



HOLY COVENANT

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

-be the Church, everywhere



Photo by Microsoft Image Creator

“Sometimes the most important thing in a whole day
is the rest we take between two deep breaths.”

– ETTY HILLESUM

“The most common way people give up their power
is by thinking they don’t have any.”

– ALICE WALKER

“I used to complain about all the interruptions to my work
until I realized that these interruptions were my work.”

– HENRI NOUWEN

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
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

June 07, 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 "Christians, We Have Met to Worship" arr. M. Hayes

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...

Introit "Welcome to This House" D. Cowen

**Welcome to this house, open and affirming,
In God's Son we are all one. Hand in hand we stand.
Welcome to this house, caring and accepting.
In God's Son we are all one.
Welcome to this house of God.**

* Call to the Heart Martha Battles

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

One: When the stranger on the corner asks for a few dollars for a meal...

Many: **God may be found in the interruption.**

One: When traffic backs up and we're forced somewhere we did not intend to go...

Many: **God may be found in the interruption.**

One: When protests fill the streets and close roads...

Many: **God may be found in the interruption.**

One: When the world asks us to change our habits, or do things differently for the sake of us all...

Many: **God may be found in the interruption.**

One: Come, let us worship and practice the ministry of presence...

Many: **For God meets us in the interruption, the unexpected, and inconvenient places too. Amen.**

* Hymn

“A Place at the Table”

FOR EVERYONE BORN

(The first verse will be introduced by Meg Houlihan)

For everyone born, a place at the table,
For everyone born, clean water and bread,
A shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,
for everyone born, a star overhead. *(R)*

Refrain: And God will delight when we are creators of justice and joy,
Compassion and peace:
Yes, God will delight when we are creators of justice,
Justice and joy!

For woman and man, a place at the table,
And all those between, beyond, and besides;
Expanding our world, dismantling power,
Each valued for what their voice can provide. *(R)*

For gay, bi, and straight, a place at the table,
Invited to wed, to baptize and preach,
A rainbow of race and gender and color
For queer, trans, and ace, God’s justice in reach. *(R)*

Monthly Affirmation

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Ourselves: I rest in the stillness of God and receive the gift of this present moment.

Neighbor: You rest in the stillness of God and receive the gift of this present moment.

World: We rest in the still of God and receive the gift of this present moment.

2026 Graduation Recognition

The Michael G. Brooks Scholarship Award

Roxie Madison McMillon, is the 2026-27 recipient of the Michael G. Brooks Scholarship for continued higher education. Roxie is the granddaughter of Holy Covenant member Roxie Wilson McMillon. She will be graduating on June 12th from Mallard Creek High School. In the fall, she will be a freshman at Virginia State University in Petersburg, VA as an animal science major. Her aspirations of ultimately being a veterinarian for large farm animals. She thanks everyone “for your continued prayers as she enters this next stage of my life”.

Congratulations Roxie!

Stories for All People

Jean Raley-Dennis

Pastoral Prayer

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Modern Lesson

Pam Shimberg

Our modern lesson for today is from Marcia Lehar and her book “The Bare Branch”. She is a writer and author on the Jewishness of Jesus and an advocate in the fight against antisemitism. In her book she says...

“If you had slept in the same house or field with Jesus, awakened with him, eaten with him and helped him, what would you have observed? One thing we always think of is that Jesus gave himself almost entirely to what we would consider interruptions. Most of the teaching, healing and wonders we see in his life were responsive...seemingly unplanned. He trusted that what [God] allowed to cross his path was exactly that...from [God]. Jesus always seemed willing [to be interrupted and] for things to get messy.”

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

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

* Gospel Lesson

Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26 (NRVS)

Martha Battles

Please take a comfortable posture...Our Gospel lesson for today comes from Matthew, where Jesus eats with tax collectors and sinners and meets the needs of very different people...

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax-collection station, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him. And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with Jesus and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" But when he heard this, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous but sinners.

