WITHOUT THE HELP OF:
Martha Bomely, Lisa Cloninger, Steve Cimelli, Keith Dennis, Brian Hankins,
Henry Hankins, Dawn Schmitz

Ushers, Greeters, Liturgist and Communion Servers

Please sign up on the SignUpGenius link:

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



**Covenant of Openness and Affirmation adopted by
Holy Covenant United Church of Christ, Charlotte, NC, at the July 9, 2000,
congregational meeting:**

We of Holy Covenant United Church of Christ affirm Christ's call to love our neighbors as ourselves, and to reach out to all people, including those who have experienced oppression, discrimination, isolation, and ostracism.

We accept the call from the General Synod for congregations to form a Covenant of Openness and Affirmation. We recognize the destructive power of homophobia in our society and among Christians. We seek to act as agents of reconciliation and wholeness within the world, within the Church Universal, and within our congregation. We affirm that all are worthy of love and declare ourselves welcoming to persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities who seek to live in loving relationships.

Therefore, we of Holy Covenant United Church of Christ declare ourselves to be an Open and Affirming Congregation, welcoming into the full life and ministry of this family of faith persons of every sexual orientation and gender identity. We join together as a covenantal community to celebrate and share our common communion with the reassurance that we are indeed created by God, reconciled in Christ, and empowered by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

IN-PERSON ACTIVITIES UPDATE

The Consistory continues to closely monitor COVID trends. Out of an abundance of caution, masks will continue to be required during Sunday worship services and all indoor church activities until further notice. We encourage attendees who are immunocompromised or fall into any other higher risk groups to use their discretion as to whether to attend in-person church activities. 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. Live-streaming will continue for weekly worship services as always. Please contact Consistory President Lisa Cloninger if you have any questions or concerns, lisa@holycovenantucc.org, or 704-516-0322.

Open and Affirming Coalition United Church of Christ

On August 5-7, 2022, the UCC's National ONA Gathering will meet virtually and celebrate the Coalition's 50th Anniversary to honor the queer leaders who founded its movement and transformed the United Church of Christ. How wonderful that our denomination has been an active champion for 50 years! Everyone is welcomed to register and attend the National Gathering. Rev. Andy Lang, longtime champion, advocate, leader and executive director, who has visited HC just a few years ago, will be retiring at the end of this year. In his honor, we'd like to make an offering to the Coalition, to keep forward momentum for the ecumenical LGBTQ+ church movement. Gifts can be made on our website during the month of June, <https://holycovenantucc.org/give-2/>. Visit <https://openandaffirming.org/> to register, for resources, webinars, news, and more!

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.

The Labyrinth Group and the Mid-week Bible Study are on hiatus.

Sojourners Class

The Sojourners Class returns July 10th, meeting Sunday mornings at 9:45 AM in the Conference Room, or via Zoom. For more information, contact Pastor Cheri.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Robert Calais, family & friends of Martha Rottler Calais,
Kevin Decker, Linn Finger, Tom & Kathy Habel, Laura Hankins, Jim Hong, Helen Lambert, Karen Long, Irene Mikkelson, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Isabelle Reddy Powell, Jerry & Marion Rhyne, Cynthia & Tommy Simpson, Anita Taylor, Kathleen Wagner

Friends & Family Members

Rev. Beth Lyon, and friends and family of Bob Lyon (Melissa Noll),
Friends and family of Renee Estep (Melissa Noll),
Friends and family of Sarah Vincent (Ed Vickery)
Emily (Kim Tyler), Faye Blakely (Diane Neese), Sandy Burby (Linda Burby), Alicia Gibson (Jim Hong), David & Cecelia Griffin (JP Griffin), Donetta Halley (Ed Vickery), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Geraldine Mobley (Jeff Edwards-Knight), Joe Parks (Beth Christian Sharp), Janey Pernice (Dawn Simmons), Jerry Raley (Jean Raley-Dennis), Barbara Rutelonis (Eric Miner), Kathy Sheppard (Vickie Griffeth), Kathryn Vickery (Ed Vickery), Joyce Ward (Ed Vickery), Tamber Watson (Jeff Edwards-Knight), Wanda Williams (John Rapp), John Zastrow (Barb Schneller), Paul Zinkann (Pam Zinkann), Steve Zrebeic & Calvin (Jeff Edwards-Knight)

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

Rev. Cheri Dennis, Interim Pastor

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

Dawn Simmons, BSBF, Executive Assistant

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