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Meditation

“Love doesn’t just sit there, like a stone, it has to be made, like bread; remade all the time, made new.”

— Ursula K. Le Guin

“Finding yourself after many years, is a treasure like no other.”

— Nancy B. Urbach

“True wisdom is like an ocean; the deeper you go the greater the treasures you’ll find.”

— Matshona Dhliwayo

**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

August 7, 2022 10:55 am

Prelude "We Are an Offering" arr. L. Bergquist

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements

One: May the peace of God be with you.

Many: And also with you.

Introit "We Are an Offering" D. Liles

We lift our voices; we lift our hands; we lift our lives up to you.

We are an offering.

We lift our voices; we lift our hands; we lift our lives up to you.

We are an offering. We are an offering.

* Call to Worship Beth Sharp

One: Creator resides in the midst of creation...calling us to this community.

Many: Our world waits for the Holy One, our help and shield.

One: God our Righteousness gazes upon the beloved with delight and concern.

Many: Our bodies wait for the Holy One, our help and shield.

One: The Spirit of the Living God greets us with fresh winds and new mercies.

Many: Our souls wait for the Holy One, our help and shield.

* Invocation (*unison*) Beth Sharp

Abundant God, we wait for you with longing, hope, and anticipation. May your kindom be realized in this community. May your people be your ambassadors. May your love be our propeller in the world and our beacon to direct us home. Fill us with the bread of life and nourish our spirits to be your good news in the world. Amen.

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

* Hymn 295

“I Sing a Song of the Saints of God”

GRAND ISLE

I sing a song of the saints of God,
Faithful their whole lives through,
Who bravely labored, lived, and died
For the God they loved and knew.
And one was doctor, and one was a queen,
And another a shepherd in pastures green:
They were saints of God, if you know what I mean.
God, help me to be one, too.

They loved their God, and they lived that love.
It was loving that made them strong.
They did what was right, for Jesus' sake,
Lived justly their whole lives long.
And one was a prophet, and one was a priest,
And another was slain by a fierce wild beast:
There is no earthly reason, none in the least,
Why I shouldn't be one, too.

They lived not only in ages past,
There are hundreds of thousands still.
The world is filled with living saints
Who choose to do God's will.
You can meet them in school, on the road, or at sea,
In a church, in a train, in a shop, or at tea:
For the saints are folk like you and like me,
And I mean to be one, too.

Prayer for Transformation and New Life (*unison*)

Cheri Dennis

Gracious God, you have created a world of abundance and flourishing. Every resource, every gift, every product originates from the generosity of your creation and the creativity you have bestowed upon us. Forgive us for misuse and overuse of your gifts. Reveal our miserly attitudes toward the plentiful trove of resources you have entrusted to our care. Sow generosity in us, reveal abundance to us, and enable flourishing through us.

Hymn 544

“If I Have Been the Source of Pain, O God”

CAMACUA

If I have been the source of pain, O God;
If to the weak I have refused my strength;
If, in rebellion, I have strayed away; Forgive me, God.

Receive, O God, this ardent word of prayer,
And free me from temptation’s subtle snare,
With tender patience, lead me to your care. Amen, Amen.

Words of Grace

Cheri Dennis

Every good and perfect gift comes from above. Grace is such a gift; mercy is another. Transformation and new life descend freely from the Most High to all who would receive it. Receive the assurance of God’s grace and compassion as precious treasure made available to all.

Children’s Message

Cheri Dennis

Pastoral Prayer

Cheri Dennis

Song

“For the Troubles and the Suffering”

R. G. Neto

(A small group will sing once through; then the congregation is invited to join.)

For the troubles and the sufferings of the world,
God, we call upon your mercy: The whole creation’s laboring in pain!

Lend an ear to the rising cry for help from oppressed and hopeless people.
Come! Hasten your salvation, healing love!

We pray for peace, the blessed peace that comes from making justice,
To cover and embrace us. Have mercy, Lord!

We pray for power, the power that will sustain your people’s witness:
Until your kingdom come, Kyrie eleison!

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 (*sung*)

SANCTUARY

**Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true.
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.**

Hebrew Scripture

Psalm 33:12-22

Beth Sharp

Happy is the nation whose God is the Lord,
the people whom he has chosen as his heritage.