While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader came in and knelt before him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live." And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples. Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from a flow of blood for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, for she was saying to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well." Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that moment. When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, he said, "Go away, for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. And the report of this spread through all of that district.

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

"Jesus Interrupted"

Invitation to Generosity

Martha Battles

Now is the time for our ministry of giving and sharing...

As we prepare our gifts this day, we pause to remember that God meets us not only in our plans, but also the interruptions, because sometimes those disruptions reveal to us what truly matters. May the gifts we bring today, our resources, our time, and our talents, be ways of saying yes to spirit's work unfolding among us. As we give, we join God in creating spaces of justice, healing, and hope. Let us now offer our gifts in gratitude to God...

* Doxology 785

SCHUMANN

**We give you but your own, whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is yours alone, we give it gratefully.**

* Prayer of Dedication (*unison*)

Martha Battles

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

Holy One, receive these gifts and the diverse blend of different hearts through which they come. Use what we have offered to bring comfort where there is pain and hope where all seems lost. Transform us and these gifts into instruments of compassion, care, and restorative justice. Bless this offering, so that it may serve Your love in the world. Amen.

**SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION
THE MYSTIC SUPPER**

*At Holy Covenant UCC, all are welcome to Christ's Table.
Elements are grape juice and bread, wafers, or gluten free options*

Invitation

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

One: We come to this table with calendars full and interrupted plans.

Many: Yet here we are invited to stop, to be still, and to be present.

One: We come distracted, pulled in different directions, with more than we can hold.

Many: Yet here we are invited to set it down and simply receive.

One: We come having walked past people and missed moments that needed our attention.

Many: Yet here grace meets us anyway and sends us back out to try again.

One: We come to the table of Christ, who was never too busy or too distracted to be present and receive those in need.

Many: So we lift our hearts, we give our thanks, and we come.

Throughout the gospels, Jesus seemed to go where he was needed. He seemed to do what needed to be done. When he was interrupted at a wedding because the wine ran out, he turned scarcity into abundance. When he was interrupted by a blind beggar named Bartimaeus who kept shouting even after the crowds told him to be quiet, Jesus stopped and asked him what he needed. When he was interrupted by ten lepers on the road, he healed every one of them. When he was interrupted by children, whom his disciples tried to push away, he pulled them close and said the kin-dom belongs to such as these.

In every case and with every person he stopped. He was present to those who had been overlooked, silenced, or pushed aside. And in his presence to them they were healed, loved, restored, and found themselves suddenly and completely seen.

This meal is a remembrance of Jesus, and his ways in this world. The one who refused to let selfishness override compassion, and who said no to the idea that there were only some people who deserved life and attention. To him all were worth of dignity, equality, and God's love. To him all were welcome to the table. And it is this invitation we extend, and it is the quality of his presence we hope to take when we leave this place and return to the world.

So, whoever you are, wherever you are on your faith journey, you are not an interruption. You are the reason this table even exists. So come, for there is room and always has been room for you.

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, gave thanks for it, blessed it and broke it, and said: *"This is my body, given for you. Whenever you eat it, remember me."*

[Let this broken bread remind you that even what is broken can feed the world.]

In the same way, after supper, Jesus took the cup. And after giving thanks, he blessed it, poured it, and 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 overflowing cup remind you that love always finds a way.]

Sharing of the Elements

Music during Communion

FOR EVERYONE BORN

**For young and for old, a place at the table,
A voice to be heard, a part in the song,
The hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled,
For bodies diverse, a church re-designed. (R)**

Refrain: And God will delight when we are creators of justice and joy,
Compassion and peace:
Yes, God will delight when we are creators of justice,
Justice and joy!

