



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 AnnouncementsJeffery 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)

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

Anthem

"N'kosi Sikelel'i Afrika" (Prayer for Africa/Pan-African National Anthem) Sung in Zulu and Lesotho

arr. N. Page

English translation:

God bless Africa, let her glory be held up high.
Please listen to our prayers, God bless we, her children.
Holy Spirit, please come down, God bless we, her children.
God protect our nation. Please bring an end to wars and suffering.
Protect us, Protect our nation, Africa.

Pastoral Prayer

Judah L. Jones

Prayer for Illumination "Listen God Is Calling" NENO LAKE MUNGU (Tanzania) Listen, listen, God is calling through the Word inviting, Offering forgiveness, comfort, and joy.

Hebrew Scripture Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7 Alice Phelan Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God say, "You shall not eat from any tree in the garden"?' The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die." 'But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So, when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.'

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

* 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", "On hands they and their will bear vou 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 vour 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.

* Hymn "Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley" LONESOME VALLEY

Jesus walked this lonesome valley.

He had to walk it by himself.

Oh, nobody else could walk it for him.

He had to walk it by himself.

* Benediction Judah L. Jones

* Benediction Response Freedom Is Coming (South Africa) Freedom is coming. (3x) Oh, yes I know.

Postlude "There Is a Balm in Gilead" arr. C.B. Putnam

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What Have You Done?: Service Prayers for the First Sunday in Lent were written by Rev. Teña T. Nock, Associate Pastor of Digital Ministry, First United Church of Tampa, United Church of Christ.

Historical Note about the Prayer for Africa:

Enoch Mankayi Sontonga (1860-1904), a Christian singer and song writer, wrote "N'kosi Sikelel'i Afrika" in 1897. Sontonga was born in Lovedale, Cape Province. Although he left formal schooling at an early age, he was gifted in music, and wrote many songs and hymns that were popular throughout South Africa. First performed in 1899, "N'kosi Sikelel'i Afrika" rapidly spread throughout churches and schools in Southern Africa, partly as a result of being sung in concerts by the Ohlange Zulu Choir, and was later adopted by the African National Congress and other

organizations as a national anthem. The beginning is Sontonga's original hymn, and is in Zulu. From "Morena Boloka" to "Sechaba sa Afrika" was added later by National poet SEK Mqhayi (1875-1945), originally in the Xhosa language. This version is in the Lesotho language. There are many versions of this great anthem. It is sung in many languages and dialects and with other stylistic and melodic differences throughout Africa, as well as with a variety of lyrics.

Despite being banned by the South African government, the song was sung at meetings, rallies, funerals, and other public gatherings. It is an anthem of enormous power and pride.

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 4**th **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 <u>DonorsChoose giving page</u> 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.

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