



BE A BLESSING

PRAY OFTEN. BE KIND. GIVE THANKS.

DO GOOD. HAVE COURAGE.

LEAD WITH LOVE. PRACTICE PEACE.

BE THE LIGHT. WORK FOR JUSTICE.

ENCOURAGE OTHERS. BE JOYFUL.

 UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

UCC.org

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

Rev. Cheri Dennis, Interim Pastor

Jon Weddell, M.Div, MSW, Minister of Music

Dawn Simmons, BSBF, Executive Assistant

Mailing address: PO Box 481285, Charlotte NC 28269

3501 West W.T. Harris Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28269-8510

www.holycovenantucc.org 704-599-9810

**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST ~ PRIDE MONTH**

June 11, 2023 10:55 am

Prelude "How Can I Keep from Singing" arr. B. Boertje

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements Cheri Dennis

One: May the peace of Christ be with you!

Many: **And also with you.**

Introit "Enter, Rejoice, and Come In" ENTER, REJOICE

Enter, rejoice, and come in. Enter, rejoice, and come in.

Today will be a joyful day: enter, rejoice, and come in.

* Call to Worship Terry Raley-Dennis

One: This month we celebrate LGBTQ+ Pride as we work toward greater inclusion in every church, workplace, and family.

Many: **We gather today to be refreshed, renewed, and strengthened in our faith and in our resolve for the work we must do together.**

One: Listen, there is a voice calling us.

Many: **It is the voice of our Divine Beloved.**

One: The one who loves us invites us to mingle our voices together.

Many: **We call out in worship and praise together.**

One: Bring your hopes, expectations, and longings that you have carried with you throughout the week.

Many: **Here they are. We speak them in our spirit and with our words.**

One: Come and worship. Come and praise. Come and pray.

All: **We commit ourselves to this sacred time of celebration.**

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

* Hymn

“Come Sing, O Church, in Joy!”

DARWALL’S 148TH

Come sing, O church, in joy! Come join, O church, in song!

For Christ the Lord has led us through the ages long!

In bold accord, come celebrate the journey now and praise the Lord!

Long years have come and gone, and still God reigns supreme,

Empowering us to catch the vision, dream the dream!

In bold accord, come celebrate the journey now and praise the Lord!

Let courage be our friend; let wisdom be our guide,

As we in mission magnify the Crucified!

In bold accord, come celebrate the journey now and praise the Lord!

Come sing, O church, in joy! Come join, O church, in song!

For Christ the Lord has triumphed o’er the ages long!

In bold accord, come celebrate the journey now and praise the Lord!

Prayer for Transformation & New Life (*unison*)

Terry Raley-Dennis

Gracious & loving God, as we celebrate Pride & Juneteenth, we remember and ask for forgiveness for those times when we have been homophobic and racist. We acknowledge, too, that the church as often been homophobic and racist. This is unacceptable and sinful. Teach us to examine ourselves for those prejudices that cause violence. Forgive us for not recognizing the image of God in others and in ourselves. When we fail to recognize your image, we fail to recognize you and your beautiful diverse creation. Forgive us, O God, forgive us.

Words of Assurance

Gregg Walker

All that The Creator made is good. Rest assured; The Creator made you. You are good. You are holy. You are sacred. May your mind be at peace, your spirit soar, and your body be elated, as you feel Holy Love surrounding and uplifting you.

Song of Preparation

“Rain Down”

J. Cortez

Rain down, rain down, rain down your love on your people.

Rain down, rain down, rain down your love, God of life.

Pastoral Prayer

Gregg Walker

Prayer for Illumination (*sung*)

OPEN MY EYES

Open our ears, that we may hear voices of truth you send so clear

And while the wave notes fall on our ears, everything false will disappear

Silently now we wait for you, ready, our God, your will to do.

Open our hearts; illumine us, Spirit divine!

Scripture Lesson

Romans 4:13-25

Debbie Davis

For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations')—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become 'the father of many nations', according to what was said, 'So numerous shall your descendants be.' He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore, his faith 'was reckoned to him as righteousness.' Now the words, 'it was reckoned to him', were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

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

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

Hebrew Scripture

Genesis 12:1-9

Terry Raley-Dennis

Now the Lord said to Abram, go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan, Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. Then the Lord appeared to Abram, and said, 'To your offspring I will give this land.' So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. From there he moved on to the hill country on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the Lord and invoked the name of the Lord. And Abram journeyed on by stages towards the Negeb.

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

"So That You..."

Gregg Walker

* Hymn

"Here I Am, Lord"

HERE I AM (SCHUTTE)

I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry
All who dwell in dark and sin
My hand will save.

I, who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them.
Whom shall I send? (R)

(Refrain) Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them
They turn away.

I will break their hearts of stone,
Give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my words to them.
Whom shall I send? (R)

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.

