



HOLY COVENANT

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

-be the Church, everywhere



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"Rest is a form of resistance because it disrupts the lie that we are only worthy by what we produce."

– Tricia Hersey

"The holy is not found in more, but in enough."

– Cole Arthur Riley

**"The earth calls us back to what matters:
belonging, beauty, and being."**

– Kaitlin Curtice

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
EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

August 3, 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 "Give Me Jesus" arr. M. Hayes

Welcome and Announcements Rev. Christopher Czarnecki
One: May the peace of Christ be with you.
Many: And also with you.

Chiming of the Hour

Centering Prayer Rev. Christopher Czarnecki
Let us center ourselves in prayer as we gather for this time of worship...
Holy Presence—already among us and always arriving—still our racing thoughts and open our hearts to what truly matters. In the beauty of each face, each story, each sacred difference, remind us that we belong to You and to one another. Let this time of worship center us in love, ground us in justice, and draw us closer to all that is holy and good. Amen.

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.

O, Alleluia, sing alleluia, we bless your holy name.
O, Alleluia, sing alleluia, there's a spirit of love in this place.

* Call to the Heart

Terry Raley-Dennis

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

One: Come, all who are searching for deeper meaning, for a sacred connection God, for a life that matters.

Many: We come to seek what is lasting and true.

One: Come, all who are worn by the pursuit for “more,” who long to trade fear for freedom, and scarcity for God’s grace.

Many: We come to seek what is lasting and true.

One: Come, beloved of God, those who are LGBTQ+ and straight, Black and brown and white, who are certain and still doubting.

Many: We come to seek what is lasting and true.

One: This is holy ground. This is your sacred time. Let us turn our hearts to the One who loves and treasures us beyond measure.

Many: We come to seek what is lasting and true.

One: Come, let us worship with open hearts, open minds, and open possibilities.

Many: We come to seek what is lasting and true. God of all things, we now gather for worship with You.

* Hymn

GOD OF GREAT AND GOD OF SMALL

God of great and God of small, God of one and God of all,
God of weak and God of strong, God to whom all things belong,

Refrain: Alleluia, Alleluia, praise be to your name.

God of land and sky and sea, God of life and destiny,
God of never-ending power, yet beside me every hour, (R)

God of silence, God of sound, God by whom the lost are found,
God of day and darkest night, God whose love turns wrong to right, (R)

God of heaven and God of earth, God of death and God of birth,
God of now and days before, God who reigns forevermore, (R)

Monthly Affirmation

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Ourselves: “I am a unique expression of Christ, as I reflect God’s love in the world.

Neighbor: “You are a unique expression of Christ, as you reflect God’s love in the world.”

World: “We are a unique expression of Christ, as we reflect God’s love in the world.”

Prayer for Transformation (*unison*)

Terry Raley-Dennis

Gracious God, we confess that too often we store up what doesn't last. We stockpile our busyness, need for approval, and possessions, thinking these will make us feel secure or worthy. We hold back love, hoard our sacred gifts, or spend our time chasing status. We forget what truly matters: relationships, justice, compassion, joy, community...turn us back toward what matters. Help us release what cannot save us and to invest our lives in what brings us closer to you and one another. 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.

If I have spoken words of cruelty;
If I have left some suffering unrelieved;
Condemn not my insensitivity; Forgive me, God.

Words of Grace

Terry Raley-Dennis

Friends, hear this good news...

God is not keeping score of our mistakes. God is not keeping the receipts of our misspent ways. When we come to God, we are not met with shame but with mercy. We are not offered guilt but grace. Know in this moment, no matter what you have done or how far you have strayed, you are forgiven. You are free. You are invited, again and always, to invest the spirit of your God-given life in what matters most. Let it be so,
Amen.

Stories for All People

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

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.

Prayers of the People

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

In response to every prayer shared:

Pastor: Lord, in your mercy,
Many: Hear our prayer.

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.

Modern Lesson

Deborah Winston

Our modern lesson for today comes from John Pavlovitz, who is pastor, author, and blogger on the Christian life. Among his work he says...

