



*Unsplash Photo by Shavr IK*

**“If you want to fly,  
you have to give up the things that weigh you down.”  
– Toni Morrison**

**“There are years that ask questions and years that answer. It is in the  
planting of questions that we find our purpose.”  
– Zora Neale Hurston**

**“The secret of life is to live with intention and purpose, uprooting  
what no longer serves and planting the seeds of revolution.”  
- Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture)**

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**  
**FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY - BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

**February 2, 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 "Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us With Your Love" arr. M. Sedio

Welcome and Announcements Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

Chiming of the Hour

Choral Introit "Yonder Come Day" arr. J. C. Tucker  
(Georgia Sea Islands)

**Yonder come day, day is a breakin'**

**Yonder come day, O my soul**

**Yonder come day, day is a breakin'**

**Sun is arisin' in my soul.**

\* Call to the Heart Lloyd Spencer

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

One: Before we were formed in the womb, God knew us.

Many: **Before we took our first breath, God set us apart.**

One: In every age, God calls prophets to uproot injustice and plant seeds of justice.

Many: **In every generation, God equips the faithful to build a world of love and equity.**

One: Today, we remember the voices that have cried out for freedom and the hands that have labored for liberation.

Many: **We honor the legacy of those who, like Jeremiah, dared to tear down systems of oppression and build a better tomorrow.**

One: Come, let us worship the One who calls us to this holy work.

Many: **With open hearts and willing hands, we come to answer God's call.**

\* Hymn "Come, All You People" UYAI MOSE (Zimbabwe)  
Come, all you people, come and praise the Most High. (3x)  
Come now and worship the Lord.

Come, all you people, come and praise the Savior. (3x)  
Come now and worship the Lord.

Come, all you people, come and praise the Spirit. (3x)  
Come now and worship the Lord.

#### Affirmation

Yourself: I don't need to see the entire path; I just need to take the next faithful step.

Neighbor: You don't need to see the entire path; you just need to take the next faithful step.

World: We don't need to see the entire path; we just need to take the next faithful step.

#### Prayer of Transformation (*unison*)

Lloyd Spencer

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

God of all people, we confess we have not done enough to dismantle the barriers of racism and inequality; that we have benefited from systems of oppression and too often turned away from the cries for justice. Forgive us for our silence, our complicity, and our fear of the work required for true liberation. Inspire us to confront our own racism with courage, to act with compassion, and to build a world that reflects your love and justice. Amen.

#### Song of Response

LET US BREAK BREAD

When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,  
My God, have mercy on me.

#### Words of Grace

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Just as God told Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you," so too does God know and love each of us. God's grace empowers us to tear out the weeds of injustice and plant seeds of righteousness, to confess our failings and rise anew with courage. May we know we are forgiven, we are loved, and we are called to seek justice. Amen.

Song of Response

GLORY TO GOD

**Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me,  
And to the Christ, whose grace has pardoned me,  
And to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.  
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.**

**World without end, without end, Amen. (3x)  
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.**

Black Christian History Moment

Jackie Freeze

During each Sunday of Black History Month, we will recognize someone of African American descent who has contributed to the theology and breath of the Christian faith. Today we celebrate the contributions and achievements of singer and actress Jennifer Hudson.

Song

“I Love the Lord”

R. Smallwood

**I love the Lord, who heard my cry and pitied every groan.  
Long as I live and troubles rise, I'll hasten to God's throne.**

**I love the Lord, who heard my cry and chased my grief away.  
O let my heart no more despair while I have breath to pray.**

Stories for All People

Joann Jellison

Prayer for Illumination (*sung*)

RAIN DOWN

**Rain down, rain down, rain down your love on your people.  
Rain down, rain down, rain down your love, God of life.**

Modern Lesson

Pam Shimberg

*Our Modern Lesson for today comes from Bishop Yvette Flunder, who is an LGBTQ+ advocate, preacher, and theologian. She says...*

God calls us to a holy disruption, where we break open the ground of our old assumptions and plant seeds of new possibility. We must be willing to uproot the things that bind us to injustice, fear, and hatred. It is only when we have the courage to make space for new life that we can begin the work of building a future that embodies God's radical love for all people.

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

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

*Our Scripture Lesson for today comes from Jeremiah 1:4-10, where God's word has come to Jeremiah, and he shares the hard task ahead of him...*

The Lord's word came to me:

"Before I created you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I set you apart; I made you a prophet to the nations."

"Ah, Lord God," I said, "I don't know how to speak because I'm only a child."

The Lord responded, "Don't say, 'I'm only a child.' Where I send you, you must go; what I tell you, you must say.

Don't be afraid of them, because I'm with you to rescue you," declares the Lord.

Then the Lord stretched out his hand, touched my mouth, and said to me, "I'm putting my words in your mouth. This very day I appoint you over nations and empires, to dig up and pull down, to destroy and demolish, to build and plant."

**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

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

"Holy Work: Uprooting, Rebuilding, and Planting New Life"

Invitation to Generosity

Lloyd Spencer

God told Jeremiah, "I appointed you to pluck up and to pull down, to build and to plant." In the same way, we are called to use our gifts to uproot systems of injustice and nurture communities of love, equity, and peace. When we give, we join in God's work of building a more just world where everyone can flourish. Let us now share a portion of our good, trusting that God will bless and multiply such a gift for the work of love and justice.

\* Doxology

THANK YOU LORD

Thank you, Lord. (3x) I just want to thank you, Lord.

