



Unsplash photo by Chris Liu

“Holiness is not something you need to secure, but something that has always been within you, really a natural part of you, waiting to be expressed.”

– Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

“Whoever you are, you are human. Wherever you are, you live in the world, which is just waiting for you to notice the holiness in it.”

– Barbara Brown Taylor

“Holiness is not only for those who spend much time in prayer. That is not the case.

We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and bearing witness in everything we do.”

– Pope Francis

Founded in 1916, we are an Open & Affirming (LGBTQ+), anti-racist, and justice seeking church that is part of the greater United Church of Christ.

HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

August 25, 2024, 10:55 am

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

Prelude "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty" arr. A. K. Organ

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 "We Are an Offering" D. Liles

We lift our voices; we lift our hands; we lift our lives up to you.

We are an offering.

God, use our voices; God, use our hands;

God, use our lives; they are yours.

We are an offering. We are an offering.

* Call to the Heart Pam Shimberg

Please take a comfortable posture that supports your worship and reading...

One: Out on the hiking trail, as we walk in the midst and beauty of God's creation...

Many: **holiness can be found.**

One: In soup kitchens, where the hungry are fed and the unhoused can find rest...

Many: **holiness can be found.**

One: At the bedside of patients and in hospital waiting rooms, where we await news of loved ones...

Many: **holiness can be found.**

One: At tables in coffee shops, in difficult conversations with teens, and standing in long lines at the DMV...

Many: **holiness can be found.**

One: Here in the church, where everyone is welcome, and no one is turned away...

Many: **holiness can be found. God, strengthen us, restore us, and inspire us as we worship, before you send us back out to be your holy presence in this world. Amen.**

* Hymn 275

“Come Now, Almighty God”

ITALIAN HYMN

Come now Almighty God,
Help us your name to laud;
Our songs we raise:
Ruler all glorious, o'er all victorious
Come and reign over us, Ancient of Days!

Come now, Incarnate Word,
By heaven and earth adored;
Our prayer attend:
Come, and your people bless, and give your world success;
Grant us your holiness, Savior and Friend!

Come, Holy Comforter,
Your sacred witness bear
In this glad hour.
Your grace to us impart, now rule in every heart,
Never from us depart, Spirit of Power!

To you, great One in Three,
Eternal praises be
For evermore,
Your sovereign majesty may we in glory see,
And to eternity love and adore.

Affirmation

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Yourself: The holiness of God shines forth through me, and I am a gift to the world.

Neighbor: The holiness of God shines forth through you, and you are a gift to the world.

World: The holiness of God shines forth through us, and we are a gift to the world.

Prayer for Transformation and New Life (*unison*)

Pam Shimberg

Loving God, we acknowledge the ways this week we have neglected to see your presence in the world before us: In the image of our neighbors who think or live differently than we do. In the driver who cut us off and left us saying a few choice words. When we were at the grocery store and lost our cool, because they didn't have what we were looking for. Help us to pause in these moments and to see with new eyes. To see your holy presence in people and to see you at work in our lives. Amen.

Hymn 544

“If I Have Been the Source of Pain, O God”

CAMACUA

**Receive, O God, this ardent word of prayer,
And free me from temptation’s subtle snare,
With tender patience, lead me to your care. Amen, Amen.**

Words of Grace

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Beloved, even when we are frustrated and God seems silent, the presence of God is still speaking, still listening, and still moving in our lives. Know that every moment we stop and place our attention upon God, we are centering our awareness on what is just, holy, and true. We are seeking to honor God, by finding God’s grace and mercy in our circumstances. And in doing so, we are given the rare opportunity to make holy what might not have been so holy before.

Stories for All People

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Hymn

“In an Age of Twisted Values”

CHURCH UNITED

**We who hear your word so often choose so rarely to obey.
Turn us from our willful wandering; give us truth to light our way.
In the power of your Spirit come to cleanse us, make us new;
Hear our cry and heal our nation; till our nation honors you.**

Pastoral Prayer

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Lord's Prayer (*in unison*)

**Our Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your Kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not
into temptation but deliver us from evil. For yours is the Kingdom, the power,
and the glory forever. Amen.**

Prayer for Illumination (sung)

SANCTUARY

**Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true.
With thanksgiving, I’ll be a living sanctuary for you.**

Our Hebrew Lesson for today comes from Psalm 84, where the psalmist expresses longing to come to the temple in Jerusalem to worship God...

How lovely is your dwelling place,
Lord of heavenly forces!

My very being longs, even yearns,
for the Lord's courtyards.

My heart and my body
will rejoice out loud to the living God!

Yes, the sparrow too has found a home there;
the swallow has found herself a nest
where she can lay her young beside your altars,
Lord of heavenly forces, my king, my God!

Those who live in your house are truly happy;
they praise you constantly. Selah

Those who put their strength in you are truly happy;
pilgrimage is in their hearts.

As they pass through the Baca Valley,
they make it a spring of water.

Yes, the early rain covers it with blessings.

