



*Image by Jonny Gios\_Unsplash*

“To greet sorrow today does not mean that  
sorrow will be there tomorrow.”

— Pádraig Ó Tuama

“New life starts in the dark. Whether it is a seed in the ground, a  
baby in the womb, or Jesus in the tomb, it starts in the dark.”

— Barbara Brown Taylor

“We live in a world that wants to break our bodies,  
our spirits and our hope. But we are not lost.  
We are not left in exile. We have the wind that  
comes into us and makes us live.”

— Fr. Shannon TL Kearns

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**  
**EASTER SUNDAY**

**April 5, 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 "Easter Praise!" arr. M. Parks  
*Bill Tyler, French horn*

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

Chiming of the Hour

Choral Introit "Majesty" arr. J. Schrader

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

One: Before the sun had risen, before the stone was moved, before any witness arrived at the tomb...

Many: **Christ Has Risen!**

One: To comfort the hearts of the grieving and bind up the wounds of the hurting...

Many: **Christ Has Risen!**

One: To be at the bedsides of the sick and the hospice rooms of the dying...

Many: **Christ Has Risen!**

One: To be at the tables where outcasts are welcomed and outsiders are called beloved...

Many: **Christ Has Risen!**

One: To be with impoverished neighborhoods, underfunded schools, and food pantries running low...

Many: **Christ Has Risen!**

One: To be with immigrant families and the asylum seekers waiting for mercy...

Many: **Christ Has Risen!**

One: To be at protest marches and wherever people are crying out for justice...

**Many: Christ Has Risen!**

**One: To be with the hopeful and the hopeless, with the faithful and those barely holding-on....**

**Many: Christ Has Risen!**

**One: Christ is not waiting in the tomb, but already out ahead of us. Christ is already in the hard places where we are called to go...**

**Many: Christ Has Risen! And so, we rise with him. Alleluia!**

\* Hymn 233

“Christ the Lord Is Risen Today”

EASTER HYMN

**Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!**

**Mortal tongues and angels say: Alleluia!**

**Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!**

**Sing, glad heavens, and earth reply: Alleluia!**

**Let the Victor’s people sing, Alleluia!**

**Where, O death, is now your sting? Alleluia!**

**Dying once, Christ lives to save, Alleluia!**

**Where your victory, O grave? Alleluia!**

**Love’s redeeming work is done, Alleluia!**

**Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!**

**Death in vain forbids Christ rise, Alleluia!**

**God has opened paradise, Alleluia!**

**Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia!**

**Following our exalted Head, Alleluia!**

**Made like Christ, like Christ we rise, Alleluia!**

**Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!**

\* Song

“My Life Is in You, Lord”

D. Gardner

*Refrain:* **My life is in you, Lord. My strength is in you, Lord.  
My hope is in you, Lord. In you, it's in you. (2x)**

**I will praise you with all of my life.**

**I will praise you with all of my strength.**

**With all of my life, with all of my strength,**

**All of my hope is in you. (R)**

## Monthly Affirmation

**Ourselves:** The Christ within me rises to a new life and way in the world.

**Neighbor:** The Christ within you rises to a new life and way in the world.

**World:** The Christ within us rises to a new life and way in the world.

## Easter Poetry

Patrick Washburn

*This poetry reading is an adaptation of an anonymous poem titled "In the Garden of Resurrection"*

In a garden of sorrow, a garden of grief,  
Lay a stone-sealed tomb that seemed beyond belief.  
But as dawn broke the sky and the night turned to day,  
The garden of death transformed into a way.

For the angels appeared, their message so clear,  
"The Lord has risen; he is not here."  
The disciples ran, their hearts filled with hope,  
A Savior's promise, rose to be life-giving.

In the garden of resurrection, the flowers bloom bright,  
The fragrance of grace fills the dark with new light.  
The mountains and hills sing praises, the trees clap their hands,  
All creation rejoices, love understands.

The stone is rolled back, the tomb stands ajar,  
The pathway to heaven [here on earth] is not far.  
For Jesus has triumphed over death and offered grace,  
So that we too might rise the same.

In the garden of resurrection, let our spirits take flight,  
For [the Christ] is our Savior, our Lord, our Light.  
Let us walk in His footsteps, sharing His love every day,  
In the garden of resurrection, we find our true way.

## Stories for All People

Dawn Robinson

Song of Preparation "I Want Jesus to Walk with Me"

SOJOURNER

**I want Jesus to walk with me. (2x)**

**All along my pilgrim journey, oh I want Jesus to walk with me.**

## Pastoral Prayer

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Prayer for Illumination (*sung*) "Take, O Take Me as I Am"

J. L. Bell

**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

Laura Hankins

*Our modern lesson for today is from Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lews, who is an activist, preacher, speaker, and writer. Among her written work she says...*

"Wherever two or more are doing God's work, wherever love is healing the world – that is proof of the resurrection. That is proof of life. It's not the dying, it's the rising. I want you to hear Jesus calling your name, inviting you into this movement of love and justice...Every new life, every resurrection, every awakening, every revolution is born out of this kind of holy pain. And we do what every birthing person knows how to do. We keep pushing. We keep breathing. We keep breaking through the pain."

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

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

\*Gospel Lesson

Matthew 28:1-10 (NRSV)

Pam Shimberg

*Please take a comfortable posture that supports your reading and worshiping...  
Our scripture reading for today comes from Matthew 28:1-10, where the two Marys' go early in the morning to visit the tomb and burial place of Jesus...*

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, "He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him." This is my message for you.' So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, 'Greetings!' And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.'

