



Artwork by HCUCC Member, Melissa Noll

“People forget facts, but they remember stories.”

–Joseph Campbell

“Owning our story can be hard by not nearly as difficult as spending our lives running from it.”

– Brené Brown

“When we tell our stories in a safe community,
all those things that separate us go away.”

– Sarah Markley

Founded in 1916, we are an Open & Affirming (LGBTQ+), anti-racist, and justice seeking church that is part of the greater United Church of Christ.

HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
LAITY SUNDAY

July 7, 2024, 10:55 am

** Your whole self is welcome here. Please feel free to take care of your body during worship in ways that work for you.*

Prelude "Blessed Be the Name of the Lord" arr. Carl Seal
Patrick Washburn, piano

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements Dawn Simmons

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: And also with you.

Introit "In This Very Room" Carol & Ron Harris
Patrick Washburn, piano

* Call to The Heart Lloyd Spencer

Please take a comfortable posture that supports your worship and reading...

One: Great is the Holy One who sits sovereign and near!

Many: **The earth rejoices on the holy mountain, at the heights and depths of God's love.**

One: We gather, we observe, we recognize, we ponder the wonders of Creator's majesty!

Many: **God's name, like your praise, reaches to the ends of the earth.**

One: The mighty deeds of power astound and amaze. We remember, and through our storytelling, recount from generation to generation!

Many: **Our Guide reigns forever and ever. Praise our God!**

* Invocation (*unison*) Lloyd Spencer

Powerful One, we come into this gathering humbled by your presence among us, grateful for the companionship of your people, and eager to worship your name. As we tell your story anew, we enter your story as the objects of your attention, love, and care. May we know you more deeply and clearly. May we be transformed and transfixed by the mystery of you. May we be inspired by your deeds of power to be instruments of your reign in the world. Empower us, O Holy One. Amen.

* Hymn 473

“Blessed Assurance”

F. Crosby

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of the Spirit, washed in Christ's blood.

Refrain: This is my story, this is my song
Praising my Savior all the day long (2x)

Perfect submission, perfect delight!
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels descending, bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love. (R)

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Savior am happy and blessed;
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with God's goodness, lost in Christ's love. (R)

Prayer for Transformation and New Life (*unison*)

Lloyd Spencer

Gracious and Loving God, have mercy on us. We confess our own forms of rebellion and stubbornness. We seek our own way and fail to wait for your counsel, wisdom, and insight. We hold fast to hopes and dreams that do not include your kingdom or our neighbors. We choose comfort over holy confrontation, doctrine over faithful discipleship and position over spiritual power. Awaken in us hunger and thirst for righteousness. Amen.

Words of Grace

Lloyd Spencer

Power-filled beloved, the Holy One is with you and fuels your journey. God grants you power to be the church, to be faithful, and to be active agents in the kingdom. You have power to make things new in your heart, in your neighborhood, and in your community. Receive the grace to try even when your way is uncertain, to hope even when circumstances seem dim, and to love even when love does not come easily. God is with you and will be with you.

Stories for All People

“Storytelling”

Laura Hankins

Prayer for Illumination 283 “Spirit of the Living God”

D Iverson

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me (2x)

Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me

Stories for All People “Making an Impression Regardless”

Ed Vickery

Scripture Lesson Ezekial 2:1-5 (NRSV)

Tina Dickens

Our lesson for today comes from the Book of Ezekial, where we learn of the story of the Vision of the Scroll...

He said to me: O mortal, stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you. And when he spoke to me, a spirit entered into me and set me on my feet; and I heard him speaking to me. He said to me, Mortal, I am sending you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have transgressed against me to this very day. The descendants are impudent and stubborn. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God.’ Whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house), they shall know that there has been a prophet among them.

One: May we hear what the Spirit is saying to the people.

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

Stories for All People “Master Gardening”

Sally Duffy

* Gospel Lesson

Mark 6:1-13 (The Message Bible)

Lloyd Spencer

Our Gospel lesson for today comes from Mark 6 as Jesus returns to his hometown and sends out his disciples...

He left there and returned to his hometown. His disciples came along. On the Sabbath, he gave a lecture in the meeting place. He stole the show, impressing everyone. “We had no idea he was this good!” they said. “How did he get so wise all of a sudden, get such ability?”

But in the next breath they were cutting him down: “He’s just a carpenter—Mary’s boy. We’ve known him since he was a kid. We know his brothers, James, Justus, Jude, and Simon, and his sisters. Who does he think he is?” They tripped over what little they knew about him and fell, sprawling. And they never got any further.

