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## Silent Meditation

“With Alleluia or Hallelujah, we Praise the Lord!”

“We are praising God now assembled here in church, but when we go our separate ways, it might seem like we stop praising God. You cease to praise God only when you swerve from the path of justice. If you never turn aside from that path, your tongue may be silent, but your life will cry, ‘Alleluia.’”

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430)

“In our day, there is a growing awareness that world peace is threatened not only by the arms race, regional conflicts and continued injustices among peoples and nations, but also by a lack of due respect for nature, by the plundering of natural resources and by a progressive decline in the quality of life. The sense of precariousness and insecurity that such a situation engenders is a seedbed for collective selfishness, disregard for others and dishonesty.”

Pope John Paul II, Jan 1, 1990

**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
CREATION CARE SUNDAY**

April 16, 2023 10:55 am

Prelude "Terra Beata" 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.

Introit 241 "Joy Dawned Again on Easter Day" PUER NOBIS NASCITUR  
Joy dawned again on Easter Day, the sun shone out with bright array;  
For when the Apostles hid in fear, the Risen Christ to them appeared.

O Jesus, Savior, Gentle One, come take our hearts to be your own,  
That we may give you all our days the willing tribute of our praise.

O Sovereign One, with us abide in this our joyful Eastertide;  
From every weapon death can wield, your own redeemed forever shield.

\* Call to Worship (*based on Psalm 19*) Lloyd Spencer

One: The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims  
God's handiwork.

Many: Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.

One: There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard.

Many: Yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the  
end of the world.

\* Invocation Psalm 150 (*unison*) Lloyd Spencer

Praise the Lord!

Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty firmament!

Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his surpassing  
greatness!

Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp!

Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe!

Praise him with clanging cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!

Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord!

Amen.

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

All people that on earth do dwell, sing out your faith with cheerful voice;  
Delight in God whose praise you tell, whose presence calls you to rejoice.

Know that there is one God, indeed, who fashions us without our aid,  
Who claims us, gives us all we need, whose tender care will never fade.

Enter the sacred gates with praise, with joy approach the temple walls.  
Extol and bless our God always as people whom the Spirit calls.

Proclaim again that God is good, whose mercy is forever sure,  
Whose truth at all times firmly stood, and shall from age to age endure.

Prayer for Transformation and New Life (*unison*) Lloyd Spencer  
Creator of the earth and all living things, maker of the sky and the air and the  
breath of life, God of all that is: we are your servant people, created out of the  
clay of the earth itself. We forget that we are your creatures, and we play at  
being gods. We neglect the work of stewardship that you have provided for our  
occupation and our joy. We have used, abused, and abandoned those things that  
you have created for your delight.

You have created a fragile world in a perfect and delicate balance. Thinking too  
much of our own importance we have upset the balance.

We ask your forgiveness, Holy and Righteous God. We yearn to join with the  
mountains and valleys, the rocks and the birds of the wild ocean waters in singing  
your praises. Amen.

Words of Grace (*Jeremiah 6:16*) Lloyd Spencer

One: "Stand at the crossroads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where  
the good way lies; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls."

Many: We are standing at a crossroads. Together let us seek the good way  
and find rest for all of God's creation.

Song "This Pretty Planet" J. Forster & T. Chapin  
*Laura & Brian Hankins, vocalists*

*This pretty planet spinning through space,  
You're a garden, you're a harbor,  
You're a holy place,  
Golden sun going down,  
Gentle blue giant spin us around.  
All through the night, safe 'til the morning light.*

Stories for All People Cheri Dennis  
"We Are Water Protectors" by C. Lindstrom & M. Goade

\* Hymn 569 "Touch the Earth Lightly" TENDERNESS

**Touch the earth lightly, use the earth gently,  
Nourish the life of the world in our care:  
Gift of great wonder, ours to surrender,  
Trust for the children tomorrow will bear.**

**We who endanger, who create hunger,  
Agents of death for all creatures that live,  
We who would foster clouds of disaster,  
God of our planet, forestall and forgive!**

**Let there be greening, birth from the burning,  
Water that blesses, and air that is sweet,  
Health in God's garden, hope in God's children,  
Regeneration that peace will complete.**

**God of all living, God of all loving,  
God of the seedling, the snow, and the sun,  
Teach us, deflect us, Christ reconnect us,  
Using us gently and making us one.**

Litany for Creation Cheri Dennis

**One:** Praise to you, O God, source of all waters. For vast oceans, flowing rivers,  
and gentle rains we give you thanks.

