



# HOLY COVENANT

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

*-be the Church, everywhere*



*Unsplash photo by Guilherme Stecanella*

“To listen to the silence  
is to hear the voice of God.”

- Thomas Merton

“The soul speaks most clearly  
when the world grows quiet.”

- Sue Monk Kidd

“There is a voice that doesn’t use words. Listen.”

- Rumi

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**  
**NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

**October 19, 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" arr. J. Inness

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...*

One: Holy Presence, in the stillness we come. Not to fill silence, but to listen within it. Quiet our restless thoughts. Soften in us the places that remain hardened or uncertain. Help us to settle in this moment as if it were sacred, a time where all we need to do is breathe and be open. May we sense Your Spirit moving like a soft current, flowing beneath the surface of our lives—steady, gentle, and always near. In the tenderness of this hour, teach us to listen with our hearts and to find You here, in the quiet and in ourselves. Amen.

Introit "Ubi Caritas" Taizé

*(translation: where charity and love are, God is there)*

**Ubi caritas et amor, Ubi caritas Deus ibi est.**

\* Call to the Heart Laura Hankins

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

One: Come, bring your whole self: your questions, your hopes, your weariness, and your wonder.

**Many: We come, ready to rest in God's presence.**

One: Lay down the rush of the world, the noise that fills our days, the striving that never ends.

**Many: We come to be still and know that God is near.**

One: In this sacred space, let your heart breathe again. Let your spirit listen for the whisper of God's grace.

**Many: We come to listen, to be open, to receive what we need to hear.**

One: Here and now, the Spirit moves quietly among us: awakening, renewing, and holding us in love.

**Many: In our worship, we open our hearts to the Holy that is already here.**

\* Hymn

“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.

Silence is a friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the pace,  
God it is who speaks and names us, knows our being, touches base,  
Making space within our thinking, lifting shades to show the sun,  
Raising courage when we're shrinking, finding scope for faith begun.

In the Spirit let us travel, open to each other's pain,  
Let our loves and fears unravel, celebrate the space we gain:  
There's a place for deepest dreaming, there's a time for heart to care,  
In the Spirit's lively scheming there is always room to spare!

Poetry Reading

Patrick Washburn

*May the words of this poem titled “Intimacy with God” by Justin Farley find space to settle in our minds and hearts. Let us listen closely...*

Speaking in the silence,  
waiting in the midst of contemplation,  
listening on the other line of prayer  
awaits the answer  
to the relentless yearning of the human heart.  
Do not come seeking secret knowledge.  
Do not expect divine visions,  
to become enlightened,  
or to transcend physical reality.  
But come to the silence  
simply to listen,  
desiring and longing for  
intimacy with the Divine,  
experiencing God's love and mercy directly,  
which we, in turn, share with the world.

Stewardship Moment

Jean Raley-Dennis

Stories for All People

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

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 (intercessory with silence)

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

*In this time of prayer, you are invited not to pray with words, but with silent hearts, open to the movement of already God among us. After each prayer, we will have a moment of silence, holding the people and places named in the light of God's love. Let us breathe deeply and enter this time of prayer. (pause)*

The Lord's Prayer

*a contemplative adaptation by Rev. Christopher Czarnecki*

Eternal Presence,  
Source of all that is and will be,  
holy is the rhythm of Your name.  
May Your spacious heart be known here on earth,  
in every breath,  
in every act of love and justice.  
Give us this day enough light for the next step,  
enough bread for body and spirit.  
Forgive us when we close our hearts or turn away,  
forgiving others just the same,  
trusting that mercy is the ground on which we all stand.  
Lead us beyond our fears and temptations,  
and into the silence where Your Spirit dwells.  
For Yours is the wisdom that grounds us,  
the compassion that sustains us,  
the glory that unfolds through all time.  
Amen.

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.

Sacred Text

Psalm 46 (NRSV)

Pam Shimberg

*Our Scripture reading today is from Psalm 46, a psalm of gratitude for God's abiding presence. Throughout this psalm, we encounter the word "Selah." Though its exact meaning is uncertain, many believe it served as a cue to pause, to reflect and let the words of the psalmist sink in. As the text is read this morning, each time we come to "Selah," we too will take a moment to pause, and allow the truth of these words to rest upon our hearts.*

God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,  
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea,  
though its waters roar and foam,  
though the mountains tremble with its tumult. Selah  
There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy habitation of the Most High.  
God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;  
God will help it when the morning dawns.  
The nations are in an uproar; the kingdoms totter;  
he utters his voice; the earth melts.  
The Lord of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah  
Come, behold the works of the Lord;  
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.  
He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;  
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;  
he burns the shields with fire.  
"Be still, and know that I am God!  
I am exalted among the nations;  
I am exalted in the earth."  
The Lord of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

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.**

Musical Response

"Bless the Lord, My Soul"

Taizé

**Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name.**

**Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me into life.**

*You will have about 10 minutes for this time of reflection, and we will give a gentle two-minute warning before we bring the exercise to a close.*

### Spiritual Reflection Exercise

Take a moment to reflect quietly on your image. Breathe deeply and allow yourself to be fully present. When you feel ready, begin to write what comes to you. You might consider these guiding questions:

- What do you see?
- Why were you drawn to this image?
- What does it stir or awaken in you?
- How does it connect to how you understand God, Spirit, or Love at work in your life?
- When have you last felt what this image conveys?
- What might God be revealing to you through it today?

