



HOLY COVENANT

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

-be the Church, everywhere



Jorge Cocco Santangelo: "Go and Do Likewise" The Good Samaritan

"On the one hand we are called to play the Good Samaritan on life's roadside, but that will be only an initial act. One day we must come to see that the whole Jericho Road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed as they make their journey on life's highway. True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring. "

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, April 4, 1967
at Riverside Church, NYC: 'Beyond Vietnam'

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 AFTER PENTECOST

July 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 “Wonderful Words of Life” arr. D. Wyrzten

Welcome and Announcements Ed Vickery

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: And also with you.

Chiming of the Hour

Introit “There’s a Spirit of Love in This Place” arr. M. A. Miller

There’s a spirit of love in this place. (2x)

You can’t see it, but it’s there, just as precious as the air.

There’s a spirit of love in this place.

There’s the presence of peace in this room. (2x)

In God’s tenderness is found peace that passes human bounds.

There’s the presence of peace in this room.

* Call to the Heart Ed Vickery

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

One: In the quiet embrace of the community of faith we come to learn, to grow, to be one with the spirit of God

Many: **We let go of the busyness of our minds and daily lives to seek the presence of the spirit of God.**

One: In the midst of the beloved community, we come to worship, to know, to be guided by the word of God that is planted in our hearts.

Many: **We seek a new word, a new way, an inspiration that will transform.**

All: **In the embrace of the love of God we worship together so that we can be renewed in our call to be the light of compassion, mercy and justice that the world needs.**

* Invocation (*unison*)

Ed Vickery

Christ, who shows us how to be in community together, thank you for gathering us into community together, onsite and online. We give you thanks for the ways we have been held in love in this community of faith. We are comforted by memories of mercy shown to us in difficult times, both by our friends in this space, and by your gracious presence in our lives. Empower us to be Good Samaritans in our own ways. Embolden us to seek out those who are hopeless and in need, not out of pity, but out of a deep understanding of difficulty in our own lives. Guided by your example. may we lead with radical love and brave compassion. Amen.

* Hymn 551

“Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior”

PASS ME NOT

Pass me not, O gentle Savior, hear my humble cry.
While on others you are calling, do not pass me by.

*Refrain: Savior, Savior, hear my humble cry.
While on others you are calling, do not pass me by.*

Let me at your throne of mercy find a sweet relief.
Kneeling there in deep contrition, help my unbelief. (R)

Trusting only in your merit, would I seek your face.
Heal my wounded, broken spirit, save me by your grace. (R)

Be the Spring of all my comfort, more than life to me.
Not just here on earth beside me but eternally. (R)

Monthly Affirmation

Rev. Barbara L. Thomas

Ourselves: “I am freed by the Christ within, to seek the life I was meant to live.”

Neighbor: “You are freed by the Christ within, to seek the life you were meant to live.”

World: “We are freed by the Christ within, to seek the life we were meant to live.”

Prayer for Transformation (*unison*)

Ed Vickery

(*inspired by "Meditations of the Heart" by Howard Thurman*)

God of compassion and truth, we are challenged to see you in everything and everyone. We walk away and avert our gaze and do not see the 'other' on the road we are traveling together. Our vision is blurred by fears, anxiety and self-interest. We seek the courage to see the true thing in everything and yet, we find ourselves paralyzed by our sense of helplessness and hopelessness. Inaction claims us. We embrace the fear of scarcity, ignoring your abundance and call to generosity. We seek the courage to do the true thing; to walk the walk of justice and to be the love that is your calling for us. Here in the quiet of worshipful prayer, we seek the transformation of your spirit O God.

Song of Transformation "If I Have Been the Source of Pain, O God"

CAMACUA

If I have been the source of pain, O God;
If to the weak I have refused my strength;
If, in rebellion, I have strayed away; Forgive me, God.

Words of Grace

Ed Vickery

Hear the good news: God sees you. God knows you. God has created you to be the light and love of God in our world. You are forgiven and fully embraced. You are empowered to live in the abundance of God's grace with an open and generous heart.

