



HOLY COVENANT

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

-be the Church, everywhere



Unsplash Photo by Daniel Lloyd Blunk-Fernández

“Teach us love, compassion, and honor that we
may heal the earth and heal each other.”
— Ojibwa prayer

“There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you. A bird does not
sing because it has the answer. It sings because it has a song.”
— Geronimo The Apache

“All the flowers of all the tomorrows
are in the seeds of today.”
— Native American Proverb”

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
AMERICAN INDIAN MINISTRIES SUNDAY

September 27, 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 “Holy God We Praise Your Name” by Grossner Gott
 Sally Duffy, organ

Welcome and Announcements Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Today is American Indian Ministries Sunday in the United Church of Christ, a day when we intentionally lift up the lives, faith, witness, and leadership of Indigenous peoples, including Native communities within our own denomination. It is also an opportunity for us to remember with honesty the complicated history between the church and Indigenous peoples, to acknowledge the harm and injustice that have occurred, and to listen with humility to Indigenous voices and experiences. As we worship on this day, may we listen, learn, and honor the gifts and wisdom that Indigenous peoples bring to the life of the church.

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: And also with you.

Chiming of the Hour

Land Acknowledgement Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

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

Jay Whitley

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

One: Come, let us worship the Creator with hearts open to all peoples...

Many: where pride and prejudice once dwelt.

One: Let us worship Creator with minds open to the wisdom of Native peoples...

Many: where listening and respect once had no place.

One: Let us honor the One who freely gives by showing honor...

Many: to those who were once and still remain oppressed.

One: Let us worship the God of diversity...

Many: who made the world in colors, in seasons, in endless variety; who created the diversity of the earth's peoples in God's image.

One: We were created to honor one another and in so doing we honor the Creator.

Many: Let us honor God today by reflecting in our worship and in life God's image - love.

* Hymn 3

"Many and Great, O God, Are Your Works"

LACQUIPARLE

"Wakantanka Taku Nitawa"

Joseph R. Renville's mother was Dakota and his father, French. An explorer, fur trader, and Congregational minister, Renville helped found the Lac qui Parle Mission in Minnesota in 1835. This song, which is also known as the "Dakota Hymn," was sung by thirty-eight Dakota prisoners of war as they were led to execution at Mankato, Minnesota, on December 26, 1862. This song was first published in the Dakota Indian Hymnal (1916).

**Many and Great, O God, are your works, Maker of earth and sky;
Your hands have set the heavens with stars,
Your fingers spread the mountains and plains.
Lo, at your word the waters were formed; deep seas obey your voice.**

**Grant unto us communion with you, O star abiding One;
Come unto us and dwell with us:
With you are found the gifts of life.
Bless us with life that has no end, eternal life with you.**

Stewardship Moment

Alix Felsing, Stewardship Chair

Witness Moment - Mel & Christine Andersen, Angela Massoud

Stories for All People

Ed Vickery

Poem

“Once the World Was Perfect”

by Joy Harjo

Phyllis Johnson

Once the world was perfect, and we were happy in that world.
Then we took it for granted.
Discontent began a small rumble in the earthly mind.
Then Doubt pushed through with its spiked head.
And once Doubt ruptured the web,
All manner of demon thoughts
Jumped through—
We destroyed the world we had been given
For inspiration, for life—
Each stone of jealousy, each stone
Of fear, greed, envy, and hatred, put out the light.
No one was without a stone in his or her hand.
There we were,
Right back where we had started.
We were bumping into each other
In the dark.
And now we had no place to live, since we didn't know
How to live with each other.
Then one of the stumbling ones took pity on another
And shared a blanket.
A spark of kindness made a light.
The light made an opening in the darkness.
Everyone worked together to make a ladder.
A Wind Clan person climbed out first into the next world,
And then the other clans, the children of those clans, their children,
And their children, all the way through time—
To now, into this morning light to you.

Our Gospel Lesson for today comes from Matthew 21:23-32, where Jesus's authority is questioned and he tells the parable of the two sons asked to work in vineyard. This translation was put together by Kevin Battles, who is of Choctaw heritage.

And when it was around the exceedingly holy house, the ones who decree over it flourished and those men who are the group of chief leaders entered, and then: 'By what manner and command do you do this thing? And what hidden source gave it to you?' Saying this, they questioned him. And Jesus questioned them, and then: 'It is a fact that one heavenly matter I will ask of you; and because of you all declaring it, by what power you command this thing and what hidden source gave it to you, I will declare to you all,' saying this, he spoke exactly to them. The baptism that John did, from what source was this thing? Was it said to be from Heaven, or from among men? And reasoning this, they debated within their group, and then: 'If we say, 'It is from Heaven,' for what reason did you not believe him?' saying this, they spoke. And, 'If we say it by thinking, "Whether it be from among men," it is a fact that we are terrified of those people; for it is a fact that John is an exceedingly great prophet, all of them truly believe it,' saying this, they spoke. So, they answered Jesus, and then: 'It is a fact that we do not know,' saying this, they spoke to him. And that one (Jesus): 'I also, by what power you command this thing and what hidden source gave it to you, I will not tell you all,' saying this, he spoke to them. As for you all, how does it seem to you? A certain man had two sons; and he approached the first one, and then: 'Oh son, this very day inside the place of the grapevines you shall labor,' saying this, he spoke to him. And he answered him, and then: 'It is a fact that I refuse,' saying this, he spoke to him. But he, later on, having a change of heart, and then he went. And he approached the second one, and then he spoke to him in that exact same way. And that one answered him, and then: 'Yes, sir, I shall go,' saying this, he spoke to him; but his going did not happen." Which of the two did the father's will? They said to him, 'The first.' Jesus said to them, 'Truly I tell you, the tax- gatherers and the prostitutes are going into the sky-country of God ahead of you.' John, who came to you in truth showing the way to heaven, you did not believe; but when you saw him bearing witness, John came to you in truth.

