



Unsplash Photo by: Annie Spratt

“Living simply makes loving simple. Peace is not found in the abundance of things but in the depth of our relationships—our ability to live in communion with the earth, with one another, and with ourselves. To practice peace is to commit to the daily work of love.”

– Bell Hooks

“If you want peace, you don’t talk to your friends. You talk to your enemies. Peace comes when we refuse to be satisfied with injustice, when we reach across boundaries and embrace the humanity of others.”

-Desmond Tutu

“Peace isn’t passive—it’s disruptive. It upends our fears, dismantles our walls, and dares us to love in a way that is reckless and healing. It’s not the absence of struggle but the presence of grace in the midst of it.”

-Nadia Boltz Weber

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.



Join us this Advent

December 15

WORSHIP 10:55 am ~ JOY IN EVERYTHING WE DO

December 22

WORSHIP 10:55 am ~ LOVE ALWAYS

Music Sunday featuring the Chancel Choir

December 24, CHRISTMAS EVE EVENTS

Chili & Soup Supper, 5:30-6:30 pm

CANDLELIGHT SERVICE at 7:00 pm

MORAVIAN LOVE FEAST

CHILI SUPPER ON CHRISTMAS EVE

Join us at 5:30pm for a light meal before worship! (Choir rehearses at 6pm.) We'll offer several styles of chili, rice, rolls, and various fixin's. Even a soup, if chili's *not your thang!* Help us keep our community safe by listing ingredients, particularly items with gluten, peanuts and tree nuts. Vegan and Vegetarian options are welcomed!

Sign up online, or in the gathering room.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C44ACAD23A2FE3-45334242-christmas#/>

HOLY COVENANT UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT ~ PEACE

December 8, 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 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" J. Carraway

Welcome and Announcements Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

Special Music "Come On, Ring Those Bells" arr. K. Barker
Eric Miner, Ed Vickery, vocalists

Chiming of the Hour

Introit "While We Are Waiting, Come" WAITING

While we are waiting, come; while we are waiting, come.

Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.

Call to the Heart Pam Shimberg

One: A voice cries out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord!"

Many: **Prepare a way to come to us.**

One: Make straight paths, clear the obstacles, and open our hearts to the coming of God.

Many: **Prepare your way within us.**

One: The Prince of Peace draws near to restore and renew.

Many: **Guide us into the way of peace.**

One: In this Advent season, we wait for the One who brings peace to our hearts and our world.

Many: **Prepare a way to come to us.**

One: Let us seek peace that surpasses understanding and extends to all creation.

All: **Prepare your way within us.**

One: God's peace will reign, and all will dwell in harmony under God's care.

Many: **Guide us into the way of peace.**

One: Come, let us worship the God of peace and hope!

All: **Amen.**

* Hymn

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

HYFRYDOL

Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.
Israel’s strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king,
Born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all-sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.

Second Sunday of Advent: Peace for the World

Patti Unger & Diane Catanzaro

Today we light the second candle, the candle of **Peace**. Peace is more than the absence of conflict; it is the presence of justice, the harmony of all people living in right relationship with one another and with the earth. Peace calls us to stand in solidarity with those who are oppressed, to work for reconciliation and healing, and to strive for justice in all things. In this season of Advent, may we be peacemakers, in our families, our communities, and our world.

The peace we seek is the peace of God, which passes all understanding and leads us to live with compassion and grace.

(Light the second candle in your Advent wreath.)

One: May we be instruments of peace, working for justice and healing.

Many: We will seek peace, for peace is the way of God.

Song of Response

“Love’s Pure Light”

J. Raney

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and end this gloom of night.

Bring hope to the world, bring peace to the earth,

And fill us with love’s pure light.

Stories for All People

Lee Parrish

Prayer for Illumination (*sung*)

MARANTHA

Maranatha! Maranatha! O come to us, Emmanuel!

Modern Lesson

Terrence Hayes

Our Modern Lesson for today comes from Rev. Dr. William Barber II, who is a pastor, professor, author, activist, and founder of the Repairers of the Breach project. Among his work he says...

Peace is not just the absence of conflict but the presence of justice and love. It is a living force that starts within each of us and ripples outward to heal broken systems and fractured relationships. True peace demands courage, the courage to listen, to act, and to stand with those who are marginalized. It is the work of creating a world where all people can thrive together in dignity and hope.

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

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

Hymn

“Song of Zechariah”

MERLE’S TUNE

**Blest be the God of Israel, who comes to set us free;
Who visits and redeems us, who grants us liberty.
The prophets spoke of mercy, of freedom and release;
God shall fulfill that promise and bring the people peace.**

**God from the house of David a child of grace has given;
A Savior comes among us to raise us up to heaven.
Before him goes the herald, forerunner in the way,
The prophet of salvation, the harbinger of day.**

**On those who sit in darkness the sun begins to rise,
The dawning of forgiveness upon the sinner’s eyes.
God guides the feet of pilgrims along the paths of peace.
O bless our God and Savior with songs that never cease!**

* Hebrew Lesson

Luke 1:67-80 (CEB)

Pam Shimberg

Our Scripture Lesson for today comes from the Gospel of Luke 1:67-80, where Zacharias prophesies about his son's ministry...

