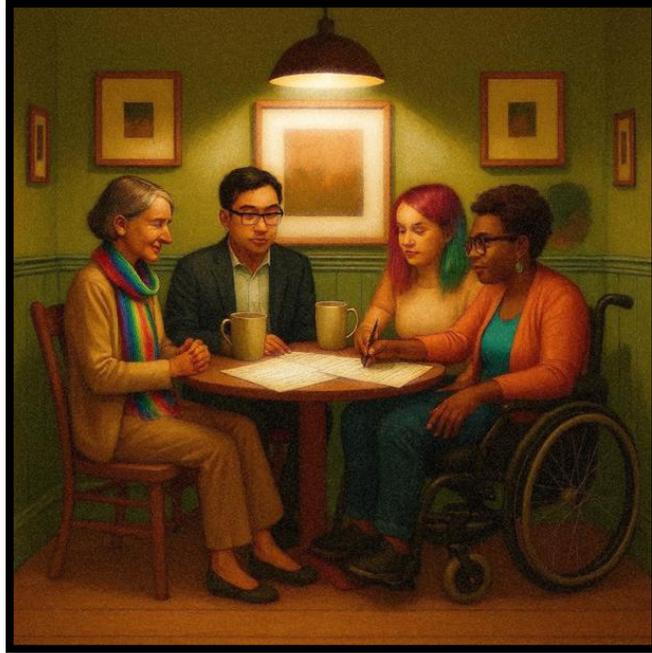




**HOLY COVENANT**

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

*-be the Church, everywhere*



*Photo by Microsoft Image Creator*

**“Our differences need not divide us;  
when approached with curiosity and care,  
they become doorways to deeper understanding.”**

**- Parker Palmer**

**“Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak;  
courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.”**

**- Winston Churchill**

**“To know each other is the best way to understand  
each other. To understand each other is the  
only way to love each other.”**

**- Michelangelo**

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**  
**THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY**

January 25, 2026 | 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 "They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love" arr. C. B. Putnam

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, in this sacred moment, we release the noise of the week and settle into your presence. A presence that surrounds us, envelopes us, and is the very presence of our own being. In the here and now, quiet our racing thoughts, calm our anxious hearts, and open us not only to the still small voice of Spirit, but its movement within and among us. Grant us the willingness to hear, minds willing to receive, and hearts ready to discern what is true and life-giving not just for us, but for all. Help us to meet you as we gather for worship, bringing our whole selves in body, mind, and spirit. Amen.

Introit "Holy Ground" Beatty/Davis

**This is holy ground. We're standing on holy ground.**

**For our God is present and where God is is holy. (2x)**

**We are standing on holy ground,**

**And I know that there are angels all around.**

**Let us praise Jesus now.**

**We are standing in God's presence on holy ground.**

\* Call to the Heart

Laura Hankins

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

**One:** We gather as one body, though we are many members.

**Many:** We come with our differences, seeking unity in Christ.

**One:** We gather to end our division and strife.

**Many:** We come to choose love over being right, connection over conflict.

**One:** We gather not to win arguments, but to find common ground.

**Many:** We come to listen with open hearts and speak with compassion.

**One:** We gather in the name of Christ, who makes us one.

**Many:** We come to embrace the sacred work of peace, justice, and reconciliation. Let us now worship God together.

\* Hymn 386

“The Church’s One Foundation”

AURELIA

**The church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ our Lord;  
We are Christ’s new creation by water and the word;  
From heaven Christ came and sought us in love to set us free;  
With precious blood Christ bought us for all eternity.**

**Elect from every nation, yet one o’er all the earth,  
One char-ter of salvation, on God, one faith, one birth,  
One name together blessing, one holy food we share,  
To one hop we are pressing, at one in work and prayer.**

**’Mid toil and tribulation, and tumult of our war,  
We wait the consummation of peace forevermore;  
Till with the vision glorious, our longing eyes are blessed,  
And the great church victorious shall be the church at rest.**

**Yet we on earth have union with God, the Three-in-One,  
And mystic sweet communion with those whose rest is won.  
O happy ones and holy! God gives us grace that we,  
Like them, the meek and lowly, may live eternally.**

Prayer of Transformation (*unison*)

Laura Hankins

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

**God of unity and peace, we confess that we often rush into conflict without pausing to examine our own hearts. We tend to speak before we listen, assume the worst in others, and prioritize being right over being in relationship. Transform us, O God, so that we might choose the way of Christ. The way of compassion, understanding, and reconciliation. Amen.**

Words of Grace

Laura Hankins

*Friends, hear this good news...*

God's love has always been more powerful than the divisions of this world, and Christ calls us not to being right, but to unite in mission and purpose. If your words or actions have hurt or harmed, know you are forgiven, you are loved, and you are invited to begin again. Try once more to listen with an open heart, to seek common ground, and to work together for the mission of love and justice that unites us all. Amen.