“A life of faith isn’t measured in possessions or achievements, but in how well we love – how deeply, how generously, how justly. The invitation of Jesus was never about safety or success, but about compassion. When we show up for people, when we refuse to look away from suffering, when we build communities where everyone is seen and included – that’s when we find what’s real. Everything else fades. But love endures. It is the only investment that never fails.”

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

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

* Gospel Lesson

Luke 12:13-21(NLT)

Terry Raley-Dennis

Our Gospel Lesson for today comes from Luke 12:13-21 (NLT), where Jesus is asked to solve an inheritance dispute and shares the parable of a rich farmer...

Then someone called from the crowd, “Teacher, please tell my brother to divide our father’s estate with me.” Jesus replied, “Friend, who made me a judge over you to decide such things as that?” Then he said, “Beware! Guard against every kind of greed. Life is not measured by how much you own.”

Then he told them a story: “A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops. He said to himself, ‘What should I do? I don’t have room for all my crops.’ Then he said, ‘I know! I’ll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I’ll have room enough to store all my wheat and other goods. 19 And I’ll sit back and say to myself, “My friend, you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Eat, drink, and be merry!”’

“But God said to him, ‘You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get everything you worked for?’ “Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God.”

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.

“Plenty to Live On, Nothing to Live For”

Invitation to Generosity

Terry Raley-Dennis

We embrace the many ways people share their gifts with Holy Covenant. Whether you support us through a planned stewardship pledge or giving in your own way, you can now scan the QR code provided on the back of your bulletin to access our secure online giving options. We thank you for supporting Holy Covenant’s ministries of love, welcome, and justice we share together.

In a world that urges us to gather more and give less, we are invited to invest in what truly matters: acts of justice, moments of compassion, the building of beloved community. These are the riches and wealth of God, that can be freely shared. Let us now bring our offerings, not out of guilt or obligation, but as a joyful response to the Sacred Presence, in us and all around us, who calls us to love.

* 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*)

Terry Raley-Dennis

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

Divine Source, that seeks to sustain us all, we bring these gifts as a sign of our intention to live with open minds and generous hearts. Bless what we offer—our time, our talents, our treasures—so that they may serve what is holy, healing, and true. May their investment be placed in your kin-dom here on earth, where the hope of love, peace, and justice rule. Amen.

THE MYSTIC SUPPER
ALL ARE WELCOME AT CHRIST’S TABLE

Invitation

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

One: The Holy One be with you.

Many: And also with you.

One: Open your hearts wide.

Many: We open them to the Spirit who makes us whole.

One: Let us give thanks to the One who give us life.

Many: It is right to offer our thanks and praise.

One: Holy and living God, from the very beginning, you created a world rich in diversity. Of creatures and colors, textures and tongues, identities and

expressions. You declared it good. You made each of us in your image and called us your beloved. In Jesus, you showed us what love looks like with skin on. He welcomed the ones religion had cast out. He shared meals with the forgotten. He spoke truth with tenderness, and kindness with courage. He embraced women, touched those deemed unclean, and invited disciples who didn't fit the mold of society. Jesus made space where others shut doors. He saw the divine in every person. This table is his and by God's grace, it is wide enough for all of us.

Many: Here, no one is excluded. Here, all are welcome: Gay and straight, trans and nonbinary, questioning, faithful, those wounded and those still seeking.

This is Christ's table, and there is a place for you. At this table, we remember the night Jesus shared a meal with his friends. He took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and said: "This is my body, broken for you. Take it and eat it." Let this be a sign that God will always love you.

After supper, he took the cup, gave thanks and shared it, saying:

"This is the cup of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many. Do this in remembrance of me." Let this be a sign that God will always be with you.

One: Pour out your Spirit, O God, on these gifts and on us. May this meal remind us that your love knows no bounds, and that in you, we are already whole. Make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to a world in need of healing, until all know they are fully seen and fully loved. As we enter this season of Pride in Charlotte, may we remember that Jesus stood with those pushed to the margins, and may we at Holy Covenant continue his work: creating a community of courageous love, radical welcome, and justice for all.

