



HOLY COVENANT

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

-be the Church, everywhere



Photo by Artem Maltsev

“Questions tune the heart toward the possibility of truth.”
— Pádraig Ó Tuama

“The soul speaks in questions
long before it speaks in answers.”
— Megan Watterson

“What keeps us alive are the questions for which
we have no answers.”
— Rubem Alves

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
FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST ~ FATHER'S DAY (PARENT'S DAY)

June 21, 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 Thou My Vision" arr. V. Labenske
Dawn Robinson, piano

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 "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 Pam Shimberg
*Please take a comfortable posture that supports your worshiping, reading, and
singing...*

One: Life can be a mystery, yet God meets us in our seeking.

Many: **We come with a sense of openness, trusting that our questions are
welcome.**

One: God is found in the questions, when we dare to wonder and wrestle.

Many: **We listen for the whispers of wisdom that rise through exploration.**

One: Insights come from searching when we look beneath the surface of
things.

Many: **We lean into the guidance Spirit who invites us to go deeper.**

One: Understanding can come as knowledge and faith are intertwined.

Many: **We celebrate the diversity of thoughts, beliefs, and opinions.**

One: And in our journey, it is okay to seek and to search.

Many: **Holy One, meet us here as we are, and make us ready to receive a
sure and sacred truth.**

* Hymn

GOD OF GREAT AND GOD OF SMALL

God of great and God of small, God of one and God of all,
God of weak and God of strong, God to whom all things belong,

Refrain: Alleluia, Alleluia, praise be to your name.

God of land and sky and sea, God of life and destiny,
God of never-ending power, yet beside me every hour, (R)

God of silence, God of sound, God by whom the lost are found,
God of day and darkest night, God whose love turns wrong to right, (R)

God of heaven and God of earth, God of death and God of birth,
God of now and days before, God who reigns forevermore, (R)

Parent's Day Litany

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Today we celebrate parents and those who have fathered us, not only biologically, but through their presence, by showing up, and through their love. As we think about the many ways parenting has looked in our lives, we make space now for all of it: the tender memories, the complicated relationships, the cherished moments, and the hard realities we live with.

There is the parent who taught us to ride a bike, hook a worm, took us to our first baseball game, who showed up to every recital and every graduation. That parent whose presence said everything.

Many: May you know how much you are loved.

There is the parent who raised us alone, who worked double shifts and missed bedtimes stories, not because they wanted to but so they could house us, feed us, and give us a better life than they had known.

Many: May you know how much you are loved.

There is the parent who fathered us not by birth but by choice. The stepparent who stepped up, the uncle or aunt who stepped in, the neighbor whose home was ours, the coach who believed in us when no one else did.

Many: May you know how much you are loved.

There is the parent who struggled with addiction, with anger, with their own unhealed wounds. The parent whose love was imperfect, whose absence or harm we are still learning to hold and get through.

Many: May you know how much you are loved.

There is the parent who never got to hold the child they longed for or who have lost a child to death. For those parents grieving today, for the child you lost or the experience to parent the child you never had.

Many: May you know how much you are loved.

There is the parent who is doing their best right now. Those exhausted, feeling scattered, who are wondering or questioning if they are failing to be the parent they are supposed to be. Keep showing up and...

Many: May you know how much you are loved.

There is the parent who fathered movements, communities, and causes. Those parenting animals with fur and whiskers. Those protecting and providing not just for their own children but for the children of the world.

Many: May you know how much you are loved.

God, we thank you for the gift of fathering in all its forms. For all the faces on these tables; those beloved, remembered, and missed. For the many ways parenting looks, for the love shown to us, and for the ways God's presence was felt, it is this we all hope to know.

Many: Amen.

Song "Rain Down" by Jaime Cortez

Rain down, rain down, rain down your love on your people.

Rain down, rain down, rain down your love, God of life.

Stories for All People

Ed Vickery

Prayer for Illumination (*sung*)

OPEN OUR EYES

Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus,

To reach out and touch you and say that we love you.

Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen.

Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus.

Our modern lesson for today comes from Otis Moss II, who is an American pastor, theologian, speaker, author, and activist. He played a significant role in the Civil Rights Movement, was close friend of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and is widely known for his dynamic preaching. He says...

“What is Strange and disconcerting about Jesus is the fact that he rarely makes demands. The style of teaching he engages in is not rote on memorization or indoctrination but Socratic, propositional and inductive. The listener is invited to explore and come to a conclusion. It is the desire of Christ for his audience to reach a conclusion and not be told what to think. Stories, sayings, reversals, parables and other forms of teaching used by Jesus are not good teaching tools for people who seek simplistic answers. Jesus teaches but requires more of a listener. We are invited to join the journey, wrestle with our assumptions, confront our spiritual bigotry and struggle with the humbling mystery and profound profundity of God. This is hard faith, especially for the modern reader. We want the speaker to tell us what to think. We want our stories tidy, without complication, and we do not want questions designed to coerce us beyond easy answers. This is the life and ministry of Jesus. He was a walking mobile university, a theological gadfly, a spiritual teacher and Savior who cannot be contained by tradition, conformity or assimilation. Jesus is loose in the world quietly upending all assumptions, ideas and concepts we hold true.”

