



HOLY COVENANT

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

-be the Church, everywhere



Unsplash image by Matteo Paganelli

**“Accessibility is not an act of charity;
it is the work of love that builds the kin-dom of God.”
- Kathy Black**

**“Our bodies are not barriers to God’s grace;
they are the place where God’s grace takes flesh.”
- Rev. Dr. Sharon Betcher**

**“To honor difference is to believe that God’s image is vast
enough to hold us all—
every mind, every body, every way of being.”
- Cole Arthur Riley**

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
ACCESS SUNDAY ~ DISABILITIES AWARENESS SUNDAY

October 12, 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 "Just As I Am" arr. L. Shackley

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 One, we pause in this moment to breathe deeply and arrive fully in the here and now. In all our varied bodies, minds, and ways of being, help us to be aware You are here, speaking wisdom through difference and recognizing beauty through diversity. Quiet our thoughts and open our hearts to Your Spirit moving among us. May we feel Your love reminding us that we all are wonderfully made. Speak to us now through word and song, through silence and community, so that we might remember in this hour: we are all part of You, all reflections of Christ and Your endless grace. Amen.

Introit "The Summons" KELVINGROVE
John L. Bell & Graham Maule
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?

* Call to the Heart

Cheryl Milam

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

One: Come, people of God, each of us created in the image of God, each of us bearing the beauty of difference.

Many: We come as we are: unique, whole, and worthy of love.

One: Some of us move with ease, others with canes or chairs or support aids unseen. Yet all of us move within God's grace.

Many: Our differences are not barriers but blessings. Together, we are the body of Christ.

One: Some minds race with ideas, others wander gently or rest in stillness. Each mind reflects God's creativity.

Many: Our neurodiversity reveals the vast imagination of God.

One: Some hearts carry pain, some carry deep joy, yet all beat with the rhythm of divine love.

Many: God is in every heartbeat, in every breath, in every being.

One: In Jesus, we see a love that crosses every border, even those of ability, identity, and expectation.

Many: We are called to embody this love: to welcome, to honor, to celebrate one another fully.

One: Come and rest in this space where all belong, where every body, every mind, and every unique soul is holy.

Many: We come to worship the One who makes us whole, not by making us the same, but by loving us as we are.

* Hymn

“Once a Sheep Was in a Pasture”
Ludwig van Beethoven, adapt. Edward Hodges
Lyrics, Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

HYMN OF JOY

Once a sheep was in a pasture with the other ninety-nine.
Their good shepherd loved those hundred,
and he told them, “You are mine!”
As the hundred grazed together, for some reason yet untold,
One found she was separated from the shepherd, from the fold.

Shepherd, sometimes we face trouble, far from others, far from you.
There are different ways we struggle,
different things that we can do.
There are times we’re prone to wander;
there are times we’re pushed away.

Shepherd, by your love you find us—then in joy you celebrate!
Like a shepherd, Lord, you know us and the songs our spirits sing.

You accept us and you love us - and you know the gifts we bring.
With our sign-ing, with our voices, with our hearts, may we express:
Shepherd, by your love you find us—
we are yours, and we are blessed!

Shepherd, by your love you find us, then you send us out in turn
To seek out all your beloved and to bring the wounded home.
As we lead and help each other, as we advocate and pray,
May we shepherd one another on your faithful, loving way.

Monthly Affirmation

Ourselves: I welcome change, trusting God to transform me with purpose and grace.

Neighbor: You welcome change, trusting God to transform you with purpose and grace.

World: We welcome change, trusting God to transform us with purpose and grace.

Prayer of Transformation (*unison*)

Join me in prayer as we confess the ways in which we separate ourselves from God...

Loving Creator, you have formed us in wonder and difference, yet we confess that at times we turn away from what we do not understand. That too often, we value sameness over diversity, magazine-model perfection over authenticity, or human ability over human decency. Forgive us for the ways we have failed to see the sacredness in every body, mind, and spirit you have made. Open our hearts to be changed by love, so that we celebrate and embrace all of your Creation. Amen.

Words of Grace

Cheryl Milam

Friends, hear this good news...

