



Unsplash Photo by Brady Leavell

**“Sometimes the best we can offer is not an answer,  
but an honest ‘I don’t know’,  
and faith begins there.”**

**- Pádraig Ó Tuama**

**“Faith is not about being certain.  
It’s about taking the next step.”**

**– Barbara Brown Taylor**

**“The purpose of faith is not to escape life,  
but to enter into it more fully.”**

**– James Baldwin**

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**  
**PALM & PASSION SUNDAY - CONFIRMATION SUNDAY**

**April 13, 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 "All Glory, Laud, and Honor" arr. J. Carter

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 216 "All Glory, Laud, and Honor" ST. THEODULPH

All glory, laud, and honor to you, O Christ, we sing,  
To whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring!  
The people of the Hebrews with palms adorned your way;  
Our praise and prayer and anthems we offer you this day.

O Promised One of Israel, of David's royal line,  
The one called "God's beloved," of flesh and yet divine;  
To you, before your passion, they sang their hymns of praise;  
To you, now high exalted, our melody we raise.

\* Call to the Heart Ed Vickery

One: We come to gather on this holy day, joining the crowd that lined the road to Jerusalem.

Many: We come with hope, waving palms and lifting our voices, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!"

One: We come with questions, with faith, with doubt, just as Jesus came—not on a warhorse, but on a colt—proclaiming peace in the face of empire.

Many: We come to follow the one who embodies justice, who invites us not to dominate, but to serve.

One: Today we also walk alongside those who are claiming their faith aloud, confirming what they believe, and discovering who they are called to be.

Many: As we worship, may we be stirred by their courage, and reminded of our own journey of faith.

One: Let us sing, shout, and praise the One who draws near.

Many: Even if we were silent, the stones would cry out!

\* Hymn 213

“Hosanna, Loud Hosanna”

ELLACOMBE

“Hosanna, loud hosanna” the little children sang;  
Through pillared court and temple the lovely anthem rang;  
To Jesus, who had blessed them close folded to his breast,  
The children sang their praises, the simplest and the best.

From Olivet they followed amid a cheering crowd,  
The victor palm branch waving, and chanting clear and loud.  
The one whom angels worship rode on in lowly state,  
And glad to see the children, slowed down the donkey’s gait.

“Hosanna in the highest!” That ancient song is ours.  
We hail our great Redeemer and sing with all our powers:  
“Hosanna, Christ, we praise you with heart and life and voice.  
Hosanna! In your presence forever we’ll rejoice!”

Prayer for Transformation (*unison*)

Ed Vickery

Hosanna, we cry and yet, we struggle to trust your way. We hold tightly to fear, to habits that no longer serve us, to silence when we should speak. We confess the times we’ve turned away from what is just because it felt too costly or hard. Transform us, O Christ, and give us courage to walk your road with courage, compassion, and hope. Amen.

Song of Transformation “God, Be Merciful to Me”

Redhead 76

God be merciful to me; on your grace I rest my plea.  
My transgressions I confess; grief and guilt my soul oppress.  
Wash me, make me pure within; cleanse, O cleanse me from my sin.

Gracious God, my heart renew, make my spirit right and true.  
Do not cast me from your sight nor remove your Spirit’s light.  
Your salvation’s joy restore, make me steadfast evermore.

Words of Grace

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

The One who entered Jerusalem with humility and hope also enters our lives with mercy and grace. There is nothing we have done, no wrong that is too great or silence held too long, that can separate us from Christ’s invitation to begin again. May we know forgiveness and be set free to rise and follow Christ, made new by God’s loving grace. Amen.

Song of Response

“Return to God”

M. Haugen

Return to God with all your heart, the source of grace and mercy.  
Come seek the tender faithfulness of God.

Prayers for the People

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Anthem

“Nearer, My God, to Thee”  
*Choir*

arr. J. Coates

\*Gospel Lesson

Luke 19:28-40 (NRSV)

Ed Vickery

*Our Scripture for today comes from the Gospel of Luke 19:28-40 (NRSV), where we hear about Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem for Passover...*

After he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, saying, “Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it.’ ” So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?” They said, “The Lord needs it.” Then they brought it to Jesus, and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. Now as he was approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!

Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!”

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, order your disciples to stop.” He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.”

