



HOLY COVENANT

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

-be the Church, everywhere



Image from Biblepics.co

"I decided that it was not wisdom that enabled poets to write their poetry, but a kind of instinct or inspiration, such as you find in seers and prophets who deliver all their sublime messages without knowing in the least what they mean."

-Socrates

"The words of the prophets are written on the subway walls and tenements halls and whispered in the sounds of silence."

-Paul Simon

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
SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

July 20, 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 “O For a Thousand Tongues to Tell” arr. M. Dorian

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 Laura Hankins

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

One: In the presence of the faithful, we proclaim the name of God, for it is good.

Many: **We thank you forever because of what you have done.**

One: Holy One, we trust in you. We take refuge in your safety. We call your presence our home.

Many: **We are like olive trees rooted in your soil—growing and fruitful. You nourish us and shine your light upon us.**

One: Faithful God, in you, we find love and truth, abundance and compassion, community and care.

Many: **We praise and exalt you, Eternal One. We trust in your steadfast love forever and ever.**

* Invocation

Laura Hankins

Abiding God, we invite you to inhabit our space. We long to renew our minds, restore our souls, and rest our presence before you. Still, we bring the burdens we carry into this gathering. We hold our responsibilities, cares, and concerns. Let us bind ourselves in your love and strength and the community of faithful and curious. We affirm that this time with you and one another equips and fortifies us for the journey and helps us discern the better way. Be glorified in our worship. Be honored by our praise. Be known by your people, O Creator, Teacher, and Friend. In your many names, we pray. Amen.

* Hymn 11

“Bring Many Names”

WESTCHASE

Bring many names, beautiful and good,
Celebrate, in parable and story,
Holiness in glory, living, loving God.
Hail and Hosanna! bring many names!

Old, aching God, grey with endless care,
Calmly piercing evil’s new disguises,
Glad of good surprises, wiser than despair:
Hail and Hosanna, old, aching God!

Young, growing God, eager, on the move,
Saying no to falsehood and unkindness,
Crying out for justice, giving all you have:
Hail and Hosanna, young, growing God!
Great, living God, never fully known,
Joyful darkness far beyond our seeing,
Closer yet than breathing, everlasting home:
Hail and Hosanna, great, living God!

Monthly Affirmation

Rev. Glencie Rhedrick

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*)

Laura Hankins

Gracious God, evil surrounds us and entices us to join in its ways, of matching energy and returning evil for evil, of seeking the comfortable and convenient way over the common good, of turning from pain and despair rather than leaning into solidarity and support. Help us, O God, to choose the path you have paved and give us strength to journey into rough spaces. Surround us with hosts of righteousness and infuse us with peace that surpasses understanding as we serve as agents and ambassadors of your kingdom. As you continually make all things new, fill us with the joy of new life. Amen.

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

Laura Hankins

Citizens of the kin-dom, commit anew to the joys and costs of discipleship. Creator has endowed you, in grace, the power to be witnesses of the Living God and the promise of the reign of God on earth. Release shame, doubt, and fear in order to choose good things and better ways to be in communion with the Triune God and neighbor.

Stories for All People

Laura Hankins

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. Glencie Rhedrick

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 psalm this morning comes from Psalm 52. Hear the word of God.

Why do you boast, O mighty one, of mischief done against the godly? All day long you are plotting destruction. Your tongue is like a sharp razor, you worker of treachery. You love evil more than good and lying more than speaking the truth. *Selah*

You love all words that devour, O deceitful tongue. But God will break you down forever; he will snatch and tear you from your tent; he will uproot you from the land of the living. *Selah*

The righteous will see and fear and will laugh at the evildoer, saying, “See the one who would not take refuge in God but trusted in abundant riches and sought refuge in wealth!” But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God. I trust in the steadfast love of God forever and ever. I will thank you forever because of what you have done. In the presence of the faithful I will proclaim your name, for it is good.

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

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

Our Hebrew Scripture lesson for today comes from the prophet Amos, Chapter 8, verses 1-12. Hear the Word of God.

This is what the Lord God showed me: a basket of summer fruit. He said, “Amos, what do you see?” And I said, “A basket of summer fruit.” Then the Lord said to me, “The end has come upon my people Israel; I will spare them no longer. The songs of the temple shall become wailings on that day,” says the Lord God; “the dead bodies shall be many, cast out in every place. Be silent!”