Many: Amen.

Music during Communion

TABLE OF GRACE

Come to the table of grace. Come to the table of grace.

This is God's table; it's not yours or mine.

Come to the table of grace ...hope...peace... joy...love.

Prayer of Thanksgiving (*unison*)

Loving and liberating God, we thank you for this holy meal, for the taste of your grace and the promise of your welcome. Send us out with hearts renewed: to share love where there is hurt, to speak justice where there is silence, to live as boldly and tenderly as Christ has taught us. For this we pray, in the name of all that is holy and true. Amen.

God, whose giving knows no ending, from your rich and endless store,
Nature's wonder, Jesus' wisdom, costly cross, grave's shattered door:
Gifted by you, we turn to you, offering up ourselves in praise;
Thankful song shall rise forever, gracious donor of our days.

**Skills and time are ours for pressing toward the goals of Christ, your Son:
All at peace in health and freedom, races joined, the church made one.
Now direct our daily labor, lest we strive for self alone.
Born with talents, make us servants fit to answer at your throne.**

Treasure, too, you have entrusted, gain through powers your grace conferred:
Ours to use for home and kindred, and to spread the gospel word.
Open wide our hands in sharing, as we heed Christ's ageless call,
Healing, teaching, and reclaiming, serving you by loving all.

* Benediction Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

* 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 “You Satisfy the Hungry Heart” arr. A. M. David

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Parts of the liturgy were 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,
Greeters: Diane Catanzaro, Deborah Winston
Refreshments: Teresa Eller

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

GET ALL THE DETAILS FOR NEWS AND EVENTS AT
<https://holycovenantucc.org/>



*Your generosity builds a more inclusive church!
Explore secure options available online*
<https://holycovenantucc.org/giving/>

BAGGED LUNCH BUILD MON., AUGUST 4, 10AM

WE NEED YOU! Please mark your calendar to remind you to participate in “Sandwiches for the Shelter” on Monday, August 4 from 10 am to noonish. We will be building 200 bag lunches with 400 sandwiches that day so we need all hands on deck. Bring your neighbors! Bring your teens! See you there!

DAYTIMERS COVENANT GROUP LUNCHEON, WED. AUGUST 6, 12PM.

Bring a dish to share or just bring yourself! All are welcome.

2025 CHARLOTTE PRIDE INTERFAITH SERVICE, SUN. AUGUST 10, 4PM

The Unitarian Universalist Community of Charlotte (UUC) are hosting this years interfaith service. Registration is required.

<https://www.eventeny.com/events/charlotteprideinterfaithservice-20570/>

PROJECT LINUS, TUES. AUGUST 12, 9AM-3PM

We're hosting a drop-in blanket making party right here at Holy Covenant — and we'd love for you to be part of it. Come anytime between 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM on Tuesday, August 12. Stay for an hour or the whole day! All are welcome — no sewing skills required. We'll have all the materials and tools you need. Whether you're tying, cutting, sewing, or simply showing up with good energy, there's a way for everyone to participate.

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.

RACIAL JUSTICE & EQUITY ORGANIZES GREENSBORO EVENT

Sat., 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!

CRAFT SALE INTEREST FOR NOVEMBER 2

It's time to plan for a chance to support a charity while selecting handmade gifts. We are looking for participants by offering any type of handmade craft/art/food. Plans for the sale to be Nov. 2, before and after worship. We plan to support an LGBT Youth Organization in WNC. Contact Kim at yhr762@yahoo.com with your interest.

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, Liz Colton, Kevin Decker, Tina Ettesen, Kristen Fuchs, Kathy Habel, Jim & Faye Humphrey, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Pam Shimberg

Friends & Family Members

Beth, Michael & Julian Bliss (Robert Shepherd), Lester Brigman (Lee Parrish), 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), Richard Lease (Barb Schneller), Michelle Sharp (Beth Sharp), Tara Washburn (Patrick Washburn), Scott Whitley (Jay Whitley)

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

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