



HOLY COVENANT

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

-be the Church, everywhere

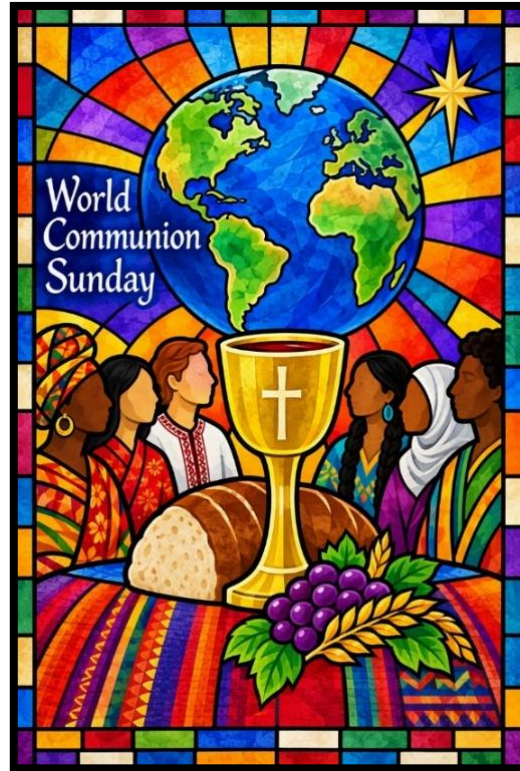


Photo by Microsoft Image Creator

“Once you are in communion with God you have the eyes to see and the ears to hear other people in whom God has also found a dwelling place.”

— Henri Nouwen

“Holy communion is to feel one with the One in all beings and creation.”

— Shankarananda

“The only body capable of taking us all in as we are with all our different body marks...is the body of Christ.”

— M. Shawn Copeland

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
WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

October 04, 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 Manna" arr. R. D. Vandall
Dawn Robinson, Jon Weddell, piano duet

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 "Let Us Build a House" ALL ARE WELCOME
Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live,
A place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;
Here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
All are welcome; all are welcome; all are welcome in this place.

* Call to the Heart Sally McLester
Please take a comfortable posture that supports your worshiping, reading, and singing...

One: Come, for Christ welcomes us all.

Many: LGBTQ+ siblings, trans and non-binary folks, queer families and rainbow kin. You are welcome here.

One: Come, for Christ welcomes us all.

Many: Doubters, seekers, and those still figuring it out; those who feel like saints and those who feel like sinners. You are welcome here.

One: Come, for Christ welcomes us all.

Many: People of every race and ethnicity; Indigenous peoples, immigrants, and those whose roots run deep in this land. You are welcome here.

One: Come, for Christ welcomes us all.

Many: Children, teens, and elders; introverts, extroverts, geeks, jocks, and bookworms. You are welcome here.

One: Come, for Christ welcomes us all.

Many: Those with mental health struggles, those who are neurodiverse, those with disabilities. You are welcome here.

One: Come, for Christ welcomes us all.

Many: Families of every shape; single parents, blended families, chosen families, those with two moms or two dads. You are welcome here.

One: Come, for Christ welcomes us all.

Many: All God's people, may you know you are welcome here. Amen.

* Hymn 72 "Here, O God, Your Servants Gather" TOKYO (Japan)

Here, O Lord, your servants gather, hand we link with hand;

Looking toward our Savior's cross, joined in love we stand.

As we seek the realm of God, we unite to pray:

Jesus, Savior, guide our steps, for you are the Way.

Many are the tongues we speak, scattered are the lands;

Yet our hearts are one in God, one in love's demands.

In despair our hope appears, calling age and youth:

Jesus, Teacher, dwell with us, for you are the Truth.

Nature's secrets open wide, changes never cease;

Where, O where, can weary souls find the source of peace?

Unto all those sore distressed, torn by endless strife,

Jesus, Healer, bring your balm, for you are the Life.

Grant, O God, an age renewed, show us how love thrives,

Help us as we work and pray, send us for our lives

Truth and courage, faith and power needed in our strife:

Jesus, Leader, be our Way, be our Truth, our Life.

