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Meditation

“The words of kindness are more healing to
a drooping heart than balm or honey.”
— Sarah Fielding

“The night is the balm
for the wounded souls of the world.”
— Avijeet Das

“Friendship is certainly the finest balm
for the pangs of disappointed love.”
— Jane Austen

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

September 18, 2022 10:55 am

Prelude "In This Very Room" R. Harris

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements Cheri Dennis

One: May the peace of God be with you.
Many: **And also with you.**

Introit "Let Us Adore" J. Chajes

Lower Voices:

Let us adore
the ever-living God
and render praise
unto God,
who spread out the heavens
and established the earth
and whose glory
is revealed in the heavens above
and whose greatness

Upper Voices:

Let us adore
the ever-living God
and render praise
unto God,
who spread out the heavens
and established the earth
and whose glory
in the heavens above
and whose greatness

All: Is manifest throughout all the earth.
You are our God. There is none else.

* Call to Worship Terry Raley-Dennis

One: Divine Parent, you feel what we feel.
Many: **Our joys and our pains are yours too.**
One: Divine Healer, you delight in our wholeness.
Many: **You are the balm for our heavy-laden hearts and souls.**
One: Giver of life, you are able to renew us
Many: **We open ourselves to you, have your way within us.**

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

* Invocation (*unison*)

Terry Raley-Dennis

One: Let us pray.

Many: Divine Nurturer, we are thankful that we can come to you any time. You have made it possible for us to come as we are, however we are. We rejoice in knowing that you walk with us whether the road is rough or smooth. You are steadfast. Help us to nurture our relationship with you, ourselves, and each other so that we may be a balm when none can be found. Amen.

* Hymn 172

“Jesus Calls Us, o’er the Tumult”

GALILEE

Jesus calls us, o’er the tumult of our life’s wild, restless sea;
Day by day that voice still calls us, saying, “Christian, follow me.

As of old, Saint Andrew heard it by the Galilean lake,
Turned from home and toil and kindred, leaving all for Jesus’ sake.

Jesus calls us from the worship of the treasures we adore,
From each idol that would keep us, saying, “Christian, love me more.”

In our joys and in our sorrows, days of toil and hours of ease,
Jesus calls, in cares and pleasures, “Christian, love me more than these.”

Jesus calls us! By your mercies, Savior, may we hear your call,
Give our hearts to your obedience, serve and love you best of all.

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Source of Wholeness, we confess that sometimes our goals don’t align with yours, and we get lost. At times, we have pursued power, knowledge, and wealth instead of you, who are the source of all. We know that you are the balm we need, and we turn ourselves towards you. You are steadfast in your love and justice. Help us to be the same, help us to be a balm to others as you are to us. Amen.

Hymn 502

“Dear God, Embracing Humankind”

REST

O Sabbath rest by Galilee! O calm of hills above!

There Jesus met you prayerfully:

The silence of eternity,

Interpreted by love.

Breathe through the pulses of desire your coolness and your balm;

Let sense be numb, let flesh retire;

Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,

O still, small voice of calm.

Words of Assurance

Cheri Dennis

The Divine one is steadfast in love, justice, and righteousness. Know that we are called and empowered to do the same. In a chaotic world, we can know peace, and in a chaotic world, we can be at peace. May God’s grace be a balm for us, and may we be a balm to and for others. Amen.

Song

GOODNESS IS STRONGER

Goodness is stronger than evil; love is stronger than hate;

Light is stronger than darkness; life is stronger than death.

Victory is ours; victory is ours through God who loves us. (2x)

Children’s Message

Laura Hankins

Pastoral Prayer

Cheri Dennis

Song

“God Weeps”

S. E. Murray/M.A. Miller

God cries at hungry mouths, at running sores,

At creatures dying without cause,

And till we change the way we care, God cries.

God waits for stones to melt, for peace to seed,

For hearts to hold each other’s need,

And till we understand the Christ, God waits.

The Prayer of Jesus (*unison*)

Cheri Dennis

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*)

OPEN OUR EYES

Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus,
to reach out and touch you and say that we love you.
Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen.
Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus.

Hebrew Scripture

Jeremiah 8:18-22

Terry Raley-Dennis

My joy is gone, grief is upon me,
my heart is sick.

Hark, the cry of my poor people
from far and wide in the land:

'Is the Lord not in Zion?
Is her King not in her?'

('Why have they provoked me to anger with their images,
with their foreign idols?')

'The harvest is past, the summer is ended,
and we are not saved.'

For the hurt of my poor people I am hurt,
I mourn, and dismay has taken hold of me.

Is there no balm in Gilead?

Is there no physician there?

Why then has the health of my poor people
not been restored?

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

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

Refrain: There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole.
There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.

Sometimes I feel discouraged, and think my work's in vain,
But then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again. (R)

Don't ever feel discouraged, for Jesus is your friend,
Who, if you ask for knowledge, will never fail to lend. (R)

If you cannot preach like Peter, if you cannot pray like Paul,
You can tell the love of Jesus, who died to save us all. (R)

* Gospel Reading

Luke 16:1-13

Cheri Dennis

Then Jesus said to the disciples, 'There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. So he summoned him and said to him, "What is this that I hear about you? Give me an account of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer." Then the manager said to himself, "What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes." So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he asked the first, "How much do you owe my master?" He answered, "A hundred jugs of olive oil." He said to him, "Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty." Then he asked another, "And how much do you owe?" He replied, "A hundred containers of wheat." He said to him, "Take your bill and make it eighty." And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

'Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.'