**Many:** **Forgive our careless waste and polluting ways.**

**One:** Help us to cleanse, conserve, and share; teach us to care for the gift of  
water.

**Many:** **Come and heal your people. Come and heal the waters.**

One: Praise to you, O God, creator of the dry land. For mighty mountains, rolling hills, and fertile prairies we give you thanks.  
**Many: Forgive our wanton greed and violent ways.**  
One: Help us to sow, till, and harvest with care; teach us to live gently on the land.  
**Many: Come and heal your people. Come and heal the land.**  
One: Praise to you, O God, breath of life and maker of air. For wind and wave, breath and breeze, light and life we give you thanks.  
**Many: Forgive our heedless acts and selfish ways.**  
One: Help us to live justly, simply, and wisely; teach us to care for the gift of air.  
**Many: Come and heal your people. Come and heal the air.**  
One: Praise to you, O God, Lord and Giver of Life. Your love sustains planet earth and by your hand all things living are fed.  
**Many: Forgive our neglect and abuse of your gifts.**  
One: Help us to serve, defend, defend and restore your creation.  
**All: Help us care for your people. Help us care for the earth.**

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.**

\* Hymn 556                    "God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens"                    HOLY MANNA  
**God, who stretched the spangled heavens, infinite in time and place,  
Flung the suns in burning radiance through the silent fields of space;  
We, your children, in your likeness, share inventive powers with you;  
Great Creator, still creating, show us what we yet may do.**

**We have ventured worlds undreamed of since the childhood of our race;  
Known the ecstasy of winging through untraveled realms of space;  
Probed the secrets of the atom, yielding unimagined power,  
Facing us with life's destruction or our most triumphant hour.**

**As each far horizon beckons, may it challenge us anew,  
Children of creative purpose, serving others, honoring you.  
May our dreams prove rich with promise, each endeavor, well begun;  
Great Creator, give us guidance till our goals and yours are one.**

Praise the LORD, O my soul!  
I will praise the LORD as long as I live;  
I will sing praises to my God all my life long.

Do not put your trust in princes,  
in mortals, in whom there is no help.  
When their breath departs, they return to the earth;  
on that very day their plans perish.

Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,  
whose hope is in the LORD their God,  
who made heaven and earth,  
the sea, and all that is in them;  
who keeps faith forever;  
who executes justice for the oppressed;  
who gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets the prisoners free;  
the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.  
The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;  
the LORD loves the righteous.  
The LORD watches over the strangers;  
he upholds the orphan and the widow,  
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

The LORD will reign forever,  
your God, O Zion, for all generations.  
Praise the LORD!

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

Praise the LORD from the heavens;  
praise him in the heights!  
Praise him, all his angels;  
praise him, all his host!

Praise him, sun and moon;  
praise him, all you shining stars!  
Praise him, you highest heavens,  
and you waters above the heavens!

Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
for he commanded and they were created.  
He established them for ever and ever;  
he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

Praise the LORD from the earth,  
you sea monsters and all deeps,  
fire and hail, snow and frost,  
stormy wind fulfilling his command!

Mountains and all hills,  
fruit trees and all cedars!  
Wild animals and all cattle,  
creeping things and flying birds!

Kings of the earth and all peoples,  
princes and all rulers of the earth!  
Young men and women alike,  
old and young together!

Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
for his name alone is exalted;  
his glory is above earth and heaven.  
He has raised up a horn for his people,  
praise for all his faithful,  
for the people of Israel who are close to him.  
Praise the LORD!

**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.

Mediation

“Praise the Lord!”