**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.

Recognition of Confirmation Teachers

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

The Confirmation Experience

Confirmand Speeches

**Lachlan Sullivan**

Lachlan attends Cannon Middle School  
Parents; Jason & Aline Sullivan

**Daniel Sexton**

Daniel attends Winkler Middle School  
Parents; Richard & Cheryl Sexton

**Justin Chaney**

Justin attends William Amos Hough Highschool  
Parent; Sara Green

**Liam Sullivan**

Liam attends Cannon High School  
Parents; Jason & Aline Sullivan

**Shanel Simmons**

Shanel attends Rocky River High School  
Parents; Christopher & Akeera Czarnecki

**Lilly Chaney**

Lilly attends William Amos Hough High School  
Parent; Sara Green

Recognition and Blessing of the Confirmands

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

*I now invite our congregation to rise in body or in spirit and join together in offering a blessing as we have printed in the bulletin to these young people as they continue their journey of faith.*

**All: We bless you with love, pride, and hope. We promise to walk with you, to support you, to listen to your questions and honor your journey, wherever it may take you. You are a cherished part of this community, in whatever way you decide to be in it. May you continue to grow in faith, and may you always know that you are loved. Thanks be to God.**

Invitation to Generosity

Ed Vickery

As Jesus entered Jerusalem, the people laid down what they had: palms, cloaks, praise, as signs of welcome and devotion. Today, we are invited to do the same: to lay before God our gifts for a more just and loving world. As we celebrate the confirmands' "yes" to the journey of faith, may we also offer our "yes" through our giving generously, joyfully, and with hearts wide open. Let us give as we are able, trusting that love multiplied can change the world. As we share our offering, please remain seated and join us in singing "*I Was There to Hear Your Borning Cry*".

Hymn 351

"I Was There to Hear Your Borning Cry"

J. Ylvisaker

I was there to hear your borning cry,  
I'll be there when you are old.  
I rejoiced the day you were baptized,  
to see your life unfold.

I was there when you were but a child,  
with a faith to suit you well;  
I'll be there in case you wander off and find where demons dwell.

When you found the wonder of the Word  
I was there to cheer you on;  
You were raised to praise the living God,  
to whom you now belong.

Should you find someone to share your time  
and you join your hearts as one,  
I'll be there to make your verses rhyme from dusk 'till rising sun.

In the middle ages of your life,  
not too old, no longer young,  
I'll be there to guide you through the night,  
complete what I've begun.

When the evening gently closes in,  
and you shut your weary eyes,  
I'll be there as I have always been  
with just one more surprise.

I was there to hear your borning cry,  
I'll be there when you are old.  
I rejoiced the day you were baptized, to see your life unfold.

Prayer of Dedication (*unison*)

Ed Vickery

Holy One, we place these gifts before you, signs of our love, our gratitude, and our hope. Bless them and use them to lift-up the lowly, to challenge what is unjust, and to build the beloved community among us. May our giving reflect our faith, and may our faith lead us always in the way of compassion, courage, and joy. Amen.

Closing Words Before Holy Week

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

\* Hymn

“My Song Is Love Unknown”

LOVE UNKNOWN

My song is love unknown, my Savior’s love to me,  
Love to the loveless shown that they might lovely be.  
O who am I that for my sake my God should take frail flesh and die?

Christ came from heaven’s throne salvation to bestow,  
But people scorned and none the longed-for Christ would know.  
But O my friend, my friend indeed, who at my need his life did spend!

Sometimes they threw down palms and sweetest praises sang.  
Hosannas and glad psalms through streets and markets rang.  
Then “Crucify!” is all their breath,  
And for his death they thirst and cry.

What has my Sovereign done? What makes this rage and spite?  
Christ gave new strength to run, restored the gift of sight.  
Sweet injuries! Yet they at these  
Themselves displease and ‘gainst Christ rise.

Postlude

“Cleansing Fountain”

arr. D. Wyrzten

*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.*

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

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

Ushers: Shakti Subramanian, Laurence Winston, Joy Decker

Greeters: Patti Unger

Refreshments: Celebration cake in honor of our Confirmands

**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/)**

**TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME!**

Charlotte Knights vs. Gwinnett game on Saturday, July 19, 6pm. Tickets \$20-27 each. Order by April 20. Payment info will be sent in an email then. Questions? Contact Martha Bomely, [martha.bomely@gmail.com](mailto:martha.bomely@gmail.com).