They go from strength to strength,
until they see the supreme God in Zion.

Lord God of heavenly forces,
hear my prayer;

listen closely, Jacob's God! Selah

Look at our shield, God;

pay close attention to the face of your anointed one!

Better is a single day in your courtyards
than a thousand days anywhere else!

I would prefer to stand outside the entrance of my God's house
than live comfortably in the tents of the wicked!

The Lord is a sun and shield;
God is favor and glory.

The Lord gives—doesn't withhold!—good things
to those who walk with integrity.

Lord of heavenly forces,
those who trust in you are truly happy!

One: May we hear what the Spirit is saying to the people.

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

Sermon Lesson 1 Kings 8:1, 6, 10-11, 22-30, 41-43 (CEB) Pam Shimberg
Our Sermon Lesson for today comes from various scriptures in 1 Kings 8, where the Ark of the Covenant is moved into the Jerusalem Temple...

Then Solomon assembled Israel's elders, all the tribal leaders, and the chiefs of Israel's clans at Jerusalem to bring up the chest containing the Lord's covenant from David's City Zion.

The priests brought the chest containing the Lord's covenant to its designated spot beneath the wings of the winged creatures in the inner sanctuary of the temple, the most holy place.

When the priests left the holy place, the cloud filled the Lord's temple, and the priests were unable to carry out their duties due to the cloud because the Lord's glory filled the Lord's temple.

Solomon stood before the Lord's altar in front of the entire Israelite assembly and, spreading out his hands toward the sky, he said:

Lord God of Israel, there's no god like you in heaven above or on earth below. You keep the covenant and show loyalty to your servants who walk before you with all their heart. This is the covenant you kept with your servant David, my father, which you promised him. Today, you have fulfilled what you promised. So now, Lord, Israel's God, keep what you promised my father David, your servant, when you said to him, "You will never fail to have a successor sitting on Israel's throne as long as your descendants carefully walk before me just as you walked before me." So now, God of Israel, may your promise to your servant David, my father, come true.

But how could God possibly live on earth? If heaven, even the highest heaven, can't contain you, how can this temple that I've built contain you? Lord my God, listen to your servant's prayer and request, and hear the cry and prayer that your servant prays to you today. Constantly watch over this temple, the place about which you said, "My name will be there," and listen to the prayer that your servant is praying toward this place. Listen to the request of your servant and your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Listen from your heavenly dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive!

Listen also to the immigrant who isn't from your people Israel but who comes from a distant country because of your reputation— because they will hear of your great reputation, your great power, and your outstretched arm. When the immigrant comes and prays toward this temple, then listen from heaven, where you live, and do everything the immigrant asks. Do this so that all the people of the earth may know your reputation and revere you, as your people Israel do, and recognize that this temple I have built bears your name.

One: May we hear what the Spirit is saying to the people.

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

The Good News “Where Do You Find the Holiness of God?”
Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Music Video “Holy Now” by Peter Mayer
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ua0PE1zulD4>

Invitation to Generosity Pam Shimberg
Now is the time for our ministry of giving and sharing...

When we can see through the lens of holiness, we can see that everything we have is a gift from God. The gifts of time, talent and treasure God has entrusted to us are not to be hoarded, but are gifts to be shared, in the hope of giving life to others as God has given life to us. In gratitude, let us now return to God a portion of what God has so generously given to us.

* Doxology OLD HUNDREDTH
Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

* Prayer of Dedication (*unison*) Pam Shimberg
Please join me in our unison prayer of dedication...
Holy God, take what we have shared and multiply it for the good of your people: our faith community, our neighbors, and the good of the world you so love. Use what was offered to shape and mold us so that our whole lives become a loving response to your goodness. Let us use these gifts to stand for justice and love abundantly. In the name of the one whose life gives life to the world, Jesus Christ, Amen.

* Hymn 423

“Great Is Your Faithfulness”

FAITHFULNESS

Great is your faithfulness, O God, Creator
With you no shadow of turning we see.
You do not change, your compassions they fail not;
All of your goodness forever will be.

Refrain: Great is your faithfulness! Great is your faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed your hand has provided,
Great is your faithfulness, God, unto me.

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To your great faithfulness, mercy, and love. (R)

Pardon for sin and a peace so enduring,
Your own dear presence to cheer and to guide.
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine with ten thousand beside. (R)

* Benediction

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

* Benediction Response

NEW DIMENSIONS

God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar,
We your people, ours the journey now and ever,
Now and ever, now and evermore.

Postlude

“Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”

arr. S. Neilson

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The liturgy for today's service was written or adapted by Rev. Christopher Czarnecki, UCC Worship Ways, and the Presbyterian Outlook.

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: Joy Decker, Greeters: Patti Unger, 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/>

COVID cases within our congregation and community continue. We encourage those attending worship with us to consider wearing a mask should you feel more comfortable while worshipping with us. We know fellowship after worship is an important and meaningful time for our church community, so we have resumed our fellowship time.