Song of Preparation "In an Age of Twisted Values"

CHURCH UNITED

In an age of twisted values, we have lost the truth we need.
In sophisticated language we have justified our greed.
By our struggle for possessions, we have robbed the poor and weak.
Hear our cry and heal our nation; your forgiveness, Lord, we seek.

Pastoral Prayer

Rev. Barbara L. Thomas

Prayer for Illumination (*sung*)

OPEN OUR EYES

Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus,
To reach out and touch you and say that we love you.
Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen.
Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus.

Our Hebrew Scripture reading this morning comes from Deuteronomy 30:10-14. Hear the Word of God.

If you obey the Lord your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this Book of the Law and turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, “Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?” Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, “Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?” No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.

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

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

Our Christian Lesson for today comes from the gospel of Luke, chapter 10, verses 25-37, the story of the Good Samaritan. Hear the Word of the Lord.

Just then a religion scholar stood up with a question to test Jesus. “Teacher, what do I need to do to get eternal life?”

He answered, “What’s written in God’s Law? How do you interpret it?”

He said, “That you love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and muscle and intelligence—and that you love your neighbor as well as you do yourself.”

“Good answer!” said Jesus. “Do it and you’ll live.”

Looking for a loophole, he asked, “And just how would you define ‘neighbor’?” Jesus answered by telling a story. “There was once a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. On the way he was attacked by robbers. They took his clothes, beat him up, and went off leaving him half-dead. Luckily, a priest was on his way down the same road, but when he saw him he angled across to the other side. Then a Levite religious man showed up; he also avoided the injured man.

...

“A Samaritan traveling the road came on him. When he saw the man’s condition, his heart went out to him. He gave him first aid, disinfecting and bandaging his wounds. Then he lifted him onto his donkey, led him to an inn, and made him comfortable. In the morning he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take good care of him. If it costs any more, put it on my bill—I’ll pay you on my way back.’

“What do you think? Which of the three became a neighbor to the man attacked by robbers?”

“The one who treated him kindly,” the religion scholar responded. Jesus said, “Go and do the same.”

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

“2-Step Instructions”

Rev. Barbara L. Thomas

Invitation to Generosity

Ed Vickery

The Good Samaritan helped a needy stranger at great cost. This revolutionary act of love was life-saving. How will your gifts of time, talent, treasure, or prayer provide hope to this community, and this world?

* Doxology

I HEAR ANGELS

“Holy, holy, God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come”

All creation is bringing glory to the Lamb who sits upon the throne.

* Prayer of Dedication (*unison*)

Ed Vickery

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

God of love, we give these gifts back to you with humility, remembering time we’ve needed help in our own lives. Help us use the gifts we give to love others as we have been loved. Amen.

* Hymn

“The Summons”

KELVINGROVE

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown? Will you let my name be known,
Will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean and do such as this unseen,
And admit to what I mean in you and you in me?

Will you love the "you" you hide if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around,
Through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.
In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

* Benediction

Rev. Barbara L. Thomas

* Benediction Response

“Send Us Out”

J.M. Talbot

Send us out to proclaim the reign of your kin-dom,
Send us out to proclaim and to heal,
Send us out with your power and your authority
To overcome and to heal the world.

Postlude

“Will You Come and Follow Me?”

arr. C. E. Walz

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

Parts of the liturgy were written by or adapted from the Rev. Jacob Nault, Union-Congregational Church (UCC), Waupun, WI and by Rev. Barbara L. Thomas.

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: Diane Catanzaro, Patti Unger, Deborah Winston

Refreshments: Bold and Beautiful Covenant Group, Stephanie Herrin

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

CHECK OUT OUR ONLINE CALENDAR AT

holycovenantucc.org/event-listings/

and holycovenantucc.org/news-listings/



Your generosity builds a more inclusive church!

