



**“MAKING ROOM FOR CHRIST” COLLABORATIVE PAINTING
DECEMBER 2014**

A Music Prayer

From "Call to Purpose: A message from the church to the church."
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God of harmony,
You give us music rich in variety,
to connect us with You and all creation.
We thank You for inspiring poets and musicians
who bring praise to our lips.
Help us embrace the harmonies of
Your creative genius;
Let Your hope, faith, love, and joy
resound in us and ring throughout the earth.
Fill us with the rhythm of your heartbeat
in Your symphony of being
as it guides and nurtures us
in mission with You.
We pray in the name of Christ,
the singer and the song.
Amen.

Dec 24 * Christ

7pm candlelight service

5:30-6:30pm chili supper

Dec 25 * Christmas Morning

We will not worship in-person Christmas morning



Christmas Eve Chili Supper

Join us 5:30-6:30pm December 24th for fun and fellowship
before our Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship.

Check out Sign-up Genius for ways to help!

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

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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HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT ~ LOVE

December 18, 2022 10:55 am

Prelude "Ding Dong! Merrily on High" arr. Ray Pool
Kristin Andes, harp

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements Cheri Dennis
One: May the peace of God be with you.
Many: And also with you.

Introit "Jesus Is Coming" FREEDOM IS COMING
Jesus is coming. (3x) Oh yes, I know.

* Call to Worship Diane Neese
One: We come seeking a sign from You, the One who sits upon the throne.
Many: **Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.**
One: We come seeking to worship You, the One who dwells with us always.
Many: **Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.**
One: We come seeking to witness your might, a child to be born in a coming night.
All: **Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

Invocation (*unison*) Diane Neese
God of love – ferocious love, fierce love, unending love, everlasting love –
We gather in place with gratitude for the ways your love has called us out of
the bleakest and into your marvelous. We know of your renown, and we stand
in awe of your work. In our own time revive it; in our own time make it
known. Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel. Stir up your might in this place. Give
us life, and we will call on your name as we worship you in spirit and in truth.
Amen.

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

* Video & Song

“The Giver”

Mia McClain

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dz-R_QX_pfE

I was glad when they said let us go to the house of the giver of hope
The granter of justice
The days are a-coming
Fulfillment of promises
Truth restoration with anticipation we wait
Wait for God’s mercy to fill this place
And the giver, the giver brings hope for a future
And peace like a river
And joy everlasting
And love
The giver of love come dwell with us now
All these things abound.

I was glad when they said let us go to the house of the giver of hope
The granter of justice
The days are a-coming
Fulfillment of promises
Truth restoration anticipation we wait
Wait for God’s mercy to fill this place
Wait for the one who will bear God’s grace
Wait for the child who will lead the way

And the giver, the giver brings hope for a future
And peace like a river
And joy everlasting
And love
The giver of love come dwell with us now

The giver brings hope for a future
And peace like a river
Joy everlasting and love
The giver brings
Hope for a future and peace like a river
Joy everlasting and love

The giver brings hope for a future
And peace like a river
Joy everlasting and love
The giver of love come dwell with us now
All these things abound

Come O come Emmanuel (3x)

Prayer for Transformation and New Life

Gregg Walker

One: We gather together in this season of Advent anticipating hope, praying for peace, attempting to cultivate joy and share love amidst commotion, grief, despair and uncertainty.

All: **God, our shepherd – Restorer of our souls, in a world full of hopelessness, we have sometimes forgotten that you have shown your hope in endless ways. Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may know your hope. In the mirey mess of the world, we have sometimes neglected to lean into your peace that transcends comprehension. Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may know your peace. In a culture shrouded in doom and despair, we have often forgotten how to fight for our joy. Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may know your joy. In a moment when it is easier to hate others because they believe differently, Love differently, live differently, vote differently—we have forgotten how to love beyond the bounds of what separates us. Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may know your love. Stimulate our memory, O divine Creator. Remind us that even in our weakness, you are mighty.**

Words of Assurance

Gregg Walker

God has never left us nor forsaken us. God is Emmanuel in the face of crisis, Emmanuel, in the midst of calamity, Emmanuel, in the presence of tribulation. God with us, helping our unbelief, bringing us back to life, reminding us that we are light. Let that be good news. Amen.

Anthem

“Coventry Carol”

arr. M. Shaw

Candle Lighting

“Candle of Love”

Kevin, Joy, Bea, Lex Decker

Voice 1: “Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.”
(Luke 2:19)

Voice 2: What does love feel like in the new world?