### A Few Gentle Reminders

- This exercise may evoke strong feelings, including sadness, grief, or old memories. Allow what arises to come gently; be kind to yourself.
- There is no right or wrong way to do this. Simply let what wants to surface, surface.
- Your writing might be a story, a few scattered words, random thoughts, or a stream of consciousness - all of it is holy!
- If you feel stuck or distracted, take a few slow breaths and return to your image.
- You do not have to write anything at all. Simply being present in stillness is itself a form of prayer.

Closing words after the reflection time

Rev. Christopher Czarencki

Song

"Little Things with Great Love"

A. Assad

*Meg Houlihan, D Evans, vocals; Benjamin Rudolph, guitar*

## Invitation to Generosity

Laura Hankins

*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.*

In the stillness, we remember giving is not only an act of generosity but an attitude of openness. Openness to the quiet ways God uses our gifts to stir hope, restore wholeness, and bring life where there was none. As you offer your gifts, may you do so as an act of deep listening. Listening for how God might use your gifts to move gently through this community and the world, wherever it is most needed. Let us now share our gifts with God...

### \* 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*)

Laura Hankins

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

**Holy One, in this sacred moment, we bring our gifts to you. We offer them in a silence that speaks through love. May they become a reflection of our trust that even in stillness, your Spirit moves; even in uncertainty, your grace endures. Use what we have shared for healing, peace, and justice and to shape us into a people who seek to live in the same intimacy with God as Christ did. Amen.**

### Poetry Reading

Patrick Washburn

*Let us still our thoughts, and listen to the words of this poem titled "On Meditation" by Heimir Stein, as we soon leave this time of contemplation and solitude...*

We're nothing but the product of our thoughts,  
therefore we should appreciate the gleam  
that flashes through our minds in hours of ease,  
and we should learn to listen to the voice  
that guides us through the turmoil of our lives.

We do become what we reflect upon;  
the things that we allow to fill our minds,  
the ruminations and the joyful thoughts  
that we permit to wander through our souls  
make up the winding pathway of our lives.

So let these thoughts be confident and bright  
and don't give in to dark and gloomy views.  
Let's focus on the good things in the world  
and clear our spirit while we meditate.

\* Hymn 290                      "Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart"                      MORECAMBE

Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;  
Wean it from earth, through all its pulses move;  
Stoop to my weakness, mighty as you are,  
And make me love you as I ought to love.

Have you not bid us love you every way?  
All, all your own: soul, heart, and strength, and mind;  
I see your cross there teach my heart to stay:  
O let me seek you, and O let me find.

Teach me to feel that you are always nigh;  
Teach me the struggles of the soul to bear,  
To check the rising doubt, the rebel sigh;  
Teach me the patience of unanswered prayer.

\* Benediction    Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

\* Benediction Response                      "Ubi Caritas"                      Taizé  
Ubi caritas et amor, Ubi caritas Deus ibi est.

Postlude    "Meditation"                      T. C. McKibben

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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: Laurence Winston, Shakti Subramanian

Greeters: Anne Hayes

Refreshments:

Darline Warren-Batton, Jeffery & Kevin Edwards-Knight

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!

#### **CHARLOTTE C.R.O.P. HUNGER WALK, TODAY AT HCUCC- 1:00PM**

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 CAMPAIGN CONCLUDES**

As the Stewardship Campaign ends today, Oct. 19, we are very close to meeting our goal for the Building Fund and the goal for the General Fund is in sight. Thank you to all who have made a financial commitment to Holy Covenant for 2026. Pledges to the Building Fund are at 89% of our goal of \$40,000 as of midmorning Friday, Oct. 17. In dollar terms, we have \$4,340 to go. Pledges to the General Fund are at 80% of our \$140,000 goal as of midmorning Friday, Oct. 17. In dollar terms, we have \$27,355 to go. We'll announce the final campaign results on Oct. 26 - Stewardship Sunday. We are grateful for **all** of your gifts, no matter the size, the time, or the talent. To make a financial pledge, go to <https://holycovenantucc.org/giving/> or scan the QR code.



#### **BOY SCOUT TROOP 58 GREENERY SALES**

Liam and Lachlan Sullivan are Boy Scouts of Troop 58 in Davidson, selling holiday greenery as their only fundraiser, supporting troop activities and helps pay individual fees for trips, camps, and dues. Additionally, it boosts scouts' confidence,

communication skills, networking, and relationship-building in the community. They are selling different types of wreaths, garlands, bows, and pinecone clusters. Please go to the website for prices and ordering: <https://www.troop58greenery.org>. The deadline is Tuesday, October 28, and it is credit/debit card only. When ordering, please fill in Liam Sullivan in the scout's name field. We will pick up our orders on Saturday, November 29 (right after Thanksgiving), and begin distributing on that afternoon. Thank you - We really appreciate the support of our congregation!

### **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](mailto: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**  
**RevChris@holycovenantucc.org, 314-402-8167**

**Jon Weddell, Minister of Music**

**Dawn Simmons, Executive Assistant**

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