SEASON OF

Jubilee

A NEW LITURGICAL SEASON

CHURCH OF THE COVENANT

SEPTEMBER THROUGH NOVEMBER

SUNDAYS AT 10:30AM

September 7, 2025

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ

Church of the Covenant
Season of Jubilee
September 7, 2025 10:30 am Zoom Link

Welcome and thank you for worshipping together for this "hybrid" service where some will be 67 Newbury Street, and some in the sanctuary of places far and near. For those joining online, we begin on Zoom at the above link. Please keep your mic muted during the service.
**You are invited to rise in body or spirit.*

Prelude *Arioso* J. S. Bach

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you.
Many: And also with you.

*** Call to Worship** (from Psalm 27)

One: God is life and light and love!
Many: God is our safe and secure place. Of whom shall we be afraid?
One: God will shelter us in the days of trouble,
Many: We will not be afraid of our enemies.
One: God will set us high on a rock, out of harm's way.
Many: And we will praise God with shouts of joy!
One: Come, let our hearts look for God's face—for yes:
Many: We shall see the goodness of our God in the land of the living.

*** Kindling the Christ Light**

One: The light of Christ,
Many: Thanks be to God!

*** Opening Hymn** NCH (black) 164 *Arise, Your Light Is Come*

Arise, your light is come! The Spirit's call obey;
Show forth the glory of your God which shines on you today!

Arise, your light is come! Fling wide the prison door;
Proclaim the captive's liberty, good tidings to the poor.

Arise, your light is come! All you in sorrow born,
Bind up the broken-hearted ones and comfort those who mourn.

Arise, your light is come! The mountains burst in song!
Rise up like eagles on the wing; God's power will make us strong.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

Many: Beloved One, your power indeed makes us strong. But sometimes the world makes us feel weak. The chaos, uncertainty, and violence that surround can threaten to overpower and consume us. So we turn to you in hope. As people united, made in your image, we profess your love is true. We affirm your promises that the weak shall be made strong; the last shall become first; in endings there shall be new beginnings. May your light rise in our hearts and in our world so that all would be set free.

One: Let us now open ourselves to God in silent prayer…

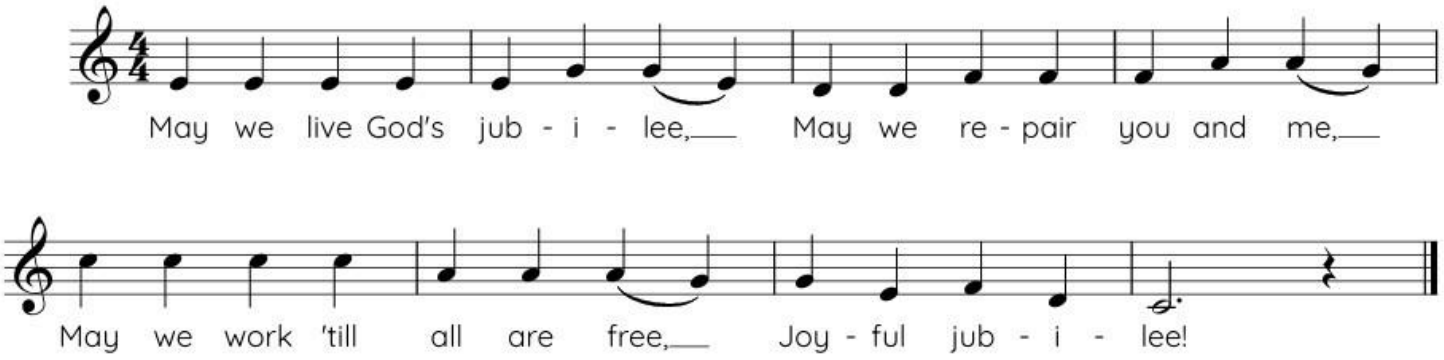
Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

One: In the midst of the chaotic or the traumatic; in the midst of the exciting or the mundane—God's voice resounds like the trumpets of jubilee with the good news of liberation:

Many: **In Jesus Christ we are set free and made whole.**
Alleluia! Amen.