Voice 1: Love feels like knowing I am a sacred piece of a magnificent whole.

Voice 2: Love feels like acceptance and gratitude.

Voice 1: Love feels like being cherished.

(Fourth Advent candle is lit.)

Voice 2: Advent is the beginning of this new world, a better world, where you, and me, and all of God’s creation are treasured and beloved.

Voice 1: May it be so. Amen.

Song

TRENTHAM

Kindle this flame of love. May it burn bright and true.
Lighting the way that is of God, the journey we pursue.

God's realm is our desire, where peace and justice reign.
Heaven and earth combined as one, when Christ shall come again.

Stories for All People

Ed Vickery

Song

“Love Waits for Us at Advent”
Eric Miner, Ed Vickery, vocalists

A. Udis-Kessler

*Love waits for us at Advent. Love waits for us to care.
Love waits for our compassion, freely offered, fully shared.
In this time of preparation for the work of co-creation,
For the birthing of a world where faith shapes all we do,
Love is born in us anew.*

Pastoral Prayer

Gregg Walker

Lord's Prayer by Manny Santiago (*unison*)

Gregg Walker

Our Parent, who is among us, blessed be your Creation. May your reign be a reality here on earth. May we become more interested in building your kin-dom here and now than in waiting for it to come down from above. Let us share our bread with those who hunger. Let us learn to forgive as well as to receive forgiveness. Help us through the time of temptation, delivering us from all evil. For ours are the eternal blessings that you pour upon the earth. Amen.

Handbell Choir

“Sing We Now of Christmas”

arr. M. L. Thompson

* Gospel Lesson

John 1: 1-5

Diane Neese

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

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

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

Anthem

“In the Bleak Midwinter”

H. Darke

* Epistle Lesson

Romans 13:11-14

Gregg Walker

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

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

“Light, Love & Action”

Gregg Walker

Handbell Choir

“He Is Born, the Divine Christ-Child” arr. M.L. Thompson

Prayer of Thanksgiving & Dedication

Diane Neese

One: We believe in the God of justice and righteousness, and God believes in us to carry forth the mission of loving and caring for community. Let us now dedicate our gifts and resources so that we may continue to walk humbly with God and with neighbors.

All: We dedicate the gifts that have been received for the fortification of the beloved community. Let these gifts do justice in the world so that all may know they are loved by God. Amen.

* Doxology

VENI EMMANUEL

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise God, all creatures here below.

Praise God above, you heavenly host.

Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel

Shall come to you, O Israel.

* Hymn

“God Comes to Us as One Unknown”
(Choir & Congregation)

REPTON
arr. J. Ferguson

God comes to us as one unknown, a breath unseen, unheard;
As though within a heart of stone, or shriveled seed in darkness sown,
A pulse of being stirred, a pulse of being stirred.

Choir only:

*God comes when souls in silence lie and thoughts of day depart;
Half-seen upon the inward eye, a falling star across the sky
Of night within the heart, of night within the heart.*

*God comes to us in sound of seas, the ocean’s fume and foam;
Yet small and still upon the breeze, a wind that stirs the tops of trees,
A voice to call us home, a voice to call us home.*

*God comes in love as once God came by flesh and blood and birth;
To bear within our mortal frame a life, a death, a saving name,
For ev’ry child of earth, for ev’ry child of earth.*

All:

God comes in truth when faith is grown; believed, obeyed, adored;
The Christ in all the scriptures shown, as yet unseen but not unknown,
Our Savior and our Lord, our Savior and our Lord.

* Benediction

Gregg Walker

* Benediction Response

DONA NOBIS PACEM

Translation: Grant us peace.

Dona nobis pacem, pacem. Dona nobis pacem.

Postlude

“Silent Night”

M. W. Smith

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(Call to Worship & Invocation inspired by Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19. Ask a Sign: Service Prayers for the Fourth Sunday in Advent were written by Rev. Mia M. McClain. Lord’s Prayer Copyright © by J. Manny Santiago, 1999. From the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists. Used with permission. Downloaded at Many Voices)

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,
Suzanne Lamorey, Shakti Subramanian

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

IN-PERSON ACTIVITIES UPDATE

Holy Covenant UCC has returned to hosting all in-person activities with face masks being optional, including Sunday worship services which will also be live-streamed.

