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Compassion

“Do a little bit of good where you are;
it’s those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.”
- Desmond Tutu

“The most important assets we have are our bodies and
our energy which can be put to good use as resources
in political activism for poor and working people.”
- Cornell West

“Doing good to others is not a duty, it is a joy,
for it increases our own health and happiness.”
- Zoroaster

**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

August 20, 2023 10:55 am

Prelude "In Moments Like These" D. Graham

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements Jeffery Edwards-Knight

One: May the peace of Christ be with you!

Many: And also with you.

Introit "Like the Murmur of the Dove's Song" (v. 1) BRIDEGROOM

Like the murmur of the dove's song, like the challenge of her flight,

Like the vigor of the wind's rush, like the new flame's eager might:

Come, Holy Spirit, come.

* Call to Worship Ed Vickery

One: O God Embodied, the one made flesh who dwelt among us, help us to arrive this morning with a "yes." A "yes" to our faith that says our bodies are good and holy, just as and however they are.

Many: **A "yes" to show up here as our whole selves, even if our society and the world around us have denied it.**

One: A "yes" to believing in You and your promise of liberation, hope for this beloved community, and knowing this is where we need to be in this moment.

Many: **A "yes" to bringing the diversity of gifts that come from and through our hearts to work toward the building of your blessed kingdom here on earth.**

One: Come, let us bring ourselves to God's ever widening and open sanctuary.

Many: **Just as we are, in all our wholeness, worth, and dignity. Amen.**

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

Invocation (*unison*)

Ed Vickery

Have mercy on us, O God of Healing. We call out to you for ourselves, our community, and our world that has so much suffering. At times we are discouraged to name what we need, by society or family expectations that leave us feeling inadequate. So often we were simply never taught how to hold this part of us with tenderness and keep boundaries. But You, O God, invite us in to name what may be tormenting us and to receive your love and acceptance. Grant us the grace to know our divine strength and place in your world. Amen.

* Hymn 417

“This Is a Day of New Beginnings”

BEGINNINGS

This is a day of new beginnings, time to remember and move on,
Time to believe what love is bringing laying to rest the pain that’s gone.

For by the life and death of Jesus, God’s mighty Spirit, now as then,
Can make for us a world of difference, as faith and hope are born again.

Then let us, with the Spirit’s daring, step from the past and leave behind
Our disappointment, guilt, and grieving, seeking new paths, and sure to find.

Christ is alive and goes before us to show and share what love can do.
This is a day of new beginnings—our God is making all things new.

Prayer for Transformation & New Life (*unison*)

Ed Vickery

Divine Creator, we admittedly recall the moments this week when we have not sought to preserve the spirit of life you have created. Maybe there was a stranger in our midst, and we denied their need. Maybe we desecrated the beauty of the earth by not discarding our trash in the most environmentally friendly way. Maybe there was a chance for us to join in solidarity for justice, but we felt it would inconvenience us. Creator, we join in prayer to be empowered to open our hearts and change our ways. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Ed Vickery

What a blessing it is to experience the power of spiritual conversion, to have this transformation of the heart offered by the very God who made us to grow and change. In times when we struggle to make the Christ-like decisions, or changes, we need in our lives, or are so desperately needed in our world, may we know the grace of God’s forgiveness as we seek to be the best Christ we can be. And all God’s people said, “Amen.”

Response to God's Grace

"Glory to God"

GLORY TO GOD

Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me,
And to the Christ, whose grace has pardoned me,
And to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

World without end, without end. Amen. (3x)
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

Stories for All People

"In God's Name"
by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso

Meg Houlihan

Pastoral Prayer

Glencie Rhedrick

The Lord's Prayer (*unison*)

Glencie Rhedrick

Our Creator, our beloved parent, in whom we move and breathe and have our being,

The hallowing of your name shines forth in the diversity of your children.

May your peace and love, justice and equality, inclusion and belonging reign here on earth as in heaven.

Grant that our LGBTQ+ loved ones might have their daily needs met—that they might find gainful employment without discrimination; that they might have access to medical care without fear; that they might have their rights and lives protected, and that they might find a loving community to belong to and call their own.

Forgive us for the ways that we have fallen short and failed your LGBTQ+ children. Forgive us for the times we turned away, or did not care; for the times we laughed or judged their unique expression of your image; for the times we have misspoken, asked too much, or failed to hear.

As we forgive those who might have failed us.

Lead us away from the temptation to be complacent in the face of injustice. But instead give us courage to stand up and stand with your beloved children. For your love and justice is to be made manifest now and forever.

Amen.

Prayer for Illumination (*sung*)

SANCTUARY

**Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true.
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.**

Hebrew Scripture

Jeremiah 2:4-13

Eric Miner

Hear the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel. Thus says the Lord:

What wrong did your ancestors find in me that they went far from me and went after worthless things and became worthless themselves? They did not say, "Where is the Lord, who brought us up from the land of Egypt, who led us in the wilderness, in a land of deserts and pits, in a land of drought and deep darkness, in a land that no one passes through, where no one lives?" I brought you into a plentiful land to eat its fruits and its good things. But when you entered you defiled my land and made my heritage an abomination. The priests did not say, "Where is the Lord?" Those who handle the law did not know me; the rulers transgressed against me; the prophets prophesied by Baal and went after things that do not profit. Therefore, once more I accuse you, says the Lord, and I accuse your children's children. Cross to the coasts of Cyprus and look; send to Kedar and examine with care; see if there has ever been such a thing. Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for something that does not profit. Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked; be utterly desolate, says the Lord, for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water.

