



*Photo by William H. Johnson. 1944 painting.
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC.*

“Never underestimate the power of dreams and the influence of the human spirit. We are all the same in this notion: the potential for greatness lives within each of us.”

– Wilma Rudolph

“When you are able to maintain your own highest standards of integrity – regardless of what others may do you are destined for greatness.”

- Napoleon Hill

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
RALLY DAY!**

September 22, 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 “All Things Bright and Beautiful” arr. P. Rodriguez

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.

All that we have, all that we are,

All that we hope to be we give to you, we give to you.

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

We are an offering. We are an offering.

* Call to the Heart Laura Hankins

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

One: The first shall be last.

Many: **We come to worship just as we are.**

One: The last shall be first.

Many: **We come knowing there is a place for us.**

One: The first shall be last.

Many: **We come with questions.**

One: The last shall be first.

Many: **We come burdened by failure.**

One: The first shall be last.

Many: **We come celebrating success.**

One: The last shall be first.

Many: **We come fearful of the future.**

One: The first shall be last, and the last shall be first. A little child shall welcome them, see them, and love them.

* 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.

Affirmation

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Yourself: My greatness comes from God, and I claim its power to do a mighty good.

Neighbor: Your greatness comes from God, and you claim its power to do a mighty good.

World: Our greatness comes from God, and we claim its power to do a mighty good.

Prayer for Transformation and New Life (*unison*) Laura Hankins
Loving God, we confess the ways we have acted first, out of selfishness or control. How we have allowed envy or self-interest to guide our actions, rather than the wisdom that comes from above. Forgive us for the times we have caused conflicts or quarrels, rather than seeking the common good and your kin-dom. Transform our hearts, and make us instruments of your peace, joy, and hope in the world. Amen.

Hymn 544 “If I Have Been the Source of Pain, O God” CAMACUA
If I have been the source of pain, O God;
If to the weak I have refused my strength;
If, in rebellion, I have strayed away; Forgive me, God.

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
We are image bearers of the divine, and grace and mercy follow our repentance. As we move from sorrow or regret for the things we’ve done, we turn toward the ways of justice and love. As we seek change, whether it be in our own lives or the greater world, let wisdom guide us, the Holy Spirit inspire us, and God use us to be a blessing for our neighbors and all of God’s creation. Amen.

Response to God’s Grace “Know That God Is Good” MUNGO NI MWEMA
Know that God is good. (3x) God is good; God is good.

Confirmation Class of 2024-2025
Shanel Simmons
Daniel Sexton
Lilly Chaney
Justin Chaney
Liam Sullivan
Lachlan Sullivan

Stories for All People Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

**In an age of twisted values, we have lost the truth we need.
In sophisticated language we have justified our greed.
By our struggle for possessions, we have robbed the poor and weak.
Hear our cry and heal our nation; your forgiveness, Lord, we seek.**

**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.**

Prayers of the People

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

(Congregational response - † Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer)

Gracious God, as autumn unfolds around us, we are reminded of your steadfast love that endures through all seasons. Like trees planted by streams of water, may we be rooted in your wisdom and bear good fruit in due season.

† Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer

We pray for our nation as we approach elections. Grant our leaders and candidates the humility to serve rather than to be served. May they seek the wisdom that comes from above – pure, peace-loving and full of care and mercy. †

We lift up to you the conflicts and crises in our world. Those enduring wars and instability, natural disasters, those cast aside or rejected. Bring your peace to areas of strife, comfort to those who suffer, and justice to the oppressed. †

We pray for your church, that we may embody the servant leadership of Christ. Help us to welcome the children, resist the need to be right, and continue on in the care of the vulnerable and least among us. †

We remember those in our community who are struggling – the sick, the lonely, the heartbroken, and those enduring financial distress. May our hands be your hands, reaching out in support, reminding them they are not alone but loved. †
As we enter this season of harvest, we thank you for your abundant blessings. Like the sage or mystic whispering in our ear, may we use the resources we gather both wisely and generously for the good of all your people. †

Guide us, O Lord, in the coming weeks and months. May we resist envy and selfish ambition, draw near to you, and pursue the righteousness that comes from heavenly wisdom. We offer all these prayers and more in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Prayer for Illumination (*sung*)

OPEN OUR EYES

Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus,
To reach out and touch you and say that we love you.
Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen.
Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus.

Modern Lesson

Dawn Schmitz

Our Modern Lesson for today comes from Joel Goldsmith, who was a spiritual author, teacher, modern-day mystic, and founder of The Infinite Way movement. Among his work he says...

