



Photo by Daniel Morton on Unsplash

Meditation

“They joined hands. So the world ended.
And the next one began.”
— Sarah J. Maas

“I met an old lady once, almost a hundred years old, and she told me,
‘There are only two questions that human beings have ever fought over,
all through history. How much do you love me? And Who’s in charge?’”
— Elizabeth Gilbert

“I do not wish them [women] to have power over men;
but over themselves.”
— Mary Wollstonecraft

“I wonder if fears ever really go away,
or if they just lose their power over us.”
— Veronica Roth

HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

March 19, 2023 10:55 am

Prelude "We Are an Offering" arr. L. Bergquist

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements Cheri Dennis

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

Introit "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.

* Call to Worship Cheryl Milam

One: Kindred of God, a new vision of leadership is called forth and God calls upon the least likely, the unheard of, and the humble of heart to assemble to receive anointing.

Many: **In peace, we anoint the forgotten, the youngest, smallest, and unlikeliest of siblings whom God has raised up to serve.**

One: Though the call may involve risk and danger, we are called to listen, obey, and live a love unwavering.

Many: **In peace, we anoint the disinherited and dismissed.**

One: God's call does not depend on our outward appearance or our earthly achievements.

Many: **In peace, we anoint neighbor and kin alike, knowing God looks upon the heart. Let us open our hearts to God this day. Amen.**

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

* Invocation (*unison*)

Cheryl Milam

Anointed One, your love comes peaceably into our lives if we will but let it. We are so fixated on the gold standard, the familiar, and the safe choice that we often lose sight of what you are raising up right in our very midst. Enliven us with your Spirit this day so that we might get a glimpse of your peace. Take what we might imagine as too small for your kingdom and use it to open the world to your overflowing abundance and provision for all that you have created. In the name of Jesus the Christ we pray. Amen.

* Hymn 252

“Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us”

BRADBURY

Savior, like a shepherd lead us, much we need your tender care;
In your pleasant pastures feed us, for our use your folds prepare.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have bought us, yours we are;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have bought us, yours we are.

We are yours, in love befriend us, be the guardian of our way;
Keep your flock, from sin defend us, seek us when we go astray.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear your children when we pray;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear your children when we pray.

Let us always seek your favor; let us always do your will;
Jesus Christ our only Savior, with your love our spirits fill.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have loved us, love us still;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have loved us, love us still.

Prayer for Transformation and New Life (*unison*)

Cheryl Milam

God of surprises, we know that we do not often perceive the world as you do. We look to the flashy fame, the grand gestures, optimal achievements, and unreachable standards. Yet, in spite of our misguided reach towards perfection, you give us glimpses of your grandeur and grace. Surprise us yet again this day, O God, that in our complacency which allows us to drift towards the same old ways of faith that we may be transformed anew. Provide us with a new cup of oil that we may be anointed by your love so that we may set out into your world to bless and anoint others. In the name of the One whose love and peace make all things new we pray. Amen.

Song

“God, Be Merciful to Me”

REDHEAD 76

Gracious God, my heart renew, make my spirit right and true.
Do not cast me from your sight nor remove your Spirit’s light.
Your salvation’s joy restore, make me steadfast evermore.

Words of Grace

Cheryl Milam

One: Friends, receive the anointing of God's tender love and forgiveness this day. For God's care and compassion for you abides in your heart today and always.

All: We rise and set out restored and renewed. Amen.

Song

"Nothing Can Trouble"

NADA TE TURBE

Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten.
Those who seek God shall never go wanting.
Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten.
God alone fills us.

Stories for All People

Cheri Dennis

Solo

"God Weeps"

DELGADO

Meg Houlihan, Vocalist

God cries at hungry mouths, at running sores,
At creatures dying without cause,
And till we change the way we care; God cries.

Pastoral Prayer

Glencie Rhedrick

Prayer for Illumination "I Want Jesus to Walk with Me"

SOJOURNER

I want Jesus to walk with me. (2x)
All along my pilgrim journey,
Oh, I want Jesus to walk with me.

Hebrew Scripture

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Tommy Tomlinson

The Lord said to Samuel, 'How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.' Samuel said, 'How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.' And the Lord said, 'Take a heifer with you, and say, "I have come to sacrifice to the Lord," Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.' Samuel did what the Lord commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, 'Do you come peaceably?' He said, 'Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.' And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, 'Surely the Lord's anointed is now before the Lord.' But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.' Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, 'Neither has the Lord chosen this one.' Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, 'Neither has the Lord chosen this one.' Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, 'The Lord has not chosen any of these.' Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all your sons here?' And he said, 'There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.' And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.' He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The Lord said, 'Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.' Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

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

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

Special Music

Dawn Anthony, vocalist

Psalter Reading

Psalm 23

Glencie Rhedrick

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;

for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
my whole life long.

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 & Dedication

Cheryl Milam

One: It is not the outward appearance or size of the gifts we share that matters to God. It is the loving generosity of our hearts that is closest to the heart of God. Let us now together thank God for the gifts we have received and dedicate them to the work of bringing in the kingdom.

Many: Generous God, you remind us that you “anoint our heads with oil” and that our “cup overflows” with your abundance. We do not take for granted all that you provide. Take these gifts and use them for the healing and tender care of your hurting world. May your cup of love overflow and abide with the hurting and heartbroken, forgotten and despised, so that we may all be made whole. Amen.

