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Silent Meditation

“Since sin, not recognizing and embracing the revelation of God in Jesus, is a theological category in John, forgiveness of sins is not about the act of penance in relation to individual deeds. Rather, forgiveness of sins is the community’s spirit empowered mission to continue Jesus’s work of making God known in the world and through that work to bring the world to judgment and decision through its response to Jesus.”

– Gail O’Day

**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
PENTECOST**

May 28, 2023 10:55 am

Prelude “Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart” 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 “There’s a Spirit of Love in This Place” M. A. Miller

There’s a spirit of love in this place. (2x)

You can’t see it but it’s there, just as precious as the air,

There’s a spirit of love in this place.

There’s the presence of peace in this room. (2x)

In God’s tenderness is found peace that passes humans bounds,

There’s the presence of peace in this room.

O Alleluia, sing alleluia, we bless your holy name.

O Alleluia, sing alleluia, there’s a spirit of love in this place.

There’s a space for grace in our hearts. (2x)

It’s in learning to forgive that our spirits truly live,

There’s a space for grace in our hearts.

O Alleluia, sing alleluia, we bless your holy name.

O Alleluia, sing alleluia, there’s a space for grace,

There’s the presence of peace,

There’s a spirit of love in this place.

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

* Call to Worship

Ed Vickery

One: When the day of Pentecost had come, the disciples were all together in one place.

Many: Today, followers of the Way gather in many places,

One: From Jerusalem to Galilee, from Pago Pago to Apia.

Many: From Rome to Arabia, from Las Vegas to Cleveland.

One: God's Spirit still blows like a mighty wind

Many: Breathing new life into the sails of our canoes.

One: God's Spirit still burns like tongues of flame

Many: Dancing over the heads of our **Toa*** [TOH-ah] (brave ones).

One: God's Spirit still flows like currents of living water

Many: Connecting hearts and islands of all believers.

One: Praise God! Viia le Atua! [vee-EE-ah leh ah-TOO-ah]

Many: Viia le Atua! Praise God!

All: Let us worship God, from whom all life's blessings flow!

Invocation (*unison*)

Ed Vickery

O Holy Spirit, come and blow through this gathering space as Mighty Wind as you did with the apostles at the beginning of the Church. Pour your Spirit upon us all, both colonized and colonizer, of all ages, all genders, to speak your words, see your vision, dream your dreams toward your great and glorious day when everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Flow like rivers of living water from the hearts of believers through the songs of praise, words of worship, and prayers of devotion. Amen!

* Hymn

“God Is Calling through the Whisper”

W ŻŁOBIE LEŻY

God is calling through the whisper of the Spirit's deepest sighs,

Through the thrill of sudden beauties that can catch us by surprise.

Flash of lightning crash of thunder; hush of stillness, rush of wonder:

God is calling - can you hear? God is calling - can you hear?

Prayer for Transformation & New Life (*unison*)

Cheri Dennis

Dear God, **le Atua e (leh ah-TOO-ah eh)** God of oceans and land and all life contained therein. You created this world by the power of your word. By your own hands and breath, you formed humankind in every conceivable shade of brown. You gave us islands and continents as a gift and charged us to be the stewards of what you have made.

Creator God, we have failed you and abused your gift to us. We have offended you and defiled your creation, including seeing fellow human beings as being less than created in your very image. Forgive us for betraying your trust. Forgive us for our greed and arrogance. Hear the cries of islands drowning in the rising seas, oceans that rise with the melting of the ice. Hear the cries of our world in distress through storm and drought.

God of Life, heal your wounded earth. Embolden us to choose the path that leads to life. so that we may renew your Shalom in land, sea, and sky. This we ask in the name of the one who came that we way have life in abundance, your Son, our Savior Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Cheri Dennis

Le alofa o le Atua (leh ah-LOW-fah oh leh ah-TOO-ah), God's love does not belong to one person or group of people. God's love and forgiveness is available to all, even those who do not ask for it. You can also be agents of God's love and healing, so let us strive to receive and give this gift of God's restoration with Creation and with each other. Be God's love and healing for people and planet. Amen.

Sung Response to God's Grace

OH QUE BUENO

Oh, how good is Christ the Lord! On the cross he died for me.

He has pardoned all my sin. Glory be to Jesus.

Glory be to Jesus! Glory be to Jesus!

In three days, he rose again. Glory be to Jesus!

Pastoral Prayer

Cheri Dennis

Prayer for Illumination (*sung*)

IN YOUR WORD

Order my steps in your word, dear Lord.

Lead me, guide me, every day.

Send your anointing, God, I pray

Order my steps in your word.

Please, order my steps in your word.

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.' All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' But others sneered and said, 'They are filled with new wine.'

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: 'Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

"In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.

Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;
and they shall prophesy.

And I will show portents in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,

before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day.

Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

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

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

* Gospel Lesson

John 20:19-23

Ed Vickery

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

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

"A Pentecost Altar Call - UCC Style"

Cheri Dennis

Hymn

"God Is Calling through the Whisper"

W ŻŁOBIE LEŻY

**God is calling through the voices of our neighbors' urgent prayers,
Through their longing for redemption and for rescue from despair.
Place of hurt or face of need; strident cry or silent pleading:
God is calling - can you hear! God is calling - can you hear?**

Call to Service on a Ministry Team

Members of the Consistory

Hymn

"God Is Calling through the Whisper"

W ŻŁOBIE LEŻY

**God is calling through the music of sublime and human arts,
Through the hymns of earth and angels, and the carols of our hearts.
Lift of joy and gift of singing; days and nights our praises bringing:
God is calling - and we hear! God is calling - and we hear!**

Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving

Ed Vickery

One: At the birth of the Church, all who believed were together and had all things in common: they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Today the work of the Holy Spirit flows like living water from the hearts of believers for this congregation has been blessed with the resources to continue the mission of Christ in the world. Let us now together dedicate those offerings to the work of this mission.