The Lord looks down from heaven;
he sees all humankind.

From where he sits enthroned, he watches
all the inhabitants of the earth—
he who fashions the hearts of them all,
and observes all their deeds.

A king is not saved by his great army;
a warrior is not delivered by his great strength.

The war horse is a vain hope for victory,
and by its great might it cannot save.

Truly the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him,
on those who hope in his steadfast love,
to deliver their soul from death,
and to keep them alive in famine.

Our soul waits for the Lord;
he is our help and shield.

Our heart is glad in him,
because we trust in his holy name.

Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us,
even as we hope in you.

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

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

* Gospel Lesson

Luke 12:32-40

Cheri Dennis

‘Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

‘Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

‘But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.’

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

“Shepherd, Master, Servant, Thief”

Cheri Dennis

Invitation to Generosity

Beth Sharp

Luke 12:34 informs us, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Let our hearts direct the use of our resources, our time, and our talents. May our generosity meet God’s abundance in attending to the needs and hopes of our community.

Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving (*unison*)

Beth Sharp

Generous One, receive the gifts we bring as we return a portion of your treasure to the use of your kingdom. May your will be manifested and your creation restored through sharing these offerings. Amen.

* Doxology

THANK YOU LORD

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

Been so good. (3x) I just want to thank you, Lord.

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

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation

Cheri Dennis

One: The Holy One be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

One: Open your hearts to the One who is Love.

Many: **We open our hearts to you, O God.**

One: We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:

UCC Statement of Faith (*unison*)

You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death. You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles. In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

You promise to all who trust you, forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen.

Words of Institution

Cheri Dennis

As Jesus was at the table with his friends, he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

Pour out your Spirit on these gifts and make this bread and this cup sustenance for our journey. By your grace, may we experience anew the call you place on our lives to serve one another. In feasting at your table, may our hearts be filled with courage once again to follow the Risen Christ, come what may.

Distribution of Elements

Song during Communion “How Beautiful” T. Paris, arr. L. Larson
Kathleen Smith, Lisa Cloninger, vocalists

Prayer of Thanksgiving (*unison*)

In this meal, O God, you have reminded us that it is your good pleasure to give us the kingdom. You have renewed our Spirits. May we journey with Christ as we make ready and wait for your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen

* Hymn 306 “The Church of Christ, in Every Age” WAREHAM
The church of christ, in every age be set by change, but Spirit led,
Must claim and test its heritage and keep on rising from the dead.

Across the world, across the street, the victims of injustice cry
For shelter and for bread to eat, and never live before they die.

Then let the servant church arise, a caring church that longs to be
A partner in Christ's sacrifice, and clothed in Christ's humanity.

* Benediction Cheri Dennis

* Benediction Response 391 NEW DIMENSIONS
God of rainbow, fiery pillar
Leading where the eagles soar,
We your people, ours the journey
Now and ever, now and ever, now and evermore.

Postlude “Love Is Your Way” S. E. Murray

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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

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

Steve Cimelli, Suzanne Lamorey
Keith Dennis, Brian Hankins, Henry Hankins

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.

BAGGED LUNCH AND SANDWICH BUILD FOLLOWING WORSHIP TODAY!

Consider sticking around for some fun and fellowship! We will assemble 200 bagged lunches and 100 extra sandwiches to be delivered to Roof Above. Supplies are provided, we just need YOU to help with the assembly! Let Suzanne Lamorey know if you will participate, suzlam@yahoo.com.

HOLY COVENANT GRANT HELPS LAUNCH TRAINING PROGRAM

Holy Covenant's recent grant of \$15,000 to Hope Haven supports an innovative new training program that will provide essential training for nonprofits that might otherwise not be able to afford it. Please see the full article in the weekly e-newsletter.

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 sheets are in the Gathering Room or you can sign up through Sign Up

Genius <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.

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

Sojourners class begins a new 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 join us. 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.

USHERS, GREETERS, LITURGIST AND COMMUNION SERVERS

Please sign up on the SignUpGenius link:

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

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Family & Friends in the death of Karen 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 & Marie 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)

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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