*** Sung Response** *May We Live God's Jubilee*



Reading from Scripture

Hebrew Bible Reading – Ecclesiastes 4:1-16

Again I saw all the oppressions that are practiced under the sun. Look, the tears of the oppressed—with no one to comfort them! On the side of their oppressors there was power—with no one to comfort them. And I thought the dead, who have already died, more fortunate than the living, who are still alive; but better than both is the one who has not yet been, and has not seen the evil deeds that are done under the sun.

Then I saw that all toil and all skill in work come from one person's envy of another. This also is vanity and a chasing after wind.

Fools fold their hands
and consume their own flesh.
Better is a handful with quiet
than two handfuls with toil,
and a chasing after wind.

Again, I saw vanity under the sun: the case of solitary individuals, without kindred or kin; yet there is no end to all their toil, and their eyes are never satisfied with riches. 'For whom am I toiling,' they ask, 'and depriving myself of pleasure?' This also is vanity and an unhappy business.

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help. Again, if two lie together, they keep warm; but how can one keep warm alone? And though one might prevail against another, two will withstand one.

A cord braided of three strands is not easily torn apart.

Better is a poor but wise youth than an old but foolish king, who will no longer take advice. One can indeed come out of prison to reign, even though born poor in the kingdom. I saw all the living who, moving about under the sun, follow that youth who replaced the king; there was no end to all those people whom he led. Yet those who come later will not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and a chasing after wind.

Gospel Reading – Luke 4:14-20 *(NRSV with italics section paraphrased)*
Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.
When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him.
Jesus then amplified and embodied what is written, "The Spirit is upon me to bring the good news to earth of centering the marginalized, bringing liberation and repair, and providing God's joyful new vision. This is jubilee!"
And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

One: God is still speaking, the word of God,
Many: Thanks be to God.

Sung Response *May We Live God's Jubilee*

Sermon "Braiding Jubilee"

Call to Offering
Online Giving Option: http://www.cotcbos.org/give.html
Click on Give Now, then choose Pledges or Gifts-General

Offertory *Calling All Angels* Jane Siberry
Margy Ronna - voice; Elliott Ronna - voice and guitar; John Ronna - guitar

*** Communion Doxology** *Tune: Old Hundredth*

Though what we have in truth is small,
God's grace shall be enough for all.
So as we bless and break this bread,
Each heart be filled, each mouth be fed.

*** Prayer of Dedication**

Celebrations & Concerns

One: God, in your grace,
Many: Receive our prayer.

Pastoral Prayer

Celebration of Holy Communion

Invitation to the Table

*** The Great Thanksgiving**

One: May God be with you!
Many: And also with you.
One: People of Covenant, let us lift up our hearts!
Many: We open our hearts to the Spirit who fills us with hope.
One: Let us give thanks to God our light.
Many: It is right for us to offer our thanks and praise to God.
One: It is right for us to thank and praise you God…
…And so, with your people here on earth, with all the ancestors, and all the saints and the great company of heaven, we glorify your name, praising you together:
Many: Holy, holy, holy One, God of heaven and earth. All creation is full of your love and grace. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of peace. Hosanna in the highest!
One: Holy are you, O God…

*** The Prayer of Jesus** (in unison)

Our Father and Mother, who is in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and do not let us fall into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

*** Breaking of the Bread**

During the singing of the communion hymn, you are invited to come forward to gather around the communion table, where we will finish our service. You do not need to bring your bulletin with you, so your hands are available for the bread and cup. If you don't feel called to receive communion, you are invited to come forward and simply fold your arms as the servers come by–knowing you are very much a beloved part of this gathering.

*** Communion Summons** *I'm Gonna Eat at the Welcome Table*

I'm gonna eat at the welcome table,
I'm gonna eat at the welcome table, some of these days. x2

All God's children gonna eat together
All God's children gonna eat together, some of these days. x2

*** Sharing of the Bread & Cup**

*** Post Communion Prayer**

*** Closing Hymn** (to the general tune of *This Little Light of Mine*)

This joy that I have, the world didn't give it to me (x3)
The world didn't give, the world can't take it away

This love that I have… / This strength that I have…

*** Charge and Benediction**

*** Exchange of the Peace**

(Please exchange greetings of Christ's peace and repair.)