**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

“God Works, Even in the Dark”

Anthem

“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”

arr. G. Martin

Invitation to Generosity

Pam Shimberg

On this day we remember the stone that sealed the tomb was not rolled away to let Jesus out, but to let us in. To remember we are given new life, and we have gifts to share, even when all hope seems lost. As we celebrate the resurrection, we are invited to share our gifts in a way that brings new life to hopeless places. Let our gifts be an act of resurrection, a belief that even now, new things are always possible.

Bell Choir Anthem

“The Strife Is O’er”

arr. K. McChesney

*Handbell Choir*

*Dawn Robinson, Tammie Holt, Autumn Holt, Joy Decker,  
Diane Neese, Sally McLester, Roman Chmura, Jon Weddell,  
Martha Battles, Dawn Simmons, Cheryl Sexton*

\* Doxology

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.**

**Praise God, all creatures high and low. Alleluia, alleluia!**

**Praise God, in Jesus fully known: Creator, Word, and Spirit one.**

**Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

\* Prayer of Dedication (*unison*)

Pam Shimberg

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

**Risen Christ, take these gifts to where hope is needed most: to the margins, to the forgotten, to the places where death seems to have won. May what we offer today be bread for the hungry, comfort for the hurting, courage for all who are working for your kin-dom. May our giving follow you and model your resurrection hope in the Galilees of this world. Amen.**

**THE COMMUNION FEAST**  
**ALL ARE WELCOME AT CHRIST'S TABLE**

The Invitation

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

One: The Lord be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

One: Lift up your hearts.

Many: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord.

Many: **It is good to give our thanks and praise.**

On the night before he died, Jesus gathered at a table with the people he loved most: not the powerful or those who were perfect, but the ones who had doubted him, who had argued with him, who would soon deny and abandon him. And still he broke bread and ate with them. Still, he poured wine and drank with them. Still, he called them beloved.

This table belongs to him, and so it belongs to everyone. It is not the church's table. It is not my table. It is Christ's table, and at Christ's table there are no prerequisites, no requirements, and no one must first prove themselves worthy to be welcome to it. If you are hungry, you are welcome here. If you are weary, you are welcome here. If you are full of doubt or short on faith, you are welcome here. If you have been told by any church or by the world that you don't belong as you are – well I have good news, you are especially welcome here.

So, come, all who are grieving what was. Come, all who are afraid of what is. Come, all who are daring to hope for what might yet be. This table is set for you, and this meal just might be your resurrection.

Words of Institution

On the night he was betrayed, Jesus gathered for a last meal among friends. And at that table as they ate, he took bread, he gave thanks for it, he blessed it and broke it, and said: *“This is my body, given for you. Whenever you eat it, remember me.”*

Let this be a sign that God will always love you.

In the same way after supper, Jesus took the cup. And after giving thanks he blessed it, he poured it, and he gave it to his disciples and said: *“This cup is the new covenant, poured out in love for all people. Whenever you drink it, remember me.”*

Let this be a sign that God will always be with you.

Sharing of the Elements

Song “A Mighty Fortress medley” arr. L. Bergquist  
*Angela Allison, D L Evans, Martha Battles, vocalists*

Prayer of Thanksgiving (*unison*)

Risen Christ, you have fed us at your table and sent us out to be your body in the world. Through this meal may we be bread for the hungry, hope for the despairing, and resurrection for every place where death seems to rule. Let bring new life to the hard and holy places of this world. Give us the courage to follow your ways, and the faith to believe that something new is always beginning, even here, even now. Amen.

\* Hymn 198 “Lift High the Cross” CRUCIFER  
(vv. 1-3)

**Refrain:** Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim;  
Let all adore and praise that sacred name.

Come, Christians, follow where our Savior trod,  
The Lamb victorious, Christ the Child of God. (R)

Each newborn servant of the Crucified  
Bears on the brow the seal of Christ who died. (R)

O Christ, once lifted on the glorious tree,  
Your death has brought us life eternally. (R)

\* Benediction Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

\* Benediction Response “Praise God's Holy Name” K. Hampton  
Sing till the power of the Lord come down.  
Shout hallelujah! Praise God's holy name! (2x)

Postlude

“Praise God! Praise God!”

arr. M. Hayes

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*Parts of the liturgy were written by Rev. Christopher Czarnecki.  
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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: Laura Hankins      Youth Group:  
Ushers: Dave Shimberg      Greeters:  
Refreshments: Kevin Edwards-Knight, Pam Shimberg

**WHAT’S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT**

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

- Apr. 05 - Easter Worship 11:00am, Egg Hunt to follow
- Apr. 06 - Easter Monday office closed
- Apr. 12 - Laity Sunday; Sandwich Build
- Apr. 18 - All Church Work Day
- 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.*

*The egg hunt for the  
children and youth  
will begin after worship.  
Please gather in the hallway  
leading to the playground.*

*Happy Easter!*



**Please Remember in Prayer  
Members**

Mel Andersen, Martha Bomely, Kathy Habel, Jim & Faye Humphrey, Anita Taylor, Alice & Sally Phelan-Young

**Friends & Family Members**

Amanda (Linda Burby), 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**

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**Jon Weddell, Minister of Music**

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