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

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

Special music

"Chico Gospel"

MaMuse

Kathleen Smith, Lisa Cloninger, vocalists

Scripture Lesson

Hebrews 13:1-3

Glencie Rhedrick

Let mutual affection continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them, those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured.

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

Glencie Rhedrick

* Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving Ed Vickery

One: The prophet Isaiah proclaimed that God's house is "a house of prayer for all peoples." And it is in such a place where offerings are acceptable to God. Here, in this place of extravagant welcome, may our offerings of time, energy, money, resources, skills, hope, and prayer be lifted up to our God. May they be discerned for the good that ripples out beyond our walls and felt by all who enter them.

Many: Let us give thanks for all that we share, as well as the way that we share. May our gratitude for this community and the Spirit's presence in this space guide us in how to show up in our lives. May we know how to give but also how to receive, how to say, "yes" and when we need to say, "not today." Let us lift up, and take in, these gifts of generosity. Amen.

* Doxology THANK YOU LORD

Thank you, Lord. (3x) I just want to thank you, Lord.

* Hymn 454 "Lord, I Want to Be a Christian" SPIRITUAL

Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart, in my heart;
Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart.
In my heart, (*in my heart*), in my heart (*in my heart*).
Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart.

Lord, I want to be more loving...

Lord, I want to be more holy...

Lord, I want to be like Jesus...

* Benediction Glencie Rhedrick

* Benediction Response NEW DIMENSIONS

God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar,
We your people, ours the journey now and ever,
Now and ever, now and evermore.

Postlude "I Love the Lord" R. Smallwood

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Portions of this service adapted from UCC Worship Ways; prayers written for Central Congregational UCC (Atlanta, GA) by the Rev. Kim Sorrells.

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:

D Evans, Brian Hankins, JoAnn Jellison, 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 your **Communications Team** for providing today's refreshments following worship. If you have an interest in the many ways in which this team promotes our church, please contact Laura Hankins, laura@hankins-clt.us, or the church office. There is a place for you!

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 BACK, REVEREND GLENCIE RHEDRICK

Glencie is an ordained Baptist minister, currently serving as an associate minister at First Baptist Church-West. A graduate of Johnson C. Smith University, Glencie received her M.Div from the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University and is currently a PhD student attending California Institute of Integral of Studies. Glencie currently serves as Chaplain for several organizations, is a local and national community activist and organizer, and was the former president of Mecklenburg Ministries. She is also an active member of the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team. Currently she holds the lead positions with numerous activist and outreach organizations. She is the convenor of a Facebook live show, 'SpeakingintheKeyofWE.' a conversation concerning Black Male Privilege and Patriarchy in the Church, raising the awareness of the biases women of African Ascent encounter in the Church and other segments of society. We are grateful for her time with us today!

CHARLOTTE PRIDE PARADE TODAY!

The 2023 Charlotte Pride Parade will begin at 1:00 pm. Since our group will have 135 groups in front of us before we start walking, *plan to be at our staging area on 11th Street at 1:30 pm*. Wear your Holy Covenant T-Shirts! Show our Pride! Pick up an information sheet with maps in the gathering room.

GAME NIGHT, SATURDAY, AUGUST 26 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.

CONFRONTING WHITENESS, SECOND SESSION STARTING SOON

This course, developed by Rev. Ben Boswell, the Senior Minister at Myers Park Baptist Church, will be offered virtually on Sunday evenings from 7-8:30pm starting late August/early September and there are 9 sessions total for the course. Read, hear, and watch the work of Black creatives and discuss what we are learning from their perspectives about whiteness. There is time for reflection, confession, and hearing other people's stories in the group. You also get to do this with people from your own church community. More details are found in the e-newsletter. Register here:

<https://forms.gle/XSfVCBQTQreCckJH9>

Questions? Email Lisa Cloninger at lisaswimbikesing@gmail.com

SOJOURNERS CLASS

Our next book selection will be The Gnostic Gospels by Elaine Pagels. Join us in person or via Zoom, no preparation necessary. We gather at 9:45am in the Conference Room, or via Zoom Meeting ID: 87673409762 Passcode: 523903. Contact Cheryl Milam for more information, docmilam@hotmail.com.

YOUR OFFERING, YOUR WAY

Various methods are available for your convenience! Schedule offerings, one time or recurring, through your bank's online payment system. Many financial institutions offer free services to its customers. Mailing a check, from home or a financial institution? Please use this secure address:

Holy Covenant UCC, PO Box 481285, Charlotte NC 28269

Donate online at HolyCovenantUCC.org/give-2/ via PayPal or Subsplash Wallet. Look for the *Give Today* button. Questions can be directed to the church office, office@holycovenantucc.org or 704-599-9810.



PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Rev. Jerry Rhyne and family in the death of his wife, Rev Marion Rhyne
Linda Carver, Gary & Linda Clark, Kevin Decker, Linn Finger, Tom & Kathy Habel,
Suzanne Hopkins & Shakti Subramanian, Jim Humphrey, Sharon Landis, Sue & Bill
Pascucci, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Jerry & Marion Rhyne, Ed & Beth Sharp, Cynthia
& Tommy Simpson, Bill Seaman, Anita Taylor

Friends & Family Members

Family & Friends of Larry Griffeth; G. D. (Joy Johnson), Jessica (Kathleen
Wagner), Joyce (Kathleen Wagner), Savannah (Beth Sharp), Linda Burby, Laura
Christian (Beth Sharp), David & Cecelia Griffin (JP Griffin), Juana Hernandez
(Melissa Noll), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Roxanne & Moose
Meyer (Dana Endsley & Mike Yonkovig), 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

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