



# HOLY COVENANT

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

*-be the Church, everywhere*



*Image by Swanson, John August.*

“God really needs our cooperation if love is to win.  
God really needs our cooperation to overcome evil.”

– Thomas Jay Oord

“Jesus is not the Lord of empire.

Jesus is not the Lord of institutionalized religion.

Jesus is not the Lord of domination. Jesus is the Lord of compassion.”

– Nadia Bolz-Weber

“The gospel is found wherever poor people struggle for justice, fighting  
for their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

– James H. Cone

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  
PALM & PASSION SUNDAY ~ WELCOME SUNDAY

March 29, 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 "My Song Is Love Unknown" arr. M. Hassell

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

Chiming of the Hour

Introit "All Glory Laud and Honor" arr. K. McChesney  
*Handbell Choir; Dawn Robinson, Tammie Holt, Autumn Holt, Joy Decker, Diane Neese, Sally McLester, Roman Chmura, Martha Battles, Dawn Simmons, Cheryl Sexton, Jon Weddell, Music Director*

\* Call to the Heart Kristin Andes  
*Please take a comfortable posture that supports your reading and worshiping...*

One: Look! Coming down the road from the Mount of Olives, riding not on a warhorse but on a donkey comes Jesus!

Many: **Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!**

One: Raise and wave your palms! Lay down your cloaks! Let the whole city know that Jesus is coming!

Many: **Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest!**

One: Look! He comes not with armies or armor, not with the power of empire, but he comes in justice and love.

Many: **Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!**

One: Crowds are singing. Children are shouting. The road is packed with people and the whole city is asking, "Who is this?"

Many: **This is Jesus of Nazareth: the prophet, the healer, the revolutionary. He is hope of all who are weary and waiting!**

One: So, lift your palms and raise your voices, for we are part of this holy procession that has never stopped moving.

Many: **Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest! Amen!**

“Hosanna, loud hosanna” the little children sang;  
Through pillared court and temple the lovely anthem rang;  
To Jesus, who had blessed them close folded to his breast,  
The children sang their praises, the simplest and the best.

From Olivet they followed amid a cheering crowd,  
The victor palm branch waving, and chanting clear and loud.  
The one whom angels worship rode on in lowly state,  
And glad to see the children, slowed down the donkey’s gait.

“Hosanna in the highest!” That ancient song is ours.  
We hail our great Redeemer and sing with all our powers:  
“Hosanna, Christ, we praise you with heart and life and voice.  
Hosanna! In your presence forever we’ll rejoice!”

#### BAPTISM & RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Reading for the Baptized and Incoming Members

Ed Vickery

*As we prepare for the baptism and installation of new members, hear these words from Rachel Held Evans’ book “Searching for Sunday”...*

“Baptism declares that God is in the business of bringing dead things back to life, so if you want in on God’s business, you better prepare to follow God to all the rock-bottom, scorched-earth, dead-on-arrival corners of this world – including those of your own heart – because that’s where God works, [and] that’s where God gardens. The church doesn’t offer a cure. It doesn’t offer a quick fix. The church offers death and resurrection. The church offers the messy, inconvenient, gut-wrenching, never-ending work of healing and reconciliation. The church offers grace. This is what God’s kingdom is like: a bunch of outcasts and oddballs gathered at a table, not because they are rich or worthy or good, but because they are hungry, because they said yes. And there’s always room for more.”

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

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

## Renewal of Baptism

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

*Today we celebrate the baptism of Kyle Deck*

## Blessing and Welcome

**Pastor:** Kyle, you have been baptized in the abundant and overflowing grace of God. May you walk in this faith from this day forward, knowing you are deeply loved, wholly accepted, and continually renewed by the Spirit of Life. May this church be a place where you grow, serve, and find belonging. And may we, as your community, walk with you on this journey, supporting you and celebrating the life God is unfolding in and before you.

**Congregation:** **Kyle, we rejoice with you! You are our sibling in Christ, a child of God and a beloved part of this community. With open hearts and joyful spirits, we welcome you in love and covenant to walk beside you in faith.**

## New Member Installation

Join us in welcoming our new members!

Ann Hooper - Fan Watson - Ginny Dodd

Katie Morris - Amanda Deck - Kyle Deck

Kim Stringer - Steven Browning

## Response of the Congregation

**Pastor:** Will the members of Holy Covenant United Church of Christ please take a comfortable posture and join in the mutual promise and welcome?

**Congregation:** **We welcome each of you and celebrate your journey of faith. We promise to search with you for truth in Scripture, word and witness; to walk with you in life's joys and sorrows; to support you when life is shaken; to laugh with you when life lifts your spirit; to share silence, song and sacrament; and to grow in Christian love and mutual appreciation. We will rely on God's sustaining presence as we journey forward together.**

## Stories for All People

Tammie Holt

## Anthem

“Two Processions: A Palm Sunday Hymn”

A. Udis-Kessler

Modern Lesson

Pam Shimberg

*Our modern lesson for today is from Marcus Brog and John Dominic Crossan's book "The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Final Days in Jerusalem". In this work they say...*

"Pilate's procession embodied the power, glory, and violence of the empire that ruled the world. Jesus' procession embodied an alternative vision, the kingdom of God. Holy Week and the journey of Lent are about an alternative procession and alternative journey...An anti-imperial and non-violent procession. Which journey are we on? Which procession are we in?"

