



HOLY COVENANT

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

-be the Church, everywhere



*Unsplash Photo by Photo by Leopold Layer, 1872.
Manna falls from heaven in the wilderness. Used with permission by the
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_Mana_v_pu%C5%A1%C4%8Davi.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leopold_Layer_-_Mana_v_pu%C5%A1%C4%8Davi.jpg)*

“Faith is not being sure where you’re going
but going anyway.”
— Frederick Buechner

“There are years that ask questions
and years that answer.”
— Zora Neale Hurston

“The present moment is filled with joy and happiness.
If you are attentive, you will see it.”
— Thích Nhất Hạnh

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
JUST PEACE SUNDAY

September 20, 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 "Beautiful Savior" 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 "Come Build a Church" Ken Medema
Come build a church with soul and spirit,
Come build a church of flesh and bone.
We need no tower rising skyward; no house of wood or glass or stone.

Come build a church with human frailty,
Come build a church of flesh and blood.
Jesus shall be its sure foundation. It shall be built by the hand of God.

*** Call to the Heart**

Patrick Washburn

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

One: What is it that is feeding you these days?

Many: A good cup of coffee, the words of wise sages, mindfulness walks, people who remind us we are not alone.

One: What is it that is touching your soul?

Many: Music that causes us to dance, laughter that catches us by surprise, quiet moments when everything finally slows down.

One: What is it that is feeding your faith?

Many: The ability to ask questions, deconstruction, new theologies, the idea of God's ever-expanding and uncontrollable love.

One: What is it that needs justice in our world?

Many: Healthcare, homelessness, living wages, immigration, islamophobia, and reparations for racial injustice.

One: What is it that you need to release or let go of?

Many: Fear of neighbors, resentments we hold, unachievable expectations, whatever keeps us from receiving new life before us.

One: Whatever feeds us and wherever we find ourselves on this journey...

Many: Let us open our hearts to God. Let us open our hearts to one another. And now let us worship together.

*** Hymn 18**

"Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer"

CWM RHONDDA

Guide Me, O my great Redeemer, pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but you are mighty; hold me with your powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more,
Feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain, where the healing waters flow.
Let the fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through.
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer, ever be my strength and shield,
Ever be my strength and shield.

When I reach the River Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside.
Death of death and hell's destruction, land me safe on heaven's side.
Songs of praises, songs of praises, I will ever sing to you,
I will ever sing to you.

Stewardship Moment

Alix Felsing, Stewardship Chair

Witness Moment - Gregg Walker, Anne Hayes

Litany: Following the Ways of Jesus (*responsive*) Terrence Hayes
We gather now for a time of prayer, holding the concerns and joys of our hearts, remembering the ways Jesus calls us not only to pray for others, but to be a prayer for others too. Join me in our responsive litany...

One: Let us remember that Jesus welcomed children into God's kin-dom.

Many: For children and their future, we pray.

One: Jesus touched those considered untouchable and those pushed to the margins.

Many: For dignity and belonging, we pray.

One: Jesus fed hungry crowds and that there could be enough when we share.

Many: For those who hunger, we pray.

One: Jesus sat at tables with people others judged, rejected, and excluded.

Many: For deeper and wider welcome, we pray.

One: Jesus stood with a woman facing judgment and condemnation.

Many: For mercy and compassion, we pray.

One: Jesus challenged religious and political powers when their laws and systems caused harm.

Many: For courage and justice, we pray.

One: Jesus crossed boundaries of religion, ethnicity, gender, and social status.

Many: For an end to divisions and hate, we pray.

One: Jesus blessed the peacemakers and told his followers to love their enemies.

Many: For peace and harmony, we pray.

One: Jesus wept alongside those who were grieving and hurting.

Many: For all who are bearing sorrows, loss, and pain, we pray.

One: Jesus withdrew from the crowds to pray, rest, and listen for the movement of God.

Many: For wisdom and renewal, we pray.

One: Jesus showed us how love could bring life, liberation, and wholeness for all.

Many: May the Christ in him be in us. Amen.

Prayer for Illumination (*sung*)

IN YOUR WORD

Order my steps in your word dear Lord

Lead me, guide me, everyday.

Send your anointing, God, I pray

Order my steps in your word.

Please, order my steps in your word.

Modern Lesson

Sally McLester

Our modern lesson for today comes from Brandan Robertson, who is an author, activist, and public theologian working at the intersections of spirituality, sexuality, and social renewal. The quote comes from his essay “On the Threshold of Tomorrow”...

We are entering a truly liminal space where, for a multitude of reasons, many are leaving the ways they’ve historically worshipped and entering into uncharted territory. On one hand, this is an exciting time in religious history, as we participate in radical and fundamental reforms of our institutions. On the other hand, this process can cause great anxiety for those of us who have devoted our lives to teaching, practicing, and guiding others in a particular spiritual or religious tradition... What are we to do at such a threshold moment?...In moments of transition, we are simply to *be*. We are to pause and acknowledge that a transition is taking place. Instead of seeking to abruptly pass through a threshold, we are to tarry...A new reality is emerging, but we cannot see beyond the threshold. All we know is that we exist in this moment, where everything is in transition. We may experience a new way of being, but we cannot yet sense what it will look like.

