



Unsplash Photo by Diana Simumpande

“The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us.”

– Walter Brueggemann

“The condition of truth is to allow suffering to speak, it means then that if you have a prophetic sensibility, you are committed to loving others and if you love others, you hate injustice.”

– Cornel West

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki, MDiv, MBA, Senior Pastor

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HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

January 28, 2024, 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 "Down by the Riverside" arr. M. A. Walden

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

One: May the peace of the Christ Child be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

Introit "Holy Ground" G. Davis
D Evans, vocals

**We are standing on holy ground,
And I know that there are angels all around.
Let us praise Jesus now.
We are standing in God's presence on holy ground.**

* Call to the Heart Jon Heaslet
Please take a comfortable posture that supports your worshiping, reading, and singing...

One: You are welcome here just as you are. You don't need to change anything about yourself, unless it is you who wants to.

Many: **Hear the prophets speaking about inclusion!**

One: God seeks to make us one. For it is God who widens the table to create one more seat and ends disparities to create real equity.

Many: **Hear the prophets speaking about justice!**

One: You are perfect and made in God's image. The color of your skin, your sexuality, your gender identity, the shape of your body.

Many: **Hear the prophets speaking about love!**

One: We've come to give praise to God and be filled for the journey of life in this week ahead. God imbue our spirit and heart.

Many: **As we worship, hear the prophets speaking about God's transformation, Christ's love, and the power of spirit's movement!**

Invocation (*unison*)

Jon Heaslet

Come. Lay down your worries and rest in the refuge of this sacred space. This is your spiritual home, a place to sit comfortably and be with the God of your own understanding. You are surrounded by kindred spirits, neighbors who hear you and see you. Allow yourself to be restored in God's image. Feel God's healing power in your midst and be set free to be who God has made you to be. Amen.

* Hymn

"Down by the Riverside"

STUDY WAR NO MORE

I'm gonna lay down my burden,

Down by the riverside, (3x)

I'm gonna lay down my burden, down by the riverside,

I'm gonna study war no more

Refrain: I ain't gonna study war no more.

Ain't gonna study war no more. (2x)

Gonna lay down my sword and shield,

Down by the riverside (3x)

Gonna lay down my sword and shield, down by the riverside,

Gonna study war no more. (R)

Daily Affirmation

Ourselves: "My words and actions contain the power to change lives."

Neighbor: "Your words and actions contain the power to change lives."

World: "Our words and actions contain the power to change lives."

Prayer of Transformation for New Life (*unison*)

Jon Heaslet

Please join me in this unison prayer of transformation for new life...

Loving God, we confess the ways we've failed to express your character in our daily lives this week. The times our actions might have diminished life, the moments we were hurtful instead of helpful, or the instances where we were gripped by fear and lacked the kind of compassion Jesus would have had. Forgive us for our shortcomings and help us to be aware of your presence among us as we seek to change our hearts, minds, and spirits. Amen.

Words of Grace

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

God knows our hearts, the longing to truly unite with one another, to free people from the bonds of oppression, and to instill a reality here on earth where peace and justice reign. In this knowing, God grants us the grace to grow through our mistakes, to release that which no longer serves us or the common good, and the space to become who God is calling us to be...the healing and prophetic love of Christ in this world. And all God's people said, "Amen."

Stories for All People

Linda Heaslet

Prayers of the People

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Modern Testimony

Jeff Edwards-Knight

These words of Modern Testimony come from William Barber II's sermon at the inaugural prayer service at the Washington Cathedral on January 21, 2021...

Please God, grant us wisdom, grant us courage, until the poor are lifted, the sick are healed, children are protected, and civil rights and human rights never neglected. Grant us wisdom for the facing of this hour until love and justice are never rejected. Grant us wisdom and courage for the facing of this hour until, together, we make sure there is racial justice and economic justice and living-wage justice and health care justice and ecological justice and disability justice and justice for homeless and justice for the poor and low-wealth and working poor and immigrant justice—until we study war no more and peace and justice are the way we live. This is the only path to domestic tranquility and healing. So, God, grant us as a people; grant us as an entire nation...grant every preacher; grant every politician; grant every person, Black and white, Latino, Native, Asian, Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Hindu, people of faith, not of faith but with a moral conscience, every human being created by God, documented or undocumented; gay, straight or trans, young or old. And what a day it will be when our children's children call us what you have called us to be: repairers of the breach. Amen.

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

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

* Doxology

OLD HUNDREDTH

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

Prayer of Dedication (*unison*)

Jon Heaslet

Please join me in a unison prayer of dedication for the gifts we have received...

Gracious God, use these gifts through the people of this church to do radical things in radical ways. May they be channels of ministry for holding hope, tending to pain, providing affirming and inclusive space, and offering your unconditional love. Through our faithful witness may these not just be prophecies, but may they be living realities. Amen.

INSTALLATION AND ORDINATION OF DEACONS AND ELDERS

Elders: Kristin Andes, Jana Harrison, Lloyd Spencer, Joy Decker, Brian Hankins;
Deacons: Phyllis Johnson, Dawn Schmitz, Gregg Walker, Suzanne Lamorey, Eric Miner, Cheryl Milam, Shakti Subramanian **Officers:** Jeff Edwards-Knight (E), President; Terry Raley-Dennis (D); Vice President, Mel Andersen (D) Secretary; Martha Bomely, Treasurer

(Members of the Class of 2026 and Officers come forward.)

Pastor: These people have been called by God, in accordance with the faith and order of the church, to serve among us. They have accepted their call and are here to witness to their willingness to serve.

President: Siblings in Christ, it is an honor to be entrusted with responsibility for service on the Consistory of Holy Covenant United Church of Christ. Having prayerfully considered the duties and responsibilities of your ministry, are you prepared to serve with the help of God in Christ's name and for the glory of God?

