



Entitled “Out Chorus”, this piece is by Romare Bearden (1911-1988). He was an (African) American artist, author, and songwriter. Romare Bearden’s vibrant paintings, drawings, collages, and photomontages canonized Black experience in mid-20th-century America. Born in Charlotte, North Carolina, Bearden grew up in New York City and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and graduated from New York University in 1935. He also studied at The Sorbonne, Columbia University, Boston University, The Art Students League of New York, and NYU Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. Later in life, he was a founding member of the Studio Museum in Harlem. He is considered part of the Harlem Renaissance, and his art reflects the periods of Modern art, Cubism, and Social realism.

Everyone must decide whether they will walk in the light of creative altruism or in the darkness of destructive selfishness.

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT ~ BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

February 26, 2023 10:55 am

Prelude "Give Me Jesus" arr. J. Purifoy

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements Jeffery Edwards-Knight

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: And also with you.

Introit "Salaam" M. Samir (Egypt)

Salaam, salaam, the peace of God to every race.

Salaam, salaam, the peace of God in every place.

* Call to Worship Alice Phelan

One: God of the Sahara and the Amazon, Maker of dry places and wetlands;

Many: We come before you with parched hearts for living in this world has made them so.

One: Holy One, your ability to renew us is unmatched.

Many: You renew us from within and without.

One: Ancient of Days, you held us in the beginning, and you are holding us now.

Many: We reach out to you and draw as close as we can.

* Invocation (*unison*) Alice Phelan

Divine One, we are thankful for the restoration that can be found in you. Your presence is welcomed here. We delight in knowing that you want to be wherever we are. Because you are love, you show up for us. In this space, may we delight in your assurance that all you made is good. Amen.

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

* Hymn 553

“There Is a Balm in Gilead”

Af. American Spiritual

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)

Prayer for Transformation and New Life (*unison*)

Judah L. Jones

Source of Grace, we confess that sometimes when we're tempted, we don't resist. Sometimes when we could do good, we don't because it seems too hard. These are the times that we need your grace the most. Instead of giving up on us, you transform us as we open ourselves to you. For grace that abounds as needed, when needed, we give you thanks. Amen.

Words of Grace

Judah L. Jones

All that God made is good. God made us and we are empowered to be good and to do good. Grace and mercy make goodness possible always and in all ways. Amen.

Song

“Glory to God”

GLORY TO GOD

Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me,
And to the Christ, whose grace has pardoned me,
And to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

World without end, without end. Amen. (3x)

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

Stories for All People

Kristin Andes

Special Music

“Seek First God’s Realm”
Judah L. Jones

by Karen Lafferty

* Gospel Lesson

Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.’ But he answered, ‘It is written, “One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”’ Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, “He will command his angels concerning you”, and “On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.”’ Jesus said to him, ‘Again it is written, “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.”’ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; and he said to him, ‘All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Away with you, Satan! for it is written, “Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.”’ Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

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

“Spiritual Literacy”

Judah L. Jones

Invitation to Generosity

Alice Phelan

God gives good things to us, so let us give good things to God. Let us bring gifts that can be like water in dry places. May these resources be used to testify to the goodness of God. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication (*unison*)

Alice Phelan

Divine One, receive our gifts from the open hearts from which we give them. Thank you for blessing us with gifts to share, so that good works can abound. We offer our gifts gladly. May what we give be used to meet the needs of all. Amen.

* Doxology

THANK YOU LORD

Thank you, Lord. (3x) I just want to thank you, Lord.

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, JoAnn Jellison, Shakti Subramanian

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

IN-PERSON ACTIVITIES UPDATE JANUARY 27

Currently we have been hosting all in-person activities with masking being **strongly** encouraged. The current Covid community risk for Mecklenburg County has decreased to low. Consistory has made the decision that we will continue in-person worship and activities with masking being optional. We will continue to monitor the situation and make changes as appropriate.

