



HOLY COVENANT

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

-be the Church, everywhere



Unsplash Photo by George Pagan III

**“Your mental health is everything, prioritize it.
Make the time like your life depends on it, because it does.”**

- Mel Robbins

**“It’s okay to feel unstable. It’s okay to disassociate.
It’s okay to hide from the world. It’s okay to need help.
It’s okay not to be okay. Your mental illness is not a personal failure.”**

- HealthyPlace.com

“Mental health is not the problem. Mental health is the solution.”

- Anonymous

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
SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER ~ MENTAL HEALTH SUNDAY

May 17, 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 "Be Still, My Soul" arr. P. Rodriguez

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

Let us center ourselves in prayer as we gather for this time of worship...

Introit "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.**

* Call to the Heart Ed Vickery

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

One: Come, let us worship God who is creating a new heaven and a new earth. Today is a new day, a fresh start, and a day of new beginnings.

Many: **Come, let us worship God who creates peace out of chaos, calm out of anxiety, and hope out of despair. Even when we are depressed, we trust God is with us.**

One: Come, let us praise God who chooses to be among us, one of us, a Disabled and Neurodiverse God dwelling among us living with mental health challenges, substance use disorders, brain disorders, and neurodiversity.

Many: **Come, let us praise God who says to each one of us, "no matter who we are or what medications we take or our diagnoses or where we are on life's journey: I will be your God."**

One: Come, let us give thanks to God who promises to wipe away every tear from our eyes.

Many: Come, let us give thanks to God who loves us so much that death, mourning, crying, and pain cannot stop God from loving us. This is our greatest hope: we are held in God's love.

All: Come, let us rejoice, for God is making all things new!

* Hymn 488

“Be Still, My Soul”

FINLANDIA

Be still, my soul: for God is on your side;
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
Leave to your God to order and provide;
In every change God faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul: your best eternal friend
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

Be still, my soul: for God will undertake
To guide in future days as in the past.
Your hope, your confidence let nothing shake;
All now mysterious shall be clear at last.
Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know
How Jesus' power ruled them long ago.

Be still, my soul: the hour will soon be here
When we shall be with God whom we adore.
With disappointment gone, no grief nor fear,
Sorrow replaced with joy forevermore.
Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past
All safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

Anxiety and Mindfulness

Sally Duffy

Stories for All People

Tammie Holt

Song of Preparation

“O Christ Surround Me”

GREEN TYLER

God, be the love to search and keep me;
God, be the prayer to move my voice;
God, be the strength to now uphold me:
O Christ, surround me. O Christ, surround me.

Christ in the eyes of all who see me,
Christ in the ears that hear my voice,
Christ in the hearts of all who know me:
O Christ, surround me. O Christ, surround me.

Poem

Christine Andersen

“Hood Mental Illness” by Magod Scroof

Prayer for Illumination (*sung*)

THY WORD

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

Christian Scripture

Acts 1:6-14(NRSV)

Ed Vickery

Our Scripture reading for today comes from Acts 1:6-14, where Jesus ascends to heaven and the disciples, along with some women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers, return to Jerusalem to pray together...

So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying: Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

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.

Sermon

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

“We Need Our Prayers and Our People”

Anthem

“My Help (Cometh from the Lord)”

arr. C. Cymbala

Angela Allison, soloist

Mental Health and Prayer

Meg Houlihan

Invitation to Generosity

Ed Vickery

One: God, our helper, has endowed us with many gifts and blessing. As we have received gifts and blessings from God, let us offer ours to support the work of healing and the comfort of community. Let us now share our offerings, so that this congregation may continue to be a refuge for the neuro-diverse and a safe harbor for mental wellness.

* 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*)

Ed Vickery

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

Many: Loving God, open us to a new world. Where there is no longer least and greatest, rich and poor, haves and have nots. A world where all are treated as beloved precious children. A world where mental health is understood to be physical health and cared for without stigma or judgement. Until that day comes, bless our small contributions of time, talent and treasures and may it work towards the building of your new world. Amen.

* Hymn 438

“It Is Well with My Soul”

VILLA DU HAVRE

When peace, like a river, upholds me each day,

When sorrows like sea billows roll,

Whatever my lot, you have taught me to say,

“It is well; it is well with my soul.”

Refrain: It is well (it is well) with my soul, (with my soul)

It is well, it is well with my soul.