Stewardship Moment

Martha Bomely, Treasurer

Witness Moment - Shakti Subramanian, Jean Berg (video)

Stories for All People

Laura Hankins

Anthem

"One Song"

P. Choplin

Poem

“Prophets of a Future Not Our Own”

by Bishop Ken Untener

Alice Phelan-Young

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.

The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.

No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection.

No pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No program accomplishes the Church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.

This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.

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

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

* Gospel Lesson

Matthew 21:33-46 (CEB)

Sally McLester

*Please take a comfortable posture that supports your reading and worshiping...
Our Gospel Lesson for today comes from Matthew 21:33-46, where Jesus tells
the parable of the landowner and tenants...*

Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a fence around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a tower. Then he rented it to tenant farmers and took a trip. When it was time for harvest, he sent his servants to the tenant farmers to collect his fruit. But the tenant farmers grabbed his servants. They beat some of them, and some of them they killed. Some of them they stoned to death. "Again he sent other servants, more than the first group. They treated them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said. "But when the tenant farmers saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come on, let's kill him and we'll have his inheritance.' They grabbed him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. "When the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenant farmers?" They said, "He will totally destroy those wicked farmers and rent the vineyard to other tenant farmers who will give him the fruit when it's ready." Jesus said to them, "Haven't you ever read in the scriptures, The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. The Lord has done this, and it's amazing in our eyes. Therefore, I tell you that God's kingdom will be taken away from you and will be given to a people who produce its fruit. Whoever falls on this stone will be crushed. And the stone will crush the person it falls on." Now when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard the parable, they knew Jesus was talking about them. They were trying to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, who thought he was a prophet.

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

"What Kind of Fruit Are We Producing?"

Invitation to Generosity

Sally McLester

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

Each year, the United Church of Christ invites congregations to support five special offerings that strengthen ministries across the wider church. Today is the annual *Neighbors in Need Offering*, which supports a variety of justice ministries through advocacy, community service, and grants to local churches and organizations working for a more just world. Your gift, of any size, helps make this important work possible, and keeps us recognized as a "5 for 5 church," meaning we have given each of the annual offerings. To contribute, please use the link on our donation page or write "Neighbors in Need" on the front of your check or envelope. Let us now share our gifts with God.

* Doxology

BARUCH HASHEM ADONAI (Israel)

Baruch hashem Adonai. Baruch hashem Adonai.

Blessed be the name of the Lord. Baruch hashem Adonai.

* Prayer of Dedication (*unison*)

Sally McLester

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

Gracious God, bless the gifts we share and the lives we offer. May they grow beyond what we can now see, nourishing your kin-dom of justice, compassion, and love. Use us, in all our imperfections and with all our faith, to embody the love of Christ that shines uniquely through us out into every corner of 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. As we prepare for Communion, those of you online are welcome to have some bread and juice and join us in Communion.

Invitation

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

One: From every corner of the earth, Christ calls us to the table.

Many: **We come from many peoples, many places, many traditions.**

One: We come with the songs of our ancestors and the prayers of those who came before us.

Many: **We come carrying stories of faith, struggle, hope, and joy.**

One: From the villages of Africa and the islands of the Pacific, from the mountains of Asia and the cities of the Americas, from the churches of Europe and the Middle East—

Many: **We come as one people, gathered in Christ.**

One: Some come to this table with abundance. Some come longing for daily bread.

Many: **Christ welcomes us all.**

One: Some come singing. Some come grieving. Some come with questions. Some come with gratitude.

Many: **Christ welcomes us all.**

One: Today, the walls that divide us do not have the final word. Language does not divide us. Geography does not divide us. Culture does not divide us.

Many: **At Christ's table, there is room for all.**

One: Come, people of God. Come with open hands and open hearts.

All: **We come to receive. We come to remember. We come to share. We come to be made one.**

Words of Institution

On the night before he was betrayed, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and shared it with his friends. He took the cup and shared it as a sign of a new covenant—a promise that love is stronger than violence, that hope is stronger than despair, and life is stronger than death.

Holy Spirit, breathe upon this bread and this cup and upon all who receive them. As Christians around the world gather today, make us mindful of one another: of those who worship in crowded churches and those who gather in small communities; of those who celebrate with joyful music and dancing and those whose worship is quiet and contemplative; of those who have enough to eat and those who cry out for bread; of those who worship in freedom and those who gather amid conflict, displacement, or persecution. Make us one in the love of Christ.