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.

Invitation to Generosity

Terry Raley-Dennis

God’s love is steadfast and abundant. We are blessed to give from hearts of love that others might experience abundance. May the gifts given to Holy Covenant be used to supply whatever balm is needed, wherever it is needed. May these resources be used to facilitate the wholeness of all. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving (*unison*)

Terry Raley-Dennis

Steadfast One, receive our gifts in the gladness we give them. Thank you that we have an abundance of resources to share so that every need is met. May we always give from wide open hearts, and may what we give, be used to bring a balm of justice. Amen.

* Doxology

I HEAR ANGELS

“Holy, holy, God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come”

All creation is bringing glory to the Lamb who sits upon the throne.

* Hymn 503

“O Savior, Let Me Walk with Your”

MARYTON

O Savior, let me walk with you in early paths of service true;

Tell me your secret, help me bear the strain of toil, the fret of care.

Help me the slow of heart to move by some clear winning word of love.

Teach me the wayward feet to stay, and guide them in the homeward way.

Teach me your patience; let me be in closer, dearer company,

In work that keeps faith sweet and strong, in trust that triumphs over wrong.

In hope that sends a shining ray far down the future’s broadening way,

In peace that only you can give, with you, O Savior, let me live.

* Benediction

Cheri Dennis

* Benediction Response

SIZOHAMBA NAYE

We will walk with God, my brothers; we will walk with God.

We will walk with God, my sisters; we will walk with God.

We will go rejoicing till the kin-dom has come.

We will go rejoicing till the kin-dom has come.

Postlude

“God Weeps”

arr. J. Strathdee

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No Balm in Gilead: Service Prayers for the Fifth Sunday after Pentecost were written by Rev. Teña T. Nock, Associate Pastor of Digital Ministry, First United Church of Tampa, United Church of Christ.

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.

WE PROVIDE OUR EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME WITH HELP FROM:

Keith Dennis, Brian Hankins, Henry Hankins, JoAnn Jellison,
Terry Raley-Dennis, Shakti Subramanian

USHERS, GREETERS, LITURGISTS:

We need you for our extravagant welcome! Please sign up on the SignUpGenius link:

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

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.

CHOIR RETURNS TODAY AFTER WORSHIP

All are welcome to join us for our first rehearsal. We'll gather in the sanctuary.
Choir, the ultimate team sport!

SETTLED PASTOR SEARCH UPDATE LISTENING SESSIONS ADDED

See the e-newsletter the full announcement from September 8th.

In brief, Consistory is in the process of selecting the new pastor search team. We have connected with a congregational coach/consultant who will help us to move forward with a healthy process. We have retained Beth Kennett with the Center for Congregational Health to facilitate this work, and she will launch this work by hosting listening sessions as a means of gathering current information about the life of our congregation; *every member is invited and encouraged to participate* in a Listening Group interview session.

We have scheduled 2 additional listening sessions. Please sign up as soon as possible so that we can add groups if needed. The listening sessions will be conducted via Zoom and are scheduled for:

- Tuesday, 9/20, 11:30 am
- Tuesday, 9/20, 7:00 pm

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f094aa9ab2fa2fd0-holy>

IT'S TIME TO FILL THE WICKER BASKET* & SHOPPING CART**

Children & college folk are back in school so it's time to share our resources, fill their stomachs, and clothe their bodies. Holy Covenant supports the *Jamil Niner Student Pantry at UNCC and the **Backpack Ministry at University City United Methodist Church supporting David Cox Elementary School.

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.

VACCINE CLINIC SUNDAY, OCT 16 FROM 12-4PM

Aline Sullivan will hold a vaccine clinic at HCUCC, Sunday, October 16th after worship until 4pm. **Please** email the office, office@holycovenantucc.org, if you wish to be included. She will have available both the Regular & HD Flu shots, COVID-19 Bivalent Booster (BA4 & BA5), SHINGRIX and Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis.) **Bring:** ID, your COVID vaccine record, if applicable, insurance card, and wear a short sleeved or loose sleeved shirt.

Aline Sullivan, BS, PharmD., R.Ph

SOJOURNERS WILL NOT MEET ON SEP. 25TH OR OCT 3RD

We resume Oct 9th with a seven-week series on the Bible: Digging deeper into the Bible and how it came to be.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

If you wish to add someone to the list, please send a note to
prayers@holycovenantucc.org.

Members

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

Friends & Family Members

Julia Smith and family in the death of her husband, Troy Smith (Robert Shepherd)
Laura Christian (Beth Sharp), Alicia Gibson (Jim Hong), David & Cecelia Griffin (JP Griffin), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Marta Kosinska & Jon Spencer (Lloyd & Gussie Spencer), Jane Kelly, Darin & Kristen Jellison (JoAnn Jellison) Geraldine Mobley (Jeff Edwards-Knight), Joe Parks (Beth Christian Sharp), Jerry & Marie Raley (Jean Raley-Dennis), Barbara Rutelonis (Eric Miner), Michelle Sharp (Beth & Ed Sharp), Kathryn Vickery (Ed Vickery), Joyce Ward (Ed Vickery), Tamber Watson (Jeff Edwards-Knight), 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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