

Covenant Congregational Church

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Worship Gathering February 11, 2018 10:30 a.m.

PRELUDE *I Want Jesus to Walk With Me* arr. Shackley

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS Alynne MacLean

INTROIT *Hallelujah Song* Bowen

*CALL TO WORSHIP (from Romans 15:5-7) Hymn #864

*SONG *Come, Christians, Join to Sing* Hymn #295

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Choral Offertory *African Alleluia* Althouse
Karsten Mohn, Drum

*Doxology 48

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him all creatures here below;
Praise Him above ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

*Prayer of Dedication

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

*(Children between the ages of Kindergarten and 5th Grade
are invited at this time to Children's Church.)*

THE WORD OF GOD

Old Testament Reading Nehemiah 5:1-19 (NRSV) Bob Buckley
O.T. Page #434

5 Now there was a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish kin. **2** For there were those who said, "With our sons and our daughters, we are many; we must get grain, so that we may eat and stay alive." **3** There were also those who said, "We are having to pledge our fields, our vineyards, and our houses in order to get grain during the famine." **4** And there were those who said, "We are having to borrow money on our fields and vineyards to pay the king's tax. **5** Now our flesh is the same as that of our kindred; our children are the same as their children; and yet we are forcing our sons and daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have been ravished; we are powerless, and our fields and vineyards now belong to others."

6 I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these complaints. **7** After thinking it over, I brought charges against the nobles and the officials; I said to them, "You are all

taking interest from your own people." And I called a great assembly to deal with them, **8** and said to them, "As far as we were able, we have bought back our Jewish kindred who had been sold to other nations; but now you are selling your own kin, who must then be bought back by us!" They were silent, and could not find a word to say. **9** So I said, "The thing that you are doing is not good. Should you not walk in the fear of our God, to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies? **10** Moreover I and my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain. Let us stop this taking of interest. **11** Restore to them, this very day, their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, and their houses, and the interest on money, grain, wine, and oil that you have been exacting from them." **12** Then they said, "We will restore everything and demand nothing more from them. We will do as you say." And I called the priests, and made them take an oath to do as they had promised. **13** I also shook out the fold of my garment and said, "So may God shake out everyone from house and from property who does not perform this promise. Thus may they be shaken out and emptied." And all the assembly said, "Amen," and praised the Lord. And the people did as they had promised.

14 Moreover from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes, twelve years, neither I nor my brothers ate the food allowance of the governor. **15** The former governors who were before me laid heavy burdens on the people, and took food and wine from them, besides forty shekels of silver. Even their servants lorded it over the people. But I did not do so, because of the fear of God. **16** Indeed, I devoted myself to the work on this wall, and acquired no land; and all my servants were gathered there for the work. **17** Moreover there were at my table one hundred fifty people, Jews and officials, besides those who came to us from the nations around us. **18** Now that which was prepared for one day was one ox and six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for me, and every ten days skins of wine in abundance; yet with all this I did not demand the food allowance of the governor, because of the heavy burden of labor on the people. **19** Remember for my good, O my God, all that I have done for this people.

Response: The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God!

SERMON *Resolving Conflicts Jesus' Way*

*RESPONSE SONG *Ashes* Insert

COMMISSIONING OF LEADERS & PRAYER (inspired by 2 Corinthians 5:16-21)
Reconciling Christ, bless our efforts to do our ministry of reconciliation.
Give us the strength to persevere without counting the hurts,
and to find within ourselves the capacity to keep on loving.

**Give us the grace to be able to stand in the middle of situations,
and to be a conduit for the deep listening
which can lead to healing and forgiveness.**

Help us to conduct ourselves with dignity,
giving and expecting respect, moving from prayer to action,
and from action back again into prayer.

**Grant that we may be so grounded in Your love,
that our identity is not threatened if we change our minds,
or begin to see a better way to act.**

Bless those who are called to reconcile within our church –
Our Pastor, Ministry Team Leaders, and other gifted peacemakers,
and bless those who stand in the midst of bitter conflict.

**Reconciling Christ, bless us and bless all who engage
in the sacred work of envisioning a new era of togetherness
and building bridges of love to people here and not here today. AMEN.**

*BENEDICTION

Alleluia

Berthier

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

Pastor Jason

It's time to say goodbye to our friend, the alleluia. It is time to let it rest for a while, so that it will return to us at Easter full of enthusiasm to remind us again who we really are: beloved children of God.

Lord God, our Creator, as we bury this sign of heaven's song, help us to commit ourselves to live a good life this Lenten season. Help us to give up things that stand between us and Your love, and walk with Jesus on the road that leads us closer to You. We give up our alleluia only for a while, so that we may make a more beautiful music in our heart and life when we sing it again at Easter.

