



Unsplash Photo by Nupo Deyon Daniel

**“Transformation happens when we move through
the fear of change and into the fullness
of who we are meant to be.”**

- Gloria Anzaldúa.

**“True transformation begins when we see the world as it is and
still believe in what it can become.”**

- James Baldwin

**“Love is an action, a choice, a way of being in the world that
transforms everything it touches.”**

- Bell Hooks

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
TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY ~ WELCOME SUNDAY**

March 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 "Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether" P. Dearmer

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 Spirit, You Are Welcome" D. Rambo

* Call to the Heart Lloyd Spencer

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

One: With boldness and hope, we come trusting in the Spirit who sets us free.

Many: **God's Spirit calls us to life, to justice, to love.**

One: With unveiled faces, we behold God's love. A love that breaks down barriers, lifts the lowly, and calls all to the table.

Many: **No one is turned away. All are welcome here!**

One: We do not lose heart, even when the world resists justice, for we are being made new, renewed, and strengthened for the work ahead.

Many: **Let us worship the One who frees us, transforms us, and leads us in the way of justice and peace.**

* Hymn 182

“We Have Come at Christ’s Own Bidding”

HYFRYDOL

We have come at Christ’s own bidding to this high and holy place,
Where we wait with hope and longing for some token of God’s grace.
Here we pray for new assurance that our faith is not in vain,
Searching like those first disciples for a sign both clear and plain.

Light breaks through our clouds and shadows,
splendor bathes the flesh-joined Word,
Moses and Elijah marvel as the heavenly voice is heard.
Eyes and hearts behold with wonder how the Law and Prophets meet;
Christ with garments drenched in brightness, stands transfigured and complete.

Strengthened by this glimpse of glory, fearful lets our faith decline,
We, like Peter, find it tempting to remain and build a shrine.
But true worship gives us courage to proclaim what we profess,
That our daily lives may prove us people of the God we bless.

RECEPTION AND WELCOME OF NEW MEMBERS

Join us in welcoming our new members!
Kristin and Markus Fuchs - Stephen and Mary Tarr
Stella Dawson - Roxie McMillion - Craig Threewitts
Sara Green - Lyndsay Molinari

* **Congregation:** We welcome each of you and celebrate your journey of faith. We promise to search with you for truth in Scripture, word and witness; to walk with you in life’s joys and sorrows; to support you when life is shaken; to laugh with you when life lifts your spirit; to share silence, song and sacrament; and to grow in Christian love and mutual appreciation. We will rely on God’s sustaining presence as we journey forward together.

Greeting of Christian Love

Sponsors: On behalf of the entire congregation, it is our pleasure to welcome you as full members of Holy Covenant United Church of Christ. In the name of Jesus Christ, we extend to you the hand of Christian love and welcome.

Song “Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying” K. Medema
Lord, listen to your children praying.
Lord, send your Spirit in this place.
Lord, listen to your children praying.
Send us love, send us power, send us grace.

Pastoral Prayer

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 Laura Hankins
Our Modern Lesson for today comes from Cole Authur Riley, who is modern mystic, author, and curator of Black Liturgies, a project of The Center for Dignity and Contemplation. In her writing she says...

I have to believe that God is not so distant, so veiled, that we cannot perceive the divine here and now. I have to believe that there are moments of revelation all around us—God meeting us in our grief, in our longing, in our becoming. Transformation is not a single moment but a slow unraveling, a lifting of what once obscured our sight. And in the unveiling, we find that love has been here all along, waiting for us to see.

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

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

* Christian Lesson 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2 (NRSV) Lloyd Spencer
Please take a comfortable posture that supports your reading and worshiping... Our Scripture Lesson for today comes 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2, where Paul speaks of spiritual stagnation and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit...

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
“Lifting the Veil: Embracing Spiritual Transformation”

Invitation to Generosity

Lloyd Spencer

In a world longing for justice, we are called to be generous. When we give, we invest in a vision of love that welcomes all, serves all, and works for transformation in the world. May our gifts be a witness to the Spirit's movement among us. Let us now share a portion of our gifts with joy and courage.

Offertory

* 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...

Gracious God, we dedicate these gifts to your work of love and justice. May they be a source of healing and hope for those in need, and a reflection of our commitment to the transformative power of your Spirit. Use these offerings to further the kin-dom you are creating, one of justice, peace, and inclusion. We dedicate these offerings, trusting in your grace and abundance. Amen.

THE MYSTIC SUPPER ALL ARE WELCOME AT CHRIST'S TABLE

The Invitation

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: On this Transfiguration Sunday, we come to the table not only to remember Jesus' moment on the mountaintop but to participate in the ongoing transformation that God offers us all. Just as Jesus' appearance was transformed before his disciples, we, too, are invited into a journey of spiritual transformation, where our hearts, minds, and lives are renewed by the power of God's love.

Many: **Through this meal, may we be transformed.**

Words of Institution

This table is a place where all are welcomed, no matter where we've come from or where we are on our spiritual journeys. It is a place of radical inclusion, where Jesus invites us to come as we are and to be transformed. Through this meal, we are called to embrace the vision of God's kin-dom, where justice, peace, and compassion reign, where even the least and lowest are held in God's tender care.

So come, all who are thirsty for justice and who hunger for transformation. Come, whether you deserve a spot at this table or feel unworthy to be invited to it. Come, whether you are a member, or if this is your first time here. Come, let this sacred meal be a reminder of the ways we, too, are called to be transformed, so that we might share the light of God's love with the world.

Sharing of the Elements

Video during Communion "God of the Movements and Martyrs" D. LaMotte
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYaEl5ombvQ>

Prayer of Dedication (*unison*)

Gracious God, we give thanks for this holy meal, where we are reminded that your love knows no bounds. May we experience the transforming power of your presence and be transfigured by your love into agents of justice, peace, and compassion. Empower us to carry the light of your kin-dom into the world, embracing all people with love and standing with the vulnerable. Make us your hands and feet, working in the hope of transformation for all of God's creation. Amen.

