



*Unsplash Photo by Oliver Hotakainen*

**“Repentance is not a performance of sorrow, but a commitment to repair. It is the holy work of truth-telling, of returning to the place where love is possible, and choosing to begin again.”**

**- Pádraig Ó Tuama**

**“To repent is to reclaim your humanity. It is to step away from systems that grind us down and instead live into the truth that we were never meant to be cogs in a machine, we were meant to be whole, to be free, to be loved.”**

**- Tricia Hersey**

**“Grace is not the absence of accountability, but the presence of love that refuses to let us stay the same. It is a hand reaching out, a voice calling us deeper, an invitation to live as if the world can be better, because it can.”**

**- Dante Stewart**

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  
THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT ~ WELCOME SUNDAY

March 23, 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 "My Jesus, I Love Thee" arr. P. Rodriguez

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 "Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley" LONESOME VALLEY

**Jesus walked this lonesome valley. He had to walk it by himself.**

**Oh, nobody else could walk it for him. He had to walk it by himself.**

\* Call to the Heart Kristin Andes

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

One: Come, you who carry questions too heavy to hold alone.

Many: **We come seeking understanding, seeking peace.**

One: When the world tells us suffering is punishment, that tragedy must have a reason...

Many: **Jesus calls us to repent, to be transformed, and to live fully.**

One: Here, we are invited into grace, not fear; into love, not blame.

Many: **Come, let us worship the God of mercy, the One who calls us to bear fruit in love.**

\* Hymn

“Gather Us In”

Marty Haugen

Here in this place, 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.

Here we receive new life in the waters,  
Here we receive the bread of new birth:  
Here you shall call your sons and your daughters,  
Call us anew to be salt for the earth.  
Give us to drink, the wine of compassion,  
Give us to eat the bread that is you:  
Nourish us well and teach us to fashion  
Lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

## RENEWAL OF BAPTISM

*Today we celebrate the baptism of Angela Massoud*

Blessing and Welcome

**Pastor:** Angela, you have been baptized in the abundant grace of God. May you walk in faith, knowing that you are deeply loved, wholly accepted, and continually renewed by the Spirit. May this church be a place where you grow, serve, and find belonging. And may we, your community, walk with you on this journey, supporting and celebrating the life God is unfolding in you.

**Congregation:** Angela, we rejoice with you! You are our sibling in Christ, a beloved part of this community. With open hearts and joyful spirits, we welcome you in love and covenant to walk beside you in faith.

## WELCOME AND INSTALLATION OF NEW MEMBERS

*Join us in welcoming our new members!*  
*Angela Massoud ~ Markus Fuchs*

### Response of the Congregation

Pastor: Will the members of Holy Covenant United Church of Christ please take a comfortable posture and join in the mutual promise and welcome?

**\* 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.

### \* Hymn

"Gather Us In"

Marty Haugen

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.

### Stories for All People

Lee Parrish

### Song of Preparation "I Want Jesus to Walk with Me"

SOJOURNER

I want Jesus to walk with me. (2x)  
All along my pilgrim journey,  
Oh I want Jesus to walk with me.

### Pastor Prayer

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

### Song of Prayer

"God Weeps"  
*Meg Houlihan, soloist*

DELGADO

Lord's Prayer (*unison*)

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

**Our Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your Kin-dom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For yours is the Kin-dom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

Prayer for Illumination "Take, O Take Me as I Am"

J. L. Bell

**Take, O take me as I am; summon out what I shall be;  
Set your seal upon my heart and live in me.**

Modern Lesson

Pam Shimberg

*Our modern lesson for today comes from Cole Arthur Riley, who is a modern mystic, theologian, author, and creator of Black Liturgies. Among her work she says...*

Repentance is not a shame-laden wallowing; it is an invitation to become. It is the courage to acknowledge that we are capable of harm, and the hope that we are also capable of change. It is not a posture of despair, but a deep trust that the Divine does not leave us in our brokenness, but beckons us toward something more whole, more just, more holy.

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

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

\*Gospel Lesson

Luke 13:1-9 (CEB)

Kristin Andes

*Please take a comfortable posture that supports your reading and worshipping. Our Scripture Lesson for today comes the Gospel of Luke 13:1-9, where Jesus is confronted about suffering and sin...*

Some who were present on that occasion told Jesus about the Galileans whom Pilate had killed while they were offering sacrifices. He replied, “Do you think the suffering of these Galileans proves that they were more sinful than all the other Galileans? No, I tell you, but unless you change your hearts and lives, you will die just as they did. What about those eighteen people who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them? Do you think that they were more guilty of wrongdoing than everyone else who lives in Jerusalem? No, I tell you, but unless you change your hearts and lives, you will die just as they did.”

