



Reflection from Voices of People of African Descent

“I say that the church is failing to preach because she is inextricably bound up in the fabric of the state. There exists a dangerous accommodation, and a peaceful coexistence that renders the prophetic voice speechless. Whenever church and state embrace, the church is not free to preach the gospel. And I do not speak of that theoretical or even mechanical separation of church and state which the founders wrote into the Constitution. We have that separation and it should remain. I am not bothered about the possible weakening of that arrangement. I’m troubled by a kind of spiritual union of church and state, a union where both pat one another on the back. I’m troubled about a buddy-buddy relationship, where the church is blind to the sins of the state. I’m troubled about an unholy fellowship of light and darkness.”

“The church should know full well that whenever she ceases to be the critical conscience of society, her sword is made dull and her voice is made silent.”

—William Augustus Jones, Jr.,
God in the Ghetto: A Prophetic Word Revisited

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

June 18, 2023 10:55 am

Celebrating Father's Day and Juneteenth

Prelude "There Is a Balm in Gilead" arr. C.B. Putnam

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 Suzanne Lamorey

One: The Lord is in this Holy Temple, let all the children of God rejoice.
We are called as family to hold up holy hands and praise the God of
justice and liberation for all!

Many: **Not some, but for all people regardless of where we are on life's
journey or who we are in the Kin-dom of God.**

One: We are here to worship!

Many: **Hallelujah!**

One: We are here to lift up Holy hands!

Many: **Hallelujah!**

One: We are the Kin-dom of God!

All: **Glory Hallelujah. Let us praise the name of the Lord!**

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

Invocation

Suzanne Lamorey

One: Gracious and ever-present God, make each of us an instrument of your justice. Continue to weave us into a family, your Kin-dom, showing forth your power of healing, feeding, clothing and resurrection as evidenced through the life and ministry of your son Jesus the Christ.

Many: Bless us and our differences and sustain our courage to stand together in the face of oppression and injustice in this present world.

One: We call on you today to gather us in your love.

Many: Impart to us the knowledge and understanding to better know you and glorify your grace on each and every step of the journey of our lives.

One: In the name of Jesus, who came in the name of love, let us now commit to shout with the voice of triumph and proclaim the love and grace of God to all the world. Let all the Kin-dom of God shout "Victory"-

Many: Over Oppression!

One: Shout "Victory"-

Many: Over Injustice!

One: Shout "Victory"-

Many: Through Jesus the Christ!

All: Amen, and Amen.

* Hymn 7 "All People That on Earth Do Dwell"

OLD HUNDREDTH

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 & New Life (*unison*)

Suzanne Lamorey

Righteous God, we find ourselves as your hands, legs, heart and spirit here in the earth. As your children, as were your disciples, we are called to manifest a Gospel of love, justice, reconciliation and healing in the present world. But our concern for a just and egalitarian world too often dissipates at the point of our discomfort. Forgive us for our humanity and our frailty as we dwell in your presence and seek transformation and new energy for the work of your ministry. Revive us again O Lord.

One: O Lord Revive...

Many: Our love for the Kin-dom!

One: O Lord Revive...

Many: Our yearning for justice!

One: O Lord Revive...

Many: Our desire for reconciliation!

One: O Lord Revive...

Many: Our need for healing!

All: Amen and Amen!

Words of Assurance

Cheri Dennis

Just as Jesus endowed his disciples, his family, with moments of rest and amazement, it is good for us, kinfolk, to bask in the glorious and loving presence of God. Fortunately, God does not condemn us when we too often choose to linger there rather than enter into difficult, tough, unfamiliar or even mundane places and spaces. With grace and compassion, the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit lifts, informs and propels us in the direction we should go to heal, deliver and resurrect.

One: Come Holy Spirit.

Many: Lift us!

One: Come Holy Spirit.

Many: Inform us!

One: Come Holy Spirit.

Many: Propel us!

One: Come Holy Spirit.

Many: Shower us with your Grace and Mercy!

All: Amen and Amen!

Story for All Ages

A Flag for Juneteenth

Laura Hankins

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.

A Prayer of Thanksgiving for Juneteenth

Many: We give thanks to God for freedom and emancipation of the enslaved people.