All: Generous God, may the gifts this church has received support the ministry of this congregation as well as strengthen the wider United Church of Christ. Give our leaders gifts of discernment for wisest possible use of these resources which we dedicate to you today. Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you! 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!

* Hymn

“Go to the World!”

SINE NOMINE

Go to the world! Go into all the earth.
Go preach the cross where Christ renews life’s worth,
Baptizing as the sign of our rebirth.
Alleluia. Alleluia.

Go to the world! Go into every place.
Go live the word of God’s redeeming grace.
Go seek God’s presence in each time and space.
Alleluia. Alleluia.

Go to the world! Go struggle, bless, and pray;
The nights of tears give way to joyous day.
As servant church, you follow Christ’s own way.
Alleluia. Alleluia.

Go to the world! Go as the ones I send,
For I am with you till the age shall end,
When all the hosts of glory cry “Amen!”
Alleluia. Alleluia.

* Benediction

Cheri Dennis

* Benediction Response

KELVINGROVE

Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.
In your company I’ll go where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I’ll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

Postlude

“I’m Goin’a Sing When the Spirit Says Sing”

arr. C. Webb

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Portions of this service adapted from Flow Out from Within: Service Prayers for Pentecost Sunday written by Rev. Mikey Kelemete, Senior Pastor of Faaaliga o le Alofa (Vision of Grace) Church in Las Vegas, Nevada, affiliated with both the Congregational Christian Church of American Samoa (Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Amerika Samoa) and the United Church of Christ and Rev. Samuelu “Sam” Tialavea, Associate Pastor of Faaaliga o le Alofa. Pastor Sam also serves as secretary for United Samoan Ministries of the UCC and in the Southern California Nevada Conference as Vice-Moderator for the Eastern Association as well as secretary for SCN Pacific Islander and Asian American Ministries. Would you like to see what worship in a Samoan church in the USA looks like? Visit us on facebook: (20+) FAAALIGA O LE ALOFA - VISION OF GRACE CHURCH in Las Vegas, NV USA | Facebook

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:

Kristin Andes, Lex Decker, Keith Dennis, Jackie Freeze,
Terry Raley-Dennis, Shakti Subramanian

We welcome all in our congregation to participate! Please sign up in the Gathering Room or on the SignUpGenius link:

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



Many thanks to the Mountain Island Covenant Group for providing today's refreshments following worship. Covenant Groups are a way for you to stay connected with people in your area, neighborhood or zip code. Contact Ed Vickery, ed.vickery@att.net, if you'd like to be a part of any of our Covenant Groups: Saints & Sunners; EastSiders; Southside; Bold & Beautiful; Plaza Midwood; Mountain Island, and Unstructured.

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/>

SOJOURNERS CLASS

Join us Sundays as the Sojourners Class discusses Munther Isaac's book *The Other Side of the Wall*. Contact Pastor Cheri for more information: cherid@holycovenantucc.org, 704-519-6016. Join us at 9:45am in the Conference Room or via Zoom.

THE HORN SOCIETY OF THE CAROLINAS, JUNE 11TH AT 1PM, AT HCUCC

Members and friends of Holy Covenant UCC are invited to a horn concert on **Sunday afternoon, June 11th at 1pm**. This concert way of saying "Thank You" to Holy Covenant for the use our space for rehearsals during COVID. Our very own Bill Tyler is a member of this group. So come enjoy the music!

The choice is yours... for making your offering

Schedule offerings, one time or recurring, through your bank's online payment system. Many financial institutions may offer free services to its customers and there's no fees on the receiving end.

Should you mail a check from home or a financial institution, please use this secure address:

Holy Covenant UCC
PO Box 481285
Charlotte NC 28269



Donate on HolyCovenantUCC.org, via Wallet®* or PayPal®*.

GIVE TODAY

Contact the church office for more information
or to suggest another option.
office@holycovenantucc.org or 704-599-9810



STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH OFFERING

Today's special offering supports the expansion of ministry and growth of UCC local congregations. Your support of this offering will help the UCC fulfill its commitment to creating a just world for all by investing in new ministries and practices that meet the emerging needs of local communities. As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults. This offering will be taken for the next few weeks, including online at HolyCovenantUCC.org/give-2/.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

David & Patty McGuirt in the sudden death of David's brother, Rick McGuirt
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, Bill Seaman, Ed & Beth Sharp, Cynthia & Tommy Simpson, Anita Taylor, Kathleen Wagner

Friends & Family Members

Linda Burby, Laura Christian (Beth Sharp), David & Cecelia Griffin (JP Griffin), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Matty & Simone McKinnon (Joy Decker), Sue Parrish (Terry Raley-Dennis), Marie Raley (Jean Raley-Dennis), Suzie & John Robinson (Dana Endsley & Mike Yonkovig), Barbara Rutelonis (Eric Miner), 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.

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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