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Meditation

“God is love. That means love is a state of being as much as action, emotions, and attitudes. Further, in the same way that God cannot be fully fathomed, neither can love. It manifests in innumerable ways and evokes a plethora of emotional and attitudinal responses. This holds especially true the further God’s people drift and deviate from the plumb line of God’s abundant, extravagant, and flourishing love.”

–Rev. Dr. Cheryl Lindsay,
UCC Minister for Worship & Theology

“It’s the spark of love’s memory inside your heart that recognizes them and most of the time they recognize you too. That spark is the magnet that always brings us back to each other. Like glue, it binds us together with an invisible cord from lifetime to lifetime, soul mate to soul mate.”

–Kate McGahan

MINISTRY TEAM

Rev. Cheri Dennis, Interim Pastor
Jon Weddell, M.Div, MSW, Minister of Music
Dawn Simmons, BSBF, Executive Assistant
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**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

July 31, 2022 10:55 am

Prelude "For the Troubles and the Suffering" R. G. Neto

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements

One: May the peace of God be with you.

Many: And also with you.

Introit 309 "We Are Your People" WHITFIELD

We are your people, Spirit of grace.

You dare to make us Christ to our neighbors
of every nation and race.

Glad of tradition, help us to see
In all life's changing - Where you are leading,
Where our best efforts should be.

Spirit, unite us, make us by grace
Willing and ready, Christ's living body,
Loving the whole human race.

* Call to Worship Bill Seaman

One: Our Loving God gathers us from the east and the west, from the north
and from the south.

Many: The Holy One is in our midst. Let us say so!

One: We cried out to our God in the time of trouble and eased our distress.

Many: The Holy One is in our midst. God leads us on right paths.

One: Our Provider satisfies our thirst and meets our needs.

Many: The Holy One is in our midst. Consider God's steadfast love!

* Invocation (*unison*)

Holy Love, we worship you as your people. You tether us to you in righteousness
and covenant. Reveal your face to us. Let us see you in our midst, in our
neighbors, and in ourselves. Clothe us in love and compassion, and continually
fashion us as your people for you are our God. Amen.

** 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)

Prayer for Transformation and New Life (*unison*)

Glencie Rhedrick

Gracious One, you have knit us together wonderfully. You have promised your abiding presence in our lives and have guided us with love. We turn away from you and toward the path to destruction and discord. We judge our neighbor rather than love them and we fail to even honor ourselves as your beloved creation. Amen.

Words of Grace

Glencie Rhedrick

The God of mercy bends toward their children with love and hope. The Holy One leads us when we wander onto divergent paths and nourishes our hunger for the newness of life. In God, grace abounds freely, abundantly, and extravagantly.

Children's Message

Laura Hankins

Hymn

“Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive”

DETROIT

“Forgive our sins as we forgive,” you taught us, Lord, to pray,
But you alone can grant us grace to live the words we say.

How can your pardon reach and bless the unforgiving heart
That broods on wrongs and will not let old bitterness depart?

Pastoral Prayer

Glencie Rhedrick

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.

Hymn

“Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive”

DETROIT

In blazing light your cross reveals the truth we dimly knew:
What trivial debts are owed to us, how great our debt to you!

Lord, cleanse the depths within our souls and bid resentment cease.
Then, by your mercy reconciled, our lives will spread your peace.

Scripture Lesson

Psalm 49

Bill Seaman

Hear this, all you peoples;
give ear, all inhabitants of the world,
both low and high,
rich and poor together.
My mouth shall speak wisdom;
the meditation of my heart shall be understanding.
I will incline my ear to a proverb;
I will solve my riddle to the music of the harp.

Why should I fear in times of trouble,
when the iniquity of my persecutors surrounds me,
those who trust in their wealth
and boast of the abundance of their riches?
Truly, no ransom avails for one’s life,
there is no price one can give to God for it.

For the ransom of life is costly,
and can never suffice,
that one should live on for ever
and never see the grave.