Finest bread I will provide
Till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send? (R)

Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving

Terry Raley-Dennis

One: We are called to build a community. One beyond the status quo. Beyond our own expectations. This comes at a cost of time, talent, and treasure. Just as Moses stirred the hearts of his people, we are called to be stirred to give toward this Kin-dom we are creating. They brought blue, purple, and crimson linen. They brought fine metals and gems of all kinds. Our gifts are likewise varied. Likewise valuable in the sight of God and each other. It is our willing hearts that make our gifts precious. In our giving, no matter how much or what kind, we connect our spirits and continue the work of Kin-dom Creation. Let us now together dedicate the offerings Holy Covenant has received to the work of Kin-dom Creation.

Many:We are all one human family. In your love you created us. Through your grace you reach out to us. You are great enough to hold us all in your arms at the same time. You have helped us to open our hearts to the world that you love. In gratitude for the many blessings you have given us, we offer back to you what you first gave us. May these gifts be used to build your kin-dom on earth as it is in heaven. May they be used to build your kin-dom of justice and peace for all. Amen.

- * Doxology “Confitemini Domino” TAIZÉ
(translation: Give thanks to the Lord for God is good, Psalm 118:1)
Confitemini Domino quoniam bonus.
Confitemini Domino alleluia!

RECEPTION AND WELCOME OF NEW MEMBERS

- * Congregation: We welcome you and celebrate your journey of faith. We promise to search with you for truth in Scripture, word and witness; to walk with you in life’s joys and sorrows; to support you when life is shaken; to laugh with you when life lifts your spirit; to share silence, song and sacrament; and to grow in Christian love and mutual appreciation. We will rely on God’s sustaining presence as we journey forward together.

Greeting of Christian Love

Hosts: *On behalf of the entire congregation, it is our pleasure to welcome you as a full member of Holy Covenant United Church of Christ. In the name of Jesus Christ, we extend to you the hand of Christian love and welcome.*

- * Hymn “We Are Your People” WHITFIELD
We are your people: God, by your grace,
You dare to make us Christ to our neighbors
Of every nation and race.

Called to portray you, help us to live
Closer than neighbors, open to strangers,
Able to clash and forgive.

Glad of tradition, help us to see
In all life’s changing where you are leading,
Where our best efforts should be.

Joined in community, breaking your bread,
May we discover gifts in each other,
Willing to lead and be led.

God, as we minister in different ways,
May all we’re doing show that you’re living,
Meeting your love with our praise.

* Benediction

Gregg Walker

* Benediction Response

“Send Us Out”

J.M. Talbot

Send us out to proclaim the reign of your kin-dom,
Send us out to proclaim and to heal,
Send us out with your power and your authority
To overcome and to heal the world.

Postlude

“Here I Am”

D. Schutte

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Portions of this service adapted from a liturgy for Pride month written by Rev. Mak Kneebone, who is passionate about creating wholeness in our broken world by following the path of Jesus as 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, D Evans, Brian Hankins, Barbara Schneller

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 **SouthSide Covenant Group & the members of the Choir**, 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/>

WELCOME TODAY'S GUEST PREACHER, REVEREND GREGG WALKER

Rev. Gregg Walker is ordained in the UCC and is a member of Holy Covenant. He and Pastor Cheri are fellow alumni of Union Presbyterian Seminary. Gregg works as a chaplain at Novant Health Matthews Medical Center. Gregg is married to Ann and they have 3 sons, all of whom got married in 2021.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Please welcome our new members, Michael and Mirjam Berger-Doane. They are joining us by Letter of Transfer from Mayflower United Church of Christ in Minneapolis, MN. Both Mirjam & Michael are ordained UCC pastors and serve as Clinical Pastoral Educators (CPE), Mirjam with Novant Health and Michael with Mayo Clinic.

STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH OFFERING

We continue the UCC special offering that supports the expansion of ministry and growth of local UCC 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/.



THE HORN SOCIETY OF THE CAROLINAS, TODAY AT 1PM, AT HCUCC

Members and friends of Holy Covenant UCC are invited to a horn concert this afternoon at 1pm. This concert is their way of saying "Thank You" to Holy Covenant for the use of our space for rehearsals during COVID. Our very own Bill Tyler is a member of this group. Stay for some refreshments following worship, and then enjoy the music!

SOJOURNERS CLASS

On Sunday, June 11th and 18th Suzanne Lamorey and Keith Dennis will be discussing a recent and fascinating Coursera class they took through Emory University titled, *“The Bible’s Prehistory, Purpose, and Political Future.”* All are welcomed to join us Sundays at 9:45am in the Conference Room or via Zoom. Contact Pastor Cheri for more information: cherid@holycovenantucc.org, 704-519-6016.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

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, Shakti Subramanian, Anita Taylor, Kathleen Wagner

Friends & Family Members

Savannah (Beth Christian), 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 Yonkovic), 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.