



John of Patmos watches the descent of New Jerusalem from God in a 14th-century tapestry. “La Jérusalem céleste“, extraite de la Tapisserie de l'Apocalypse du Château d'Angers, France.

"The only constant in life is change."

-Heraclitus

“Just because no one else can heal or do your inner work for you doesn’t mean you can, should, or need to do it alone.”

~Lisa Olivera

“Reminder. You can love Jesus and still benefit from therapy.”

@ChristianMentalHealth

The science of mental health and faith can coexist.

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
FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER ~ MENTAL HEALTH SUNDAY**

May 18, 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	“It Is Well with My Soul” <i>Mary Tarr, violin</i>	arr. L. Bergquist
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Welcome and Announcements Ed Vickery
 One: May the peace of Christ be with you.
 Many: **And also with you.**

Chiming of the Hour

Introit

"Come and Find the Quiet Center"

BEACH SPRING

**Come and find the quiet center in the crowded life we lead,
Find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed:
Clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes that we can see
All the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be.**

* Call to the Heart Kristin Andes

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

One: We gather in the presence of the One who abandons no one.

Many: **Come Holy Spirit, our advocate and comforter.**

One: All are welcome in this sacred place, made holy through your presence with us.

Many: **Open our hearts and minds this day, guide us into a loving relationship with all your children.**

One: We gather as God's beloved people, leaving no one outside.

Many: **Spark us with a word of life and radical belonging—a message that we share with others as we seek to live out Christ's love.**

One: We call on the name of God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us.

All: **Amen.**

Be still, my soul: for God is on your side;
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
Leave to your God to order and provide;
In every change God faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul: your best eternal friend
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

Be still, my soul: for God will undertake
To guide in future days in the past.
Your hope, your confidence let nothing shake;
All now mysterious shall be clear at last.
Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know
How Jesus’ power ruled them long ago.

Be still, my soul: the hour will soon be here
When we shall be with God whom we adore.
With disappointment, gone, no grief nor fear,
Sorrow replaced with joy forevermore.
Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past
All safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

Monthly Affirmation

Rev. Terry Parrish

Ourselves: As the Christ within me rises, I experience the hope of new life.

Neighbor: As the Christ within you rises, you experience the hope of new life.

World: As the Christ within us rises, we experience the hope of new life.

Prayer of Transformation (*unison*)

Kristin Andes

Creator God, you are full of grace and justice. You are holy and wholly present with us at every moment of our lives. In our rush to compartmentalize and create control in our lives, we have sometimes ironically allowed seeds of chaos to be planted in our relationships with others. We have sought to put people and their illnesses, struggles, and complexities at bay while we justify ourselves as “normal” or “quirky.” Yet in your righteousness, Lord, you have seen fit to be steadfastly patient and divinely compassionate with all of your Creation— including us.

. . .

We confess both our subconscious and willful othering that provides us false protection from our own inner battles. You said that if we confess, you will draw us close and wrap us in your forgiveness that provides both truth and love. We come before you with humble hearts and contrite spirits asking for your pardon. Continue to grant us the invaluable gift of the ability to know one another and walk together in an intimacy that only you can manifest. Into your care, we commit our collective weakness, assured by your omniscient strength and love. Amen.

Words of Grace

Kristin Andes

Hear the Good News: No valley is too despairing, broken, or dusty for God to enter in. No fear, no chaos, no hopelessness is beyond the reach of the One whose breath gives us life. Through Christ, God sees only our wholeness. Through Christ, forgiveness, love, and new life are always possible. All things are made new. In our brokenness and in our wholeness, we are God's beloved. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Special Music

"Shepherd of My Heart"
Eric Miner, soloist

M. Baldwin/D. Tunney

Stories for All People

Lee Parrish

Song of Preparation

"O Christ Surround Me"

GREEN TYLER

God, be the love to search and keep me;
God, be the prayer to move my voice;
God, be the strength to now uphold me:
O Christ, surround me. O Christ, surround me.

Christ in the eyes of all who see me,
Christ in the ears that hear my voice,
Christ in the hearts of all who know me:
O Christ, surround me. O Christ, surround me.

Mindfulness Moment

Sally Duffy

Pastoral Prayer

Rev. Terry Parrish

Prayer for Illumination (*sung*)

THY WORD

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne say, "Look! God's dwelling is here with humankind. He will dwell with them, and they will be his peoples. God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more. There will be no mourning, crying, or pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." Then the one seated on the throne said, "Look! I'm making all things new." He also said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." Then he said to me, "All is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will freely give water from the life-giving spring.

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

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

*Please take a comfortable posture that supports your reading and worshiping...
Our Christian Lesson for today comes from Acts 11: 1-18*

The apostles and the brothers and sisters throughout Judea heard that even the Gentiles had welcomed God's word. When Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him. They accused him, "You went into the home of the uncircumcised and ate with them!"