Stories for All People

Rev. Judah L. Jones

Pastoral Prayer

Gift in Song

“Weave”

by Rosemary Crow

*Judah L. Jones, guitar & vocals*

*Refrain:* Weave, weave, weave us together,  
Weave us together in dignity and love.  
Weave, weave, weave us together,  
Weave us together, together in love.

We are many textures, we are many colours,  
Each one different from the other.  
But we are entwined with one another  
in one great tapestry - (R)

We are different instruments playing our own melody,  
Each one tuning to a different key,  
But we are all playing in harmony  
in one great symphony - (R)

A moment ago, still we did not know  
Our unity, only diversity.  
Now the Christ in me greets the Christ in thee  
in one great family - (R)

Modern Lesson

Brian Hankins

*Our Modern Lesson for today comes from Jiddu Krishnamurti who was an Indian philosopher, speaker, and spiritual figure. In his book "The Book of Life" he says...*

"How do you listen? Do you listen with your projections, through your projection, through your ambitions, desires, fears, anxieties, through hearing only what you want to hear, only what will be satisfactory, what will gratify, what will give comfort, what will for the moment alleviate your suffering? If you listen through the screen of your desires, then you obviously listen to your own voice; you are listening to your own desires. And is there any other form of listening? Is it not important to find out how to listen not only to what is being said but to everything - to the noise in the streets, to the chatter of birds, to the noise of the tramcar, to the restless sea, to the voice of your husband, to your wife, to your friends, to the cry of a baby? Listening has importance only when it is not projecting one's own desires through which one listens. Can one put aside all these screens through which we listen, and really listen?"

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

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

Scripture Lesson

1 Corinthians 1:10-18 (CEB)

Laura Hankins

*Our Scripture reading for today comes from 1 Corinthians 1:10-18, where Paul addresses conflict and division that is occurring at the church community in Corinth...*

Now I encourage you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: Agree with each other and don't be divided into rival groups. Instead, be restored with the same mind and the same purpose. My brothers and sisters, Chloe's people gave me some information about you, that you're fighting with each other. What I mean is this: that each one of you says, "I belong to Paul," "I belong to Apollos," "I belong to Cephas," "I belong to Christ." Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you, or were you baptized in Paul's name? Thank God that I didn't baptize any of you, except Crispus and Gaius, so that nobody can say that you were baptized in my name! Oh, I baptized the house of Stephanas too. Otherwise, I don't know if I baptized anyone else. Christ didn't send me to baptize but to preach the good news. And Christ didn't send me to preach the good news with clever words so that Christ's cross won't be emptied of its meaning. The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are being destroyed. But it is the power of God for those of us who are being saved.

**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.

## “Ending Conflict: Choose Christ and One Another”

1. **Talk to each other, not about each other.** If you have a problem with someone or something they did, go to them directly to talk to them. Don't send passive-aggressive emails. Don't gossip to others about it. Don't assume the worst about their motives. Have the courage to engage in an honest, face-to-face conversation.
2. **Listen with a sense of openness.** When someone shares their perspective or how they're feeling, listen to understand, not to respond. Listen for the hurt beneath the words, the fear driving their anger or frustration, listen for the values that are informing the disagreement. You don't have to agree with them, but you do have to genuinely hear them.
3. **Try to find common ground.** Even in the midst of disagreement, there is usually something you can share, some value, concern, or hope. Start there. Build from that place of connection rather than from a place of division. And ask yourself: What do we both care about here? What outcome would serve us both?
4. **Let go of the need to be right.** The goal in talking to someone when we are upset is not to win the argument but to find a mutual path forward. Being right is of no help if there is no care for what the other person has to share. We must be open to the possibility there is something we don't understand, the meaning of which could change everything.
5. **Remember the mission.** Ask yourself: Is what I'm hoping to share here going to serve our common mission or just my personal opinion? Is the thing I'm upset about right now related to our mission, or will it distract us from it? Does this matter in light of people who are suffering in our world, or is this about me or my ego?

## Invitation to Generosity

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

One: As we bring our tithes and offerings, we remember the way our gifts serve as a commitment to our shared mission. When we give, we declare that we will not let our differences distract us from the holy work of building God's kin-dom here on earth. When we give, we proclaim our responsibility to the oppressed and suffering. Let us give generously, in the hope that we might be a place of reconciliation, justice, and radical love.

\* Prayer of Dedication (*unison*)

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

**Gracious God, we dedicate these gifts to the work of your kin-dom. A kin-dom where divisions are healed, where the marginalized find welcome, and where**

love triumphs over fear. May these gifts extend your table, expand your justice, and equip us to be the presence of Christ in a world that desperately needs your peace. Use us and these gifts, so that your kin-dom might come here on earth. Amen.

\* Hymn

“We Are One in the Spirit”  
*Judah L. Jones, Laura Hankins*

ST. BRENDAN’S

We are one in the Spirit; we are one in the Lord.  
We are one in the Spirit; we are one in the Lord.  
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored.

