



Silent Meditation

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

“I have decided to stick with love.
Hate is too great a burden to bear.”

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is,
'What are you doing for others?'"

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

OUR FAITH IS OVER 2000 YEARS OLD. OUR THINKING IS NOT,

**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY**

January 15, 2023 10:55 am

Prelude "In This Very Room" R. Harris

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements Cheri Dennis

One: May the peace of the Christ Child be with you.

Many: And also with you.

Introit "Holy Ground" Beatty/Davis

This is holy ground. We're standing on holy ground.

For our God is present and where God is is holy. (2x)

We are standing on holy ground,

And I know that there are angels all around.

Let us praise Jesus now.

We are standing in God's presence on holy ground.

* Call to Worship Ed Vickery

(with gratitude to Ruth Moody and the Wailin' Jennys)

One: There are no words for what this testimony means only the wonder at how it feels like grace.

Many: **We celebrate the prophets and visionaries; in story and song, we awaken to the sound of one voice.**

One: There is no way to know what this following will take only the hope that it is leading us deeper into the heart of love.

Many: **We cherish the risk-takers and the tide-turners: in prayer and praise, we witness to the sound of voices two.**

One: There is no telling when the struggle will end, only the faith in a future we cannot yet behold.

Many: **We become the movement and the liberation: in worship and wrestling, we create the sound of all of us.**

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

Invocation (*unison*)

Ed Vickery

To the revelation and the wonder, open us. With the vision and the possibility, convict us. For the recognizing and the following, equip us. In the struggle and the seeking, be with us. Holy One, manifest your love, make your justice known in and among us. Amen.

* Hymn 593

“Lift Every Voice and Sing”

LIFT EVERY VOICE

Lift every voice and sing, till earth and heaven ring
Ring with the harmonies of liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise, high as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the harsh past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet,
Come to the place for which our people sighed?

We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,
God who has brought us thus far on the way;
God, who by your might, led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met you,
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, forget you;
Shadowed beneath your hand, may we forever stand,
True to our God, true to our native land.

Prayer for Transformation and New Life

Glencie Rhedrick

One: In this moment of stillness, feel for the rhythm of your own pulse
listen to the cadence of your own breath when we lose touch with our
own flourishing,

Many: **Holy One, forgive us, reconnect us.**

One: In this moment of stillness, feel for the rhythm of another one's pulse
listen to the cadence of another one's breath when we lose touch with
the celebrations and struggles of our neighbors,

Many: **Holy One, forgive us, reconnect us.**

One: In this moment of stillness, feel for the rhythm of the pulse of justice
for all listen to the cadence of the breath of love When we lose touch
with our collective liberation,

Many: **Holy One, forgive us, reconnect us. Amen.**

Hymn 472

“Precious Lord, Take My Hand”

PRECIOUS LORD

**Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand,
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light:
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.**

**When my way grows drear, precious Lord, linger near,
When my life is almost gone,
Hear me cry, hear my call, hold my hand, lest I fall:
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.**

**When the shadows appear and the night draws near,
And the day is past and gone,
At the river I stand, guide my feet, hold my hand:
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.**

Words of Grace

Glencie Rhedrick

One: Thrill and rejoice, people of God: God's grace and love meet us at
every turn, no matter where our journeys lead.

Many: **Praise God who gives us each the chance to be epiphanies of
redeeming love and liberating justice.**

Stories for All People

Laura Hankins

Pastoral Prayer

Glencie Rhedrick

The Lord's Prayer (*Manny Santiago*)

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 kingdom 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.

Hymn 570

“We Shall Overcome”

Traditional

We shall overcome, we shall overcome,
We shall overcome some day;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome some day.

Our God will see us through ...some day;

The truth shall make us free. . . some day.

We shall I live in peace. . . some day.

Hebrew Scripture

1 Corinthians 1:1-9

Ed Vickery

Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

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

* Gospel Lesson

John 1: 29-42

Glencie Rhedrick

The next day he saw Jesus coming towards him and declared, 'Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, "After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me." I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel.' And John testified, 'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.'

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, 'Look, here is the Lamb of God!' The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, 'What are you looking for?' They said to him, 'Rabbi' (which translated means Teacher), 'where are you staying?' He said to them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated Anointed). He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas' (which is translated Peter).