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C44ACAD23A2FE3-48668551-charlotte>

**BAGGED LUNCH BUILD, April 27**

No experience needed! We are making 100 bagged lunches for the Giles Center on April 27.

**YOU'RE INVITED TO BE A PART OF OUR CHURCH PICTORIAL DIRECTORY! MAY 1-4**

We are excited to partner with Heritage Church Directories to create a pictorial directory of our congregation. This full color directory will include all our congregations' photos as well as our rich history and current ministries. This will be a beautiful heirloom and a functional book for getting into deeper relationship with our congregation. We ask for your participation to love our neighbor and get to know each other. You will receive a free directory as part of our thank you gift for participating.

To make this a success, we invite all our congregants to participate. Heritage Church Directories will offer professionally produced prints of the portraits, candids, and church promotional shots captured during this event. You may bring family or any other extra outfits for additional photos, you can even bring pets!

**REGISTER NOW!**





Heritage is here to make this event special and would love to photograph what is most important to you. Everyone will have the opportunity to purchase packages and pictures a la carte at the time of the event. You are under no obligation to purchase anything. The Heritage Directory will be made available to all our faith family who are photographed. Schedule your appointment by the above QR code, or this link: <https://www.picktime.com/52a9cdf2-9678-4d2b-8ae5-0b49dc094729>

Thursday, May 1, 2pm-8pm    Friday, May 2, 3pm-8pm  
Saturday, May 3, 10am-1pm, 2pm-7pm    Sunday, May 4, 1pm-5pm

### **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 Andersen, Liz Colton, Kevin Decker, Tina Ettesen, 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, Linda Burby, Reva Dixon, Kim Dixon VanFleet (Diane Neese), Kent Hansen (Kristen Fuchs), Jeanne Hord (Diane Neese), Pam McGill & 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), Larry & Karen Roark (Ed Vickery), Michelle Sharp (Beth Sharp), Janet Wakefield (Linda Burby), Brian Weddell (Jon Weddell), Kim Wiggs-Gamblin, Scott Whitley (Jay Whitley)

### **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**

## Season of Lent: March 5 through April 17

### **April 17, Maundy Thursday Dinner & Tenebrae Service, 6pm**

Join us on Thursday, April 17, 2025, at 6:00 pm for a deeply meaningful Maundy Thursday Dinner & Tenebrae Service. We will gather in the Gathering Room for a simple meal of soup and bread, sharing in conversation, singing, reflection, and communion together, remembering Jesus' final meal with his disciples.

Following dinner, we will move into the sanctuary for a Tenebrae service, walking through the Seven Last Words of Jesus as we reflect on the meaning of his crucifixion. This service weaves together the themes of both Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, drawing us into the depth of Christ's life and death.

If you would like to bring a soup to share this evening, please sign up below, or on the sheet in the Gathering Room. We hope you'll come, bringing your presence and spirit to this sacred evening.  
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C44ACAD23A2FE3-56198146-maundy#/>

### **Readers Needed for Maundy Thursday Service**

We are looking for 8 readers to participate in our Maundy Thursday Dinner and Tenebrae Service on Thursday, April 17th at 6:00pm. This is a meaningful and contemplative service, and your voice can help bring the story to life.

If you are interested in being a reader, please sign up using the link below:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C44ACAD23A2FE3-ushers>

Thank you for helping us create a sacred and memorable evening together.

### **April 20, Easter Worship 10:55am**

Join us for a meaningful and joyful Easter Sunday worship service as we celebrate the resurrection of Christ and the promise of new life. On this Sunday, we invite you to bring fresh flowers with you to help create a beautiful living cross in the sanctuary, a symbol of hope, transformation, and the beauty that blooms as Christ rises. After the service, please stick around for our all-ages Easter Egg Hunt! Yes, everyone is welcome to join the fun, but we kindly ask our enthusiastic adults and egg-hunting teens (*especially those who take this very seriously*) to give our littlest ones a head start. Let's make sure everyone gets a chance to fill their baskets with joy. Come celebrate Easter with love, laughter, community, and Easter egg hunting. See you there!

### **April 27, Celebrate Earth Sunday with the Creation Justice Team**