RSVP FOR SEPTEMBER 8! GUEST PREACHER AND AUTHOR GREG JARRELL

Join us Sunday, September 8, when our guest Greg Jarrell will preach during service and afterward give a talk on his new book. This will be an action-packed day, so we're planning a catered lunch. You can help by completing the RSVP form at your earliest convenience so we know how best to prepare.

RSVP: <https://forms.gle/Lq95dGEWYfXJe5xB8>

Greg Jarrell is an author and community organizer in Charlotte. His book [Our Trespasses: White Churches and the Taking of American Neighborhoods](#), examines the influence of white churches and Christians in planning, executing, and profiting from the federal Urban Renewal projects of the 1950s and 60s, in Charlotte and beyond. Greg is Senior Campaign Organizer for The Redress Movement, a national nonprofit organizing local communities for housing justice. He is one of the co-founders of QC Family Tree, a cultural organizing group in his neighborhood, and a founding organizer of Charlotte's West Side Community Land Trust. Greg will bring copies of book to sell and sign.



You can get the book now at Park Road Books (reserve a copy by calling 704-525-0293), at publisher fortresspress.com, or at Amazon.

Can you help us with set-up or clean-up? For questions, information, or to volunteer, contact Holly Middleton at hsmiddleton@gmail.com.

SANDWICH BUILD TODAY

Following worship, join us! No experience required. Let's build 400 sandwiches for our neighbors at Roof Above. Questions? Contact Suzanne Lamorey, slamorey@uncc.edu.

GAME NIGHT, SATURDAY, AUG 31

6:30-8:30PM BYOGames (Bring Your Own) or just come join us in the church Gathering Room and have some fun! RSVP Suzanne Lamorey, slamorey@uncc.edu.

SOJOURNERS CLASS, READS & REVIEWS JARRELL'S "OUR TRESPASSES"

We gather Sundays at 9:45am in the Conference Room, or via Zoom

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

C.R.O.P. WALK FOR HUNGER, OCTOBER 6

Join the HCUCC hunger fighting team! All are welcome! On October 6, we will walk on church property after the worship service. If you would like a shirt for only \$3.00, let Tina Dickens know the size you want by August 24 (taichitina@gmail.com or 704.200.0089). Walkers are encouraged to ask friends and/or relatives for support.

CHANGE TO ELECTRONIC OFFERINGS

Beginning August 22, 2024, *Subsplash*, one of our online giving platforms, will change their default selection to charging the donor the processing fee assessed for each transaction. Right now, the donor can elect to cover the processing fee by clicking on the "cover fees" option in the payment box. Beginning August 22nd, the donor will need to elect to "not cover" the processing fee if desired and would need to make this change on the Subsplash dashboard before completing their transaction. While *Subsplash* offers a convenient way to make an electronic gift to the church, many banks offer free online banking to their customers, allowing them to send an electronic check to the church through their bill pay with no fees. We want to make sure all our *Subsplash* donors are aware of this upcoming change. Questions? Contact Dawn Simmons, office@holycovenantucc.org, or Debbie Davis debbiekdavisnc@gmail.com.

YOUR OFFERING, YOUR WAY

Various methods are available for your convenience! Schedule offerings, one time or recurring, through your bank's online payment system. Many financial institutions offer free services to its customers. Mailing a check, from home or a financial institution? Please use this secure address:



Holy Covenant UCC, PO Box 481285, Charlotte NC 28269

Donate online at [HolyCovenantUCC.org/give-2/](https://www.holycovenantucc.org/give-2/) via PayPal or Subsplash Wallet. Look for the *Give Today* button. Questions can be directed to the church office, office@holycovenantucc.org or 704-599-9810.

WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

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>.

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#/>



PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Kathy Habel and family in the recent death of her husband, Tom Habel Lee Brigman, Linda Carver, Joy & Kevin Decker, Linn Finger, Jim Humphrey, Kat Kerce, Sharon Landis, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Alice Phelan & Sally Young, Cynthia Simpson, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Jerry Rhyne, Ed & Beth Sharp, Anita Taylor, Cathy & Jay Whitley

Friends & Family Members

Chris Mele-Wagner in the death of his husband Michael, and mother Mary Ann Wagner. (Dominic Ciciollo)

Beth, Michael & Julian Bliss (Robert Shepherd), Melissa Brown, Gretchen Calder (Martha Bomely), Craig Chrismon (Melissa Noll), Debbie Coble (Cindy Coble), Pam Culp & Pam McGill (Melissa Noll), George Miner (Eric Miner), Dominica Haegele & Francesca Czarnecki (Chris Czarnecki), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Charles Jernigan (Lee Brigman), Dave Johnson, Judah L. Jones & Bill Englebreth, Richard Lease (Barb Schneller), Kyle Morre (Akeera Czarnecki), Joe Parks (Beth Sharp), Mike Santino (Melissa Noll), Michelle Sharp (Beth & Ed Sharp), 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

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

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