



HOLY COVENANT

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

-be the Church, everywhere



Photo: September 9, 1998 Holy Covenant UCC

If we're a lantern and the Light of God is inside, Holy Covenant is a place that polishes the glass on the lantern and makes us less smudgy, more glowing, and more bright for the world.

~ Kristin Andes

The Church is the Church only when it exists for others.

~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer

The church is not a group of people who believe all the same things; the church is a group of people caught up in the same story, with Jesus at the center.

~ Rachel Held Evans

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
LAITY SUNDAY

October 18, 2026, 10:55 am

EVERY VOICE MATTERS: NEW HEARING ASSISTANCE DEVICES AVAILABLE
See the ushers for a wireless transmitter and your personal ear buds.

** Your whole self is welcome here. Please feel free to take care
of your body during worship in ways that work for you.*

Prelude

**“Pictures of Our Lives Together”
created by Laura Hankins
“Come Build a Church”**

Ken Medema

Welcome and Announcements

The 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 hands will reach beyond the wood and stone!

To heal and strengthen, serve and teach,

And live the Word they’ve known.

Here the outcast and the stranger bear the image of God’s face;

Let us bring an end to fear and danger:

All are welcome; all are welcome; all are welcome in this place.

*** Call to the Heart**

Alix Felsing

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

One: We built a church.

**Many: Where couples exchanged vows, babies were baptized, children
grew up, and generations have gathered to celebrate life's joys and
sorrows.**

One: We built a church.

**Many: Where people found a place to belong, a shoulder to cry on, people
to embrace them, and a community that loved them just as they are.**

One: We built a church.

Many: Where questions were welcomed, faith was deepened, and people discovered new understandings of God, Jesus, and what it means to follow Christ.

One: We built a church.

Many: Where we declared ourselves Open and Affirming, where differences were celebrated, and where all God's children are welcomed.

One: We built a church.

Many: Where rooms became places of ministry, meals were prepared for the hungry, neighbors received help, and justice reached beyond these walls.

One: We built a church.

Many: Where people prayed, sang, laughed, grieved, stood up for justice, found hope, and discovered the strength to face another day.

One: We built a church.

Many: Together, we built a community of faith. We built a family of love. We built a place where God's work continues through us all. Today we celebrate this mortgage is paid off, and Holy Covenant we're nowhere near finished yet!

* Hymn

“Gather Us In”

Marty Haugen

Here in this place, the new light is streaming,
Shadows of doubt are vanished away:
See in this space our fears and our dreamings
Brought here to you in the light of this day.
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken,
Gather us in, our spirits inflame.
Call to us now and we shall awaken,
We shall arise at the sound of our name.

We are the young - our lives are a mystery,
We are the old who yearn for your face.
We have been sung throughout all of history,
Called to be light to the whole human-race.
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty,
Gather us in, the proud and the strong:
Give us a heart so meek and so lowly,
Give us the courage to enter the song.

Not just in buildings, small and confining,
Not in some heaven light-years away,
Here in this place the new light is shining,
Now is God present, and now is the day.
Gather us in and hold us forever,
Gather us in and make us your own,
Gather us in, all peoples together -
Fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

History of the Church

Dawn Robinson

Reflections

Robert Shepherd

Hebrew Scripture

Ezra 3:10-13 (CEB)

Pam Shimberg

Our first scripture reading comes from Ezra 3:10-13, where there is rejoicing and celebration among the Israelites for the foundation upon which the new temple would be built...

When the builders laid the foundation of the Lord's temple, the priests clothed in their vests and carrying their trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, arose to praise the Lord according to the directions of Israel's King David. They praised and gave thanks to the Lord, singing responsively, "He is good, his graciousness for Israel lasts forever." All of the people shouted with praise to the Lord because the foundation of the Lord's house had been laid. But many of the older priests and Levites and heads of families, who had seen the first house, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this house, although many others shouted loudly with joy. No one could distinguish the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the people's weeping, because the people rejoiced very loudly. The sound was heard at a great distance.

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

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

Reflections

The Rev. Dr. Nancy Ellett Allison

Song "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.

Stories for All People Dawn Robinson

Reflections Brian Hankins

Christian Scripture Ephesians 2:19-22 (CEB) Alix Felsing
Our second scripture reading comes from Ephesians 2:19-22, where a Pauline follower speaks of building God's household together...

So now you are no longer strangers and aliens. Rather, you are fellow citizens with God's people, and you belong to God's household. As God's household, you are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. The whole building is joined together in him, and it grows up into a temple that is dedicated to the Lord. Christ is building you into a place where God lives through the Spirit.

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.**

CEREMONIAL SHREDDING OF THE MORTGAGE

The Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

Over twenty-five years ago, the people of Holy Covenant made a commitment. They dreamt of a place where people could gather for worship, grow in their faith, build community, and put the love of Christ into action. That dream required faith, courage, generosity, and a mortgage that would help make it possible. And for twenty-five years, through that generosity and faithful stewardship of this congregation and its people, through times of growth and change, through celebrations and challenges, we have continued to honor that commitment. Today, five years ahead of schedule, we celebrate that our mortgage has been paid in full!

At this time, I invite long-time member Diane Neese, who has been part of Holy Covenant's journey for so many years to share a reflection and then lead us in a responsive litany to help us mark this historic occasion.

Reflections

Diane Neese

One: Today, we give thanks for those who first imagined what this church could become.

Many: **We give thanks for their vision, their courage, and their faith.**

One: We give thanks for those who gave generously, who made sacrifices, and who worked faithfully to make this day possible.