Jesus told them, “A prophet has little honor in his hometown, among his relatives, on the streets he played in as a child.” Jesus wasn’t able to do much of anything there—he laid hands on a few sick people and healed them, that’s all. He couldn’t get over their stubbornness. He left and made a circuit of the other villages, teaching.

Jesus called the Twelve to him, and sent them out in pairs. He gave them authority and power to deal with the evil opposition. He sent them off with these instructions:

“Don’t think you need a lot of extra equipment for this. *You* are the equipment. No special appeals for funds. Keep it simple. And no luxury inns. Get a modest place and be content there until you leave. If you’re not welcomed, not listened to, quietly withdraw. Don’t make a scene. Shrug your shoulders and be on your way.”

Then they were on the road. They preached with joyful urgency that life can be radically different; right and left they sent the demons packing; they brought wellness to the sick, anointing their bodies, healing their spirits.

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.

Stories for All People

“Modes of Storytelling”

Brian Hankins

Invitation to Generosity

Lloyd Spencer

Now is the time for our ministry of giving and sharing...

Generosity does not measure the resources we have. Rather, it notes the capacity we have to give from the abundance we have received and the trust we place in God's generosity to renew the gifts we bring. Let us give generously to meet the needs that confront our community and to demonstrate the power of our collective faithfulness.

During the month of July, Holy Covenant UCC also receives its Annual Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and Emergency Fund. This fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years. We will receive these offerings in the month of July. If you are moved to share your gifts, please notate "Christmas Fund" in the memo. Thank you for sharing your genericity with others.

* Doxology

OLD HUNDREDTH

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost.**

* Prayer of Dedication (*unison*)

Lloyd Spencer

Please join me in our unison prayer of dedication...

Creator, all we have emanates from you and your creation. Receive these gifts we give with thanksgiving and hope for a shared future without lack, disparities, and unmet needs. Amen.

THE MYSTIC SUPPER ALL ARE WELCOME AT CHRIST'S TABLE

The Invitation

Rev. Gregg Walker

Beloved children of God, as we gather here this morning, hearing each other's stories, we are the church! In this moment, we respond to the words of Jesus, who tells us: "...where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

It is through the power of Christ we proclaim that this table is open to all people — no matter who you are or what you believe or what you've been told. Here at the Lord's table, we remember the simple gathering of a chosen family that came together for a meal that through the proclaimed a new way of being in this world.

We remember God's radically inclusive love made real in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. We remember the One who befriended the forgotten, embraced the outcast, and saw the Image of God in all people. We remember the One who confronted every power that disconnected, marginalized, oppressed, and "other-ed."

It is here at this table that we find hope and imagination to see God's dream and promise of a world of wholeness, and it is here that we receive the nourishment and strength to continue on the paths of justice.

Words of Institution

We recall that on the night he was betrayed, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way he took the cup, saying, "This is my blood, my very life, poured out for you. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Sharing of the Elements

“O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing”

O, for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise
Thy glories ever echoing
The triumphs of God's grace

My gracious savior and my God
Assist me to proclaim
To spread through all the earth abroad
The honors of Thy name

Refrain: So come on and sing out,
Let our anthem grow loud
There is one great love
There is one great love, Jesus

Jesus, the name that charms our fears
That bids our sorrows cease
'Tis music in the sinner's ears
'Tis life and health and peace

Christ breaks the power of canceled sin
And sets the prisoners free
His love can ease our suffering
His love availed for me (R)

Christ speaks and listening to His voice
New life the dead receive
The mournful broken hearts rejoice
The humble poor believe

Glory to God and praise and love
Be ever, ever giv'n
By saints below and saints above
The church in earth and Heav'n (R)

Prayer of Thanksgiving (*unison*)

God, by the bread of heaven and the cup of life, you make us one body. Bind us together by your spirit that we might live into your hopes for us, a community centered in Christ and rich in compassion, commitment, courage, and care, and a thoughtful community to come together when others are in need of time away. In the name of your beloved son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

* Hymn 591

“This Is My Song”

FINLANDIA

This is my song, O God of all the nations,
A song of peace for lands afar and mine.
This is my home, the country where my heart is;
Here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine;
But other hearts in other lands are beating
With hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.

My country’s skies are bluer than the ocean,
And sunlight beams on clover leaf and pine;
But other lands have sunlight, too, and clover,
And skies are everywhere as blue as mine.
O hear my song, O God of all the nations,
A song of peace for their land and for mine.

