



Photo by Kenny Eliason on Unsplash

Meditation

“Because with true friends, no one is keeping score.
But it still feels good to repay them –
even in the tiniest increments.”

~Emery Lord

“If a person seems wicked, do not cast him away. Awaken him with your words,
elevate him with your deeds, repay his injury with your kindness.
Do not cast him away; cast away his wickedness.”

~Lao Tzu

“Each of us is more than the worst thing we have ever done.”

~Bryan Stevenson

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

October 23, 2022 10:55 am

Prelude "Church United" A.V. Fedak

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements Cheri Dennis

Update from the Pastoral Search Team Eric Miner

One: May the peace of God be with you.

Many: And also with you.

Stewardship Moment Suzanne Lamorey

Introit "Come Build a Church" K. Medema

The choir will sing the verses to this song. Please join us on the refrain:

Come build a church with soul and spirit.

Come build a church of flesh and bone.

We need no tower rising skyward;

No house of wood or glass or stone.

Come build a church with human frailty.

Come build a church of flesh and blood.

Jesus shall be its sure foundation.

It shall be built by the hand of God.

* Call to Worship Laura Hankins

One: Praise be to God who pours out the spirit upon all life.

Many: **Who gives us everything we need to build beloved community.**

One: Gathering us into God's dwelling place, God strengthens us.

Many: **In God's presence, the weary are renewed and joy is restored.**

One: From all the edges of the earth, God calls to those who desire to grow in Love.

Many: **Coming home to the presence of God is also a coming home to each other.**

All: **With hearts awake to the wonder of this Sacred calling, let us worship God.**

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

* Hymn 12

“I Sing the Mighty Power of God”

ELLACOMBE

I sing the mighty power of God that made the mountains rise,
That spread the flowing seas abroad, and built the lofty skies.
I sing the wisdom that ordained the sun to rule the day;
The moon shines full at God’s command, and all the stars obey.

I sing the goodness of our God that filled the earth with food;
God formed the creatures with a word, and then pronounced them good.
Oh, how your wonders are displayed, where’er I turn my eye:
If I survey the ground I tread, or gaze upon the sky!

On earth there’s not a plant or flower but makes your glory known.
The clouds arise and spread their showers by order from your throne.
All life is but a gift from you and ever in your care;
Wherever people gather, you, O God, are present there.

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Cheri Dennis

God, often in our lives we have put others to shame, calling them names, judging them for their circumstances, blaming them for events, considering them unworthy of your love and our respect because of the color of their skin, their gender, their age, for any trait we deem unworthy. O God, forgive us for not loving others. God, not only have we shamed others, but we often shame ourselves because we compare ourselves to others we deem more worthy than us. That too is sin. O God, forgive us for not letting you show us how to love even ourselves. May we always remember that you are the God who made us, loves us, forgives us and redeems us. Amen.

Song

“Take, O Take Me as I Am”

TAKE ME AS I AM

Take, O take me as I am; summon out what I shall be;
Set your seal upon my heart and live in me.

Words of Assurance

Cheri Dennis

As the prophet Joel tells us, God repays our unlove with love. God repays our shaming of ourselves and others with a forgiveness that always makes harvest even from desolation. Thank you, God, for forgiving us for we are forgiven.

Song

“Know That God Is Good”

MUNGU NI MWEMA

Know that God is good. (3x) God is good; God is good.

Stories for All People

Laura Hankins

Pastoral Prayer

Cheri Dennis

Song

“Heal Our Nation”

T. Morgan

Heal our nation. (3x) Pour out your Spirit on this land.

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*)

CHEREPONI

Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love,

Show us how to serve the neighbors we have from you.

O children of Zion, be glad

and rejoice in the Lord your God;

for he has given the early rain for your vindication,

he has poured down for you abundant rain,

the early and the later rain, as before.

The threshing-floors shall be full of grain,

the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.

I will repay you for the years

that the swarming locust has eaten,

the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter,

my great army, which I sent against you.

You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied,

and praise the name of the Lord your God,

who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame.

You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,

and that I, the Lord, am your God and there is no other.

And my people shall never again

be put to shame.

Then afterwards

I will pour out my spirit on all flesh;

your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

your old men shall dream dreams,

and your young men shall see visions.

Even on the male and female slaves,

in those days, I will pour out my spirit.

I will show portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls.

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

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

Hymn

“How Lovely, Lord”
(based on Psalm 84)

MERLE’S TUNE

How lovely, Lord, how lovely is your abiding place;
My soul is longing, fainting, to feast upon your grace.
The sparrow finds a shelter, a place to build her nest;
And so your temple calls us within its walls to rest.

In your blest courts to worship, O God, a single day
Is better than a thousand if I from you should stray.
I’d rather keep the entrance and claim you as my Lord
Than revel in the riches the ways of sin afford.

A sun and shield forever are you, O Lord Most High;
You shower us with blessings; no good will you deny.
The saints, your grace receiving, from strength to strength shall go,
And from their life shall rivers of blessing overflow.

* Gospel Lesson

Luke 18:9-14

Cheri Dennis

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: ‘Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax-collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, “God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax-collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.” But the tax-collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!” I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.’

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

“Tax Collector vs. Pharisee”

Cheri Dennis

Invitation to Generosity

Laura Hankins

We are invited to repay the grace we have received with our resources, time, abilities, compassion from a deep and wide place of gratitude. These gifts are for prophecies, dreams, and hopes of the future from all your children. Be generous, my friends, with repaying, repraising, repairing.

Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving (*unison*)

Laura Hankins

God, you who have everything, we bring our offering and enter your spirit. This is your generosity to us -- we can share with you in the giving and receiving of gifts. May these be blessed for each use, and may we be blessed by letting go plenty and learning need. Amen.

* Doxology

BARUCH HASHEM ADONAI

Baruch hashem Adonai. Baruch hashem Adonai.

Blessed be the name of the Lord. Baruch hashem Adonai.

* Hymn 23

“There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy”

IN BABILONE

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.

* Benediction

Cheri Dennis

* Benediction Response

HALLE, HALLE

Halle, halle, hallelujah! (3x)

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Postlude

“God, in Your Grace”

S. E. Murray

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WE PROVIDE OUR EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME WITH HELP FROM:

Keith Dennis, Brian Hankins, Henry Hankins,
JoAnn Jellison, Dawn Schmitz, Shakti Subramanian

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

IN-PERSON ACTIVITIES UPDATE

Consistory voted to move to a "masks optional" designation for in-person activities at the church effective Sept. 23rd, and ask that a member's decision to mask or not mask be respected. We will continue to monitor COVID trends as we move into the cooler months and will adjust as needed. 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.

STEWARDSHIP 2023

We need YOU and your transformational gifts of time, talent and treasure. Thank you for your prayers for God's continued life-giving work through Holy Covenant, for our Settled Pastoral Search team, and for God's spirit to move within each of our lives as we discern what gifts each of us can offer to God to strengthen God's ministry through Holy Covenant to our members, our community, and beyond. Our current pace for our pledges are at 44% **for the General Fund** (operating fund), and 33% **Building Fund** (capital fund)! Please turn in your pledge card today or send a confidential email to the church office, office@holycovenantucc.org.

UPDATES FROM YOUR PASTORAL SEARCH TEAM

We're busy at work and want to share what we are up to!

Week ending October 23, 2022

- We agreed on updates to our Church Profile to ensure we remain an attractive congregation to prospective pastors
- We are now reviewing candidates
- We have received new candidates that will soon be reviewed

See our weekly electronic newsletter for a chronological document of our weekly accomplishments. Keep us in prayer as we continue this most important work!

WHAT IS NON-BINARY? WHAT IS GENDER IDENTITY? WHAT ARE THE CORRECT PRONOUNS? Join Holy Covenant on Sunday, Nov. 6th at 12:30 PM

to explore these questions and others with [Dr. Benjamin Simmons](#), a family physician and board member of [PFLAG Charlotte](#). A light lunch will be available. PFLAG's mission is to support families, allies and people who are LGBTQ+, to educate ourselves and others about issues important to LGBTQ+ communities, and to advocate in our communities for a more equitable future for all. Our call at Holy Covenant includes continuing to educate ourselves around many issues, including the changing nature of LGBTQIA+ identity and language.

CROP HUNGER WALK 2022, SUNDAY OCTOBER 30

WALK with your church family and friends to help alleviate hunger in Mecklenburg County and the world. The Holy Covenant branch of the Charlotte CROP Hunger Walk will happen on the church's property, Sunday, **October 30 after worship**. If you can join us, please let Tina Dickens know by email- taichitina@gmail.com or talk to her at church. 25% of all donations will stay local and give assistance to three charitable agencies. Tina has been a member since 1996. Not able to join us? Please support our walkers! Tina Dickens, Linda Carver and Darline Warren. Checks should be payable to C.R.O.P.

SOJOURNERS CLASS SUNDAYS AT 9:45AM

Everyone is welcome to join us both in-person or via Zoom at 9:45 Sunday mornings. Go to www.zoom.us. Meeting ID: 876 7340 9762 and Passcode: 523903. For more information, contact Cheri Dennis (704-519-6016, cherid@holycovenantucc.org).

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Kristin Andes & Tom Magraw in the recent death of Kristin's mother, Kathy Andes; David & Patty McGuirt & family in the recent death of David's mother, Betty Sue McGuirt; Friends and Family in the recent death of Danny Bushman; Jeff Edwards-Knight in the death of his sister-in-law, Mattie; Kevin Edwards-Knight in the death of his sister-in-law Carolyn Gary & Linda Clark, Cindy Coble, Kevin Decker, Linn Finger, Tom & Kathy Habel, Jim Hong, Helen Lambert, Sharon Landis, Irene Mikkelson, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Isabelle Reddy Powell, Jerry & Marion Rhyne, Cynthia & Tommy Simpson, Anita Taylor

Friends & Family Members

Friends & family in the recent death of Bobby Vickery (Ed Vickery & Eric Miner); Friends & Family in the recent death of Steve Zrebeic (Jeff Edwards-Knight); Friends & family of Aida Marcial who live in Puerto Rico
Laura Christian (Beth Sharp), Alicia Gibson (Jim Hong), David & Cecelia Griffin (JP Griffin), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Ann Johnson (Joy Johnson), Marta Kosinska & Jon Spencer (Lloyd & Gussie Spencer), 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), Christopher Sizemore (Tina Ettesen), Kathryn Vickery (Ed Vickery), Joyce Ward (Ed Vickery), Tamber Watson (Jeff Edwards-Knight), John Zastrow (Barb Schneller)

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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