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Silent Meditation

**“There are basically three types of songs:
loved songs, unloved songs, and transitional songs written by
tired people in between the two. Love songs are cheesy, unloved
songs are depressing, and transitional songs are poetry.
Transitions catch the world on fire, touching on relevant topics
while speaking with giddiness
and despair of the lover between.”**

— Ace Boggess

**“Listen closely. Even the trees exhale sweet love songs
that roll off their boughs and echo out to all of creation.
Love is always in the air.”**

— Cristen Rodgers

**“Mine was the twilight and the morning.
Mine was a world of rooftops and love songs.”**

— Roman Payne

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

August 14, 2022 10:55 am

Prelude "In Moments Like These" D. Graham

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements Cheri Dennis

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.

All that we have, all that we are,

All that we hope to be we give to you, we give to you.

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 Terrence Hayes

One: In a world uprooted at every turn, come beloved of God for replanting.

Many: Our hope and weariness are mixed together, yet we come, trusting ancient promises.

One: The Holy One who led the people out of Egypt, yearns to lead us, too.

Many: God will not rest until all are rerooted, restored, and renewed for rejoicing.

One: Let us be joined to God's song of justice, bearing beauty into the life of the world.

All: May our lives be formed for faithfulness by the One who is always faithful.

* Invocation (*unison*) Terrence Hayes

Loving and Gracious God, form a new song of soul within us. Take every fragment of our lives and fashion a new creation. Plant us deep in the soil of Your love, that your living water might rise in us, forming a fruit of possibility unimaginable on our own. Grant us grace to trust your promised presence already meeting us here, now, and always. By this, fill us with a new strength of heart for whatever Your love demands. Amen.

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

* Hymn 70

“God Is Here! As We Your People”

ABBOTT’S LEIGH

God is here! As we your people meet to offer praise and prayer,
May we find in fuller measure what it is in Christ we share.
Here, as in the world around us, all our varied skills and arts
Wait the coming of the Spirit into open minds and hearts.

Here are symbols to remind us of our lifelong need of grace;
Here are table, font, and pulpit, here the cross has central place.
Here in honesty of preaching, here in silence, as in speech,
Here, in newness and renewal, God the Spirit comes to each.

Here our children find a welcome in the Shepherd’s flock and fold;
Here as bread and wine are taken, Christ sustains us as of old.
Here the servants of the Servant seek in worship to explore
What it means in daily living to believe and to adore.

Sovereign God, of earth and heaven, in an age of change and doubt
Keep us faithful to the gospel, help us work your purpose out.
Here, in this day’s dedication, all we have to give, receive;
We, who cannot live without you, we adore you! We believe!

Prayer for Transformation and New Life (*unison*)

Gardener God, You plant us in a gifted place, but often we return sour grapes. In the midst of Your abundance, we complain of not having enough or being enough. Your call “to give justice to the weak and the orphan; to maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute” is easily overlooked or ignored. We are uprooted by our own inaction, selfishness, and fear. Re-root our hearts, our minds, and our lives in the soil of Your forgiving love. Bear up in us a boldness to sing a song strange to the world but known by You. Let it be the song of shalom, the chorus of Christ-love, a hallelujah rising as the world is mended by our consent to You. Yes, plant this anew in us today.

Hymn 544

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

CAMACUA

If I have spoken words of cruelty;
If I have left some suffering unrelieved;
Condemn not my insensitivity; 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

Hear this good word. God can never cease to be love. God has no joy in plants uprooted or journeys detoured by distraction. The ancient promise of God proclaimed again and again throughout history still rings true. Nothing can separate us from the love of God, made known to us in Christ Jesus. God forgives you and is already planting you anew. This is the good news and you can trust it with your life. Thanks be to God!

Children's Message

Cheri Dennis

Pastoral Prayer

Cheri Dennis

Song

"For the Troubles and the Suffering"

R. G. Neto

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.

Isaiah 5:1-7

Let me sing for my beloved
my love-song concerning his vineyard:
My beloved had a vineyard
on a very fertile hill.
He dug it and cleared it of stones,
and planted it with choice vines;
he built a watch-tower in the midst of it,
and hewed out a wine vat in it;
he expected it to yield grapes,
but it yielded wild grapes.