As this bread is broken and this cup is shared, teach us that communion is more than what happens here. Make us people who share what we have, who welcome the stranger, who seek reconciliation, who stand with those who suffer, and who work for the peace and flourishing of all creation.

Sharing of the Elements

Prayer of Thanksgiving

One: God of every nation and generation, gather us into the great company of your people—those who have gone before us, those who worship beside us, and those we may never meet in this life. Until the day when every people and every nation are gathered into your eternal feast, keep us faithful to one another and to you. Send us from this table as people of Christ's peace.

Many: **One God. One Spirit. One body. One love. One hope. One table, to which we all belong. Amen.**

* Hymn 386

“The Church’s One Foundation”

AURELIA

The church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ our Lord;
We are Christ’s new creation by water and the word;
From heaven Christ came and sought us in love to set us free;
With precious blood Christ bought us for all eternity.

Elect from every nation, yet one o’er all the earth,
One charter of salvation, one God, one faith, one birth,
One name together blessing, one holy food we share,
To one hope we are pressing, at one in work and prayer.

’Mid toil and tribulation, and tumult of our war,
We wait the consummation of peace forevermore;
Till with the vision glorious, our longing eyes are blessed,
And the great church victorious shall be the church at rest.

Yet we on earth have union with God, the Three-in-One,
And mystic sweet communion with those whose rest is won.
O happy ones and holy! God give us grace that we,
Like them, the meek and lowly, may live eternally.

* Benediction

Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

* Benediction Response

HALLE, HALLE (Caribbean)

Halle, halle, hallelujah! (3x) Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Postlude

“Let Us Break Bread Together”

arr. D. Wyrzten

Songs in this service are used by permission.

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The liturgy for today’s service was written by Rev. Christopher Czarnecki and adapted from Global Ministries: World Communion Sunday 2026 Worship Resource (Communion Liturgy).

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

Ushers: Shakti Subramanian

Greeters:

Refreshments: Pam Shimberg, Kathy Gorman

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.

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN ENDS TODAY, OCT. 4

We are grateful for the many ways that Holy Covenant members make this a loving and welcoming church community. We are also grateful to all those who have already pledged their financial resources for 2027 during our Stewardship Campaign, "Journeys: Rooted in Faith, Growing in Hope." As of 2 p.m. Friday, we have raised \$218,605 - 74% of our \$296,000 goal for 2027. If you haven't pledged yet, we ask that you prayerfully consider increasing your total pledge from last year. **Pledge by the end of the day today, Oct. 4, if you can - it sharpens the picture of our financial resources as our Consistory and Budget & Finance team craft a 2027 budget to reflect our vision for 2027.** Gifts are always welcome, of course, and you can change yours if your circumstances change. To pledge, scan this QR code or go to <https://holycovenantucc.org/giving/>.



UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

- Oct. 04: New Member/Inquire Class I
- Oct. 10: (2PM) Celebration of Life for Rev. James Humphrey
- Oct. 11: Youth Food & Fellowship; New Member/Inquirer Class II
- Oct. 18: Mortgage Payoff Service & Celebration
- Oct. 25: Welcome Sunday Installation of New Members

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A JOURNEY OF HISTORY, REFLECTION, AND RENEWAL

The Racial Justice & Equity team is planning a meaningful, community building three-day journey to Charleston to explore history, hear stories, reflect together, and renew our commitment to justice and equity. Check your calendars for April 5-7, 2027. Why are we sharing this with you now? Well, a group of 30 is required for the team to book this trip, and sign-ups and deposits will need to be submitted by mid-November. So, we want to get the word out sooner than later! Please watch for more info in the coming weeks. If you have any questions in the meanwhile, please speak with Ann Hooper or any member of the RJ&E team.

Please Remember in Prayer

Members

Faye Humphrey and family in the recent death of her husband,
the [Reverend James "Jim" Humphrey](#)

(Celebration of Life at HCUCC on Oct. 10 at 2PM)

Mel Andersen, Jeffery & Kevin Edwards-Knight, 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

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