Hear this, you who trample on the needy, and bring to ruin the poor of the land, saying, “When will the new moon be over so that we may sell grain, and the Sabbath, so that we may offer wheat for sale? We will make the ephah smaller and the shekel heavier and practice deceit with false balances, buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals and selling the sweepings of the wheat.” The Lord has sworn by the pride of Jacob: Surely I will never forget any of their deeds. Shall not the land tremble on this account, and everyone mourn who lives in it, and all of it rise like the Nile, and be tossed about and sink again, like the Nile of Egypt?

. . .

On that day, says the Lord God, I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight. I will turn your feasts into mourning and all your songs into lamentation; I will bring sackcloth on all loins and baldness on every head; I will make it like the mourning for an only son and the end of it like a bitter day.

The time is surely coming, says the Lord God, when I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread or a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord, but they shall not find it.

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. Glencie Rhedrick

“The Time Is Ripe: Prophecy in the Age of Propaganda”

Invitation to Generosity

Laura Hankins

Let us give generously from the abundance of God’s provision, demonstrate our trust in God’s provision, and embrace mutuality with God’s creation.

* 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*)

Laura Hankins

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

Giver of all good and perfect gifts, we celebrate the opportunity to contribute to the ministry of this faith community. Receive the resources we offer in love and hope that needs will be met, lives will be changed, and the world will receive the testimony of compassionate care, action, and sharing. Amen.

* Hymn

“We’ve Come This Far by Faith”

arr. R. Smallwood

Refrain:

We’ve come this far by faith, leaning on the Lord,
Trusting in God’s holy Word—God’s never failed us yet.
Oh, can’t turn around, we’ve come this far by faith.

Don’t be discouraged with trouble in your life;
God will bear your burdens and remove all misery and strife. (R)

* Benediction

Rev. Glencie Rhedrick

* 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

"God's Eye Is on the Sparrow"

arr. C. E. Walz

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Parts of the liturgy were written by or adapted from UCC Worship Ways, the United Church of Christ.

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: Patti Unger
Refreshments: Sojourners

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

<https://holycovenantucc.org/giving/>

UCC Special Offering Christmas Fund (Our Christmas in July)

WELCOME BACK REV. GLENCIE RHEDRICK

Today, we welcome the Reverend Glencie Rhedrick, to the pulpit. Glencie is an ordained Baptist minister, Womanist theoactivist, and prophetic voice for justice, centering the lived experiences of Black women and African Ascending peoples. Her ministry challenges systems of injustice and affirms the sacred worth and dignity of all individuals in the community, both local and global.

She holds a Master of Science in Human Resources Management and Development from National Louis University and a Master of Divinity with a focus in Pastoral Care from the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Women's Spirituality at the California Institute of Integral Studies.

Rev. Rhedrick serves as an HIV/AIDS Faith Ambassador and Consultant with *UBTheCure*. She chairs multiple justice-centered organizations, including the Charlotte Clergy Coalition for Justice, the Mayfield Memorial Community Development Corporation, and UMBA Bright Stars, as well as programs for the Charlotte Ministry Conference.

She is the founder and visionary of *SpeakingintheKeyofWE*, a Womanist platform rooted in the theme "No Longer Silenced: No Longer Invisible." What began as a challenge to Black male privilege and patriarchy in the Church has grown into a liberative space for confronting social, gender, and racial injustice. Her message boldly affirms the power, brilliance, and historical contributions of Black and Brown communities, past and present.

A former President of Mecklenburg Ministries and proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Rev. Rhedrick is most proud to be the mother of Justin and grandmother of Marleigh and Nasir.

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. 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.

SOJOURNERS CLASS

The Sojourners meet 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>

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.

SAVE THE DATE! RACIAL JUSTICE & EQUITY ORGANIZES GREENSBORO EVENT

Saturday, October 4, Civil Rights Museum Tour

The International Civil Rights Center and Museum in Greensboro will host a staff-guided tour for Holy Covenant. Tour tickets cost \$20; more info forthcoming on transportation. Save the date now to see where the nationwide lunch counter sit-in movement ignited in 1960, learn more about the U.S. and international movement for human rights, and hang out with your buddies from church!

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.

#TheLoop | #HCUCCEverywhere | #CommunityInMotion

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

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

Members

Mel & Christine Andersen, Kevin Decker, Tina Ettesen, Kristen Fuchs, 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), Erica Echeverri, 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)

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki, MDiv, MBA, Senior Pastor
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Jon Weddell, MDiv, MSW, Minister of Music

Dawn Simmons, BSBF, Executive Assistant

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