* Benediction

Ed Vickery

* Benediction Response 391 “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

“Let There Be Glory and Honor and Praises”

arr. Carl Seal

Patrick Washburn, piano

Songs in this service are used by permission.

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The liturgy for today's service was written by or adapted from Worship Ways, the Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay who serves as Minister for Worship and Theology for the United Church of Christ. Communion liturgy adapted from the writings of Rev. Christopher Czarnecki.

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.

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

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WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

Stay connected! There are many new events in our future! 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/>

We thank Patrick Washburn for his gift in music today. Patrick is filling in for Jon Weddell while he is on vacation.

On Sunday, July 14, we welcome back to the pulpit Rev. Jonathan Heaslet.

Save the Date! July 28, 2024 "Feast of 5000" Potluck following worship Special Offering to be taken to benefit those in the Gaza Strip - via World Central Kitchen Watch for sign-up coming soon.

SUMMER ALL-CHURCH READ: "OUR TRESPASSES"

All are invited to join Holy Covenant's All-Church Read this summer, which will culminate in an author visit Sept. 8.

"Our Trespasses: White Churches and the Taking of American Neighborhoods" tells the story of Charlotte's Brooklyn neighborhood through the North family, displaced by urban renewal, and the white congregation of the First Baptist Charlotte that purchased their land from the city. This local history examines how race, geography, policy and religion haunt landscapes in Charlotte, as they do in cities across the country. Understanding this history is a vital step in Holy Covenant's journey to creating a more just and equitable community. **Author Greg Jarrell, an ordained minister, will preach at Holy Covenant during worship Sept. 8.** Following worship and a break for light refreshments, Jarrell will discuss what he learned about the values and biases that are woven into Charlotte's development patterns.

Get the book at Park Road Books (reserve a copy by calling 704-525-0293), at publisher fortresspress.com or at Amazon.

SOJOURNERS CLASS, SUNDAYS AT 9:45AM

We gather Sundays at 9:45am in the Conference Room, or via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89561758099?pwd=d1gvUmh3K2hCNmdidm1QdjllNkF5QT09>

WE PROVIDE OUR EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME WITH HELP FROM:

D Evans, Brian Hankins, Laura Hankins, Jo Ann Jellison

Ushers: Shakti Subramanian; Greeters:

Refreshments: Southside Covenant Group

WORSHIP VOLUNTEER SIGN-UP

Greeters and ushers are needed starting at 10:30am every Sunday. Liturgists and readers roles are also available. **Please sign up in the Gathering Room or at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C44ACAD23A2FE3-ushers>.**

We welcome all in our congregation to participate in worship leadership.

Download the app to make signing up even easier!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/mobileapp>

Pastor Chris will be on vacation from July 1st through July 14th. Should you need pastoral care support while he's away, our Elder of the Month, Joy Decker, and retired UCC pastor Rev. Lloyd Spencer will be available. If a pastoral care need arises, we ask that you please contact the church office at 704-599-9810 or office@holycovenantucc.org, and our office manager will put you in contact with one of them depending on your spiritual needs.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Terry Parrish & Lee Brigman and family in the recent death of Terry's mother, Fran
Eric Miner & Ed Vickery and family in the recent death of Eric's brother, Jason
Haydock

Linda Carver, Akeera Czarnecki & Daveyion Simmons, Kevin Decker, Linn Finger,
Tom & Kathy Habel, Jim Humphrey, Jeff Hughes, Kat Kerce, Sharon Landis, Eric
Miner & Ed Vickery, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Alice Phelan & Sally Young, Cynthia Simpson,
Isabelle Reedy Powell, Jerry Rhyne, Ed & Beth Sharp, Anita Taylor

Friends & Family Members

Lianna (Kathleen Wagner), Melissa Brown, Phillip Cherry (Anne Pigg), Craig Chrismon
(Melissa Noll), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Charles Jernigan (Lee
Brigman), Dave Johnson, Judah L. Jones & Bill Englebreth, Richard Lease (Barb
Schneller), Joe Parks (Beth Sharp), Mike Santorini (Melissa Noll), Michelle Sharp (Beth
& Ed Sharp), Joyce Ward (Ed Vickery), Janet Wakefield (Linda Burby) Nelly Webb
and parents (Kristin Andes), John Zastrow (Barb Schneller)

If you wish to add someone to the list, please send a note to

prayers@holycovenantucc.org.