



Silent Meditation

“If I take Easter as the starting point, the one incontrovertible fact about how God treats those whom [God] loves, then human history becomes the contradiction and Easter a preview of ultimate reality.”

— Philip Yancey

“Then came the healing time, hearts started to shine, soul felt so fine,
oh what a freeing time it was.”

— Aberjhani

“Transformed people transform people.”

— Richard Rohr

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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**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
RESURRECTION SUNDAY ~ EASTER**

April 9, 2023 10:55 am

Prelude “Come, Christians, Join to Sing” arr. M. Hayes

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements Cheri Dennis

One: May the peace of Risen Christ be with you!

Many: And also with you.

Choral Introit “Praise We in Songs of Victory” GELOBT SEI GOTT

* Call to Worship Terry Raley-Dennis

One: Give thanks to our Good God whose unfailing love lasts forever!

Many: **Give thanks to our Risen God whose unfailing love lives forever!**

One: We gather together in the dawn of a new day. We look toward the tomb to seek the Enfleshed Word.

Many: **The stone has been rolled away. The tomb is empty! Alleluia!**

One: We find God alive in the searching, in the garden, in our hope-filled spaces.

Many: **Alleluia. Christ lives and finds us with unfailing love!**

* Invocation (*unison*) Terry Raley-Dennis

Resurrected God, you are the God of new beginnings, of new dawns and new mercies. Enter into our presence again. When we move toward the tomb, remind us that you come with life. When we despair at the world unfolding around us, assure us of your redemptive power. When we long for your voice, speak a word of hope, encouragement, and peace. May we reflect your image as resurrection people in covenant with you. Amen.

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

* Hymn 233

“Christ the Lord Is Risen Today”

EASTER HYMN

Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!
Mortal tongues and angels say: Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
Sing, glad heavens, and earth reply: Alleluia!

Let the Victor’s people sing, Alleluia!
Where, O death, is now your sting? Alleluia!
Dying once, Christ lives to save, Alleluia!
Where your victory, O grave? Alleluia!

Love’s redeeming work is done, Alleluia!
Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!
Death in vain forbids Christ rise, Alleluia!
God has opened paradise, Alleluia!

Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia!
Following our exalted Head, Alleluia!
Made like Christ, like Christ we rise, Alleluia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!

Prayer for Transformation and New Life (*unison*)

Terry Raley-Dennis

Amazing God, we know there is nothing you cannot overcome. We confess to our profound need of your love, strength, and mercy. Too often, we come toward the tomb resigned to the status quo. We anticipate the worst even when you are the provider of every good and perfect thing. We allow despair over the condition of our world to overwhelm us when you call us to follow you. Fortify us to live abundantly in your kingdom on earth. Transform us and breathe new life into us.

Words of Grace

Cheri Dennis

The One who transformed death can and will certainly transform our lives. Jesus welcomes us on the journey to new life. No matter how many times our steps stray, we hide from hard things, or we betray the good news, God’s grace meets us with an unfailing love to guide us on the path of life abundant and everlasting. Receive the resurrection power of the One who was and is and is to come.

Bell Choir Anthem

“The Strife Is O’er”

arr. K. McChesney

Stories for All People

Laura Hankins

The Lord's Prayer (*unison*)

Our God, in whom is heaven, blessed be your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Song "Halle, Halle, Halle" HALLE, HALLE

Refrain: Halle, halle, hallelujah! Halle, halle, hallelujah!
Halle, halle, hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Cantor:

O God, to whom shall we go? You alone have the words of life.
Let your words be our prayer and the song we sing:
Hallelujah, hallelujah! (*R*)

My sheep hear my voice, says the Lord. When I call them they follow me.
I will lead them to rest by the peaceful streams:
Hallelujah, hallelujah! (*R*)

New Testament Reading Acts 10:34-43 Barbara Schneller

Then Peter began to speak to them: 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.'

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

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

Choir Anthem

"Praise God's Holy Name"

K. Hampton

* Gospel Reading

John 20:1-18

Terry Raley-Dennis

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So, she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." ' Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

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

Cheri Dennis

"Crucifix to Empty Cross: How can we celebrate Easter in a dark world?"

Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving

Terry Raley-Dennis

One: Colossians 3:1-2 states, "So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of

God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.” In the giving of our gifts, we seek the kingdom, we trust in the Provider, and we follow in the way of Jesus. Let us now together dedicate the gifts we have received to the bringing in of God’s kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

Many: Giving God, receive this portion of the gifts you have given to us. May our time, treasure, and talent be magnified and multiplied for your glory. Amen.

* Doxology

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.

Praise God, all creatures high and low. Alleluia, alleluia!

Praise God, in Jesus fully known: Creator, Word, and Spirit one.

Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Preparation

Cheri Dennis

One: The Holy One be with you.

Many: And also with you.

One: Open your hearts to the One who is Love.

Many: We open our hearts to you, O God.

One: We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:

Let us join together in the UCC Statement of Faith

You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death. You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles. In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen.