The Spirit of Christ dwells within and among each of us, and it is radiant, alive, and bursting forth in its own unique brilliance. The divine spark that shone in Jesus also shines in you, in me, in all of creation. You are not, nor were you ever, incomplete; but you are already a reflection of God's wholeness. So live, then, as God's beloved in the world: freed by grace, sustained by love, and empowered to see that same holy light in every person you meet. Amen.

Stewardship Moment

Patrick Washburn

Song

"Come Build a Church"

Ken Medema

Come build a church with soul and spirit,

Come build a church of flesh and bone.

We need no tower rising skyward; no house of wood or glass or stone.

Come build a church with human frailty,

Come build a church of flesh and blood.

Jesus shall be its sure foundation. It shall be built by the hand of God.

Stories for All People

D Evans

Song

"I Love the Lord"

R. Smallwood

I love the Lord, who heard my cry and pitied every groan.

Long as I live and troubles rise, I'll hasten to God's throne.

I love the Lord, who heard my cry and chased my grief away.

O let my heart no more despair while I have breath to pray.

Prayers of the People

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

After every prayer shared by a person in the congregation the collective response will be...

Pastor: Lord, in your mercy,

Many: Hear our prayer.

Prayer for Illumination (*sung*)

Take Me as I Am (Iona)

Take, O take me as I am; summon out what I shall be;

Set your seal upon my heart and live in me.

Modern Lesson

Deborah Winston

Our Modern Lesson for today comes from Rev. Sarah Griffith Lund, who is the Minister for Disabilities and Mental Health in the United Church of Christ. Among her work she says...

“The image of God is not one-size-fits-all. It’s not something we can fit into a narrow mold of ability, productivity, or perfection. Every body and every mind reveals a new facet of God’s beauty. The good news of Jesus Christ is not that we can all be ‘fixed,’ but that we are all already beloved. The Spirit is alive in the places we thought were broken, in the stories we tried to hide. When we honor our differences, we honor God’s creativity. Inclusion isn’t a ministry; it’s a spiritual practice of seeing the holy in one another.”

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

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

* Gospel Lesson

Luke 17:11-19 (CEB)

Cheryl Milam

Our Gospel lesson today comes from Luke 17:11-19, where Jesus healed or cleanses the ten people with a skin disease...

On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten men with skin diseases approached him. Keeping their distance from him, they raised their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, show us mercy!”

When Jesus saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” As they left, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw that he had been healed, returned and praised God with a loud voice. He fell on his face at Jesus’ feet and thanked him. He was a Samaritan. Jesus replied, “Weren’t ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? No one returned to praise God except this foreigner?” Then Jesus said to him, “Get up and go. Your faith has healed you.”

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. Christopher Czarnecki
“To Be Made Whole, Not the Same”

Invitation to Generosity

Cheryl Milam

At Holy Covenant, we celebrate the many ways you share your gifts: through pledged support, spontaneous generosity, and acts of love in our shared life. If you'd like to give today, you can scan the QR code on the back of your bulletin to access our secure online giving options. Thank you for sustaining the ministries of love, welcome, and justice we are creating together.

One: In today's scripture, ten people called out to Jesus for mercy and all were met with compassion. However, only one, a Samaritan, returned to give thanks. But Jesus still saw each of them, honored their difference, and restored their place in community. When we give, we participate in this same work: making space where all belong, ensuring that every gift and every person is valued. So let us now share our gifts with gratitude, generosity, and the awareness that God's kin-dom is growing still every time our love makes room for another.

* Doxology

Baruch Hashem Adonai (ISRAEL)

**Baruch Hashem Adonai, Baruch Hashem Adonai,
Blessed be the name of the Lord, Baruch Hashem Adonai.**

* Prayer of Dedication (*unison*)

Cheryl Milam

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

Good and giving God, we offer these gifts as signs of our gratitude and our hope. May they become part of the work of building your kin-dom here on earth. A kin-dom where differences are celebrated, belonging replaces exclusion, and every person's gifts are needed and known. Bless our giving and our living. That through them your love may be felt, your justice made real, and so your peace may take root. Amen.

Amen.