WELCOME BACK REV. GREGG WALKER

Rev. Gregg Walker is ordained in the UCC and is a member of Holy Covenant. He and Pastor Cheri are fellow alumni of Union Presbyterian Seminary. Gregg works as a chaplain at Novant Health Matthews Medical Center. Gregg is married to Ann and they have 3 sons, all of whom got married in 2021.

USHERS, GREETERS, LITURGIST, COMMUNION SERVERS AND ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTERS! Please sign up on SignUpGenius

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



UPDATES FROM YOUR PASTORAL SEARCH TEAM

The Team held their last meeting for the year and will reconvene early January 2023. We've been busy at work and want to share what we are doing! Please see the church weekly electronic newsletter for a chronological document of our weekly accomplishments. Keep us in prayer as we continue this most important work!

FROM THE RACIAL JUSTICE & EQUITY TEAM

Holy Covenant has a [DonorsChoose giving page](#)! This offers a way for members to directly donate to classroom projects at historically underserved local elementary schools. The HC DonorsChoose giving page gives us all a place to choose a classroom project, make a donation of any amount, and track our giving as a congregation. Last year we gave \$998 to the students and teachers in our neighborhood! The Holy Covenant DonorsChoose



giving page will be available for donations year-round and you can even set up a monthly donation. See projects on the Holy Covenant [DonorsChoose giving page](#): and consider buying your books from Shelves, Charlotte's only Black-owned bookstore: <https://shelvesbookstore.com/>.

SOJOURNERS CLASS

Join us (in-person or via Zoom) on Sunday mornings at 9:45 for our Sojourners Class. We will break until January 8th, when we will be discussing Philip Gulley's book *If Grace is True: Why God Will Save Every Person*. Dec. 25 & Jan 1 - No Class. For more information, contact Pastor Cheri (cherid@holycovenantucc.org, 704-519-6016)

HOLIDAY LOVE OFFERING FOR OUR STAFF

During this joyful time of year, we ask those of you who are able to consider contributing to a holiday love offering to be divided among our dedicated staff members who work hard to make Holy Covenant a place of welcome, warmth, & spiritual renewal. Please direct your gifts to either Dawn Robinson or Kathi Smith by December 18, to ensure that the gifts can be organized & distributed on December 24. Offerings can be made electronically at Venmo: @kathilouwho; PayPal: @kathilouwho; Zelle: 704-614-7674, or by cash, or by check made out to Dawn Robinson (NOT the church). This is not a tax-deductible donation.

YEAR-END GIVING

Holy Covenant's fiscal year ends on Friday, December 30 so any contributions for 2022 or prepayments for 2023 must be received at the church by noon on 12/29, or postmarked on or before 12/31/2022 if being mailed. Please use the secure address of: Holy Covenant UCC, PO Box 481285, Charlotte NC 28269. Questions about year-end contributions, stock gifts or electronic giving may be directed to Dawn Simmons at office@holycovenantucc.org. We are blessed by your generous support of the ministries at Holy Covenant!

HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

The church office will be open on Friday, December 23 until noon & will re-open on Tuesday, December 27, & will be open on Friday, December 30 until noon & will re-open on Tuesday, January 3rd.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Jean & Terry Raley-Dennis and family in the death of Jean's father, Jerry Raley Sr. Andrew & Britany Bomely, Linda Carver, Gary & Linda Clark, Cindy Coble, Kevin Decker, Linn Finger, Tom & Kathy Habel, Helen Lambert, Sharon Landis, Irene Mikkelson, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Isabelle Reddy Powell, Jerry & Marion Rhyne, Cynthia & Tommy Simpson, Anita Taylor

Friends & Family Members

Nikki Arrigo (Kathleen Wagner), Tom Chevrier & Rob Lux (Kathleen Wagner), Laura Christian, Matthew Christian (Beth Sharp), David & Cecelia Griffin (JP Griffin), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Ann Johnson (Joy Johnson), Geraldine Mobley (Jeff Edwards-Knight), Joe Parks (Beth Christian Sharp), Marie Raley (Jean Raley-Dennis), Barbara Rutelonis (Eric Miner), Michelle Sharp (Beth & Ed Sharp), Christopher Sizemore (Tina Ettesen), Eulene Shepherd (Robert Shepherd), Joyce Tyler (Bill & Kim Tyler), Kathryn Vickery (Ed Vickery), Joyce Ward (Ed Vickery), Tamber Watson (Jeff Edwards-Knight), John Zastrow (Barb Schneller)

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