



Silent Meditation

“For there is always light, if only we’re brave enough to see it.
If only we’re brave enough to be it.”

— Amanda Gorman

“Don’t blow off another’s candle for it won’t
make yours shine brighter.”

— Jaachynma N.E. Agu

“Not everybody can be famous but everybody can be great, because
greatness is determined by service.”

— Martin Luther King Jr.

“I will love the light, for it shows me the way,
yet I will endure the darkness because it shows me the stars.”

— Og Mandino

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

January 22, 2023 10:55 am

Prelude "Bring Peace to Earth Again" P. Nelson

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 (*inspired by Psalm 27:1, 4-9*) Judah L. Jones

One: Our ever-present God dwells in the sanctuary and in homes, in public spaces and our interior lives.

Many: **Behold the greatness of the Holy One in the expansiveness of these sacred spaces.**

One: We seek God's face on Sunday mornings and evenings...and throughout the week.

Many: **Live in the presence of the Holy One all the days of our lives.**

One: We call out for God's grace, strength, and guidance.

Many: **Seek the face of the Holy One. Recognize God's greatness.**

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

Invocation (*unison*)

Judah L. Jones

Great God, we acknowledge your presence among us and the ways you connect us as a community. Make us receptive to your voice and instruments of your love in the world. Thrill us with your majesty and inspire us with your humility. We rejoice in this gathering as we bless your Holy Name in the assembly, gathered across time and space as your people. We seek you. We're grateful to find you. Amen.

* Hymn

“Come Sing, O Church, in Joy!”

DARWALL'S 148TH

Come sing, O church, in joy! Come join, O church, in song!

For Christ the Lord has led us through the ages long!

In bold accord, come celebrate the journey now and praise the Lord!

Long years have come and gone, and still God reigns supreme,

Empowering us to catch the vision, dream the dream!

In bold accord, come celebrate the journey now and praise the Lord!

Let courage be our friend; let wisdom be our guide,

As we in mission magnify the Crucified!

In bold accord, come celebrate the journey now and praise the Lord!

Come sing, O church, in joy! Come join, O church, in song!

For Christ the Lord has triumphed o'er the ages long!

In bold accord, come celebrate the journey now and praise the Lord!

Prayer for Transformation and New Life (*unison*)

Glencie Rhedrick

Sovereign God, how often do we turn toward ourselves or others for validation, salvation, and deliverance rather than seek your wisdom, will, and way? How often have we sought our own measure of greatness apart from the realm of your kingdom? How long have you waited for us to seek you? Forgive us, O God, and call us back to your presence, plan, and purpose.

Words of Grace

Glencie Rhedrick

The One who creates us in the divine image knows how tempted we may be to consider ourselves more highly than we ought or more lowly than we should. The One who knows us continually reaches toward us with the promise of grace and the hope of mercy, faithfulness, and love. Receive God's forgiveness and restorative embrace. Amen.

Hymn

"Lead Me, Guide Me"

LEAD ME, GUIDE ME

Refrain:

Lead me, guide me, along the way, for if you lead me, I cannot stray.
Lord, let me walk each day with you. Lead me, O Lord, lead me.

I am weak and I need your strength and power
to help me over my weakest hour.
Help me through the darkness your face to see.
Lead me, O Lord, lead me. (R)

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 kin-dom here and now than in waiting for it to come down from above. Let us share our bread with 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.

How firm a foundation for you has been laid,
By God in the Word, in the sacrifice paid!
What more can God say than to you has been said,
To you, who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

Fear not, I am with you, oh, be not dismayed,
For I am your God, I will still give you aid;
I'll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand
Upheld by my gracious, omnipotent hand.

Hebrew Scripture

Isaiah 9:1-4

Judah L. Jones

But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.
You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.
For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

One: May we hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church;
Many: Open our ears, our hearts, our minds.

* Gospel Lesson

Matthew 4:12-23

Glencie Rhedrick

Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the lake, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

‘Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,

on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—
the people who sat in darkness

have seen a great light,
and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death
light has dawned.’

From that time Jesus began to proclaim, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.’