Blessings, Jeff Edwards-Knight, Consistory President

WELCOME BACK REV. JUDAH L. JONES

The Reverend Judah L. Jones is an ordained minister in the Western NC Conference of the United Methodist Church. She holds a Master of Divinity (MDiv) from Duke Divinity School. Despite being born blind, Judah has challenged limits and continues to accomplish her vocational goals. She serves in extension ministry as a preacher, singer/songwriter, actor, artist, and comedian. Former positions include Senior Pastor, Director of Pastoral Care, Substance Abuse Counselor, and Minister of Music. She served as Minister of Music at Holy Covenant UCC 2006-2014. She has a new venture partnering with Humana Healthcare, bringing information and music to seniors in Charlotte communities. She is married to Bill Englebreth, a recently retired UM minister and table tennis professional. You can follow Judah on Facebook at Judah Blind Prophet.

MEET-UP FOR SMITHSONIAN EXHIBIT TOUR, MARCH 4TH

The Men of Change: Power. Triumph. Truth is a traveling Smithsonian exhibit. Half of the exhibit, focusing on storytellers, fathering, imagining, and loving, is at the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts & Culture in Uptown Charlotte. The other half, focusing on catalysts, myth-breakers, community, and loving, is at the Levine Museum of the New South, a five-minute walk away (401

S. Tryon St.). Join us, **Saturday March 4th 11am**. Museum closes at 5pm, so leave as you complete the tour. The exhibit is free. Buy your own lunch at Chipotle. *See our e-newsletter for agenda and to RSVP.*

BLACK HISTORY MONTH PARTNERS WILL MATCH YOUR DONATION!

Holy Covenant has a [DonorsChoose giving page](#) and your donation will be matched during Black History month! Our giving page offers a way for members to directly donate to classroom projects at historically underserved local schools. You can choose a classroom project, make a donation of any amount, and track our giving as a congregation. So far, we've given \$1,448 to the students and teachers in our neighborhood! While we like to focus on David Cox elementary school, any school on the giving page is in the 28269 or 28262 zip code and historically underfunded due to racial and economic inequity. Your Racial Justice and Equity Team

CRAFTER'S CIRCLE has resumed! We'll meet on Mondays at 1:30pm in the Gathering Room. All are welcomed.

FELLOWSHIP TIME, FIRST SUNDAYS EACH MONTH

Join us in the gathering room at 9:30 next Sunday, March 5 for a muffin fellowship. Coffee & muffins will be provided. Contact Laura Hankins with any questions, laura@hankins-clt.us.

USHERS, GREETERS, LITURGIST AND COMMUNION SERVERS

We encourage sign ups of **greeters and ushers**, ready to welcome and help members and guests starting at 10:30 every Sunday; a **liturgist** to serve with Pastor Cheri; and **communion servers (elders, deacons and ordained clergy) and clean up**. Everyone is welcome in these roles! If you need an explanation of the mechanics of this, please indicate that in the comments on the sign-up and we will make sure you are comfortable on your first Sunday. Ushers and Greeters, please contact the church office with questions. Communion Servers, please contact Laura Hankins with questions, laura@hankins-clt.us. **Please sign up on the SignUpGenius link:**

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

SOJOURNERS CLASS

We will be reading *The Other Side of the Wall* by Munther Isaac, a native Palestinian Lutheran pastor living and pastoring conflict. The book is available from Amazon.com in Kindle, Audiobook, and paperback. Join us (in-person or via Zoom)

on Sunday mornings at 9:45 for our Sojourners Class. 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 & Vickie Griffeth, Tom & Kathy Habel, Sharon Landis, Irene Mikkelson, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Isabelle Reddy Powell, Jerry & Marion Rhyne, Cynthia & Tommy Simpson, Ed & Beth Sharp, Anita Taylor

Friends & Family Members

Nikki Arrigo and family (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), Janey Pernice (Dawn Simmons), Marie Raley (Jean Raley-Dennis), Barbara Rutelonis (Eric Miner), Matthew Sharp, Michelle Sharp (Beth & Ed Sharp), Christopher Sizemore (Tina Ettesen), Eulene Shepherd (Robert Shepherd), Kathryn Vickery (Ed Vickery), Joyce Ward (Ed Vickery), 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

Mailing address: PO Box 481285, Charlotte NC 28269

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

www.holycovenantucc.org 704-599-9810