Jesus told this parable: “A man owned a fig tree planted in his vineyard. He came looking for fruit on it and found none. He said to his gardener, ‘Look, I’ve come looking for fruit on this fig tree for the past three years, and I’ve never found any. Cut it down! Why should it continue depleting the soil’s nutrients?’ The gardener responded, ‘Lord, give it one more year, and I will dig around it and give it fertilizer. Maybe it will produce fruit next year; if not, then you can cut it down.’”

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

“When Bad Things Happen”

Invitation to Generosity

Kristin Andes

As we reflect on God’s boundless love and the call to live with justice and compassion, we are invited to respond with generosity. Our gifts, whether big or small, become part of God’s work in this world, bringing hope, healing, and new possibilities. Let us give with open hearts, trusting that what we offer will be used to build a world where all are embraced and uplifted.

\* Doxology

GIVE THANKS

**Give thanks with a grateful heart; give thanks to the Holy One;  
Give thanks because God’s given Jesus Christ, God’s Son. (2x)**

**And now let the weak say, “I am strong,”**

**Let the poor say, “I am rich**

**Because of what the Lord has done for us.” (2x) Give thanks.**

\* Prayer of Dedication (*unison*) Kristin Andes  
*Please join me in a prayer of dedication for the gifts we have received...*  
Holy One, we bring these gifts as a sign of our gratitude. Bless them and bless us, that all we offer, our resources, our time, our lives, may be used to build your vision of love, justice, and belonging. May these gifts be multiplied for good, so they might bring healing where there is hurt, comfort where there is struggle, and joy where there is need. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

\* Hymn "Gather Us In" Marty Haugen  
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.

\* Benediction Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

\* Benediction Response 581 WORLD PEACE PRAYER  
Lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth,  
From despair to hope, from fear to trust,  
Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace;  
Let peace fill our hearts, let peace fill our world,  
Let peace fill our universe.

Postlude "The Old Rugged Cross" arr. L. Shackley  
*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, Laurence Winston, Tom Magraw  
Greeters: Refreshments:

## 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/](https://holycovenantucc.org/events/)**

### **SOJOURNERS CLASS**

Join us for 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](https://www.thriftbooks.com) where you will find "good: and "very good" paperback copies as well as less expensive hardback copies. In person or via Zoom—no preparation necessary.

### **BAGGED LUNCH BUILD, MARCH 30 FOLLOWING WORSHIP**

No experience needed! We are making 100 bagged lunches for the Giles Center on March 30, and again on April 27.

### **GAME NIGHT, APRIL 6**

We start around 6:30pm. Join us for fun and fellowship!

### **CARES TEAM BRAINSTORMING SESSION, MARCH 30**

On March 30th, following our worship service at 12:30pm in the conference room we will have a brainstorming session around the idea of forming a Cares Team Ministry at the church. This idea rose out of the proposed Year of Wellness Plan for 2025. The idea of the "Cares Team" was a ministry that would initially work to gather information about the needs and gifts within the congregation and find ways to coordinate and sustainably match those needs and resources. This is an idea in development. If you have a passion for wanting to be part of this ministry please join us. All are welcome!



## **Season of Lent: March 5 through April 17**

### **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 devotionals on our Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/HCUCC.Church>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/61370940062>

Contact the office for print copy if desired.

### **Sojourners Class**

Book study of The Last Week:

What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Final Days in Jerusalem  
by Marcus Borg and John Crossan.

We gather In-person or via Zoom: Meeting ID: 895 6175 8099 Passcode: 986788

April 6

On the 5th Sunday in Lent, join us for “Mix-it-up” Sunday,  
with a Spring Brunch Potluck following worship.

Pastries, Muffins, Casseroles and Salads

April 13

Palm & Passion Sunday:

Let’s celebrate our Confirmands together!

April 17

Maundy Thursday Dinner & Tenebrae Service, 6pm

April 20

Easter Worship 10:55am

Bring fresh flowers for the cross

April 27

Celebrate Earth Sunday with the Creation Justice Team

## **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**

Mel & Christine Andersen, Liz Colton, Kevin Decker, Laura Hankins, Jana Harrison, Jim & Faye Humphrey, Sharon Landis, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Beth Sharp, Anita Taylor, Darline Warren, Sally Young & Alice Phelan

### **Friends & Family Members**

Sandra (Carl & Phyllis Johnson), Beth, Michael & Julian Bliss (Robert Shepherd), Gary Bomely (Martha Bomely), Melissa Brown, Reva Dixon, Kim Dixon VanFleet (Diane Neese), Kent Hansen (Kristen Fuchs), 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)