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

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

Our Hebrew Scripture for today comes from Exodus 16:2-15, where the Israelites grow hungry in the wilderness and complain to Moses and Aaron...

The whole Israelite community complained against Moses and Aaron in the desert. The Israelites said to them, “Oh, how we wish that the Lord had just put us to death while we were still in the land of Egypt. There we could sit by the pots cooking meat and eat our fill of bread. Instead, you’ve brought us out into this desert to starve this whole assembly to death.”

Then the Lord said to Moses, “I’m going to make bread rain down from the sky for you. The people will go out each day and gather just enough for that day. In this way, I’ll test them to see whether or not they follow my Instruction. On the sixth day, when they measure out what they have collected, it will be twice as much as they collected on other days.” So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, “This evening you will know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt. And in the morning you will see the Lord’s glorious presence, because your complaints against the Lord have been heard. Who are we? Why blame us?” Moses continued, “The Lord will give you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning because the Lord heard the complaints you made against him. Who are we? Your complaints aren’t against us but against the Lord.”

Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole Israelite community, ‘Come near to the Lord, because he’s heard your complaints.’” As Aaron spoke to the whole Israelite community, they turned to look toward the desert, and just then the glorious presence of the Lord appeared in the cloud.

The Lord spoke to Moses, “I’ve heard the complaints of the Israelites. Tell them, ‘At twilight you will eat meat. And in the morning you will have your fill of bread. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God.’”

In the evening a flock of quail flew down and covered the camp. And in the morning there was a layer of dew all around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the desert surface were thin flakes, as thin as frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, “What is it?” They didn’t know what it was.

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.

Invitation to Generosity

Patrick Washburn

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

In the wilderness, manna appeared. This manna came from God and was enough to meet the needs of the people. We, too, have received gifts that have sustained us, sometimes from places we never expected. As we give today, may our generosity become manna for someone else, providing hope, welcome, love, and right nourishment for the journey to where God is leading us all.

* Doxology

I HEAR ANGELS

“Holy, holy, God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come”**All creation is bringing glory to the Lamb who sits upon the throne.*** Prayer of Dedication (*unison*)

Patrick Washburn

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

God of all good things, we give thanks for the manna that continues to sustain our lives and our community. Bless these gifts and use them to meet real needs, strengthen our ministries, and help create a world where everyone has enough. May what we offer today become some new source of love, justice, and hope for others. Amen.

* Hymn 307

“Glorious Things of You Are Spoken”

AUSTRIAN HYMN

**Glorious things of you are spoken, Zion, city of our God;
One whose word cannot be broken formed you for a blessed abode.
On the Rock of Ages founded, what can shake your sure repose?
With salvation's walls surrounded, you may smile at all your foes.**

**See! the streams of living waters, springing from eternal Love,
Well supply your sons and daughters, and all fear of want remove.
Who can faint, while such a river ever will their thirst assuage:
Grace which, like our God, the Giver, never fails from age to age?**

**‘Round each habitation hovering, see the cloud and fire appear
For a glory and a covering, showing that their God is near!
Thus deriving from their banner light by night and shade by day,
Safe they feed upon the manna which God gives them when they pray.**

**Savior, if of Zion's city we through grace a part may claim,
Let the world deride or pity, we will glory in your name.
Fading is all worldly pleasure, all earth's boasted pomp and show;
Solid joys and lasting treasures, none, but Zion's children know.**

* Benediction

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

* Benediction Response "Song of Hope"

ARGENTINA

May the God of hope go with us every day,
Filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.
May the God of justice speed us on our way,
Bringing light and hope to every land and race.

Praying, let us work for peace; singing, share our joy with all;
Working for a world that's new, faithful when we hear Christ's call.

Postlude "Give Me That Old Time Religion" arr. H. S. Livingston

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The liturgy for today's service was 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: Yvette Wynn
Refreshments: Tina Dickens

A SIMPLER WAY TO SERVE!

All Sunday worship volunteer roles — refreshments, usher/greeter, reader, and more — are now in one convenient sign-up. No more hunting through separate lists! Join our ministries: <https://tinyurl.com/HCUCCSundays>

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.

EVERY VOICE MATTERS: NEW HEARING ASSISTANCE DEVICES AVAILABLE

See the ushers for a wireless transmitter and your personal ear buds.

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

- Sep. 26: RJ&E Civil Rights Trail Outing, Davidson College Sculpture & Museum.
- Sep. 27 Consistory
- Oct. 4 & 11: New Member/Inquire Classes
- Oct. 25: Welcome Sunday Installation of New Members

MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE & JOIN THE CHOIR

Advent is coming—let's fill our sanctuary with hope, peace, joy, and love. No audition. All voice parts are welcome. Rehearsals Sundays starting today after worship.