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.

“Once We Know”

Invitation to Generosity

Dawn Robinson

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

The Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM) is the voice for American Indian people in the UCC. CAIM provides Christian ministry and witness to American Indians and to the wider church. Justice issues that affect American Indian life are communicated to the whole UCC by CAIM.

Historically, the forebears of the UCC established churches and worked with Lakota, Dakota, Nakota, Mandan, Hidatsa, Arickara, and Hocak in North and South Dakota, Wisconsin and northern Nebraska. Today there are 20 UCC congregations on reservations and one urban, multi-tribal UCC congregation in Minneapolis, Minnesota. CAIM supports these local churches and their pastors. In addition, CAIM strives to be a resource for more than 1,000 individuals from dozens of other tribes and nations who are members of other UCC congregations and to strengthen their participation in the life of the church.

Today and next Sunday we'll be taking a collection for the UCC's annual Neighbors in Need Offering. This offering is designed to fund ministries that promote justice and compassion across the United Church of Christ. One-third of this offering is allocated to the Council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM) by our greater denomination. To make a donation to Neighbors in need please mark the front of your envelope, memo line of your check, or visit our website for online giving options.

* 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*)

Dawn Robinson

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

God gives us good things, including the gifts of cultures different from our own. Art, language, music, craftsmanship, and saga from the tribes and nations of indigenous peoples are blessings often overlooked. In gratitude for all God's good gifts, we make our offerings today. Use it as you use us. Amen.

Video “Why” by Supaman

Supaman is an Indigenous rapper and fancy dancer from the Apsaalooke (Crow) Nation. This song is from his album *Illiminatives* and includes world champion dancer Acosia Red Elk from the Umatilla Tribe. A Monetary donation was made to Supaman in use of this video for today’s service.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OiVU-W9VT7Q&list=RDEMIP31r-Gkshmh0qjBWo2ddw&start_radio=1&rv=ep97FZrRSPk

Benediction

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Video

Native American Chants

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olRN-9kvY5I&t=152s>

There will be no benediction response or postlude today. As you exit the sanctuary today, we invite you to listen to the Native American chants in the background. The video will continue playing in the gathering room.

*Songs in this service are used by permission.
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The liturgy for today’s service was written by the United Methodist Church Resource for Worship on Native American Ministries Sunday - Call to Worship by the Rev. Jeff Ramsland, pastor of the Cherokee United Methodist Church in Cherokee, NC - Prayer of Dedication adapted by George Estes and Mary McCaskey Cumberland Presbyterian Church

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:

Brian Hankins, Laura Hankins, Dom Ciciollo
Ushers: Dave Shimberg, Shakti Subramanian
Greeters: Pam Shimberg
Refreshments: Meg Houlihan & Tom Lannin,
Alix Felsing & Tommy Tomlinson, Ann Hooper

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. 27: Consistory Meeting
- Oct. 4 & 11: New Member/Inquirer Classes
- Oct. 18: Mortgage Payoff Service & Celebration
- 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 are on Sundays after worship. They started on Sep. 20, but it's not too late to join!

SEPTEMBER IS STEWARDSHIP MONTH

Make your Stewardship pledge on or before Oct. 4

Holy Covenant's church community has big dreams for 2027, and we ask you to prayerfully consider increasing your total pledge from 2026 if you are able to do so. Our Stewardship Campaign for 2027 - "*Journeys: Rooted in Faith, Growing in Hope*" - has raised more than 76% of last year's total pledges as of Thursday evening. We appreciate your time, talents, energy and wisdom as we ask for your financial commitments.

We ask that you make your pledge by the end of the day Oct. 4, so that Holy Covenant's Consistory and Budget & Finance team have time to craft a 2027 budget that reflects our vision for our church community. **To pledge, scan this QR code with your phone or go to** <https://holycovenantucc.org/giving/>.



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 after worship for food and fellowship. We'll be planning social justice and mission projects for the months ahead. Also, please 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.

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>

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

Remember Lon Kominski and family in the recent death of his wife, Janet.

(Dawn Simmons)

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), 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) & Tara Washburn (Patrick Washburn)

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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