Cheri Dennis

The UCC & Creation Care

Jo Ann Jellison

\* Hymn 32

“God of the Sparrow, God of the Whale”

ROEDER

God of the sparrow, God of the whale, God of the swirling stars  
How does the creature say Awe? How does the creature say Praise?

God of the earthquake, God of the storm, God of the trumpet blast  
How does the creature cry Woe? How does the creature cry Save?

God of the rainbow, God of the cross, God of the empty grave  
How does the creature say Grace? How does the creature say Thanks?

God of the hungry, God of the sick, God of the prodigal  
How does the creature say Care? How does the creature say Life?

God of the neighbor, God of the foe, God of the pruning hook  
How does the creature say Love? How does the creature say Peace?

God of the ages, God near at hand, God of the loving heart  
How do your children say Joy? How do your children say Home?

Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving

Lloyd Spencer

\* 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!



\* Hymn "Light Dawns on a Weary World" TEMPLE OF PEACE  
Light dawns on a weary world  
When eyes begin to see all people's dignity.  
Light dawns on a weary world:  
The promised day of justice comes.

*Refrain:* The trees shall clap their hands,  
The dry lands gush with springs;  
The hills and mountains shall break forth with singing!  
We shall go out with joy and be led forth in peace,  
As all the world in wonder echoes *shalom*.

Love grows in a weary world  
When hungry hearts find bread and children's dreams are fed.  
Love grows in a weary world:  
The promised feast of plenty comes. (R)

Hope blooms in a weary world  
When creatures once forlorn, find wilderness reborn.  
Hope blooms in a weary world:  
The promised green of Eden comes. (R)

\* Benediction Cheri Dennis

Benediction Response "Light Dawns on a Weary World" TEMPLE OF PEACE  
The trees shall clap their hands,  
The dry lands gush with springs;  
The hills and mountains shall break forth with singing!  
We shall go out with joy and be led forth in peace,  
As all the world in wonder echoes *shalom*.

Postlude "For the Beauty of the Earth" arr. J. Carter

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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:**

Kristin Andes, Keith Dennis, Brian Hankins, JoAnn Jellison,  
Suzanne Lamorey, Gussie Spencer, Shakti Subramanian

Many thanks to our **Worship Team** for providing today's refreshments following worship. Have an interest to serve on this team, or questions?  
Contact Kathi Smith, [kathleenie53@msn.com](mailto:kathleenie53@msn.com).

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

**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/>

The HCUCC Racial Justice and Equity Team is thrilled to offer an important course "Confronting Whiteness" for our members as we continue to live into our mission. Developed by Ben Boswell at Myers Park Baptist Church and will be delivered by trained facilitator, [Carrie Veal](#), Wednesday evenings, 7:30pm-9pm, Virtually, April 26-June 21. \$150 per person, and financial aid is available. Members of color participate at no cost. Space is limited. Please see details in the eblast special announcement. Contact Lisa Cloninger at [lisacmsw@hotmail.com](mailto:lisacmsw@hotmail.com).

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. Worship Volunteer Sign-up: Please sign up in the Gathering Room or on the SignUpGenius link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C44ACAD23A2FE3-ushers>

### **Game Night, Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup> 6:30-8:30pm**

BYOGames (Bring Your Own) or just come join us in the church Gathering Room and learn some new ones. Game "fanatics" as well as newbies are welcome! There will be beverages as well as snacks. RSVP Suzanne Lamorey [slamorey@uncc.edu](mailto:slamorey@uncc.edu)

## **AIDS Walk Charlotte Saturday, May 6, 2023**

This continues to be the largest HIV fundraising event in the Carolinas. We hope you can join us this year. Questions? Contact Debbie Davis, [Debbiekdavisnc@gmail.com](mailto:Debbiekdavisnc@gmail.com).  
<https://p2p.onecause.com/aidswalkclt/team/holy-covenant-united-church-of-christ>

### **PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER**

#### **Members**

Family & friends in the recent death of Irene Mikkelson

Lisa Cloninger & Kathi Smith in the death of Lisa's aunt, Teena Barnes

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

#### **Friends & Family Members**

Rowan, 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)

#### **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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