One: God heard the voices and supplications of enslaved people, those enslaved beyond Emancipation Day in 1863, cheated of their lives and livelihood by oppressors beyond the pale of human rights and dignity.

Many: From the shacks and plantations of Texas they cried: “God, we pray, save our children!”

One: The snares of death encompassed them in the places where they were held captive and used as commodity. God inclined his ear to them, delivering them from the distress and anguish of this living hell.

Many: From the shacks and plantations of Texas they cried: “God, we pray, save our lives!”

One: Because of their skin they were deemed less than farm animals, these African and African American people made in the image of the Divine; therefore, they called on God all day long praying to God to loosen their chains.

Many: From the shacks and plantations of Texas they cried: “God, we pray, keep us from harm and danger!”

One: We will pay our vows to God in the presence of all people. We give thanks and praise to God for the full emancipation for these human beings.

Many: From the shacks and plantations of Texas they sang: “God, we thank you for saving our lives.”

One: “All persons henceforth shall be free” were the words spoken in 1863. Today we reinforce with thanksgiving God’s life, love and liberty.

Many: From the depths of our hearts, we cry: “God, we thank you for deliverance.”

A Time of Silence

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 kin-dom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

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!

Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving

Suzanne Lamorey

The Holy Spirit comes down to us as a gift of presence, compassion, and companionship. We honor and uphold the Kin-dom here on earth through our stewardship; as we are called to present our lives as a living testimony of the God who has created each one of us to be unique and minister to a world that needs what we have to offer in time, talent and treasure. Let us now uphold the glory of God by dedicating our gifts in the spirit of generosity.

One: We give...

Many: To meet the needs of the Kin-dom!

One: We give...

Many: Out of the generosity of our hearts!

One: We give...

Many: To further justice and peace in our world!

All: Generous God, may our gifts glorify your spirit and meet the needs of your Kin-dom. In the name of Jesus the Christ, we pray. Amen and 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!

* Hymn 593

“Lift Every Voice and Sing”

LIFT EVERY VOICE

Lift every voice and sing, till earth and heaven ring

Ring with the harmonies of liberty;

Let our rejoicing rise, high as the listening skies,

Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.

Sing a song full of the faith that the harsh past has taught us,

Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;

Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,

Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod,

Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;

Yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet,

Come to the place for which our people sighed?

We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,

We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,

Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last

Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,
God who has brought us thus far on the way;
God, who by your might, led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met you,
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, forget you;
Shadowed beneath your hand, may we forever stand,
True to our God, true to our native land.

* Benediction

Cheri Dennis

* 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

“Lift Every Voice and Sing”

J. W. Johnson

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Portions of this service adapted from **Kin-dom: Service Prayers for the Third Sunday after Pentecost** written by Pastor Kevin Tindell, Pastor of Community Engagement, GATHER Church Chicago and Vice President of the Open and Affirming Coalition of the UCC. **A Prayer of Thanksgiving for Juneteenth** was written by Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson, Associate General Minister (AGM) for Wider Church Ministries (WCM) and Operations in the United Church of Christ and Co-Executive for Global Ministries with the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). **A Flag for Juneteenth** was written by Kim Taylor, a self-taught textile artist, Speech-Language Pathologist and administrator at a school for the Deaf and is based on one of her favorite story quilts.

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, Kevin Edwards-Knight

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 **Plaza Midwood Covenant Group & the Endowment Team**, 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

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.

Game Night, Friday, June 30th, 6:30-8:30pm

BYOGames (Bring Your Own) or just come join us in the church Gathering Room and have some fun! Game "fanatics" as well as newbies are welcome! We've been having a blast playing "Scattergories". Snacks and beverages provided, or bring along your favorites. RSVP Suzanne Lamorey, slamorey@uncc.edu.

The Michael G. Brooks Scholarship 2023-24, Applications Due June 30

The purpose of the Michael G. Brooks Scholarship Fund is to encourage youth in both their educational growth and their service to God. Scholarship funds up to approximately \$2,000 will be considered annually for all applicants. Contact the church office for an application, office@holycovenantucc.org.

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.

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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