You are now invited to say your own good-bye to the alleluia, if you wish.

Lord, we have given up for a time the song of heaven so that we may prepare our hearts and minds to be ready for our resurrection. Help us, in Jesus, to die to selfish habits that keep us from You and to live more fully Your peace and joy. Help us to be renewed in Your Spirit as we live in the way of Jesus this Lent. Amen.

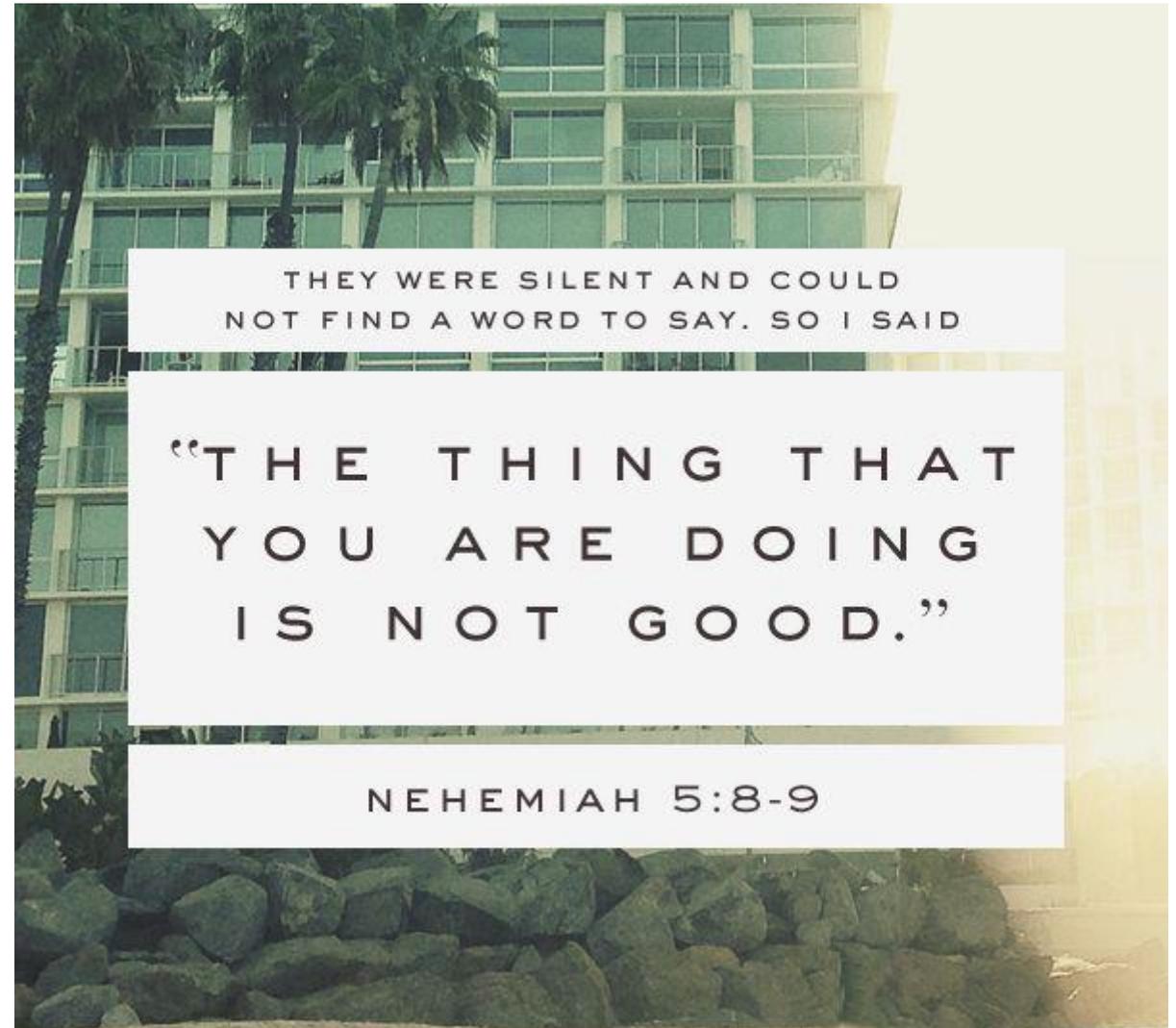
*POSTLUDE

Glorious Morning

arr. Andrews

*Please stand in praise to God, if able
CCLI #982653

Thank you for participating in our worship gathering! We are glad that you are here this morning and pray that this might be a meaningful faith-building experience for you and/or your family. To go deeper in relationship with this church family, we invite join in on the fellowship and light refreshments after services today in the Fireside Room.



Welcome to Covenant Congregational Church
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