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

"The Unfinished Assignment"

Glencie Rhedrick

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication

Ed Vickery

*(with quotes from Remaining Awake through a Great Revolution
by Martin Luther King, Jr.)*

One: There can be no flourishing for some of us without liberation for all of us. Our offering gives us the opportunity to invest in our collective liberation. May our giving be a revelation of God's love, made known and being made known in our midst.

Many: "All life is interrelated" - Praise!

"We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality" - Praise!

"We are tied in a single garment of destiny" - Praise!

Use our gifts to empower us to lean into this reality and this calling,
more and more fully, until we become the salvation we are dreaming
of.

May it be so. Amen.

* Doxology

OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures here below.

Praise God above, you heavenly hosts,

Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Hymn 526

"We Are Marching in the Light of God"

arr. Anders Nyberg

Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos',

Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'. (2x)

Siyahamba *hamba, siyahamba*

Ooo *hamba,*

Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'. (2x)

We are marching in the light of God,

We are marching in the light of God. (2x)

We are marching *marching, we are marching,*

Ooo *marching,*

We are marching in the light of God. (2x)

We are singing in the light of God,

We are singing in the light of God. (2x)

We are singing *singing, we are singing,*

Ooo *singing,*

We are singing in the light of God. (2x)

Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos',

Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'. (2x)

Siyahamba *hamba, siyahamba*

Ooo *hamba,*

Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'. (2x)

* Benediction

Glencie Rhedrick

* Benediction Response

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

“I Don’t Feel No Ways Tired”

C. Burrell

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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.

WE PROVIDE OUR EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME WITH HELP FROM:

Keith Dennis, Brian Hankins, Henry Hankins

WHAT’S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

IN-PERSON ACTIVITIES UPDATE JANUARY 7, 2023

Currently we have been hosting all in-person activities with face masks being optional. We said we would revisit this if conditions changed. The current COVID level for Mecklenburg County has increased to High causing a high burden of illness on county resources, including health care resources. Consistory has made the decision that we will continue in-person worship and activities with masking **strongly** encouraged. We will continue to monitor the situation and make changes as appropriate. Blessings, Jeff Edwards-Knight, Consistory President

A memorial service for Kathy Andes, mother/mother-in-law/grandmother of the Andes, Magraw family, will be held in the church sanctuary today at 1:30 p.m. Your presence would be welcome.

WELCOME BACK REVEREND GLENCIE RHEDRICK

The Reverend Rhedrick is an ordained Baptist minister, currently serving as an associate minister at First Baptist Church-West. A graduate of Johnson C. Smith University, Glencie received her M.Div from the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University and is currently a PhD student attending California Institute of Integral of Studies. Glencie currently serves as Chaplain for several organizations, is a local and national community activist and organizer, and was the former president of Mecklenburg Ministries. She is also an active member of the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team. Currently she holds the lead positions with numerous activist and outreach organizations. She is the convenor of a Facebook live show, 'SpeakingintheKeyofWE.' a conversation concerning Black Male Privilege and Patriarchy in the Church, raising the awareness of the biases women of African Ascent encounter in the Church and other segments of society. We are grateful for her time with us today!

USHERS, GREETERS, LITURGIST, AND COMMUNION SERVERS

Please sign up on SignUpGenius

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



FOOD BAGS FOR MIGRANT BUS MINISTRY, JANUARY 22

NOTE DATE CHANGE - Join us following worship on January 22nd. We'll assemble food bags for distribution to the asylum-seeking migrants passing through Charlotte at the bus station. SVP Suzanne Lamorey slamorey@uncc.edu

UPDATES FROM YOUR PASTORAL SEARCH TEAM

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 be discussing Philip Gulley's book *If Grace is True: Why God Will Save Every Person*. For more information, contact Pastor Cheri (cherid@holycovenantucc.org, 704-519-6016)

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

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), Bill Bennett (Kathleen Wagner), Tom Chevrier & Rob Lux (Kathleen Wagner), Laura Christian (Beth Sharp), Sandra Dobson (Joy Decker), 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), Matthew Sharp, 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), Chandra Winston (Deborah & Larry Winston), John Zastrow (Barb Schneller)

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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