SEPTEMBER IS STEWARDSHIP MONTH

How will you support God's work in the world?

Our Stewardship Moments are a glimpse into the many reasons Holy Covenant's church community is a special place. We care for each other in heartbreak, celebrate our joys, and walk each other home. Our ministries are a broad array of social, racial and environmental justice caring for people who need housing and food. "Journeys: Rooted in Faith, Growing in Hope," is our theme for this year's Stewardship Campaign, and we have raised slightly more than half of last year's total pledges so far. We appreciate your time and talents, and we ask you to prayerfully consider increasing your total financial contribution. We'll accept pledges and gifts any time, of course, and you can adjust them if your circumstances change. **Making**



your pledge by Sept. 30 helps us shape the vision for ministry in 2027. To pledge, scan this QR code or go to <https://holycovenantucc.org/giving/> .

RJE OFFERS DAVIDSON FIELD TRIP, SAT. SEP. 26, 2026

Come see the exquisite exhibit "With These Hands"; a memorial sculpture to the enslaved and exploited, and the Homeless Jesus Sculpture, Davidson College. Register at <https://forms.gle/73ax9yFmiDF4HhXm7> or use the QR Code. Questions? Contact us at 704-578-2677 or hooperclt@aol.com



NEW MEMBER/INQUIRER CLASSES IN OCTOBER

If you are interested in becoming a member at Holy Covenant or would like to explore what becoming a member means, mark your calendar for some upcoming dates in 2026. We will hold new member classes on Oct. 4 & 11 in the conference room, with a new member installation on Oct. 25th. If you are interested in becoming a new member or have questions, please reach out to Pastor Chris, RevChris@holycovenantucc.org or contact the church office, office@holycovenantucc.org.

WELCOME BACK TO SUNDAY SCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S CHURCH!

All school age children are invited to remain in worship until the Stories for All People. After that, we will have prayer and lesson in the Children's Chapel. Following our lesson, we'll work on craft projects or enjoy outdoor time. Please register your child(ren) for Faith Formation so we'll have your current contact information and anything else we need to know.

Second Sundays for Youth. Beginning on October 11th, teens and young adults will gather in the youth room for food and fellowship. We'll be planning social justice and mission projects for the months ahead. Save the dates January 15-18th for the WNCA Winter Youth Retreat at Blowing Rock Conference Center. More information is coming soon. <https://brccenter.org/winter-youth-retreat-2/>

SOJOURNERS CLASS - ADULT EDUCATION, SUNDAYS | 9:45 AM

Everyone is welcome to join us for stimulating discussion and no preparation is required. Everyone is welcome and no preparation is required. Join us at 9:45am in the Conference Room or via Zoom.

NEIGHBORS IN NEED SPECIAL OFFERING - OCTOBER 4

Every year the United Church of Christ encourages its churches to give to five key offerings. Churches that contribute to each of these offerings are recognized annually as being a ["5 for 5" church](#). On October 4, which is World Communion Sunday, we'll be taking a collection for the [Neighbors in Need Offering](#). One-

third of the offering is allocated to the Council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM), which provides ministry and advocacy support for American Indian communities. The remaining two-thirds support a variety of UCC justice ministries, including advocacy, direct service projects, and grants for local churches and organizations engaged in justice work. A donation of any amount to this special offering helps keep us a “5 for 5” church. To make a donation to Neighbors in Need please use the link on our donation page or write “Neighbors in Need” on the front of your check or envelope.

**Please Remember in Prayer
Members**

Faye Humphrey and family in the recent death of her husband,
the Reverend James "Jim" Humphrey

Mel Andersen, Kathy Habel, Anita Taylor, Alice & Sally Phelan-Young

Friends & Family Members

Farug Brown Bey (Jeffery Edwards-Knight), Joan Bowling (Kristen Fuchs), Randy & Tina Buie (Diane Neese), Kim Chamberlain (Kevin Decker), Cecelia Ciciollo (Dom Ciciollo), April Dawson, Mario Gaetani and family (Kristen Fuchs), Ann Garret (Holly Middleton & Dawn Schmitz), Ivory Garvin and family (Von McQueen-Simmons), Samuel Head (Benjamin Rudolph), Henry Hildebrand (Bill & Connie Hildebrand), Charlie Holt (Autumn Holt), Dean Horning (Melissa Noll), Judson Hulsey (Kristen Fuchs), Janet & Lon Kominski (Dawn Simmons), Renee Lewis (Martha Battles), Richard Lease (Barb Schneller), Matty McKinnon (Joy Decker), Geraldine Mobley (Jeffery Edwards-Knight), Tom, Beth and Ariel Rudolph (Benjamin Rudolph), Branchia Thomas, Steve Thomas (Jeffery Edwards-Knight) Dave & Jennifer Ward (Jay & Cathy Whitley), Scott Whitley (Jay Whitley)

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki, MDiv, MBA, Senior Pastor

RevChris@holycovenantucc.org

Jon Weddell, MDiv, MSW, Minister of Music

Dawn Simmons, BSBF, Executive Assistant

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