Step-by-step, Peter explained what had happened. "I was in the city of Joppa praying when I had a visionary experience. In my vision, I saw something like a large linen sheet being lowered from heaven by its four corners. It came all the way down to me. As I stared at it, wondering what it was, I saw four-legged animals—including wild beasts—as well as reptiles and wild birds. I heard a voice say, 'Get up, Peter! Kill and eat!' I responded, 'Absolutely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' The voice from heaven spoke a second time, 'Never consider unclean what God has made pure.' This happened three times, then everything was pulled back into heaven. At that moment three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea arrived at the house where we were staying. The Spirit told me to go with them even though they were Gentiles. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered that man's house. He reported to us how he had seen an angel standing in his house and saying, 'Send to Joppa and summon Simon, who is known as Peter. He will tell you how you and your entire household can be saved.' When I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, just as the Spirit fell on us in the beginning. I remembered the Lord's words: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, then who am I? Could I stand in God's way?"

Once the apostles and other believers heard this, they calmed down. They praised God and concluded, "So then God has enabled Gentiles to change their hearts and lives so that they might have new life."

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.

Now is the time for our ministry of giving and sharing...

In our offering we share not only measurable treasures of time, talents and resources, we also radically commit to sharing immeasurable gifts of forgiveness, grace, compassion, acceptance and loving concern with each other and with ourselves. Let us now bring our gifts forward in gratitude and grace.

* Doxology

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.

Praise God, all creatures high and low. Alleluia, alleluia!

Praise God, in Jesus fully known: Creator, Word, and Spirit one.

Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

* Prayer of Dedication

Kristin Andes

One: Loving God, open us to a new world. Where there is no longer least and greatest, rich and poor, haves and have nots. A world where all are treated as beloved precious children. A world where mental health is understood to be physical health and cared for without stigma or judgment.

Many: May these gifts help to build the community of care and compassion that we hope to create. May they be a legacy of justice, hope, faith and most importantly love. Amen.

* Hymn 438

"It Is Well"

(v.1, 2, 4)

VILLA DU HAVRE

**When peace, like a river, upholds me each day,
when sorrows like sea billows roll,
Whatever my lot, you have taught me to say,
"It is well; it is well with my soul."**

Refrain: It is well (it is well) with my soul, (with my soul)
It is well, it is well with my soul.

**Though evil should tempt me, though trials should come,
Let this blessed assurance control,
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
And has paid life and blood for my soul: (R)**

**O God, speed the day that is filled with your light,
When clouds are rolled back as a scroll;
The trumpet shall sound and the Lord shall appear,
"Even so" it is well with my soul. (R)**

* Benediction

Rev. Terry Parris

* Benediction Response 181

BRING FORTH

Bring forth the reign of mercy, bring forth the reign of peace;
Bring forth the reign of justice, bring forth the city of God!

Postlude

“There Is a Balm in Gilead”

arr. A. M. David

*Songs in this service are used by permission.
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Parts of the liturgy for today's service was adapted from the UCC Mental Health Network's Mental Health and Wellness Worship Resources for All.

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, Kevin Edwards-Knight

Greeters:

Refreshments: Cheryl Milam, Christine Andersen

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/

PLEASE WELCOME TODAY'S GUEST PREACHER, REVEREND TERRY PARRISH

Terry was born in Greenville, and grew up in Durham, Oxford, and Beaufort, NC. When he was 5 his grandmother gave him a copy of Dr. Seuss's "My Book About Me." In January 1969 he and his mother filled out the part "When I grow up, I want to be: _____" and he wrote the word "preacher." Terry's ex-wife and he moved to Mooresville, her hometown, in 1995 and their son, Adam was born in 1999. He crammed his 4-year bachelor's degree into 19 years and four schools, graduating from Queens University in Charlotte in 2001. At the age of 45, forty years after writing that he wanted to be a preacher when he grew up, he entered seminary at Wake Forest University School of Divinity in Winston Salem and graduated with a Master of Divinity in 2013. He spent the next year at Vidant Medical Center doing a one-year chaplain residency. During the summer of 2014 he also finished his Master of Arts in Pastoral Care and Counseling from Grand Canyon University. Terry was ordained here at Holy Covenant United Church of Christ on Sept 10, 2017, and was the pastor of Hebron United Church of Christ in Midway, NC, 2017-2022. Terry is currently serving as the treasurer of the Western NC Association and will be one of the voting delegates at this year's General Synod in Kansas City. We are grateful for his time with us today!

CELEBRATING OUR GRADUATES

Do you know someone who will be graduating soon? Please let us know so we can recognize their accomplishments out ahead! Send information (and we'd love a photo!) to office@holycovenantucc.org.