*And they’ll know we are Christians by our love, by our love.  
Yes, they’ll know we are Christians by our love.*

We will walk with each other; we will walk hand in hand.  
We will walk with each other; we will walk hand in hand.  
And together we’ll spread the news that God is in our land. (R)

We will work with each other; we will work side by side.  
We will work with each other; we will work side by side.  
And we’ll guard each one’s dignity and save each one’s pride. (R)

\* Benediction

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

\* Benediction Response

NEW DIMENSIONS

God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar,  
We your people, ours the journey now and ever,  
Now and ever, now and evermore.

Postlude

“Make Me a Servant”  
*Songs in this service are used by permission.  
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K. Willard

*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.*

## 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/>*



*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 to access our secure online giving options. Thank you for sustaining the ministries of love, welcome, and justice we are creating together.*

**CHECK OUT OUR ONLINE CALENDAR AT <https://holycovenantucc.org/events/>**

- Feb. 01 - Christian Ed Planning Meeting 12:30pm
- Feb. 04 - Daytimers Covenant Group Luncheon 12:00pm
- Feb. 08 - Guest Preacher Bishop Tonyia Rawls, Room In The Inn 3:30pm
- Feb. 09 - Worship Team Meets 5:30pm
- Feb. 18 - Ash Wednesday

Anyone wishing to be a part of the HCUCC Ministry Teams is invited to contact the church office for an introduction to the team. A Ministry Team Fair is in the planning stages for the first Sunday in March.

**EVERY VOICE MATTERS: NEW HEARING ASSISTANCE DEVICES AVAILABLE**  
See the ushers for a wireless transmitter and your personal ear buds.

### **A CONVERSATION ABOUT OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH, FEB. 1**

To offer meaningful, engaging, and faith-based education for our children and youth, we are inviting parents and volunteers to join us for an important meeting. On Sunday, February 1, at 12:30 pm, we will gather in the Children's Classroom for a conversation about our children's and youth programming; what is working well, what support is needed, and how we can best provide a faith-based experience of our youngest members. This will be a time to talk through upcoming plans, identify areas where help is needed, and explore ways parents and volunteers can sign up and participate to offer both Christian education and spiritual formation during worship. Parents and volunteers are encouraged to attend, and you do not need to currently have a child or youth involved to participate. If you have a heart for supporting our children, families, and the future of our church, your presence and

ideas are welcome. We look forward to dreaming, planning, and sharing this responsibility together, so that our children and youth continue to experience church as a place of care, belonging, and growth. For questions, please reach out to Jo Ann Jellison or Dawn Robinson.

### **NEW MEMBERS' CLASSES PLANNED IN 2026**

If you are interested in becoming a member at Holy Covenant or would like to explore what becoming a member means, mark your calendar for some upcoming dates in 2026. We hold new member classes on March 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, with a new member installation on March 29<sup>th</sup>, which is Palm & Passion Sunday. If you are interested in becoming a new member or have questions, please reach out to **Pastor Chris**, [RevChris@holycovenantucc.org](mailto:RevChris@holycovenantucc.org) or contact the church office, [office@holycovenantucc.org](mailto:office@holycovenantucc.org).

### **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 Andersen, Liz Colton, Kevin Decker, Kathy Habel, Eileen Howe, Jim & Faye Humphrey, Linda Miller, Bill Pascucci, Benjamin Rudolph, Anita Taylor, Tommy Tomlinson, Sally Phelan-Young

### **Friends & Family Members**

Joan Bowling (Kristen Fuchs), Lester Brigman (Lee Parrish), Kim Chamberlain (Kevin Decker), Gayle Clay (Jay Whitley), Erica Echeverri, Gloria Echeverri (Melissa Noll), Jason Field (Benjamin Rudolph), Samuel Head (Benjamin Rudolph), Jack Hillard (Barbara Schneller), Jeanne Hord (Diane Neese), Cindy Hedrick (Barb Schneller), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Richard Lease (Barb Schneller), Ed & Johnnie McLester (Diane Neese), Sakhi Naushad (Stephanie Herrin), Matt, Brianna and Rhiannon Pacewicz (Dom Ciciollo), Frank Roach (Kristen Fuchs), Tom, Beth and Ariel Rudolph (Benjamin Rudolph), Michelle Sharp (Beth Sharp), Tiffany Turner (Terry Raley-Dennis), Molly Valente (Martha Battles), Dave & Jennifer Ward (Jay & Cathy Whitley), Tara Washburn (Patrick Washburn), Scott Whitley (Jay Whitley)

### **OUR MINISTRY TEAM**

**Rev. Christopher Czarnecki, Senior Pastor**  
[RevChris@holycovenantucc.org](mailto:RevChris@holycovenantucc.org), 314-402-8167

**Jon Weddell, Minister of Music**

**Dawn Simmons, Executive Assistant**

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