When we look at the wise, they die;
fool and dolt perish together
and leave their wealth to others.
Their graves are their homes for ever,
their dwelling-places to all generations,
though they named lands their own.
Mortals cannot abide in their pomp;
they are like the animals that perish.

Such is the fate of the foolhardy,
the end of those who are pleased with their lot.

Selah

Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol;
Death shall be their shepherd;
straight to the grave they descend,
and their form shall waste away;
Sheol shall be their home.
But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol,
for he will receive me.

Selah

Do not be afraid when some become rich,
when the wealth of their houses increases.
For when they die they will carry nothing away;
their wealth will not go down after them.
Though in their lifetime they count themselves happy
—for you are praised when you do well for yourself—
they will go to the company of their ancestors,
who will never again see the light.
Mortals cannot abide in their pomp;
they are like the animals that perish.

One: May we hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church;
Many: **Open our ears, our hearts, our minds.**

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.

* Sermonic Scripture

Hosea 11:1-11

Glencie Rhedrick

When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son.
The more I called them,
the more they went from me;
they kept sacrificing to the Baals,
and offering incense to idols.

Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk,
I took them up in my arms;
but they did not know that I healed them.
I led them with cords of human kindness,
with bands of love.
I was to them like those
who lift infants to their cheeks.
I bent down to them and fed them.

They shall return to the land of Egypt,
and Assyria shall be their king,
because they have refused to return to me.
The sword rages in their cities,
it consumes their oracle-priests,
and devours because of their schemes.
My people are bent on turning away from me.
To the Most High they call,
but he does not raise them up at all.

How can I give you up, Ephraim?
How can I hand you over, O Israel?
How can I make you like Admah?

How can I treat you like Zeboiim?
My heart recoils within me;
my compassion grows warm and tender.
I will not execute my fierce anger;
I will not again destroy Ephraim;
for I am God and no mortal,
the Holy One in your midst,
and I will not come in wrath.

They shall go after the LORD,
who roars like a lion;
when he roars,
his children shall come trembling from the west.
They shall come trembling like birds from Egypt,
and like doves from the land of Assyria;
and I will return them to their homes, says the LORD.

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

Glencie Rhedrick

Invitation to Generosity

Bill Seaman

Jesus said, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." (Luke 12:15) The promise of life abundantly invites us to trust God's provision and abundance of resources for all. We share our gifts from the abundance given to us.

Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving (*unison*)

Loving God, may we demonstrate our love through the gifts that have been given. Bless them and magnify them so that all creation will benefit from your abundance and gift of life and love. Amen.

* Doxology

OLD HUNDREDTH

**Praise God from whom all blessing flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly hosts,
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

- * Hymn "Go to the World!" SINE NOMINE
Go to the world! Go into all the earth.
Go preach the cross where Christ renews life's worth,
Baptizing as the sign of our rebirth. Alleluia. Alleluia.
- Go to the world! Go into every place.
Go live the word of God's redeeming grace.
Go seek God's presence in each time and space. Alleluia. Alleluia.
- Go to the world! Go struggle, bless, and pray;
The nights of tears give way to joyous day.
As servant church, you follow Christ's own way. Alleluia. Alleluia.
- Go to the world! Go as the ones I send,
For I am with you till the age shall end,
When all the hosts of glory cry "Amen!" Alleluia. Alleluia.
- * Benediction Glencie Rhedrick
- * Benediction Response "Send Us Out" J. M. Talbot
Send us out to proclaim the reign of your kin-dom,
Send us out to proclaim and to heal,
Send us out with your power and your authority
To overcome and to heal the world.
- Postlude "God in Your Grace" S.E. Murray

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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. Please contact Consistory President Lisa Cloninger if you have any questions or concerns, lisa@holycovenantucc.org, or 704-516-0322.

