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“Justice is not something you find, but something you create. It is the labor of recognizing humanity in those whose lives are unlike your own.”

- Viet Thanh Nguyen

“All that you touch, you change.
All that you change, changes you.
The only lasting truth is change.”

- Octavia Butler

“Do not ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”

- Howard Thurman

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
ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF ELDERS & DEACONS

January 19, 2025, 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 "Jesus Is Here Right Now" L. Roberts

Welcome and Announcements Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: And also with you.

Chiming of the Hour

Introit "Holy Ground" Beatty/Davis

This is holy ground. We're standing on holy ground.

For our God is present and where God is is holy. (2x)

We are standing on holy ground,

And I know that there are angels all around.

Let us praise Jesus now.

We are standing in God's presence on holy ground.

* Call to the Heart Kristin Andes

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

One: When systemic racism denies people their humanity, let's turn water into wine.

Many: **Lifting every voice and dismantling oppression.**

One: When our LGBTQ+ siblings are excluded or denied love, let's turn water into wine.

Many: **Embracing every person as beloved.**

One: When the earth suffers from pollution and neglect, let's turn water into wine.

Many: **Renewing creation to life and restoration.**

One: When wars rage and peace feels impossible, let's turn water into wine.

Many: **Building bridges and offering compassion.**

One: When housing is out of reach for so many, let's turn water into wine.

Many: **Making affordable housing a reality for all.**

One: When anyone feels unwelcome in this place, let's turn water into wine.

Many: **Opening our hearts, opening our minds, and opening our doors.**

One: Wherever there is pain, division, or need, let's turn water into wine.

Many: **Letting God's abundance overflow in acts of justice, love, and hope.**

* Hymn

“Let Us Build a House”

ALL ARE WELCOME

Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live,
A place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;
Here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
All are welcome; all are welcome; all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where all are named,
Their songs and visions heard
And love and treasured,
Taught and claimed as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
Prayers of faith and songs of grace;
Let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:
All are welcome; all are welcome; all are welcome in this place.

Affirmation

Yourself: The Christ in me, has been called to do great and mighty things.

Neighbor: The Christ in you, has been called to do great and mighty things.

World: The Christ in us, has been called to do great and mighty things.

Year of Wellness Moment

Prayer of Transformation (*unison*)

Kristin Andes

Join me in prayer as we confess the ways we seek to be changed and transformed...

Loving God, we confess that we often resist the call to do what is right and just. We turn away from the needs of our neighbors, the cries of the oppressed, and the brokenness of our world. Forgive us for the times we have chosen comfort over courage or silence over speaking out. Renew our hearts and strengthen our resolve to be your hands and feet in the world. Amen.

Words of Grace

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

In Christ, we are forgiven and made whole. God's grace pours over us, offering a new beginning and the strength to live with justice and love. No matter the struggles we face, no matter how much we resist, God's love remains steadfast and unchanging. May we hold this truth as we are empowered to go forth in the world and make a difference. Amen.

Stories for All People

Lee Parrish

Pastoral Prayer

Modern Lesson

Patrick Washburn

Our Modern Lesson for today comes from Andrea Gibson, who is a young poet, writer, and activist whose work focuses on gender norms, politics, social justice, and LGBTQ topics. Among her written work she says...

The world is not tired of you. It is waiting for you, hungry for your courage, your voice, your light. Every time you choose kindness over indifference, love over fear, you tilt the scales toward healing. We are here to hold one another in the work of becoming whole. Together, we are the hope we've been searching for.

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

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

* Gospel Lesson

John 2:1-11 (CEB)

Kristin Andes

Our Scripture Lesson for today comes from the Gospel of John 2:1-11, where Jesus turns water into wine at the wedding in Cana...

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration. When the wine ran out, Jesus' mother said to him, "They don't have any wine."

Jesus replied, "Woman, what does that have to do with me? My time hasn't come yet."

His mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Nearby were six stone water jars used for the Jewish cleansing ritual, each able to hold about twenty or thirty gallons.

Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water," and they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Now draw some from them and take it to the headwaiter," and they did. The headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine. He didn't know where it came from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew.

The headwaiter called the groom and said, "Everyone serves the good wine first. They bring out the second-rate wine only when the guests are drinking freely. You kept the good wine until now." This was the first miraculous sign that Jesus did in Cana of Galilee. He revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

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

Kristin Andes

As we bring our offerings today, we are reminded of the miracle at the wedding in Cana, where Jesus transformed a simple necessity into something abundant and overflowing. Just as Jesus took what was ordinary and made it extraordinary, our offerings have the power to do astonishing things too. Let us give with generosity, trusting that our gifts will be multiplied in the same manner to bring justice, hope, and healing to the world.

* 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.

* Prayer of Dedication (*unison*)

Kristin Andes

Please join me in a prayer of dedication for the gifts we have received...

Gracious God, just as Jesus turned water into wine, take these offerings, however small they may seem, and multiply them to meet the needs of your people. May they be used in the fight for justice, welcome the stranger, heal the broken, and bring hope where there is despair. Bless the work they support and the hearts that have given, so that all may experience the love of your abundant kin-dom. Amen.

