



Picture by Jon Tyson (Unsplash)

“It is our duty to fight for our freedom.
It is our duty to win.
We must love each other
and support each other.
We have nothing to lose but our chains.”
– Assata Shakur

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

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**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

October 29, 2023, 10:55 am

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

Prelude Kathi Smith

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

One: May the peace of Christ be with you!

Many: **And also with you.**

Stewardship Moment Jean Raley-Dennis

Introit "Let Us Build a House" ALL ARE WELCOME

**Let us build a house where all are named,
Their songs and visions heard and love and treasured,
Taught and claimed as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
Prayers of faith and songs of grace;
Let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:
All are welcome; all are welcome; all are welcome in this place.**

* Call to the Heart Ed Vickery

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

One: This morning we hold love in our hearts.

Many: **For those who are here with us. The ones we call family, friends, and neighbors.**

One: This morning we hold love in our hearts.

Many: **For those who are not here. Those the Church has hurt, abandoned, or rejected.**

One: This morning we hold love in our hearts.

Many: **For the saints in our lives. People whose lives have touched us, impacted us, and changed us.**

One: This morning we hold love in our hearts.

Many: **For the saints we will soon come to know. Newcomers to our church, strangers who will become friends, and the divine encounters that happen among us as we bring our worship of loving God and neighbor to the world. Amen.**

* Hymn 456

“More Love to You, O Christ”

MORE LOVE TO YOU

More love to you, O Christ, more love to you!
Hear now the prayer I make faith to renew.

Refrain: In all I say and do, more love, O Christ to you,
More love to you, more love to you!

Once earthly joy I craved, sought peace and rest;
Now you alone I seek, give what is best: (R)

Then shall my latest breath whisper your praise;
This be the parting cry my heart shall raise: (R)

Daily Affirmation

Yourself: I am an expression of God’s love in the world.

Neighbor: You are an expression of God’s love in the world.

World: We are an expression of God’s love in the world.

Prayer of Transformation (*unison*)

Ed Vickery

Please join me in a unison prayer of transformation...

Merciful One, we come before you in the humbleness of prayer and spirit. We seek to share with you the love we have not expressed this week. The moments we lost our cool, lashing out in impatience. The times we said words Jesus would never say. The instances when our actions might have hurt others or even your creation. We know there is a different way, a more Christ-like way. In your time, reveal the revolutionary love of this path to us. Amen.

Words of Grace

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Saints were not born saints. They became saints. They learned from their mistakes and realized the error of their ways. They saw their life as no longer being independent of others, but interconnected to the world around them and the life that springs forth from it. The saints became aware the power of God could be revealed right in our midst, a power that transformed lives. Do not dwell on what you have done wrong, but as you have the power to be a saint unto others, dwell on what you can now do right.

Response to God’s Grace

GOODNESS IS STRONGER

Goodness is stronger than evil; love is stronger than hate;
Light is stronger than darkness; life is stronger than death.

Victory is ours; victory is ours through God who loves us. (2x)

Stories for All People

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

All children in attendance are welcome to remain where they are or come up to the chancel for a story or time with the pastor...

A Time of Remembering Our Saints

In the middle of the aisle is a table with several votive candles. You are invited to come up to the table to light one of the candles in memory of a saint in your life. When finished please discard the matchstick upside down in the vase with the wet marbles and return to your seat. We will dismiss rows as guided by the ushers.

Song of Preparation

“Now”

R. Cooney

Now is the moment, now is the time.

This very day there is salvation.

Pastoral Prayer

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

The Lord's Prayer *Adapted from Dr. Rocco A. Errico (translation from the Aramaic)*

Our Creator who is throughout the universe.

Let your name be set apart.

Come your counsel.

Let your desire be, as in the universe, also on the earth.

Give us bread for our necessities this day.

And free us from our offenses, as also we have freed our offenders.

And do not let us enter our worldliness,

but set us free from error.

For belongs to you the kin-dom, power, and song, from ages to ages.

Sealed in faithfulness,

Let this be our way.

Amen.

Prayer for Illumination (*sung*)

CHEREPONI

Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love,

Show us how to serve the neighbors we have from you.

Epistle Lesson

1 John 4:7-8 (NRSV)

Sally McLester

Our first scripture reading for today comes from the first epistle of John 4:8, where we are told God is love...

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.

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

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

* Gospel Lesson

Matthew 22:34-46 (NRSV)

Ed Vickery

Our second scripture reading for today comes from the Gospel of Matthew 22:34-46, where Jesus is questioned about the greatest commandment...

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ‘Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?’ He said to him, ‘ “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.’

Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: ‘What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?’ They said to him, ‘The son of David.’ He said to them, ‘How is it then that David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying,

“The Lord said to my Lord,

‘Sit at my right hand,

until I put your enemies under your feet’ ”?

If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?’ No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

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.

The Good News

“Love Is Our Duty”

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Invitation to Generosity

Ed Vickery

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

As we sit among the shining lights of the loving saints who have gone before us, may we reflect on what they have given us. How they have molded us, shaped us, and formed us. As recipients of their love, their divine investment has not gone unnoticed. May we use this time of sharing to invest a portion of our gifts in the love of God and neighbor.

Prayer of Dedication (*unison*)

Ed Vickery

Please join me in a unison prayer of dedication for all we will receive...

God, source of all being, lover of all creation, use these gifts freely given for greater purposes than we could ever imagine. Use them to fill empty hearts back up with hope. To put smiles on the faces of those who carry disappointment. To create a beloved community for those who thought there was none. And may this church and its people be Your vessels through which such gifts happen. Amen.

* Doxology

BARUCH HASHEM ADONAI

Baruch hashem Adonai. Baruch hashem Adonai.