For bodies diverse, a place at the table,
All manner of speech and movement and minds;
Enabled to lead and teach us new language,
For young and for old, the right to belong. *(R)*

For just and unjust, a place at the table,
A chance to repent, reform and rebuild,
Protecting the wronged, without shame or pressure,
For just and unjust, God's vision fulfilled. *(R)*

Prayer of Thanksgiving *(unison)*

Interrupted Christ, you have fed us at this table and reminded us of the ways we are loved. Having received this meal, may we be just as interruptible as Jesus: open to the stranger, attentive to the overlooked, and willing to stop when everything in us wants to keep moving. May the Christ within us be as restless with our mercy and as stubborn with our love. Help us to build the kin-dom of God not just in holy moments, but also divine disruptions. Amen.

* Hymn "A Place at the Table" FOR EVERYONE BORN
For everyone born, a place at the table,
To live without fear, and simply to be,
To work, to speak out, to witness and worship,
For everyone born, the right to be free. *(R)*

Refrain: And God will delight when we are creators of justice and joy,
Compassion and peace:
Yes, God will delight when we are creators of justice,
Justice and joy!

* Benediction Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

* Benediction Response NEW DIMENSIONS
God of rainbow, fiery pillar,
Leading where the eagle's soar,
We your people, ours the journey
Now and ever, now and ever, now and evermore.

Postlude

“I’m Goin’ a Sing When the Spirit Says Sing”

arr. C. Webb

*Songs in this service are used by permission.
CCLI License #11439355; CSPL164710*

Parts of the liturgy were written by written by Rev. Christopher Czarnecki and the 2026 graduates slide show was prepared by Laura Hankins.

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.

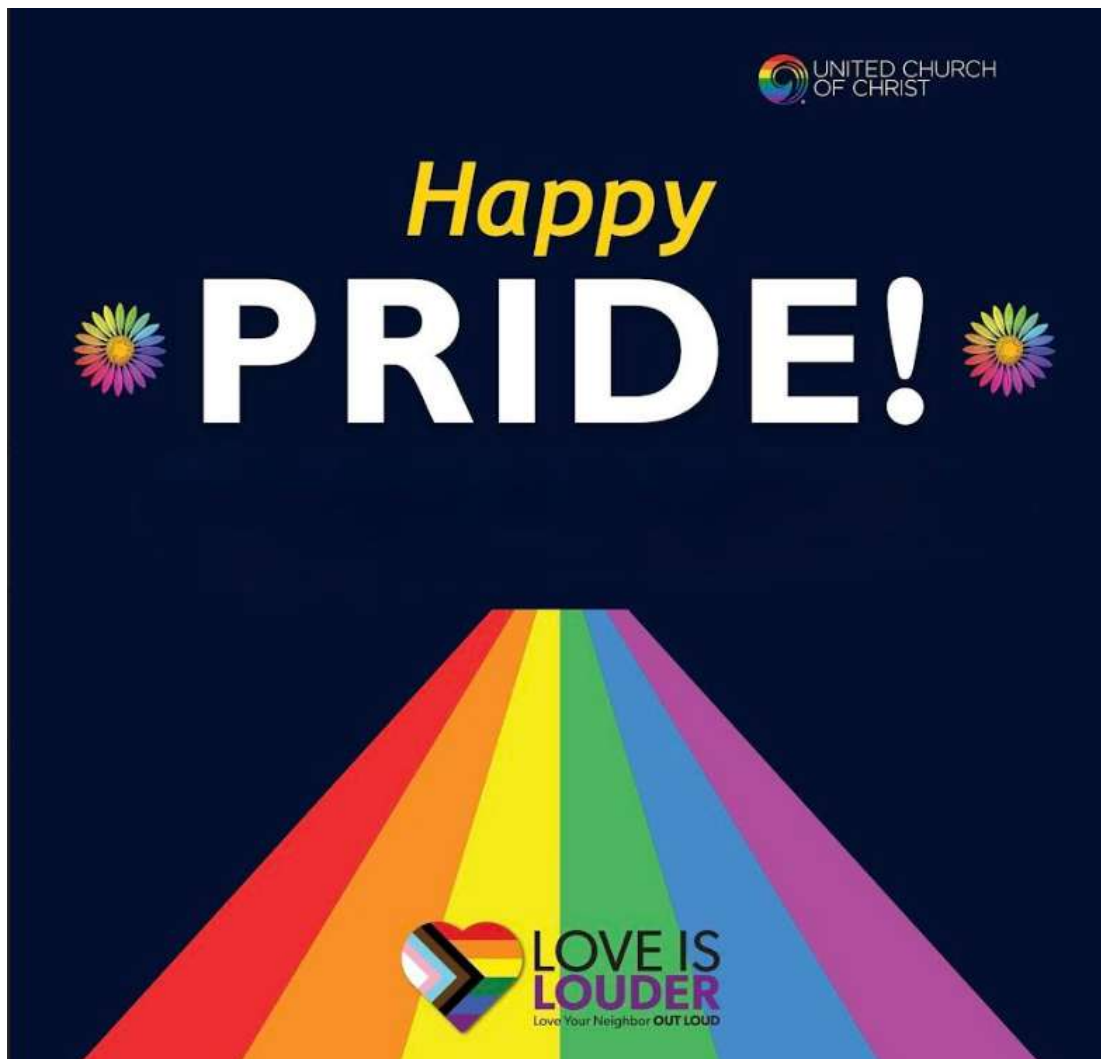
WE PROVIDE OUR EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME WITH HELP FROM:

D Evans, Brian Hankins, Laura Hankins

Ushers: Dominic Ciciollo, Dave Shimberg, Shakti Subramanian

Greeters:

Refreshments: Terry & Jean Raley-Dennis



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.

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

- Jun 13: All Church Workday 9:00am-1:00pm
- Jun 14: Juneteenth, Sandwich Build following Worship
- Jun 14: Huntersville Pride 1:00-6:00pm
- Jun 18: Life Line Screening HCUCC 9:00am-5:00pm
- Jun 18-20: SOC Annual Gathering, Greensboro
- Jun 21: "Ask the UCC Pastors" special Worship time

COMING SOON SIGN UP GENIUS SIMPLIFIED!

Our SignUpGenius pages will be under construction starting this week. For now, they will look different, but the existing links will still work, and all our existing signups are still there. Expect more information in the weeks to follow!

SOJOURNERS CLASS - ENGAGING ADULT EDUCATION

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

Join us Sunday mornings in the Conference Room or online via Zoom, 9:45am Meeting ID: 895 6175 8099 Passcode: 986788

ALL CHURCH WORKDAY, SAT. JUNE 13 | 9:00AM-1:00PM

We're at it again! Many hands make for light work! Come help us with #CleaningGodsHouse. Can't make this event? See the task board outside of the office. Sign up for something or sign off that you've completed a task. Both inside and outside chores are available. Most tools and supplies are already on hand. We are grateful for all your helping hands!

HUNTERSVILLE PRIDE FESTIVAL, SUN. JUNE 14 | 1:00PM-6:00PM

Veterans Park, 201 Huntersville-Concord Road, Huntersville

We're hosting a booth at the Huntersville Pride Festival – and we'd love your help! Come represent our church, share some love, and invite folks into our community. It's going to be a joyful day.

Volunteers needed to greet people to our booth. Questions? Contact Laura Hankins or Joy Decker for more information.

signupgenius.com/go/10C044CA4AE22A3F8C16-64351198-huntersville#/

Please Remember in Prayer Members

Mel Andersen, Kathy Habel, Jim & Faye Humphrey, Melissa Noll, Lee Parrish, Shakti Subramanian, Anita Taylor, Fan Watson, Laurence Winston, Alice & Sally Phelan-Young

Friends & Family Members

Family and friends in the recent death of Juan Sullivan (*Martha Bomely*)
Amanda (Linda Burby), Laura Allison, Annette Borrelli, 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*), 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.

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki, MDiv, MBA, Senior Pastor
RevChris@holycovenantucc.org, 314-402-8167

Jon Weddell, MDiv, MSW, Minister of Music

Dawn Simmons, BSBF, 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