SANDWICH & BAG LUNCH BUILDS!

NEW THIS MONDAY, MAY 19, 10AM, Sundays, May 25 & June 15 after worship. No experience needed! We are making 100 bagged lunches for the Giles Center, including 200 sandwiches! Come! Help us feed our neighbors in need!

THE MICHAEL G. BROOKS SCHOLARSHIP 2025-26, Applications Due June 15

The purpose of the Michael G. Brooks Scholarship Fund is to encourage youth in both their educational growth and their service to God. Scholarship funds up to approximately \$2,000 will be considered annually for all applicants. Contact the church office or JoAnn Jellison, joannjellison@yahoo.com for the Process and Procedures document for this scholarship and the application.

DAYTIMERS COVENANT GROUP LUNCHEON meets Thursday, June 5, noon. All are welcome.

SOJOURNERS CLASS

The Sojourners has started a new read, "Grace Will Lead Us Home" by Jennifer Berry Hawes. We meet on Sundays at 9:45am in the Conference Room or via Zoom. Everyone is welcome and no preparation is necessary.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89561758099?pwd=d1gvUmh3K2hCNmdidm1QdjllNkF5QT09>

COMPASSION CLOSET

Compassion Closet is a non-profit organization that collects and distributes clothing and linens to asylum-seeking migrant families here in Charlotte. Please donate new or gently used (& laundered) men's, women's and children's shoes and clothing, as well as towels and sheets. You'll find the collection box in the gathering room. Thank you!

MISSIONS & JUSTICE TEAM ANNOUNCES A PARTERSHIP WITH THE PRISON BOOKS COLLECTIVE

Imprisoned people are underserved in every way imaginable. The Prison Books Collective in NC is one way of counteracting the injustices of the incarceration system. The goal is to provide resources that help people during their imprisonment and as they prepare to transition back to society. Each year the Collective sends over a thousand books and resources free of charge to people in prison who otherwise couldn't afford them. These materials provide education and life skills as well as joy, relief, and a sense of connection to the world. Pick up a list of High-Demand Books in the Gathering Room, near the collection shelf.

CHARLOTTE AIDS WALK, MAY 31

Join us for the Charlotte AIDS Walk on Saturday, May 31st, from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM at Truist Field. This annual walk is an opportunity to show support, raise awareness, and help make a difference in the lives of those affected by HIV/AIDS in our community. So far, we've raised \$575, but we're not yet close to our goal. Thank you for supporting us!

You can walk with our team, sponsor a participant, or donate by visiting:

<https://p2p.onecause.com/aidswalkclt/team/holy-covenant-ucc-5>

Let's come together in love and solidarity, hope to see you there!

SAVE THE DATE: JUNE 22, 1:00-3:00 PM, SCREENING AND DISCUSSION OF "AMERICAN COUP: WILMINGTON 1898"

In partnership with PBS North Carolina and Working Films, Holy Covenant will host a screening of "American Coup," a film that shares the little-known story of a deadly race massacre and insurrection in North Carolina's largest city in 1898. Self-described white supremacists used intimidation and violence to destroy

Black political and economic power and overthrow Wilmington's democratically elected, multi-racial government. Refreshments will be served prior to the 1:00 screening and discussion will start at 2:00.

This community event is a Racial Justice and Equity contribution to the Year of Wellness. At a time when the truths of our history are being erased, RJE offers this event as a corrective. We will also have the opportunity to process it with two guest speakers: Tom Hanchett, a local historian, will guide us through the historical conditions that made the coup possible and Justin Perry, a trauma-informed therapist, will facilitate discussion of the viewing experience. For more information contact Holly Middleton at hsmiddleton@gmail.com.

**Please Remember in Prayer
Members**

Markus & Kristen Fuchs in the recent death of Markus' father.

Mel & Christine Andersen, Liz Colton, Kevin Decker, Tina Ettesen, Laura Hankins, Jim & Faye Humphrey, Lee Parrish, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Isabelle Reedy Powell, Beth Sharp, Anita Taylor, Darline Warren, Sally Young & Alice Phelan

Friends & Family Members

Family and Friends in the death of Carol Stewart, Darline Warren's sister-in-law; Beth, Michael & Julian Bliss (Robert Shepherd), Melissa Brown, Linda Burby, Reva Dixon, Kim Dixon VanFleet (Diane Neese), Kent Hansen (Kristen Fuchs), Jeanne Hord (Diane Neese), Cindy Hedrick (Barb Schneller), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Dave Johnson, Richard Lease (Barb Schneller), Michelle Sharp (Beth Sharp), Janet Wakefield (Linda Burby), Brian Weddell (Jon Weddell), Kim Wiggs-Gamblin, Scott Whitley (Jay Whitley)

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

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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