“It must come as a shock to many to realize that in their spiritual ongoing, there are no places of honor, greatness, or fame; there are no kings and princes; there is no upper ten or lower five. All these are one in Christ Jesus: there are no greater and no lesser. There is only a complete dependence on the Spirit of God. There is a Spirit of Christ, and It will raise up our mortal bodies; It will be the bread and the wine and the water to our experience; It will take us out of those empty years of the locusts.”

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

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

*Gospel Lesson

Mark 9:30-37 (NRSV)

Laura Hankins

Our Scripture Lesson for today comes from Mark 9:30-37, where the disciples are arguing among themselves who will be the greatest...

They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it, for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.” But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

Then they came to Capernaum, and when he was in the house, he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.” Then he took a little child and put it among them, and taking it in his arms he said to them, “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.”

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

“Jesus’ Kind of Greatness”
Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Invitation to Generosity

Laura Hankins

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

Jesus said, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.” Let this moment be an opportunity to serve as Jesus asks, and to offer gifts that will help the first part ways for the last. May we offer up something good from the best of who we are and the deep treasure trove of gifts we possess. May each and every gift be a seed of peace, a call to justice, and a sign of God’s unconditional love...

* 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*) Laura Hankins

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

Gracious God, we offer these gifts to you as an expression of our gratitude and love. Help us to embody a spirit of humility and service as Christ is witnessed among us, and move us to use them to nurture wisdom, foster peace, and serve those in need. In Christ’s name, we pray. Amen.

* Hymn 181

“You Are Salt for the Earth, O People”

BRING FORTH

**You are the salt for the earth, O people: salt for the reign of God!
Share the flavor of life, O people: life in the City of God!**

Refrain: **Bring forth the reign of mercy, bring forth the reign of peace;
Bring forth the reign of justice, bring forth the City of God!**

**You are a light on the hill, O people: light for the City of God!
Shine so holy and bright, O people: shine for the City of God! (R)**

**You are a seed of the Word, O people: bring forth the reign of God!
Seeds of mercy and seeds of justice, grow in the City of God! (R)**

**We are a blessed and a pilgrim people: bound for the reign of God!
Love our journey and love our homeland: love is the City of God! (R)**

* 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 "Come, Christians, Join to Sing" arr. M. Hayes

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*The liturgy for today's service was written or adapted by Katherine Hawker's
<http://liturgyoutside.net>, UCC Worship Ways, Ministry Matters,
the Presbyterian Outlook, 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.*

***The alter flowers for today's service are in honor of the wedding of Terry
& Lee Parrish, September 21, 2024. Congratulations!***

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/>

Due to COVID cases within our congregation and community, those attending worship are welcomed to wear a mask should you feel more comfortable while worshipping with us.

WE PROVIDE OUR EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME WITH HELP FROM:

D Evans, Brian Hankins, Laura Hankins, Jo Ann Jellison

Ushers: Barbara Schneller, Shakti Subramanian Greeters:

Refreshments: Christian Education Team

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>.



CHECK OUT OUR ONLINE CALENDAR AT <https://holycovenantucc.org/events/>

9/22 Rally Day, Confirmation Classes begins, 12:30-2pm

9/23 Project Harmony begins at HCUCC

9/29 Covenant Group Fair, Stewardship Month begins

10/5 WNCA Annual Meeting

10/6 World Communion Sunday, C.R.O.P. Hunger Walk

10/13 Sandwich build following worship

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

We have 6 walkers so far - Linda Carver, Tina Dickens, Tom Magraw, Melissa Noll, Darline Warren, Deborah Winston. It's not too late to join us on October 6. If you can't do the walk with us on church property, please support a walker with either cash or a check made payable to CROP.

If you prefer to give online, please use this link:

<https://events.crophungerwalk.org/cropwalks/team/holy-covenant-ucc-4>

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Linda Carver, Liz Colton, Kevin Decker, Linn Finger, Jeff Edwards-Knight, Jim & Faye Humphrey, Sharon Landis, Melissa & Von McQueen-Simmons, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Alice Phelan & Sally Young, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Ed & Beth Sharp, Anita Taylor, Ed Vickery & Eric Miner, Cathy & Jay Whitley

Friends & Family Members

Melinda Tabb & Amanda Fern in the recent death of their mother, Joyce Ward (Ed Vickery) Beth, Michael & Julian Bliss (Robert Shepherd), Melissa Brown, Craig Chrismon (Melissa Noll), Debbie Coble (Cindy Coble), Pam Culp & Pam McGill (Melissa Noll), Cindy Hedrick (Barb Schneller), Pat Keegan, George Miner (Eric Miner), Francesca Czarnecki (Christopher Czarnecki), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Charles Jernigan (Lee Brigman), Dave Johnson, Richard Lease (Barb Schneller), Joe Parks (Beth Sharp), Mike Santino (Melissa Noll), Michelle Sharp (Beth & Ed Sharp), 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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