And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem
and people of Judah,
judge between me
and my vineyard.
What more was there to do for my vineyard
that I have not done in it?
When I expected it to yield grapes,
why did it yield wild grapes?

And now I will tell you
what I will do to my vineyard.
I will remove its hedge,
and it shall be devoured;
I will break down its wall,
and it shall be trampled down.
I will make it a waste;
it shall not be pruned or hoed,
and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns;
I will also command the clouds
that they rain no rain upon it.

For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts
is the house of Israel,
and the people of Judah
are his pleasant planting;
he expected justice,
but saw bloodshed;
righteousness,
but heard a cry!

Jeremiah 23:23-29

Am I a God near by, says the Lord, and not a God far off? Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them? says the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the Lord. I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, 'I have dreamed, I have dreamed!' How long? Will the hearts of the prophets ever turn back—those who prophesy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart? They plan to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, just as their ancestors forgot my name for Baal. Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let the one who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? says the Lord. Is not my word like fire, says the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?

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

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

* Gospel Lesson

Luke 12:49-56

Cheri Dennis

'I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! From now on, five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided:

father against son

and son against father,
mother against daughter

and daughter against mother,
mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law

and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.'

He also said to the crowds, 'When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, "It is going to rain"; and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, "There will be scorching heat"; and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?

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

"A Song of Love or Words of Judgment"

Cheri Dennis

Invitation to Generosity

Terrence Hayes

We live in a more than enough world, created by a God who lavishes abundance. Today, we are privileged to join God's motion of generosity. When we add our gifts, God multiplies them for good, and joy mysteriously rises. This is God's will and way. May we be joined to it.

Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving (*unison*)

We thank you, Loving God, that sourness gives way to sweetness when we answer Your call to be generous. Multiply these gifts and Your spirit in us, that the world may know your life-giving will and way. 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.

- * Hymn 81 “God Be With You Till We Meet Again” GOD BE WITH YOU
God be with you till we meet again; By good counsel guide, uphold you,
With a shepherd's care enfold you: God be with you till we meet a-gain.

Refrain:

Till we meet; till we meet, till we meet at Jesus' feet;

Till we meet, till we meet, God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again; Wings of shelter safely hide you,
Daily manna still provide you: God be with you till we meet again. (R)

God be with you till we meet again; When life's perils thick confound you,
Put unfailing arms around you: God be with you till we meet again. (R)

God be with you till we meet again; Keep love's banner floating o'er you,
Smite death's threatening wave before you:
God be with you till we meet again. (R)

- * 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

“Pelas Dores Deste Mundo”

R. G. Neto

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WE PROVIDE OUR EXTRAVEGANT WELCOME WITH HELP FROM:

Mel Andersen, Christine Andersen, Anne Hayes,
Keith Dennis, Brian Hankins, Henry Hankins

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.



SUNDAY, SEPT. 11, 2022 AT 2:00PM IN OUR SANCTUARY.

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 Sept 11 at 2PM. Watch the trailer of this documentary at:

<http://www.playworksonline.org/p/streetsmarts.html#>

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.

MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO ASSISTED WITH LAST SUNDAY'S BAGGED LUNCH BUILD. It was a great time in fellowship! Look for a date next month when we will do the same. All are welcome to join in!

SAVE THE DATE! HELP CLEAR THE TRAILS OCT. 15 - 9AM

After 24+ months of very little use but lots of storms, the trails in Holy Covenant's backyard are not quite hike-ready. Join us Saturday, Oct. 15 to enjoy cooler fall weather and church fellowship as we clear our hiking trails and enjoy nature.

USHERS, GREETERS, LITURGIST AND COMMUNION SERVERS

Please sign up on the SignUpGenius link:

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

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 SUNDAY MORNINGS

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 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

Angela Fish and family in the death of her husband Peter (Dom Ciciollo)

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)

If you wish to add someone to the list, please send a note to

prayers@holycovenantucc.org.

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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