*God of change and glory, God of time and space,
When we fear the future, give to us your grace.
In the midst of changing ways give us still the grace to praise.*

**Refrain: Many gifts, one Spirit, one love known in many ways.
In our difference is blessing, from diversity we praise
One Giver, one Word, one Spirit, one God
Known in many ways, hallowing our days.
For the Giver, for the gifts, praise, praise, praise!**

**God of many colors, God of many signs,
You have made us different, blessing many kinds.
As the old ways disappear, let your love cast out our fear. (R)**

**Freshness of the morning, newness of each night,
You are still creating endless love and light.
This we see, as shadows part, many gifts from one great heart. (R)**

* Benediction

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

* Benediction Response

“The Summons”

KELVINGROVE

**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.**

Postlude

“Balm in Gilead”

arr. A. M. David

*Songs in this service are used by permission.
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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: Joy Decker, Laurence Winston

Greeters: Deborah Winston, Patti Unger

Refreshments: Southside Covenant Group

Deacon of the Month: Tom Magraw (Martha Bomely)

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/>

ALL CHURCH PHOTO DIRECTORY

If you were not able to have a photo session this week, we have options! Contact the church office. We would love everyone to be included!

MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE & JOIN THE CHOIR

Advent is coming—let's fill our sanctuary with hope, peace, joy, and love.

No audition • All voice parts are welcome. Rehearsals after worship.



ALL CHURCH WORKDAY, OCT. 18 - 9AM-NOON

Outside & Inside. In Other Words, *"Clean the Church Everywhere."*

Check out Sign Up Genius for the tasks needing your attention.

CHARLOTTE C.R.O.P. HUNGER WALK, OCT. 19 - 1:00PM

The Walk is next Sunday, Oct.19, on church property. We can equip families to support themselves by providing seeds, water systems, tools, and livestock. Talk to Tina Dickens after worship to sign up or ask questions. Checks should be made payable to CWS/CROP, Or you can donate to our team online

<https://events.crophungerwalk.org/crophungerwalks/team/holy-covenant-ucc-4>

STEWARDSHIP PLANNING FOR 2026

Thank you to all of you who have made financial commitments. We have received a generous gift that will provide some financial resilience until we pay off our mortgage in the next few years. Setting aside that gift, pledges to the General Fund are at 77% of our \$140,000 goal as of 2 p.m. Friday, Oct. 10. Pledges to the Building Fund are at 86% of our goal of \$40,000. To make a financial pledge, go to <https://holycovenantucc.org/giving/> or scan the QR code



SHARE YOUR VOICE – HELP SHAPE *THE LOOP!*

We're gathering feedback on our weekly newsletter to make it even more engaging, meaningful, and accessible for our congregation. Scan the QR code to take the short survey and let us know what you think!



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, Teresa Eller, Tina Ettesen, Kathy Habel, Eileen Howe, Jim & Faye Humphrey, Sue & Bill Pascucci, Benjamin Rudolph, Pam Shimberg, Anita Taylor

Friends & Family Members

Kim & Michael Henson and family in the death of Kim's mother, Reva Dixon
Beth, Michael & Julian Bliss (Robert Shepherd), Lester Brigman (Lee Parrish), Linda Burby, Kim Chamberlain (Kevin Decker), Cecelia Ciciollo (Dom Ciciollo), Erica Echeverri, Gloria Echeverri (Melissa Noll), Jason Field (Benjamin Rudolph), Kent Hansen (Kristen Fuchs), Samuel Head (Benjamin Rudolph), Doug Howe (Eileen Howe), Jeanne Hord (Diane Neese), Cindy Hedrick (Barb Schneller), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Richard Lease (Barb Schneller), Matt, Brianna and Rhiannon Pacewicz (Dom Ciciollo), Tom, Beth and Ariel Rudolph (Benjamin Rudolph), Michelle Sharp (Beth Sharp), Ed Stack (Martha Bomely), Joyce Tyler (Bill Tyler), Tara Washburn (Patrick Washburn), Scott Whitley (Jay Whitley)

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki, Senior Pastor

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Jon Weddell, Minister of Music

Dawn Simmons, Executive Assistant

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