Blessed be the name of the Lord. Baruch hashem Adonai.

* Hymn 498

“Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love”

CHEREPONI

Refrain: Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love,

Show us how to serve the neighbors we have from you.

Knelt at the feet of his friends, silently washing their feet,
Jesu, you act-ed as servant to them. (R)

Neighbors are rich and poor, varied in color and race,
Neighbors are near and far away. (R)

These are the ones we should serve; these are the ones we should love;
All these are neighbors to us and you. (R)

Loving puts us on our knees, showing our faith by our deeds,
Serving the neighbors, we have from you. (R)

Kneel at the feet of our friends, silently washing their feet,
This is the way we should live with you. (R)

* Benediction

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

* Benediction Response

HALLE, HALLE

Halle, halle, hallelujah! (3x) Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Postlude

Kathi Smith

*Songs in this service are used by permission.
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The liturgy for today's service have been written by Rev. Christopher Czarnecki.

Thank you, Kathi Smith, for filling in for Jon Weddell while he is away!

WE PROVIDE OUR EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME WITH HELP FROM:

D Evans, Brian Hankins, Jo Ann 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 the Mountain Island Covenant Group 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: Daytime Saints; 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/>

STEWARDSHIP 2024

As we conclude our stewardship messages in October, please prayerfully share your pledge. Our Budget and Finance Team relies on your input to develop our church spending plan for the coming year that feeds our many ministries. Thank you for your prayers for God's continued transformational work through Holy Covenant, for our new Settled Pastor Rev. Christopher Czarnecki, and for God's spirit to move within each of our lives as we discern what gifts each of us can offer to God to

strengthen God's ministry through Holy Covenant to our members, our community, and beyond.

Our pledges as of printing are at 62% (\$87,344) of \$140,000.00 goal, General Fund (operating fund), and 58% (\$23,258) of \$40,000.00 goal, Building Fund (capital fund). Thank you to all who have provided their commitments to ministry.

Submit your pledge by one of the following methods:

1. Online through the church's website

<https://holycovenantucc.org/make-your-pledge-online/>,

2. E-mail your pledge to the church office at office@holycovenantucc.org or

3. Mail the pledge card to:

Holy Covenant UCC, PO Box 481285, Charlotte NC 28269

Because of you our church changes lives.

USHERS, GREETERS, ...

Greeters and ushers are needed starting at 10:30 every Sunday, and a liturgist and a scripture reader are needed during each service. Please sign up in the Gathering Room or

at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C44ACAD23A2FE3-ushers>.

HYGIENE KITS AND SANDWICH BUILD, FOLLOWING WORSHIP

The Youth contingent and Missions and Justice is planning to prepare meal bags to be distributed at the Greyhound station for migrant travelers and the families while the rest of us are planning to prepare 400 sandwiches for the Men's Shelter. The Young and Not-So, the Regulars as well as our New Folks...please join us in the camaraderie that these events inspire!!!

NEW MEMBER/INQUIRER CLASS, TODAY IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM

Are you interested in learning more about our denomination, Holy Covenant UCC, and the United Church of Christ? Do you wonder why we do what we do? Let's get together and talk about! Join us in the Conference Room following worship.

Save The Dates!

Nov 5 - Installation, The Reverend Christopher Czarnecki, reception following

The Rev. Dr. H. Warren Casiday, Interim Associate Conference Minister of the UCC Southern Conference's Western North Carolina Association, will participate in this special installation worship service, beginning at 11 a.m., Sunday, Nov. 5, 2023 at Holy Covenant UCC. *Church members wishing to participate with items for the reception following, please bring items plated and ready for serving:*

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C44ACAD23A2FE3-45337385-installation>

Nov 12 – Rev. Lloyd Spencer brings the message

Nov 19 - Annual Meeting & All Church Pot Luck

Join us in worship on November 19 at 10:55am in the sanctuary or via live stream where we will integrate reports of the many ministries of the church during the service. **Then join us at noon (on November 19th) in the sanctuary or** via Zoom for business reports and voting on 2024 Proposed Budget and Class of 2026 Consistory. Votes that are cast in person and via Zoom will be included in the tally.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C44ACAD23A2FE3-45284953-annual#/>

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Linda Carver, Gary & Linda Clark, Kevin Decker, Linn Finger, Tom & Kathy Habel, Jim Humphrey, Sharon Landis, Melissa Noll, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Jerry Rhyne, Ed & Beth Sharp, Cynthia & Tommy Simpson, Shakti Subramanian, Anita Taylor, Bill & Kim Tyler

Friends & Family Members

Ketisha Daley in the recent death of her husband, Roger Daley (Robert Shepherd) Karen & Billy (Kim Tyler), Melissa Brown, Craig Chrismon (Melissa Noll), Erika Eckel and family (Dawn Simmons), David & Cecelia Griffin (JP Griffin), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Darin Jellison and family (Jo Ann Jellison), Matty & Simone McKinnon (Joy Decker), Roxanne & Moose Meyer (Dana Endsley & Mike Yonkovig), Sue Parrish (Terry Raley-Dennis), Marie Raley (Jean Raley-Dennis), Susan Rayfield (Martha Bomely), Suzie & John Robinson (Dana Endsley & Mike Yonkovig), Barbara Rutelonis (Eric Miner), Michelle Sharp (Beth & Ed Sharp), Dave & Pam Shimberg, Christopher Sizemore (Tina Ettesen), Eulene Shepherd (Robert Shepherd), Joyce Ward (Ed Vickery), Janet Wakefield (Linda Burby), John Zastrow (Barb Schneller)

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

prayers@holycovenantucc.org.