



Photo by Jametlene Reskp

“Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul.
It is daily admission of one’s weakness.
It is better in prayer to have a heart without words
than words without a heart.”

- Mahatma Gandhi

“When you can’t put your prayer into words,
God hears your heart.”

- Anonymous

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

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**HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

May 12, 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 "My Faith Looks Up to Thee" arr. B. Buda

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 "There's a Spirit of Love in This Place" arr. M. A. Miller

There's a spirit of love in this place. (2x)

You can't see it, but it's there, just as precious as the air.

There's a spirit of love in this place.

There's the presence of peace in this room. (2x)

In God's tenderness is found peace that passes human bounds.

There's the presence of peace in this room.

* Call to the Heart Liz Colton

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

One: God of our hearts...here we are! We've come with thirsty hearts,

Many: **Praying that your word will satisfy us.**

One: We come with aching hearts,

Many: **Praying for good news to comfort us.**

One: We come with overflowing hearts,

Many: **Praying for a chance to share your love.**

One: You, who know our hearts and hear our prayers,

Many: **Be with us now in this hour of worship. Amen.**

* Invocation (*unison*)

Liz Colton

Join me as we call our attention to the Spirit of God moving among and within us in this space...

Ever present God, we are grateful that you meet us right where we are and as we are. As we worship help us to know you are present in every thought we think, alive with every beat of our heart, and being revealed among us right now in every breath as we sing, speak, and pray. Amen.

* Hymn 164

“Arise, Your Light Is Come”

FESTAL SONG

**Arise, your light is come! The Spirit’s call obey;
Show forth the glory of your God which shines on you today!**

**Arise, your light is come! Fling wide the prison door;
Proclaim the captive’s liberty, good tidings to the poor.**

**Arise, your light is come! All you in sorrow born,
Bind up the broken-hearted ones and comfort those who mourn.**

**Arise, your light is come! The mountains burst in song!
Rise up like eagles on the wing; God’s power will make us strong.**

Prayer for Transformation and New Life (*unison*)

Liz Colton

God of life, we are told we are not alone, that you are with us and close to our heart. Yet at times, we admit you feel so far away, or we feel you aren’t listening. Forgive us for the ways we’ve turned on you, prioritized other things in your place, or missed your calling instead of turning our gaze and finding rest in you. Amen.

Words of Grace

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

In Jesus we see the fulfillment of God’s promise to be with us always. The way God enlarged his horizons to the needs of others, opened his heart to the pain of those around him, and had patience and trust in God’s timing. Like Jesus, may we be led into God’s enduring presence, drawn into God’s love and care, and hear the incessant call of God who is beckoning us home. In God’s rest we pray, saying, “Amen.”

Response to God’s Grace

OH QUE BUENO (Puerto Rico)

Oh, how good is Christ the Lord! On the cross he died for me.

He has pardoned all my sin. Glory be to Jesus.

Glory be to Jesus! Glory be to Jesus!

In three days, he rose again. Glory be to Jesus!

Mother's Day Litany

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Today is the day we celebrate mothers. For some Mother's Day is a day of delight and joyfulness. And for some, it's a day that is painful, complicated, and even layered. As we think about the vastly different connections and relationships there are to motherhood, we now take time to open our doors wide, making space for all experiences, as we hold in prayer this day:

Those who are proud and grateful for the mothers they have. Those who are holding good and tender memories of their mothers. Those who are grieving the loss of a mother on this day, who has since passed and is no longer with us.

All: God, for these we pray.

Those who are healing from the abuse, violence, or neglect of a mother. Those who find their relationship with their mother to be complicated and difficult one. Those who have longed for maternal love but have found none.

All: God, for these we pray.

Those mothers who have lost children to suicide, disease, or estrangement. Those mothers whose children have gone missing or been abducted. Those mothers who are separated from their children due to family or marital conflict.

All: God, for these we pray.

Those mothers who have miscarried or had pregnancy end unexpectedly. Those who are now amid pregnancy and will soon be moms. Those who have desperately wanted or longed to be a mother to a child of their own but cannot.

All: God, for these we pray.

Those who have decided being a mother is not for them. Those who find the experience of motherhood to be challenging or difficult. Those mothers who are unhoused and caring for children with limited resources.

All: God, for these we pray.

Those who are mothers to foster children, stepchildren, or those not biologically their own. Those who delight in having not one mom but two or three or more. Those who found mothering in their teachers, neighbors, friends, relatives, and siblings.

All: God, for these we pray.

Those who mother businesses, non-profits, and movements. Those who are mothering furry friends, pets with whiskers, and animal companions. Those who mother and tend to the earth that in return nurtures and cares for us.

All: God, for these we pray.

God, we thank you for the gift of motherhood. For the many ways mothering looks, For the life that is given, for the care that is shown, and for the love of Godly mothering all we hope to know.

Amen.

New Zealand Lord's Prayer (*unison*)

**O most Compassionate Life-giver, may we honor and praise you;
May we work with you to establish your new order of justice, peace, and love;
Give us what we need for growth,
And help us, through forgiving others, to accept forgiveness.
Strengthen us in the time of testing, that we may resist all evil,
For all tenderness, strength and love are yours, now and forever.
Amen.**

Contemporary Reading

Ed Vickery

Our contemporary reading for today comes from Thomas Merton, who was a Trappist Monk, theologian, social activist, and writer. He says...

“It’s a risky thing to pray and the danger is that our very prayers get between God and us. The great thing in prayer is not to pray, but to go directly to God...The fact is, though, that if you descend into the depths of your own spirit and arrive somewhere near the center of what you are, you are confronted with the inescapable truth that, at the very root of your existence, you are in constant and immediate contact with the infinite power of God.”