Words of Institution

Sharing of Bread and Cup

Music during Communion “Love Had a Dream” A. Udis-Kessler
Lisa Cloninger, Kathi Smith, vocalists

*Love had a dream. Love had a vision. Love breathed the dream into life.
Love spoke a word and the world came into being.
Evening and morning: all creation was good.*

*Love walked the earth in the life of a prophet. Love set a table for all.
Love spoke a word full of hope and invitation:
Jesus, our brother, kindling the vision again.*

*See how Love's dream broke forth in his life.
In the healing of pain, in the multitudes fed,
in the radical welcome of wine and of bread,
Love was still speaking. Love is still speaking in him.*

*The power rose up against love and murdered the prophet.
His followers scattered. It seemed that the dream would be lost
in the death of a man who had followed Love's vision no matter the cost.*

*Then something incredible happened as Love found a new word to say.
The friends of the prophet found courage to follow Love's way.
See how Love's dream broke forth in their lives.
In the risks that they took, in the meals that they shared,
in community gathered in kindness and care.
Love was still speaking. Love was still speaking in them.*

*Love has a dream. Love has a vision. We bring Love's vision to life.
Love speaks today as the world comes into being.
If we but choose it, we'll see creation renewed.*

*Love walks the earth as we trust the Beloved. We set a table for all.
We live our lives full of hope and invitation.
Jesus, remembered, kindles the vision again.*

*See how Love's dream breaks forth in our lives.
In the work that we do, in the justice we bring,
in the peace that flows down, in the healing of pain,
Love is still speaking. Love is still speaking in us.*

*Love had a dream. Love had a vision.
Love is still speaking. Love is still speaking in us.*

Prayer of Thanksgiving after Communion (*unison*)

God, your bread and your cup renew our spirits. No matter the times we have failed to show up to your call, or to our own needs, or to the cries of our neighbors, you receive us again. May your unending grace be our foundation as we journey with Christ towards justice. Amen.

* Hymn 198

"Lift High the Cross"

CRUCIFER

**Refrain: Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim;
Let all adore and praise that sacred name.**

**Come, Christians, follow where our Savior trod,
The Lamb victorious, Christ the Child of God. (R)**

**Each newborn servant of the Crucified
Bears on the brow the seal of Christ who died. (R)**

**O Christ, once lifted on the glorious tree,
Your death has brought us life eternally. (R)**

**Set up your throne, that earth's despair may cease,
Be-neath the shadow of its healing peace. (R)**

**So shall our song of triumph ever be:
Praise to the Crucified for victory. (R)**

Benediction Response “Soon and Very Soon” A. Crouch/J. Schrader
Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King; (3x)
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! We’re going to see the King. *(Repeat)*

Choir Only: Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

No more dying there, we are going to see the King; (3x)
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! We’re going to see the King.

Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King; (3x)
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! We’re going to see the King.

Choir Only: Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Soon and very soon.

Postlude “Praise God! Praise God!” arr. Angi Bemiss

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Portions of this service adapted from Toward the Tomb: Service Prayers for Resurrection Sunday written by The Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay, Minister for Worship and Theology, United Church of Christ.

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,
Suzanne Lamorey, Barbara Schneller, Shakti Subramanian

Many thanks to our **Christian Education Team** for providing today's refreshments following worship. Have an interest to serve on this team, or questions? Contact JoAnn Jellison or Kim Buch.

Masking is currently optional at Holy Covenant. Thank you for respecting those who continue to wear masks for their comfort and safety.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

Save the date! Welcome our pastor candidate April 22, 2023

We're excited about our pastoral candidate, and we know you are, too! The entire congregation is invited to meet the pastor and family on April 22. Specific details will be announced in a special email in the next few days.

The pastoral candidate will preach during worship on April 23.

Immediately after the service, we will hold a Called Congregational Meeting to vote on whether to call the minister to lead Holy Covenant.

Save the dates, and make plans to join us in providing our Holy Covenant extravagant welcome.

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/>

UNC Charlotte School of Social Work presents **PARK VIEW**, film screening & discussion panel, April 11, 6-8:00pm. Advocating for LGBTQ Citizens of North Carolina. Hate in our State; The *Park View* documentary film embraces the daunting task of illuminating the humanity of lesbian hate crime murder victim Talana Kreeger and the resilience of her community.

<https://www.parkviewproject.com/hateinourstate> For more information, free live or virtual registration, contact Kevin Edwards-Knight, UNC Charlotte School of Social Work, Edwards-Knight.K@uncc.edu

Are you willing to serve as liturgist or to read scripture in worship but feel "iffy" about it or don't know quite what to do? **On Thursday, April 20th at 7:30 pm**, the worship team will host a zoom training for potential liturgists and readers. See the e-newsletter for details.

AIDS Walk Charlotte Saturday, May 6, 2023

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

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

Joy Johnson & Joe Craig in the death of Joy's mother, Ann Johnson Rowan, Teena Barnes (Lisa Cloninger), Linda Burby, Laura Christian (Beth Sharp), David & Cecelia Griffin (JP Griffin), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Matty & Simone McKinnon (Joy Decker), Corky Myers (Dawn Simmons), Sue Parrish (Terry Raley-Dennis), Marie Raley (Jean Raley-Dennis), Suzie & John Robinson (Dana Endsley & Mike Yonkovig), Barbara Rutelonis (Eric Miner), Pauline Savage (Dawn Simmons), Matthew Sharp, Michelle Sharp (Beth & Ed Sharp), Christopher Sizemore (Tina Ettesen), Tom & Silvia Smith (Laura Hankins), 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.