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

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

\*Gospel Lesson

Matthew 21:1-11 (NRVS)

Kristin Andes

*Our scripture reading for today comes from Matthew 21:1-11, where Jesus enters Jerusalem for the beginning of the Passover Festival...*

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet:

"Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey." The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

"Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

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.**

“New Members and Protests”

Invitation to Generosity

Kristin Andes

On this Palm Sunday, we remember long ago the crowds gathered and gave what they had. They laid down their cloaks on the road, cut branches from the trees and laid them in the streets, and offered their voices up in praise. This morning, we are invited to do the same, to lay something of ourselves and our resources before the one who comes to us in love. Let us now share with open hands and grateful hearts, as a people who believe the kin-dom of God here on earth is worth everything we have to offer.

\* Doxology

OLD HUNDREDTH

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God all creatures here below,  
Praise God above all heavenly hosts,  
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

\* Prayer of Dedication (*unison*)

Kristin Andes

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

**God who journeys with us, we lay before you the treasures and resources we have. Take what we have offered and use it for the building of your kin-dom: for the healing of the sick, the feeding of the hungry, the welcoming of the outcast, and the work of justice and love that is needed. May our giving rise to be as real and as bold as the One who rode into Jerusalem. Amen.**

Closing Words before Holy Week

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Friends, today we waved palms and shouted “Hosanna,” joining the joyful procession and crowd that welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem. But as we look to the week ahead we know what’s coming.

Over the next few days, the cheers will fade. Tables will turn. Bread will be broken. Feet will be washed. A friend will betray him. Prayers will be whispered in a garden where disciples sleep. Contempt for Jesus will ensue. Three will be suffering and a cross will rise on a hill.

Holy Week is a journey through the heart of what it means to be human—through celebration and sorrow, through hope and heartbreak. It is the week where God draws near not just in glory, but also in grief. Not just in triumph, but also in moments of trial and suffering.



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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

Children's Church: Tammie Holt

Youth Group:

Ushers: Dom Ciciollo, Dave Shimberg

Greeters: Pam Shimberg

Refreshments: Teresa Eller, Laura Hankins

**WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT**

**GET ALL THE DETAILS FOR NEWS AND EVENTS AT**

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

- Mar. 29 - Welcome Sunday for New Members; Palm/Passion Sunday
- Apr. 02 - Maundy Thursday - Meal 5:30pm, Worship 7:00pm
- Apr. 05 - Easter Worship 11:00am, Egg Hunt to follow
- Apr. 06 - Easter Monday office closed
- Apr. 12 - Laity Sunday
- Apr. 18 - All Church Workday
- Apr. 19 - Earth Sunday; Consistory

*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.*

### **ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING:**

What a caring congregation! Giving to One Great Hour of Sharing totals \$2,379.94 as of Friday, March 20. OGHS is a UCC special offering, so these gifts are in addition to people's tithes and "regular" offerings. Thank you! Your love will bless people both in the U.S. and abroad through disaster relief; sustainable development; essentials like food, water, and shelter; advocacy and resettlement assistance for refugees and displaced persons; and combatting injustice in its many forms. The online giving portal (QR Code) will be open through the end of March. And one can contribute any time by check or cash, designating OGHS on the memo line or the outside of the envelope.



## **Holy Week Services & Events**

Apr. 2 – Maundy Thursday Service 7:00pm  
Soup & Bread Dinner 5:30-6:30pm

Apr. 5 – Easter Worship 11:00am  
Egg Hunt for Children following Worship  
Bring fresh flowers for the cross!  
Home grown/wildflowers welcome!

**Please Remember in Prayer  
Members**

Tina Dickens and family in the recent death of her sister, Betty Koester  
Mel Andersen, Martha Bomely, Kathy Habel, Jim & Faye Humphrey, Anita Taylor,  
Alice & Sally Phelan-Young

**Friends & Family Members**

Laura Allison, Joan Bowling (Kristen Fuchs), Lester Brigman (Lee Parrish), Kim Chamberlain (Kevin Decker), Diana Ciciollo (Dom Ciciollo), Jason Field (Benjamin Rudolph), Ann Garret (Holly Middleton & Dawn Schmitz), Samuel Head (Benjamin Rudolph), Jack Hillard (Barbara Schneller), Jeanne Hord (Diane Neese), Cindy Hedrick (Barb Schneller), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Charlie Holt (Autumn Holt), Richard Lease (Barb Schneller), Sakhi Naushad (Stephanie Herrin), Michael Reed (Dawn Simmons), Frank Roach (Kristen Fuchs), Tom, Beth and Ariel Rudolph (Benjamin Rudolph), Tiffany Turner (Terry Raley-Dennis), Dave & Jennifer Ward (Jay & Cathy Whitley), Scott Whitley (Jay Whitley)

If you wish to add someone to the list, please send a note to [prayers@holycovenantucc.org](mailto:prayers@holycovenantucc.org). We periodically adjust our prayer list. If you would like to have someone added back, please contact the office.

**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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