WELCOME BACK REV. GLENCIE RHEDRICK

Today, we welcome the Reverend Glencie Rhedrick, to the pulpit. She is an ordained Baptist minister, currently serving as an associate minister at First Baptist Church-West. A graduate of Johnson C. Smith University, Glencie received her M.Div from the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University and is currently a PhD student attending California Integral Institute of Studies. Glencie currently serves as Chaplain for several organizations, is a local and national community activist and organizer, and was the former president of Mecklenburg Ministries. She is also an active member of the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team. Currently she holds the lead positions with numerous activist and outreach organizations. She is the convenor of a Facebook live show, 'SpeakingintheKeyofWE.' a conversation concerning Black Male Privilege and Patriarchy in the Church, raising the awareness of the biases women of African Ascent encounter in the Church and other segments of society. We are grateful for her time with us today!

WE COULDN'T PROVIDE OUR WARM WELCOME WITHOUT THE HELP OF:

Alix Felsing, Keith Dennis, Brian Hankins, Henry Hankins

USHERS, GREETERS, LITURGIST AND COMMUNION SERVERS

Please sign up on the SignUpGenius link:

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

Ushers and Greeters, please contact Martha Bomely with questions, martha.bomely@gmail.com. Communion Servers, please contact Laura Hankins with questions, laura@hankins-clt.us.



Mark your calendars now for a viewing of this locally produced documentary about living without a home. For three years, a group of people experiencing homelessness met weekly to create this film documentary about living on the street in Charlotte. Holy Covenant is pleased to host a viewing of this film on **Sunday, Sep. 11, 2022 at 2:00pm in our sanctuary**. Following the documentary, there will be a 30-minute Talkback with local folks who had a hand in creating this film. A light lunch will be provided for those who wish to “hang around and fellowship” between worship & the showing.

CELEBRATE PRIDE WITH HOLY COVENANT UCC!

Share your ONA Pride of Holy Covenant UCC at this year's Charlotte Pride Event. Volunteers are needed for our church booth on Saturday and Sunday August 20-21 beginning at 12 noon. Masks will be required. Signup in the Gathering Room or you can sign up through SignUpGenius

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C44ACAD23A2FE3-charlotte1>. Please contact Debbie Davis with questions at Debbiekdavisnc@gmail.com and thank you for your support of this important outreach ministry.

CHRISTMAS IN JULY - A UCC SPECIAL OFFERING

“Good news...Great joy...All the people!” (Luke 2:10)

As we wrap up this UCC special offering, we wish to give thanks to all who have contributed to this, and to any of the special offerings taken. You make a difference. The Christmas Fund provides Supplementation of Small Annuities, Supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and Christmas “Thank You” Gift Checks for retirees and those facing unforeseen financial hardship. Holy Covenant, along with others in the United Church of Christ, we bring good news and great joy to those who have who have given so much to the life of our church! This UCC offering, typically taken in December, is now available on our website listed under Designated Gifts. <https://holycovenantucc.org/give-2/> Checks are also graciously accepted. Notate in your memo line Christmas Fund. Thank you for your continued generosity!

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 SUNDAYS AT 9:45AM

Join us in our study of this current book: *Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi* by Amy-Jill Levine. This book is available on Amazon, Kindle, and Audible and other places too, but you do not have to have read the book to participate. For more information, contact Pastor Cheri: cherid@holycovenantucc.org or 704-519-6016. All are welcome either in person or via Zoom. See the link in the e-newsletter.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Family & friends of Karen Jane Long

Cindy Coble, Kevin Decker, Linn Finger, Tom & Kathy Habel, Jim Hong, Helen Lambert, Irene Mikkelson, Cheryl Milam, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Isabelle Reddy Powell, Jerry & Marion Rhyne, Cynthia & Tommy Simpson, Bill & Jan Seaman, Anita Taylor, Kathleen Wagner

Friends & Family Members

Sara & Paul (Eileen Howe), Emily (Kim Tyler), Faye Blakely (Diane Neese), Sandy Burby (Linda Burby), Laura Christian (Beth Sharp), Debbie Coble (Cindy Coble), Angela & Peter Fish (Dom Ciciollo), 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), 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)