* Hymn

“God, You Love the World”

ARGENTINA

arr. Carolyn W. Gillette

God, you love the world! You sent your only Son,
And you said, "Go share my love with everyone."
So we seek to serve you in our homes and towns,
And we work to show the world: Your love abounds!

Refrain: Lead us, as we go this day;
Guide us as we work and pray.
Give us, when each day is through,
True joy, found in serving you.

By your Spirit, some build houses, safe and strong,
Some are called to share your Word in prayer and song.
Some are called to heal the sick and fight disease,
Some are called to save the land by planting trees. (R)

Teach us that in loving, we must listen well.
Help us hear the stories others have to tell.
Help us learn from other people and their ways.
May we be united as we offer praise. (R)

* Benediction

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

* Benediction Response NCH 581

WORLD PEACE PRAYER

Postlude

“Bread of the World”

L. Bourgeois

*Songs in this service are used by permission.
CCLI License #11439355; CSPL164710*

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.*

WE PROVIDE OUR EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME WITH HELP FROM:

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

Ushers: Shakti Subramanian Greeters:

Refreshments: Hospitality Team

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/>

CHECK OUT OUR ONLINE CALENDAR AT holycovenantucc.org/events/

SEE THE E-NEWSLETTER FOR ABUNDANT LIFE WEBINAR SERIES BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE NORTH CAROLINA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

ASH WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 7PM

Our Ash Wednesday Service will be held on March 5th at 7:00pm. Ash Wednesday is considered to be the first day of Lent in the Christian liturgical calendar, a time that spans 40 days leading up to Easter. It is a day of repentance, reflection, and fasting in preparation for the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus at Easter. On Ash Wednesday Christians across the world participate in a service in which they receive ashes on their foreheads. The ashes are typically made from the burned palms of the previous year's Palm Sunday and are applied in the shape of a cross. The act of receiving ashes symbolizes human mortality and repentance, reflecting the words, *"Remember that you are dust, and to dust, you shall return"* (Genesis 3:19).

LENTEN DEVOTIONALS

"YOUNG VOICES: STEPPING OUT OF THE WILDERNESS"

This 47-day devotion walks you through Lent and concludes with the good news of Easter Sunday. All entries were written by UCC youth and young adults between the ages of 12 and 35. See these daily devotions on our Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/HCUCC.Church>

We will have a limited number of printed copies available.

PLEASE PICK UP BLACK HISTORY DISPLAY ITEMS

Many thanks to all who shared their treasured items with us! If you brought in items for our Black History Display during the month of February, please stop by Pastor Chris' office to collect your items. He has several books, periodicals, art, and statues that still need to be claimed.

BAGGED LUNCH BUILD, MARCH 9

No experience needed! We are making 100 bagged lunches for the Giles Center on March 9. This center is affiliated with A Roof Above and provides overnight shelter (and bags lunches) for homeless men. Stay after the worship service and join us!

SOJOURNERS CLASS BEGINS NEW STUDY, MARCH 9

Sunday, March 9, we will begin a book study of *The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Final Days in Jerusalem* by Marcus Borg and John Crossan. Amazon has only an "acceptable" paperback plus hardback copy. Another good source is thriftbooks.com where you will find "good: and "very good" paperback copies as well as less expensive hardback copies. Hope you can join us either in person or via Zoom—no preparation necessary.

UCC CLIMATE HOPE ART CONTEST HAPPENING NOW

Entries should be turned in the first week of March. See Jo Ann Jellison for details.

UNC Charlotte MOVIE SCREENINGS

How to Save a Milestone, March 17, 6pm, UNCC Student Union Theater

Gentrification is creeping toward Charlotte's legendary Milestone Club. Fifty plus years of music history is threatened by a crumbling building as the owner tries to hold one to a vanishing heart of live music.

Our Movement Starts Here, March 18, 5:30pm & 8:30pm, UNCC

This film, produced by *John Rash and Melanie Ho*, chronicles the pioneering protesters in North Carolina whose actions inspired the Environmental Justice movement, highlighting the rural community's fight against the establishment of a toxic landfill in their area.

See the e-newsletter for full details and registration links.

SING FOR THE CURE CONCERT, MARCH 29, 7:30PM, CPCC

This will be a very special, life affirming concert, on March 29, 7:30 at CPCC Halton Theater. Several choruses and choirs will be part of the large 90 member chorus, including 3 HCUCC choir members. See the newsletter for live links and discount code. Proceeds of this concert will benefit local organizations that provide critical financial assistance to individuals and families who are battling breast cancer. Thanks, *Tina Dickens, Meg Houlihan and D Evans, HCUCC members / Women's Chorus of Charlotte*

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

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

Members

Linda Carver, Liz Colton, Kevin Decker, Jim & Faye Humphrey, Sharon Landis, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Beth Sharp, Anita Taylor, Darline Warren

Friends & Family Members

Beth, Michael & Julian Bliss (Robert Shepherd), Melissa Brown, Reva Dixon, Kim Dixon VanFleet (Diane Neese), Jeanne Hord (Diane Neese), Pam McGill & Pam Culp (Melissa Noll), Deby Gumper (Dawn Simmons), Cindy Hedrick (Barb Schneller), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Charles Jernigan (Lee Parrish), Dave Johnson, Richard Lease (Barb Schneller), Earl & Susie Morgan (Ed Vickery), 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

Mailing address: P.O. Box 481285, Charlotte NC 28269
3501 West W.T. Harris Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28269-8510
www.holycovenantucc.org 704-599-9810