\* Prayer of Dedication (*unison*)

Lloyd Spencer

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

Holy God, you have called us, like Jeremiah, to plant seeds of justice and uproot barriers of inequity. Bless these gifts we bring today, that they may build a world where love reigns, hope flourishes, and all your children are valued and free. Use our offerings, our lives, and our hearts to further your work of justice, peace, and healing. Amen.

THE MYSTIC SUPPER  
ALL ARE WELCOME AT CHRIST'S TABLE

Song of Preparation 348 "Jesus Is Here Right Now"

JESUS IS HERE

**Jesus is here right now. Jesus is here.**

**With this bread and wine true peace you'll find;**

**Christ Jesus is here right now.**

Invitation to the Table

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

**One: The Lord be with you.**

**Many: And also with you.**

**One: Lift up your hearts.**

**Many: We lift them up to the Lord.**

**One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.**

**Many: It is good to give our thanks and praise.**

**One:** This is the table of Jesus Christ, a table where barriers are broken down and new life is made possible. It was at tables like these that Jesus sat with those who were excluded, misunderstood, and marginalized. He shared bread with the poor, the sinner, the stranger, and the outcast, showing us that God's love knows no limits. Here at this table, we remember that Jesus calls us to do the holy work of tearing down the walls that divide us. When we come together in this meal, we proclaim that racism, hatred, and injustice have no place in God's kingdom. We come to the table because Jesus invites us, every one of us, no matter who we are, where we've been, or what burdens we carry. This is the table of grace, where love is poured out without exception and where we are strengthened for the work of justice, equity, and peace. So come, people of God. Come and bring all that you are. Come and be nourished, healed, and empowered for the work ahead.

**Many: We come to the table as one body, united in Christ's love and committed to the work of justice for all people.**

Words of Institution

Sharing of the Elements



\* Benediction Response AMEN SIAKUDUMISA (South Africa)  
Amen, siakudumisa! Amen, siakudumisa!  
Amen, bawo. Amen, bawo. Amen, siakudumisa!  
(Translation: Amen, we praise your name, O God.).

Postlude "Let Us Break Bread Together" arr. J. Carter

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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/>

### WE PROVIDE OUR EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME WITH HELP FROM:

D Evans, Brian Hankins, Laura Hankins, Jo Ann Jellison  
Ushers: Shakti Subramanian  
Greeters:

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

### ANNUAL GIVING STATEMENTS 2024

The Annual Giving Statements for 2024 have been distributed via email, in an effort of reducing paper and costs, and to distribute them to you expediently. If you have questions regarding your statement, please contact Dawn Simmons in the church office, [office@holycovenantucc.org](mailto:office@holycovenantucc.org), or Martha Bomely, Treasurer. Printed copies are available upon request.



## **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.

## **RELATIONAL WELLNESS EVENTS**

Mark your calendars for Sunday, February 9th and February 23rd. On these two Sundays after worship we will be engaging in conversation and fun activities that engage the dimension of Relational Wellness, how we connect with others. The **hospitality team** will be hosting this event on both Sundays. We will meet in the Gathering Room after worship at 12:30pm and will last approximately 1 hour to 1.5 hours. Childcare and light food and beverages for all ages will be provided. To get a headcount of how many to plan for we ask that you please register using the link in the newsletter, or contact the church office.

## **DROP IN BLANKET PARTY, AT HCUCC, TUESDAY, FEB. 25**

Join the Project Linus Blanketeers in a drop in day, Tuesday, February 25, from 9am-3pm at Holy Covenant UCC! All are welcome. Materials and tools provided. Let's make some blankets for children needing a little comfort by providing them with blankets made with love. No sewing skills needed!

## **UCC LAUNCHES CLIMATE HOPE ART CONTEST**

Under the theme, "Planting Seeds of Hope," the United Church of Christ (UCC) is conducting a Climate Hope Art Contest. Children and youth from UCC churches across the nation are invited to draw, paint, or color works of art that illustrate the theme and bring it to life. Submissions will be accepted from February 2 to March 14. An online award ceremony for finalists from each of the different age groups will be held on Saturday, April 5, 2025. One overall winner will receive an all-expenses paid trip to visit Washington, D.C. with a parent or guardian. The winning artwork will serve as the logo for UCC Climate Hope advocacy work throughout 2025.

## **PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER**

If you wish to add someone to the list, please send a note to  
**[prayers@holycovenantucc.org](mailto:prayers@holycovenantucc.org)**.

### **Members**

Beth Sharp and family in the recent death of her husband, Ed Sharp  
Linda Carver, Liz Colton, Kevin Decker, Jim & Faye Humphrey, Sharon Landis,  
Suzanne Lamorey, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Beth Sharp, Anita  
Taylor, Darline Warren

### **Friends & Family Members**

Sakhi and family in the recent death of his son, Musab. (Stephanie Herrin)  
Beth, Michael & Julian Bliss (Robert Shepherd), Melissa Brown, Jeffrey Calder  
(Martha Bomely), Craig Chrismon (Melissa Noll), Reva Dixon, Kim Dixon VanFleet  
(Diane Neese), 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 Sharp), Janet Wakefield (Linda Burby), Brian  
Weddell (Jon Weddell), Kim Wiggs-Gamblin, Scott Whitley (Jay Whitley), John  
Zastrow (Barb Schneller)

### **OUR MINISTRY TEAM**

**Rev. Christopher Czarnecki, MDiv, MBA, Senior Pastor**

**RevChris@holycovenantucc.org, 314-402-8167**

**Jon Weddell, MDiv, MSW, Minister of Music**

**Dawn Simmons, BSBF, Executive Assistant**

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