* Doxology

GIVE THANKS

Give thanks with a grateful heart; give thanks to the Holy One;
Give thanks because God's given Jesus Christ, God's Son. (2x)
And now let the weak say, "I am strong,"
Let the poor say, "I am rich
Because of what the Lord has done for us." (2x)
Give thanks.

* Hymn 247

"My Shepherd Is the Living God"

CONSOLATION

My shepherd is the living God, I therefore nothing need;
In pastures fair, near pleasant streams you settle me to feed.
You bring my wandering spirit back when I forsake your ways,
And lead me for your mercy's sake in paths of truth and grace.

When I walk through the shades of death, your presence is my stay;
A word of your supporting breath drives all my fears away.
Your hand, in sight of all my foes, does still my table spread;
My cup with blessings overflows, your oil anoints my head.

The sure provisions of my God attend me all my days;
O may your house be my abode, and all my work be praise.
There would I find a settled rest, while others come and go—
No more a stranger or a guest, but like a child at home.

* Benediction

Glencie Rhedrick

* Benediction Response 497 "Guide My Feet"

Guide my feet while I run this race, (3x)
For I don't want to run this race in vain.

Postlude

"Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether"

H. Friedell

*Songs in this service are used by permission.
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Come Peaceably: Service Prayers for the Fourth Sunday in Lent were written by Rev. Dr. Chad Abbott, Conference Minister for the Indiana Kentucky Conference of the United Church of Christ and resides in Indianapolis, Indiana.

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, Barbara Schneller, Shakti Subramanian, Deborah Winston, Laurence Winston

Many thanks to our **Communications Team** for providing today's refreshments following worship. Have an interest to serve on this team, or questions? Contact Laura Hankins, laura@hankins-clt.us or 704-724-1105.

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

FELLOWSHIP TIME, FIRST SUNDAYS EACH MONTH

Join us in the gathering room at 9:30 next Sunday, April 2nd for a muffin fellowship. Coffee & muffins will be provided. Contact Laura Hankins with any questions, laura@hankins-clt.us.

Worship Volunteer Sign-up

We welcome all in our congregation to participate in worship leadership, including **greeters and ushers**, ready to welcome and help members and guests starting at 10:30 every Sunday; a **liturgist and a scripture reader** to serve with Pastor Cheri. 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. **Please sign up on the SignUpGenius link:**

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

UCC SPECIAL OFFERINGS

One Great Hour of Sharing® is one of five special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ. This Lenten Offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the United Church of Christ within Wider Church Ministries. You are invited to mail your check to the church office, PO Box 481285, Charlotte, NC 28269 or drop it in the collection plate. Please mark your memo as OGHS. And thank you for sharing with Wider Church Ministries!

Give online at <https://holycovenantucc.org/give-2/>

AIDS Walk Charlotte 2023

CHARLOTTE'S 2023 AIDS WALK, SATURDAY, MAY 6

Holy Covenant will once again participate with a team of donors/walkers. AIDS WALK Charlotte 2023 continues to be the largest HIV fundraising event in the Carolinas and for \$35 or more, you will receive a 2023 T-Shirt and you can donate as a walker for the shirt or as a donor to support this important need. Last year our church family raised over \$1,000 in support of this important ministry and we hope you can join us this year. Questions, please let Debbie Davis know at Debbiekdavisnc@gmail.com.

[AIDS WALK Charlotte 2023 - Holy Covenant United Church of Christ \(onecause.com\)](https://onecause.com)

REMEMBERING DANNY BUSHMAN

August 20, 1951 - October 11, 2022

A memorial service will be held at Holy Covenant UCC on Saturday, March 25, 2023 beginning at 11:30am in celebration for the life of Daniel Milton Bushman.

The family will receive friends at 11am.

SOJOURNERS CLASS

We will be reading *The Other Side of the Wall* by Munther Isaac, a native Palestinian Lutheran pastor living and pastoring in 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)

Stay connected! Check out all the current happenings in the weekly newsletter via Constant Contact. Not seeing it in your inbox? Sign-up here:

<https://holycovenantucc.org/newsletters/>

Palm/Passion Sunday, April 2
worship 11AM; Rev. Cheri Dennis
The joyful entry of Christ into Jerusalem,
ending in the solemnity of Holy Week.

Maundy Thursday, April 6
worship 7PM
Christ's final Passover meal &
command to followers to love one another.

Easter/Resurrection Sunday, April 9
worship 11AM; Rev. Cheri Dennis

Crafter's Circle Mondays at 1:30pm
in the Gathering Room.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Linda Carver, Gary & Linda Clark, Cindy Coble, Kevin Decker, Linn Finger, Tom & Kathy Habel, Jim Humphrey, Sharon Landis, Irene Mikkelson, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Jerry & Marion Rhyne, Ed & Beth Sharp, Cynthia & Tommy Simpson, Anita Taylor

Friends & Family Members

Pauline Savage and family in the death of her husband, Jim (Dawn Simmons)
Laura Christian (Beth Sharp), David & Cecelia Griffin (JP Griffin), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Ann Johnson (Joy Johnson), Janey Pernice (Dawn Simmons), Marie Raley (Jean Raley-Dennis), Suzie & John Robinson (Dana Endsley & Mike Yonkovig), 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

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