Though evil should tempt me, though trials should come,

let this blessed assurance control,

That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,

And has paid life and blood for my soul: (R)

My sin oh the bliss of this glorious thought-

My sin- not in part, but the whole-

Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more.

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul! (R)

* Benediction

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

* Benediction Response 581

WORLD PEACE PRAYER

Lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth,
From despair to hope, from fear to trust,
Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace;
Let peace fill our hearts, let peace fill our world,
Let peace fill our universe.

Postlude

“There Is a Balm in Gilead”

arr. A. M. David

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Parts of the liturgy were written by Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund, Rev. Carolyn C. Blair, & Rev. Dr. Alydia Smith, utilizing the recent editions of the UCC’s Mental Health and Wellness Worship Resources for All.

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: Laura Hankins, Jo Ann Jellison

Ushers: Laurence Winston, Shakti Subramanian

Greeters: Deborah Winston

Refreshments: Joy Decker, Pam Shimberg, Stella Dawson

WHAT’S HAPPENING AT HOLY COVENANT

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.

GET ALL THE DETAILS FOR NEWS AND EVENTS AT

<https://holycovenantucc.org/>

- May 17 - Consistory 12:30pm
- May 20-25 Church Office Closed
- May 23 - Project Linus drop-in event 10:00am-3:00pm
Game Night at HCUCC 6:30-8:30pm
- May 24 - Pentecost - Sandwich Build following Worship
- May 25 - Memorial Day Observed
- May 30 - UCC Women's Conference, Greensboro
- May 31 - Trinity Sunday - Laity Sunday
- June 13 - All Church Workday 9:00am-1:00pm

STORIES FOR ALL PEOPLE, SUNDAYS | 11:00AM

Help Lead our Stories for All People! If you would like to deliver a short children's message to our youth during "Stories for All People" on a Sunday, or Sundays of your choosing, please consider the opened dates out ahead. You will receive an email the during the week before your chosen Sunday that will include the scripture reading for that week so that you can link your message into the message congregants will receive while the children are in children's church. Please sign up for no more than 3 dates. For more information, contact Dawn Robinson, or members of our Christian Education Ministry team.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C44ACAD23A2FE3-63107138-stories>

SOJOURNERS CLASS - ADULT EDUCATION - ON BREAK.

We will break in May, returning in June. Plan to join us in-person, or watch for the Zoom link. All are welcome and no preparation is required.

June 7-21 Discussion of *Tattoos on the Heart* led by Suzanne Lamorey

June 28 Discussion of justice and religion begins led by Anne Hayes

DROP-IN BLANKET DAY AT HOLY COVENANT SAT. MAY 23 9:00AM-4:00PM

Join the Project Linus Blanketeers for a joyful and purposeful day of crafting comfort! We're hosting a drop-in blanket making party at Holy Covenant – and we'd love for you to be part of it. No experience necessary! Stay for an hour or the whole day.

GAME NIGHT AT HCUCC SAT. MAY 23 | 6:30-8:30PM

Game Night is a fun, family-friendly event where everyone is welcome to join in the laughter, connection, and friendly competition. Whether you're a board game enthusiast, a card shark, or just looking for a relaxed evening with a warm

and inclusive community, there's something for everyone to enjoy. It's a great way to meet new friends, spend time with loved ones, and feel the spirit of fellowship that defines Holy Covenant. All are welcome here— come and be part of the joy!

**Please Remember in Prayer
Members**

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

Friends & Family Members

Amanda (Linda Burby), Laura Allison, Joan Bowling (Kristen Fuchs), Lester Brigman (Lee Parrish), Linda Burby, Kim Chamberlain (Kevin Decker), April Dawson, Erica Echiverri, Gloria Echiverri (Melissa Noll), Cherice Fequiere (Deborah Winston), Jason Field (Benjamin Rudolph), Mario Gaetani and family (Kristen Fuchs), 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), Judson Hulsey (Kristen Fuchs), Renee Lewis (Martha Battles), Richard Lease (Barb Schneller), Matty McKinnon (Joy Decker), Tom, Beth and Ariel Rudolph (Benjamin Rudolph), Juan Sullivan (Martha Bomely), Tiffany Turner (Terry Raley-Dennis), Dave & Jennifer Ward (Jay & Cathy Whitley), 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

Mailing address: P.O. Box 481285, Charlotte NC 28269

3501 West W.T. Harris Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28269-8510

www.holycovenantucc.org 704-599-9810