Many: **We give thanks for every gift, act of service, and expression of love.**

One: We remember those who helped build this church but are no longer with us, and we celebrate those who have joined us along the way.

Many: **Their gifts live on in this church and in the ministries we share.**

One: And now, as we release this mortgage, we celebrate not only what we have accomplished, but all that is still possible.

Many: **Our debt is paid, but our calling continues!**

Shred the mortgage document - Diane Neese

Pastor: Holy Covenant, our debt is paid, but our calling continues! What will we do with this freedom and the possibilities before us?

Many: **We will do justice! We will love kindness! And we will walk humbly with our God!**

Anthem

“Draw the Circle Wide”

arr. M. Miller

Draw the circle, draw the circle wide. (2x)

No one stands alone, we'll stand side by side.

Draw the circle, draw the circle wide.

Draw the circle wide, draw it wider still.

Let this be our song: no one stands alone.

Standing side by side,

Draw the circle, draw the circle wide.

Invitation to Generosity

Alix Felsing

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

Today, we celebrate the generosity and faithfulness of those who came before us and who continue to make the ministries of Holy Covenant possible. As we look toward the future, we are reminded that our giving is about more than maintaining a building; it is about supporting the work of love, compassion, and justice that happens here and beyond these walls. Let us now give with grateful hearts, trusting that what we share today will help make a difference in the lives of others tomorrow.

* Doxology

OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God all creatures here below,
Praise God above all heavenly hosts,
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.

* Prayer of Dedication (*unison*)

Alix Felsing

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

Loving God, we give thanks for the generosity of those who have brought us this far and for the many ways you continue to work through this community of faith. Bless these gifts and use them to strengthen our ministries, care for our neighbors, and help build a world that reflects your love and justice. May we continue to be faithful stewards of all that has been entrusted to us, today and for generations to come. Amen.

* Hymn 391

“In the Midst of New Dimensions”

Julian 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)

Should the threats of dire predictions / Cause us to withdraw in pain,
May your blazing phoenix spirit / Resurrect the church again. (R)

* Benediction

The Rev. Christopher Czarnecki

* Benediction Response

HALLE, HALLE

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

Postlude

“Pictures of Our Lives Together”

created by Laura Hankins

“Come Build a Church”

Ken Medema

Songs in this service are used by permission.

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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:

Brian Hankins, Laura Hankins, D Evans

Ushers: Shakti Subramanian, Roxie McMillon

Greeters:

Refreshments: Amanda Deck, Dawn Robinson

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.

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>

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

- Oct. 25: Welcome Sunday Installation of New Members
- Oct. 27: Deadline to order Holiday Greenery
- Nov. 01: All Saints Sunday - CWS Guest Kevin McCoy
- Nov. 08: CROP Hunger Walk at HC
- Nov. 15: HCUCC Annual Meeting & Potluck

HOLY COVENANT UCC ANNUAL MEETING & ALL-CHURCH POTLUCK SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2026, BOTH IN-PERSON AND VIRTUALLY.

Like every year, our meeting will take place in two parts. The first part will take place in worship as various ministry teams of the church share their submitted reports about the work they've been engaged in over the last year. The second part will be our more formal business meeting immediately following worship at approximately 12:15pm. At this year's meeting, we will review church business reports, vote to approve last year's Annual Meeting Minutes (2025), the incoming Consistory Class of 2029, and the Proposed 2027 Budget, and an amendment to the church's constitution and bylaws (see below).

Our annual church potluck will follow after all business has been attended to, so plan to bring a dish to share and stay to celebrate the faithful ways we've been living into God's call and ministries!

To call our annual congregational meeting to order and conduct the business of the church, we need a quorum. So that means we need our members to attend!

We want to thank you for your attention to this important church event! If you have any questions about the Annual Meeting, please contact the church office or reach out to one of our Consistory Members.

Notice of Proposed Amendment to the Constitution and Bylaws

At our upcoming Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, November 15, 2026, members will be asked to consider and vote on a proposed amendment of Holy Covenant's Constitution and Bylaws. The amendment has been recommended by the Consistory to provide greater clarity regarding the rights and privileges of associate members. More specific information about this wording will be forthcoming next week.

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN RAISED \$269,765

Thank you to all who have pledged financial support for Holy Covenant, our clergy and staff, our building and our community. The Stewardship Campaign raised \$269,765 for the General Fund as of 7 p.m. Thursday. That is 91% of our ambitious goal of raising \$296,000 to fund all budget requests, and we are so grateful for all who pledged early, and those who increased their pledges. The budget continues to evolve as it comes together, and we are currently just \$15,000 short of what we need. Today we celebrate paying off the mortgage, and the draft budget will be presented to the Consistory for discussion. You can still join our “Journeys: Rooted in Faith, Growing in Hope” campaign. If you haven’t pledged yet, scan this QR code or go to <https://holycovenantucc.org/giving/>.



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**

Mel Andersen, Darline Warren Batton, Jeffery & Kevin Edwards-Knight, Kathy Habel, Faye Humphrey, Wiley & Marlowe Morris, Anita Taylor, Alice & Sally Phelan-Young

Friends & Family Members

Dale & Nancy Allison in the recent death of their daughter, Laura Allison Farug Brown Bey (Jeffery Edwards-Knight), Joan Bowling (Kristen Fuchs), Randy & Tina Buie (Diane Neese), Don & Wanda Carver and the people of Panama, 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), Jeremy Hong (Jim Hong), Dean Horning (Melissa Noll), Judson Hulse (Kristen Fuchs), 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), Connie Stidham (Ed Vickery), 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