INSTALLATION AND ORDINATION OF DEACONS AND ELDERS

Elders: Jana Harrison, Lloyd Spencer, Joy Decker, Brian Hankins, Tom Magraw;
Deacons: Suzanne Lamorey, Eric Miner, Cheryl Milam, Shakti Subramanian, Lee Parrish, Tom Lannin **Officers:** Terry Raley-Dennis (D), President; Dawn Robinson (E); Vice President, Mel Andersen (D) Secretary; Martha Bomely (D), Treasurer

(Members of the Class of 2027 and Officers come forward.)

Pastor: These beloved members of our community have heard God's call to serve among us, and they have responded with willingness and joy. Today, we affirm their calling and commit to supporting them in their service.

President: Friends in Christ, it is both a privilege and a responsibility to serve as leaders of Holy Covenant United Church of Christ. Having reflected

on the significance of this ministry, are you prepared to serve with love, humility, and grace, trusting in God's guidance?

Members: I am, with God's help.

President: Do you promise to lead with compassion, integrity, and a commitment to the mission of this church, embodying Christ's love in all that you do?

Members: I do, relying on God's grace.

Pastor: To those of you stepping into the role of officers within this church, do you accept the responsibilities of your office and promise to serve faithfully, in partnership with this community, for the flourishing of God's work among us?

Officers: I do, with God's help.

Pastor: Members of this congregation, you have witnessed the commitment of these siblings in Christ. Will you affirm your covenant with them, pledging to support them in their ministry and to work alongside them as partners in Christ's mission?

People: We celebrate the calling of these leaders and promise to encourage them, honor their service, and join them in building a faithful and inclusive community of love, peace, and justice.

(Current Elders and Deacons and the outgoing class of 2024 are invited forward for the laying on of hands.)

Laying on of Hands

Pastor: Throughout history, the laying on of hands has been a sacred act, symbolizing the Church's recognition of God's call and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to confer upon those called the gifts they will need for ministry. Today, we lay hands upon you, Lee Parrish, Tom Lannin, and Martha Bomely, as Deacons of this church, and Dawn Robinson and Tom Magraw, as Elders of this church. Let us offer our blessings upon them together as we pray:

People: Loving and Eternal God, we thank you for calling these leaders to serve your church. Pour out your Spirit upon them, that they may lead with the wisdom, compassion, and courage of Christ. May their service inspire and encourage us all as we journey together in faith. Strengthen them for the duties and tasks ahead, and may their work bring glory to you and your kin-dom. Amen.

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/>

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

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/>

BLACK HISTORY MONTH DISPLAY

During the month of February, you are invited to bring in books, art work, pictures, and memorabilia from Black History and Culture that can be used for our 2nd Annual Black History Month Display. The items shared for the display will be for viewing purposes only and will be returned to the owner at the end of February. Last year the display was placed in the gathering room and was a huge hit not only within the congregation but the community who used the building that month. If you have questions sharing your items, please reach out to Pastor Chris or contact the church office.

ON JANUARY 20, WE CELEBRATE MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY!

Holy Covenant's RJE (Racial Justice and Equity) committee would like to encourage all members to make time to honor Dr. King on this day, in a method helpful to them.

In Person Events: For those interested in joining an in person event, this link <https://www.charlotteonthecheap.com/mlk-day-charlotte/> to Charlotte on the Cheap sends you to a list affordable and free Charlotte area events taking place on or near January 20th, 2025

Videos and Audios

For those who have the time and desire to watch a film, we recommend SELMA available on various streaming platforms and free to members as a DVD via the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library. In addition, the library has a number of streaming and additional DVDs related to Dr. King, including documentaries. You can go to <https://www.cmlibrary.org/> then search the catalog for MLK.

Also, there is a YouTube site where you can watch and listen to over 15 of Dr. King's speeches. Enter "Martin Luther King, Jr Speeches by LearnOutLoud" into the browser (no spaces in LearnOutLoud) and click on the first image to access these powerful recordings.

Readings

For those who would like to read some of Dr. King's famous powerful speeches, search "CSUMB College of Business MLK Speeches" for a PDF with Eleven Speeches by Dr. King. Here is a link to the King Center, located in Georgia: <https://thekingcenter.org>

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

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

Members

Alix Felsing & Tommy Tomlinson in the death of Alix's mother, Joann Felsing; Her life will be celebrated at 11:00 AM on Saturday, January 25, 2025, at Holy Covenant UCC, Visitation will follow the service.

Jana Harrison & Jeff Hughes in the death of Jana's father, James Thomas Harrison
Linda Carver, Liz Colton, Kevin Decker, Jim & Faye Humphrey, Sharon Landis,
Suzanne Lamorey, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Ed & Beth Sharp,
Anita Taylor, Darline Warren

Friends & Family Members

Will Judd and family in the death of his father, Grady Judd
Beth, Michael & Julian Bliss (Robert Shepherd), Melissa Brown, Jeffrey Calder
(Martha Bomely), Craig Chrismon (Melissa Noll), Jeanne Hord (Diane Neese), Pam
Culp (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), Michelle Sharp (Beth & Ed Sharp), Janet Wakefield
(Linda Burby), Brian Weddell (Jon Weddell), Kim Wiggs-Gamblin, Scott Whitley
(Jay Whitley), John Zastrow (Barb Schneller)

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

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Jon Weddell, MDiv, MSW, Minister of Music

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