Explore secure options available online holycovenantucc.org/giving/

WELCOME BACK REV. BARBARA L. THOMAS

Barbara L. Thomas M.Div., MSOD, NCFBPPC, is the Director of The Forum at Hope Haven, a new training center whose mission is to equip, train and support the staff who are working with the most vulnerable populations in our community. She creates the curriculum, engages with community partners and is one of the primary trainers at The Forum. Barbara comes to this position with years of experience in non-profits as Director of Dove's Nest, at Charlotte Rescue Mission, Director of Services at Urban Ministry Center (now Roof Above) and in private practice at the Counseling Center at Charlotte. She is an ordained UCC pastor (former Associate at HCUCC) and welcomes the opportunity to preach and lead worship at various faith communities in Charlotte. Barbara Lives in Charlotte with her mom who is 95 years old.

THANK YOU FOR CELEBRATING WITH US! SHOW US THE PICS!

You were part of history - now help us remember it.

Upload your photos from the 25th Anniversary service and celebration.

<https://my.guestpix.com/Guest/Access/106937/GmXrXdhL>



SANDWICHES WITH LOVE, MONDAY, JULY 14 | 10 AM

"We're putting the social in Social Justice!" -Suzanne Lamorey.

You're invited to join us for a meaningful and hands-on service opportunity as we assemble 100 bagged lunches for the Giles Center, a men's shelter affiliated with A Roof Above. No experience needed. We make 100 bagged lunches for the Giles Center, including 200 sandwiches. Come! Help us feed our neighbors in need!

BACK TO SCHOOL SUPPLIES DRIVE

During July and through August 31, Holy Covenant will be participating in the city-wide Back to School Supplies drive for Classroom Central. We will be delivering our collected supplies to the district for distribution to the schools who need them the most. Typically, there are major sales of these supplies in stores, so be on the lookout!! Thank you in advance for your support.

INTERFAITH YOUTH SUMMIT THROUGH MECKMIN

Friday, August 8 and Saturday, August 9

Each year, MeckMIN (Mecklenburg Metropolitan Interfaith Network) hosts unique experiences for middle and high school youth throughout Mecklenburg County. These events bring together youth from different faiths, races, and socioeconomic backgrounds to foster understanding, respect, and shared purpose. **Holy Covenant has grant funds earmarked for youth programs and would love to spend those funds on youth attending this MeckMin event!** The interfaith component is a great way to supplement what we were able to teach in Confirmation Class. **Please contact Jo Ann Jellison at joannjellison@yahoo.com or 804-937-1180 to sign up.**

THE LOOP: A RHYTHM OF COMMUNITY, FAITH, JUSTICE, AND JOY

Holy Covenant UCC Launches a Bold New Newsletter Look

We're thrilled to introduce The Loop – the next evolution of Holy Covenant's weekly newsletter. It's more than updates. It's a rhythm that holds us together in spirit and purpose. It reflects who we are: inclusive, justice-driven, and joy-filled. Each edition of The Loop is your invitation into the life of our church:

- Stories from our ministries in motion
- Events from HCUCC and HCUCC Everywhere
- Reflections on worship, justice, and spiritual growth
- Ways to give, serve, and show up for one another

With fresh colors, new links, and a heartbeat that beats alongside yours, The Loop is your window into who we are and where we're going – together.

Check your inbox weekly – or catch up anytime on our website under News.

<https://holycovenantucc.org/news-listings/>

#TheLoop | #HCUCCEverywhere | #CommunityInMotion

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Members

Mel & Christine Andersen, Kevin Decker, Tina Ettesen, Kathy Habel, Laura Hankins, Jim & Faye Humphrey, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Beth Sharp, Pam Shimberg, Anita Taylor, Sally Young & Alice Phelan

Friends & Family Members

David Sells and sons in the recent death of their wife and mom, Stephanie Sells (Jean & Terry Raley-Dennis); Beth, Michael & Julian Bliss (Robert Shepherd), Lester Brigman (Lee Parrish), Melissa Brown, Linda Burby, Reva Dixon, Kim Dixon VanFleet (Diane Neese), Gloria Echeverri (Melissa Noll), 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), Tara Washburn (Patrick Washburn), 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

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