Members: I am.

President: Do you promise to exercise your ministry diligently and faithfully, showing forth the love of Christ?

Members: I do, relying on God's grace.

Pastor: Are each of you who have committed to serve as officers of the congregation willing to accept the office to which you have been called and are you prepared to serve with the help of God in Christ's name and for the glory of God?

Officers: I am.

Pastor: Members of this household of faith, you have heard our siblings in Christ who have answered God's call to service. Let us affirm our intention to live in covenant with them.

People: We gather in celebration of the joy that is ours to be partners with you in the service of Jesus Christ. We promise to love you, honor your leadership, and assist you, that together we may be a faithful church of Jesus Christ.

(Current Elders and Deacons and the outgoing class of 2023 are invited forward for the laying on of hands.)

Laying on of Hands

Pastor: The Laying on of Hands is the symbolic act whereby the church in every age recognizes God's call to ministry in the lives of faithful people and asks the Holy Spirit to confer upon them the gifts of ministry. We lay hands upon you, Mel Andersen, Cheryl Milam, and Shakti Subramanian, as Deacons and Joy Decker and Brian Hankins, as Elders. Let us offer our prayers and blessing as a congregation:

People: Eternal God, you have called these people to serve you in this household of faith and in the world, which you have entrusted to our care and keeping. Send your Holy Spirit on them that they may serve among us with honor and faithfulness. Help them to be diligent in their duties, that your church may prosper in the mission you place before it. May their example prove worthy for all of us to follow, as we are united in Christ's ministry, to the glory of your name. Amen.

President: In the name of Jesus Christ, and on behalf of the people of Holy Covenant United Church of Christ, we rejoice to announce that you are each ordained as members of the Consistory. May your service be a blessing and cause you to grow in wisdom and in grace. Amen.

D Evans, Brian Hankins, Jo Ann Jellison, Shakti Subramanian,
Jean Raley-Dennis, Terry Raley-Dennis



We welcome all in our congregation to participate! Do you like talking to interesting people and being helpful? **Greeters and ushers, liturgists and readers are needed** starting at 10:30 every Sunday. Please sign up in the Gathering Room or on the SignUpGenius link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C44ACAD23A2FE3-ushers>

FELLOWSHIP HOUR HOSTS NEEDED

Please sign up in the gathering room, or on <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C44ACAD23A2FE3-sunday1#/>. We will need light refreshments after worship on Sundays, plus set up and clean up.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

BOOKS AVAILABLE FOR LENDING AND SHARING - OR FOR THE BOOK DRIVE!

Holy Covenant has found it has an abundance of books. Also, we had recently learned of a Prison Books Collective that will be coming to a close on January 31, 2024. Please drop by the classroom next to the office for details.

GAME NIGHT, JAN. 27, 6:30-8:30PM

Don't miss our monthly game night happening on Saturday, January 27. Bring your favorite game or just jump into a round of Yahtzee or cribbage. Everyone is welcome! We'll have snacks and beverages galore.

NEW MEMBER / INQUIRER CLASSES FEB. 4 & FEB. 18, 2024

Are you interested in learning more about our denomination, the United Church of Christ? Do you wonder why we do what we do? Would you like to get together with others who will be talking about it? Let's get together and talk about! Please RSVP, 704-599-9810 or office@holycovenantuc.org. All are welcome!

ROOM IN THE INN, FEB. 11

Everyone is invited to join our guests for a family-style pizza dinner. Room In The Inn is a program through A Roof Above, that matches individuals and families who need shelter during the winter months with faith communities offering an overnight welcome. We need help setting up Sunday after church and we always

welcome our congregation to share in our evening meal and fellowship. There is a sign-up sheet in the gathering room with ways you can help. Text Suzanne at 7046547267 for “dinner reservations”!

CONFRONTING WHITENESS UPDATES

Coming soon--Cohort 3 of Confronting Whiteness.

We're planning for our next group to start in early March (specific date TBA), with the 9 weekly classes held by Zoom on Sunday afternoon/evenings. Join fellow church members to engage in "a new conversation about race and racism that helps members of White-dominant churches and institutions identify their own racial history and wrestle with what it means to be White." For further information or to add your name to a list of participants, contact Meg Houlihan (megmhoulihan@gmail.com).

Confronting Whiteness discussion/debrief for Cohorts 1 and 2

Please join us on **Sunday, Feb. 11** from 12:30-2 in the Conference Room for a conversation about your experience with this process and this material. Facilitated by Sally Duffy and Meg Houlihan, we will have a chance to share our experiences and identify needs and opportunities going forward. RSVP to Meg Houlihan (megmhoulihan@gmail.com).

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Patti Key & Pam Zinkann in the death of Patti's father, James Key
Linda Carver, Kevin Decker, Linn Finger, Tom & Kathy Habel, Jim Humphrey, Sharon Landis, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Alice Phelan & Sally Young, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Jerry Rhyne, Ed & Beth Sharp, Cynthia & Tommy Simpson, Shakti Subramanian, Anita Taylor

Friends & Family Members

Larry Campbell and family in the recent death of his wife, Pat (Ed Vickery)
Mary (Bill & Kim Tyler), Melissa Brown, Craig Chrismon (Melissa Noll), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Darin Jellison (Jo Ann Jellison), Judah L. Jones & Bill Englebreth, Matty & Simone McKinnon (Joy Decker), Roxanne & Moose Meyer (Dana Endsley & Mike Yonkovig), Suzie & John Robinson (Dana Endsley & Mike Yonkovig), Michelle Sharp (Beth & Ed Sharp), Joyce Tyler (Bill Tyler), 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.