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

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

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

Our scripture lesson for today comes from the letter of James 1:2-6a, where the writer speaks about praying for wisdom and faith...

My brothers and sisters, think of the various tests you encounter as occasions for joy. After all, you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. Let this endurance complete its work so that you may be fully mature, complete, and lacking in nothing. But anyone who needs wisdom should ask God, whose very nature is to give to everyone without a second thought, without keeping score. Wisdom will certainly be given to those who ask. Whoever asks shouldn't hesitate.

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.

Introduction of the Panel

Open Questions and Answers with the Congregation

Invitation to Generosity

Pam Shimberg

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

In gratitude for God's abundance, we now prepare to share our gifts, trusting that even smallest of offerings can be used for God's greater purpose. May we know that all our gifts are taking part om God's work of healing people, seeking justice, and providing spaces of compassion in this community and beyond. Let our giving be a sign of our hope, our trust, and our commitment to love.

* 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*)

Pam Shimberg

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

Holy One, bless these many gifts and all who gave them. Use what we have offered to nurture your work of justice, to strengthen this church, and to serve the world in your love. May our lives, like these gifts, be offered freely and used faithfully for your purposes. Amen.

* Hymn 391

**"In the Midst of New Dimensions"
(vv. 1-3)**

J. Rush

**In the midst of new dimensions, in the face of changing ways,
Who will lead the pilgrim peoples, wandering in their separate ways?**

***Refrain:* 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.**

**Through the flood of starving people, warring factions and despair,
Who will lift the olive branches? Who will light the flame of care? (R)**

**As we stand a world divided by our own self-seeking schemes,
Grant that we, your global village might envision wider dreams. (R)**

* 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

"What a Friend We Have in Jesus"

arr. J. Vogt

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Parts of the liturgy were written by 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

Ushers: Dave Shimberg, Shakti Subramanian

Greeters:

Refreshments: Bold & Beautiful Covenant Group

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 25: United Church of Christ's 69th Anniversary
- Jun 28: Open and Affirming Sunday,
Guest Preacher Rev. Barbara Thomas,
Consistory 12:30pm
- Jul 03: Office Closed in Observance of Independence Day
- Jul 12: Sandwich Build after worship
- Jul 19: Family Games after worship

A SIMPLER WAY TO SERVE!

Starting June 12, all Sunday worship volunteer roles – refreshments, usher/greeter, reader, and more – are now in one convenient sign-up. No more hunting through separate lists! To sign up, visit our website

www.holycovenantucc.org and click **Volunteer | SignUpGenius**

Already signed up? You're all set – your existing commitments have been transferred automatically. We welcome everyone to share their gifts and serve alongside us!

Join our Ministry. Ushers and Greeters are among the first people newcomers and members meet when attending Services. We provide the first impression and welcome that, hopefully, make everyone feel welcome and special here at Holy Covenant. Of course, we also help with offerings and the flow of Communion. Select one or two Sundays each month, or every other month to help welcome people and make them feel at home. <https://tinyurl.com/HCUCCSundays>

SOJOURNERS CLASS - ENGAGING ADULT EDUCATION

All are welcome and no preparation is required.

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

CHARLOTTE PRIDE INTERFAITH CELEBRATION, Aug. 9 | 4:00pm

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 1900 The Plaza, Charlotte, NC

This service brings together the LGBTQIA+ community and different faith groups to reflect, celebrate, and build relations. Additionally, this celebration initiates Pride Week in Charlotte, culminating in the festival and parade the following weekend. There will be an after-service social and refreshments. See the Loop newsletter for more details.

HCUCC BANNED BOOK LIBRARY

This month, the HCUCC Banned Book Library will celebrate Pride Month by focusing on books centered on LGBTQ+ stories and authors. Stop by the library table to see the books in our collection by and about the LGBTQ+ community. If there is a specific book you think should be added to the library to celebrate Pride month, please let Kim Tyler know. Check out our regular news article updates in the Loop. This week, you'll find a book review by our own Kevin Edwards-Knight.

Please Remember in Prayer Members

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

Friends & Family Members

Amanda (Linda Burby), Laura Allison, Farug Brown Bey (Jeffery Edwards-Knight), 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), Geraldine Mobley (Jeffery Edwards-Knight), Tom, Beth and Ariel Rudolph (Benjamin Rudolph), Brenchia Thomas, Steve Thomas (Jeffery Edwards-Knight) 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. 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, MDiv, MSW, Minister of Music

Dawn Simmons, BSBF, Executive Assistant

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