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.’ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

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

Glencie Rhedrick

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication

Judah L. Jones

One: When Jesus calls his disciples, he promises to transform the gifts they already possess to be used for the glory and kingdom of God. Let us dedicate the gifts and resources that Holy Covenant has received to the glory and kingdom of God.

All: Great God, the giver of all gifts, receive the gift of ourselves and our resources for the benefit and building of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

LAYING ON OF HANDS

Pastor: The laying on of hands is the symbolic act whereby the church in every age recognizes God's call to ministry in the lives of faithful women and men and asks the Holy Spirit to confer upon them the gifts of ministry. We lay hands upon you, Suzanne Lamorey, Eric Miner and Terry Raley-Dennis, as Deacons, and Jana Harrison and Lloyd Spencer as Elders. Let us offer our prayers and blessing as a congregation:

People: Eternal God, you have called these people to serve you in this household of faith and in the world, which you have entrusted to our care and keeping. Send your Holy Spirit on them that they may serve among us with honor and faithfulness. Help them to be diligent in their duties, that your church may prosper in the mission you place before it. May their example prove worthy for all of us to follow, as we are united in Christ's ministry, to the glory of your name. Amen.

President: In the name of Jesus Christ, and on behalf of the people of Holy Covenant United Church of Christ, we rejoice to announce that you are each ordained as members of the Consistory. May your service be a blessing and cause you to grow in wisdom and in grace. Amen.

You are the seed that will grow a new sprout;
 You're a star that will shine through the day;
 You are the yeast and a small grain of salt,
 A beacon to glow in the night.
 You are the dawn that will bring a new day;
 You're the wheat that will bear golden grain;
 You are a sting and a soft, gentle touch,
 My witnesses where'er you go.

Refrain: Go, my friends, go to the world, proclaiming love to all,
 Messengers of my forgiving peace, eternal love.
 Be, my friends, a loyal witness, from the dead I arose;
 "Lo, I'll be with you forever, till the end of the world."

You are the flame that will brighten the way,
 Sending sparkles of hope, faith, and love;
 You are the shepherds to lead the whole world
 Through valleys and pastures of peace.
 You are the friends that I chose for myself,
 The word that I want to proclaim.
 You are the city, that's built on a rock
 Where justice and truth always reign. (R)

You are the life that will nurture the plant;
 You're the waves in a turbulent sea;
 Yesterday's yeast is beginning to rise,
 A new loaf of bread it will yield.
 There is no place for a city to hide,
 Nor a mountain can cover its might;
 May your good deeds show a world in despair
 A path that will lead all to God. (R)

* 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

“We’ve Come This Far by Faith”

R. Smallwood

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**WE PROVIDE OUR EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME WITH HELP FROM:
Martha Bomely, Keith Dennis, Brian Hankins, Laura 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

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 and 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!

FOOD BAGS FOR MIGRANT BUS MINISTRY TODAY AFTER WORSHIP

We'll assemble food bags for distribution to the asylum-seeking migrants passing through Charlotte at the bus station. Plan to join us for fun and fellowship!

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](#)! Donate directly 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/>.



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

Shyhemm (Jeff Edwards-Knight), David & Cecelia Griffin (JP Griffin), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Chantel Hill (Jeff Edwards-Knight), Ann Johnson (Joy Johnson), Yolanda Price (Jeff Edwards-Knight), Barbara Rutelonis (Eric Miner), Matthew Sharp, Michelle Sharp (Beth & Ed Sharp), Christopher Sizemore (Tina Ettesen), Joyce Tyler (Bill & Kim Tyler), Kathryn Vickery (Ed Vickery), Joyce Ward (Ed Vickery), 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 FAITH IS OVER 2000 YEARS OLD. OUR THINKING IS NOT,

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

Rev. Cheri Dennis, Interim Pastor

Jon Weddell, M.Div, MSW, Minister of Music

Dawn Simmons, BSBF, Executive Assistant

Mailing address: PO Box 481285, Charlotte NC 28269

3501 West W.T. Harris Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28269-8510

www.holycovenantucc.org 704-599-9810