John's father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, "Bless the Lord God of Israel because he has come to help and has delivered his people. He has raised up a mighty savior for us in his servant David's house, just as he said through the mouths of his holy prophets long ago. He has brought salvation from our enemies and from the power of all those who hate us. He has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and remembered his holy covenant, the solemn pledge he made to our ancestor Abraham. He has granted that we would be rescued from the power of our enemies so that we could serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness in God's eyes, for as long as we live. You, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way. You will tell his people how to be saved through the forgiveness of their sins. Because of our God's deep compassion, the dawn from heaven will break upon us, to give light to those who are sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide us on the path of peace." The child grew up, becoming strong in character. He was in the wilderness until he began his public ministry to Israel.

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

"Preparing the Way of Peace"

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Invitation to Generosity

Pam Shimberg

As Zechariah proclaimed, God's tender mercy leads us to prepare the way of peace, a peace that heals and restores the world. Through our gifts, we join in making space for hope, justice, and love to flourish. Let us give generously, preparing the way for God's peace to shine in and through us.

Anthem

"Song of the Baptist"

F.P. O'Brien

* Doxology

CAROL

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise God all creatures here below.

Praise God above, ye heavenly host.

Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost.

Prayer of Dedication (*unison*)

Pam Shimberg

God of tender mercy, we dedicate these gifts to your work of peace in the world. May they prepare the way for justice, healing, and hope, bringing light to those who feel lost or need your light to guide their way. Use what we offer today and our lives to lead others into the way of peace, so that all may know your love. Amen.

* Hymn

“Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates”

TRURO

Lift up your heads, O mighty gates; behold the glorious Ruler waits!
The Sovereign One is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here.

Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple, set apart
From earthly use for heaven’s employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.

Redeemer, come! I open wide my heart to you; here, Christ, abide!
Let me your inner presence feel; Your grace and love in me reveal.

So come, my Sovereign; enter in! Let new and nobler life begin;
Your Holy Spirit guide us on, until the glorious crown be won.

* Benediction

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

* Benediction Response

ELATA

O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray.
Cast out our sin, and enter in; be born in us today.

Postlude

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

J. Purifoy

*Songs in this service are used by permission.
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The liturgy for today’s service was written by 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.

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/>

*Read about Project Linus, New Member Classes planned in 2025,
and more!*

WE PROVIDE OUR EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME WITH HELP FROM:

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

Ushers: Shakti Subramanian, Laurence Winston

Greeters: Deborah Winston, Anne Hayes

Refreshments: Diane Catanzaro & Patti Unger

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/>

COOKIE EXCHANGE TODAY FOLLOWING WORSHIP

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

If you wish to add someone to the list, please send a note to
prayers@holycovenantucc.org.

Members

Friends and Family in the recent death of the Rev. H. Linn Finger
Linda Carver, Liz Colton, Kevin Decker, Alix Felsing & Joann Felsing, Jim & Faye
Humphrey, Sharon Landis, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Ed & Beth
Sharp, Anita Taylor, Darline Warren

Friends & Family Members

Beth, Michael & Julian Bliss (Robert Shepherd), Melissa Brown, Tinnie & Craig
Chrismon (Melissa Noll), Jeanne Hord (Diane Neese), Pam Culp & Pam McGill
(Melissa Noll), Cindy Hedrick (Barb Schneller), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie
Hildebrand), Charles Jernigan (Lee Parrish), Dave Johnson, Richard Lease (Barb
Schneller), Earl & Susie Morgan (Ed Vickery), Joe Parks (Beth Sharp), Larry &
Karen Roark (Ed Vickery), Mike Santino (Melissa Noll), Michelle Sharp (Beth & Ed
Sharp), Janet Wakefield (Linda Burby), Brian Weddell (Jon Weddell), John
Zastrow (Barb Schneller)

If you wish to add someone to the list, please send a note to
prayers@holycovenantucc.org.

HOLIDAY LOVE OFFERING FOR OUR STAFF

During this joyful time of year, we ask you to consider contributing to a holiday love offering to be divided among our 4 dedicated staff members who work hard to make Holy Covenant a place of welcome, warmth, & spiritual renewal. No gift is too small and all are appreciated. If you chose to give, electronic offerings can be made to Terry Raley-Dennis via Venmo: @Terry-Raley-Dennis or via Zelle: tldennis2@hotmail.com; or to Martha Bomely via PayPal: Martha.Bomely@gmail.com. Please contribute by **December 15th**, so the gifts can be distributed.

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

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