Our Gospel reading for today comes from John 17:1-9, where Jesus prays for his disciples...

When Jesus finished saying these things, he looked up to heaven and said, “Abba, the time has come. Glorify your Begotten One, so that the Begotten One can glorify you. You gave me authority over everyone so that I could give eternal life to everyone you gave me. This is eternal life: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you sent. I have glorified you on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. Now, God, glorify me in your presence with the glory I shared with you before the world was created.

“I have revealed your name to the people you gave me from this world. They were yours and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. This is because I gave them the words that you gave me, and they received them. They truly understood that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.

“I’m praying for them. I’m not praying for the world but for those you gave me, because they are yours. Everything that is mine is yours and everything that is yours is mine; I have been glorified in them. I’m no longer in the world, but they are in the world, even as I’m coming to you. Holy Abba God, watch over them in your name, the name you gave me, that they will be one just as we are one. When I was with them, I watched over them in your name, the name you gave to me, and I kept them safe. None of them were lost, except the one who was destined for destruction, so that scripture would be fulfilled. Now I’m coming to you and I say these things while I’m in the world so that they can share completely in my joy. I gave your word to them and the world hated them, because they don’t belong to this world, just as I don’t belong to this world. I’m not asking that you take them out of this world but that you keep them safe from the evil one. They don’t belong to this world, just as I don’t belong to this world. Make them holy in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. I made myself holy on their behalf so that they also would be made holy in the truth.

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.

Invitation to Generosity

Cheryl Milam

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

One: From the abundance of God's generosity, all are invited to offer a portion of our gifts.

Many: **We offer these offerings to Christ's church.**

One: Remembering the great love that Christ has for all people,

Many: **We give these gifts to further spread the love of Christ in the world.**

One: Blessing those who gave, and those unable to give.

Many: **We receive joy in this moment of giving.**

One: May these offerings help fulfill our hope to be Christ's love and light in the world. Let us now share our gifts with God.

* Doxology

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.

Praise God, all creatures high and low. Alleluia, alleluia!

Praise God, in Jesus fully known: Creator, Word, and Spirit one.

Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

* Prayer of Dedication (*unison*)

Cheryl Milam

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

Divine Giver, and bearer of all good things, blessed are the gifts we have received. May each of these cherished gifts be an answer to a prayer. May they find their way through the life of this church to become generous love, healing hope, and the persistence of restorative justice. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

* Hymn 75

"Lord, Make Us More Holy"

SPIRITUAL

Lord, make us more holy (3x), until we meet again.

Holy, holy, holy until we meet again.

Lord, make us more faithful (3x), until we meet again.

Faithful, faithful, faithful until we meet again.

Lord, make us more mindful (3x), until we meet again.

Mindful, mindful, mindful until we meet again.

Lord, make us more prayerful (3x), until we meet again.

Prayerful, prayerful, prayerful until we meet again.

* Benediction

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

* Benediction Response "Song of Hope" ARGENTINA
May the God of hope go with us every day,
Filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.
May the God of justice speed us on our way,
Bringing light and hope to every land and race.

Praying, let us work for peace; singing, share our joy with all;
Working for a world that's new, faithful when we hear Christ's call.

Postlude "I Surrender All" arr. J. Vogt

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*Parts of the liturgy for today's service were adapted by Carol Penner,
www.leadinginworship.com, UCC Worship Ways,
and 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.*

WE PROVIDE OUR EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME WITH HELP FROM:
D Evans, Brian Hankins, Laura Hankins, Jo Ann Jellison
Ushers: Shakti Subramanian

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/>

MISSIONS AND JUSTICE INVITES YOU...

SPECIAL EVENT! We are partnering with [ImaginOn](#) to host a **literacy story time, book giveaway, and pizza dinner** at the Archdale Manor Apartments on **Monday, May 13 at 4 pm**. This site is where so many of our asylum-seeking families reside and this event gives families the opportunity to discover the resources available at the public library. We need help with set up as well as sharing the enjoyment of watching kids interact with great story tellers! Please contact Suzanne Lamorey if you wish to participate suzlam@yahoo.com.

Sandwich ministry for A Roof Above Day Center is **Sunday, May 19**. Join us in making 400 sandwiches after worship for our yet-to-be housed neighbors!

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

THE MICHAEL G. BROOKS SCHOLARSHIP

Michael Brooks Scholarship applications are ready for distribution. Contact Dawn in the church 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/>

SOJOURNERS CLASS, SUNDAYS AT 9:45AM

We gather Sundays at 9:45am in the Conference Room, or via Zoom
Next Sunday, May 19, we will begin discussing *Revelations: Visions, Prophecy, & Politics in the Book of Revelation* by Elaine Pagels, Chapter 1.

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

CRAFTER'S CIRCLE MEETS MONDAYS AT 1:30PM

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

STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH OFFERING DURING MAY

The United Church of Christ has 5 yearly special offerings. The Strengthen the Church offering supports the expansion of ministry and growth of UCC local congregations. Your support of this offering will help the UCC fulfill on its commitment to creating a just world for all by investing in new ministries and practices that meet the emerging needs of local communities.

As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults. HCUC will receive the STC offering on Pentecost Sunday, May 19, 2024. Notate your donation as "STC". No need to wait! You can make your offering on the church website anytime in the month of May. Look for the Give button.

We welcome all in our congregation to participate in **worship leadership, ushering, greeting, and fellowship time**. Sign up in the gathering room, or download the app to make signing up even easier!

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

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, Kat Kerce, 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), Tom Schneller (Barb Schneller), 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.