



Photo by Rasheeque Ahnaf

“The fruit of the Spirit is the outward evidence of the inward reality of a heart “abiding” in Christ.”

– Richard J. Foster

“Union with Christ, and abiding in Christ, what do they not secure? Peace, perfect peace; rest, constant rest; answers to all our prayers; victory over all our foes; pure, holy living; ever-increasing fruitfulness. All, all of these are the glad outcome of abiding in Christ.”

– James Hudson Taylor

“Abiding is a journey of growing spiritual roots down deep so that you can do more than just survive, you can thrive.”

- Anonymous

HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

April 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 "O Jesus, I Have Promised" arr. M. Cox

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

Introit 73 "Enter, Rejoice, and Come In" ENTER, REJOICE

Enter, rejoice, and come in. Enter, rejoice, and come in.

Today will be a joyful day: enter, rejoice, and come in.

* Call to the Heart Mel Andersen

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

One: We are branches, rooted in the vine of Christ.

Many: **We come because we seek to abide in Christ.**

One: The branches that remain in the vine bear much fruit.

Many: **We come because we long to be vibrant, alive, and productive.**

One: If we abide in Christ, then Christ will abide in us.

Many: **We come because we strive to bear the fruit of Christ's life.**

One: We now gather to worship God as creator and sustainer of us all.

Many: **May we grow wildly, as God tends to us lovingly.**

* Invocation (*unison*) Mel Andersen

Living God, as we gather, help us to embrace your presence in our lives. Plant us together in your peace. Root us together in your hope. Grow us together in your love. And reap the harvest of fruit, as we enact your justice. In your loving presence, we pray. Amen.

* Hymn

“Gather Us In”

Marty Haugen

Here in this place, the new light is streaming,
Shadows of doubt are vanished away:
See in this space our fears and our dreamings
Brought here to you in the light of this day.

Gather us in, the lost and forsaken,
Gather us in, our spirits inflame.
Call to us now and we shall awaken,
We shall arise at the sound of our name.

We are the young - our lives are a mystery,
We are the old who yearn for your face.
We have been sung throughout all of history,
Called to be light to the whole human-race.

Gather us in, the rich and the haughty,
Gather us in, the proud and the strong:
Give us a heart so meek and so lowly,
Give us the courage to enter the song.

Not just in buildings, small and confining,
Not in some heaven light-years away,
Here in this place the new light is shining,
Now is God present, and now is the day.

Gather us in and hold us forever,
Gather us in and make us your own,
Gather us in, all peoples together -
Fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

Prayer for Transformation and New Life (*unison*)

Mel Andersen

Creating God, as disciples help us to grow your garden of love. Prune us so that we may have a cleansed heart. Water our despair so it can be transformed into your hope. Feed our minds so that we may glean from your wisdom. Nurture our spirits so that we may become more fruitful. As we seek transformation, give us new life, we pray. Amen.

Song

"Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive"

DETROIT

“Forgive our sins as we forgive,” you taught us, Lord, to pray,
But you alone can grant us grace to live the words we say.

Words of Grace

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Merciful God, your love for us grows deep and wide. Help us to know your forgiveness for those times when we have failed to follow your example; when we chose greed over advocating for human rights; or when we chose silence over speaking truth to power. Help us to remember we can change our mindsets from one of earthly scarcity to divine abundance. Renew in us the courage to get into “good trouble” even when the arc of peace and justice is long. Strengthen us to be your branches so that all might know your garden of forgiveness and love. In your mercy, we pray, saying, “Amen.”

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

Linda Heaslet

Pastoral Prayer

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Lord’s Prayer (*unison*)

Our Creator who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kin-dom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kin-dom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Prayer for Illumination (*sung*)

O CHRIST, SURROUND ME

**God be the love to search and keep me;
God, be the prayer to move my voice;
God, be the strength to now uphold me:
O Christ, surround me; O Christ, surround me.**

**Christ in the eyes of all who see me,
Christ in the ears that hear my voice,
Christ in the hearts of all who know me:
O Christ, surround me; O Christ, surround me.**

* Hymn 270

“Like the Murmur of the Dove’s Song”

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.

To the members of Christ's body, to the branches of the Vine,
To the church in faith assembled, to our midst as gift and sign:
Come, Holy Spirit, come.

With the healing of division, with the ceaseless voice of prayer,
With the power to love and witness, with the peace beyond compare:
Come, Holy Spirit, come.

Poem

by Steve Garnaas-Holmes

Terrance Hayes

Christ, living vine,
be my life.

Let my life flow from you,
from your heart to mine.

My soul is rooted in you;
my very being is your being.

I am rooted in your love;
your love alone gives me life.

Let my love be your love,
flowing through me.

Let my life be the fruit of your presence,
my thoughts the vessels of your grace,
my deeds the movements of your spirit.

Let me receive the life that is rooted
with all others in you.

Prune all of me that does not bear your fruit;
though I cry out, I willingly surrender it.

My life is in you,
and your life is in me.

Christ, living vine, be my life,
and I will be your living branch,
your life-giving fruit.

* Benediction

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

* Benediction Response

HALLE, HALLE

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

Postlude

“Give Me Jesus”

arr. M. Hayes

*Songs in this service are used by permission.
CCLI License #11439355; CSPL164710*

*Parts of the liturgy for today’s service were adapted by Joanna Harader,
UCC Worship Ways, Steve Garnaas-Holmes.*

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, Laura Hankins, Jo Ann Jellison, Shakti Subramanian

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>

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Tommy Tomlinson and Alix Felsing in the death of
Tommy’s brother-in-law, Ed Williams

Linda Carver, Kevin Decker, Kevin & Jeff Edwards-Knight, 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, Anita Taylor

Friends & Family Members

Family and Friends of Mark Williams

Melissa Brown, Phillip Cherry (Anne Pigg), Craig Chrismon (Melissa Noll), Gregg Clare (Kathleen Wagner), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), the Jeffreys family (Kathleen Wagner), Charles Jernigan (Lee Brigman), Dave Johnson, Judah L. Jones & Bill Englebreth, Richard Lease (Barb Schneller), Matty & Simone McKinnon (Joy Decker), Joe Parks (Beth Sharp), Michelle Sharp (Beth & Ed Sharp), Tom Schneller (Barb Schneller), 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.

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/>

CELEBRATING OUR GRADUATES

Do you know someone who will be graduating soon? Please let us know so we can recognize their accomplishments out ahead! office@holycovenantucc.org

MICHAEL BROOKS SCHOLARSHIP

Applications are ready for distribution. Contact Dawn Simmons in the Holy Covenant UCC office. There are \$2000 in funds to be awarded. High school graduates and soon to be graduates encouraged to apply. Deadline for submission is May 15, 2024. Candidates will be notified by May 31, 2024.

JRVC YOUTH SUMMER EVENTS

Johns River Valley Camp is an outdoor ministry site of Southern Conference, United Church of Christ located in Collettsville, NC. Various camp dates and events are available to youth of Grades 3-12. <https://www.jrvc.org/>

CRAFTER'S CIRCLE MEETS MONDAYS AT 1:30PM

Bring a craft, learn a craft. Join us in the Gathering Room. All are welcome!

FELLOWSHIP HOUR HOSTS NEEDED

Please sign up in the gathering room for light refreshments after worship on Sundays, plus set-up and clean-up.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C44ACAD23A2FE3-sunday1#/>

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki, MDiv, MBA, Senior Pastor

RevChris@holycovenantucc.org, 314-402-8167

Jon Weddell, MDiv, MSW, Minister of Music

Dawn Simmons, BSBF, Executive Assistant

Mailing address: PO Box 481285, Charlotte NC 28269

3501 West W.T. Harris Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28269-8510

www.holycovenantucc.org 704-599-9810