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: And also with you.

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Worship Participants

Preacher – Rev. Rob Mark
Worship Leader – Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard
Liturgist – Karen Henry
Lector – Sally Pomeroy
Voice – Margy Ronna
Voice & Guitar – Eliott Ronna
Guitar – John Ronna
Covenant Choir
Communion Servers – Debbie Howland, Sally Pomeroy
Usher – Denice Thornhill
Digital Minister – Sandra May
Audio Visual Tech Team – Venkatesh Balasubramanian, Abhishek John, Jonathan Schwarz
Sexton – Jesús Vargas

WELCOME TO CHURCH OF THE COVENANT! We are so glad to have you worshipping with us today! If you are new to our community, we hope you will feel at home and welcome during this service. If you have any questions about who we are as a community of faith, please reach out to an usher in person or our Digital Minister in the chat.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING TODAY! A congregational meeting (in person and on Zoom) has been called today, **Sunday, September 7**, immediately after the worship service to vote on extending the term of our designated Associate Pastor, Rev. Joshua Lazard, by one year starting on September 8, 2025, to increase his hours from half-time to three-quarter time, and to approve the terms of call in the 2025. If you would like to receive a copy of the Call Agreement, email Parish Administrator Nancy Stockford (*nancy.stockford@cotcbos.org*). Coffee will be available.

SACRED RECKONINGS SPIRITUAL EDUCATION SESSION TODAY. Join us after the congregational meeting today (in person and online), as our Sacred Reckonings Team leads a discussion on Truth Telling, focusing on a piece of our church's history, Benjamin Edward Bates IV. The Sacred Reckonings team is helping us explore truth-telling, spiritual practices, relationships, advocacy, and wealth return. Sessions are on the first Sunday of the month, following worship. Next dates are: **October 5, November 2, and December 7**. Questions? Kathy Bull: *kaxianna@yahoo.com* or Rev. Rob: *rob.mark@cotcbos.org*.

WELCOME CHILDREN & YOUTH!! Welcome to all children, youth, and families—those we know already and those who are here for the first time. We offer Christian education through Godly Play for ages 3-9, youth classes for ages 10-13 and 14+, and a nursery for the littlest ones. If you need help finding us, please ask an usher. We share CYCE info regularly via email, so please email Rev. Kate at *kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org* if you want to receive updates.

UPCOMING SUNDAY WORSHIP. Please join us each Sunday at 10:30 am as we come together in community to pray, sing, share celebrations and concerns, and hear God's still-speaking Word proclaimed in these hybrid (in person and on Zoom) services.

- September 14: Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard preaching, All-Church Potluck After Worship, Jubilee Jaunt in Arboretum at 1:30 pm
- September 21: Worship in the Streets: Sun Way Pilgrimage, 11:30 am

MASSACHUSETTS FAITH COMMUNITY RESISTANCE & NONCOOPERATION TRAINING. The Massachusetts Council of Churches and Episcopal City Mission invite you to the Massachusetts Faith Community Resistance & Noncooperation Training on **Saturday, September 13, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm**, at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul (138 Tremont Street, Boston). This in-person gathering will equip faith leaders and community members with tools for nonviolent resistance, faithful noncooperation, and solidarity in times of crisis. Lunch will be provided and registration is required: *https://www.tfaforms.com/5188051*.

JUBILEE JAUNT ON SEPTEMBER 14! Join us at the Arnold Arboretum for one of the Climate Jubilee Team's Jubilee Jaunts, on **Sunday, September 14, at 1:30 pm**. Please contact Nancy Stockford (*nancy.stockford@cotcbos.org*) if you are interested in getting outside and appreciating the wonders of the end of summer.

COMMUNITY DEDICATION OF MEMORIAL TO THE ENSLAVED ON SEPTEMBER 14. Our siblings at King's Chapel invite us to join them at the dedication of a Memorial Statue outside their church to honor and memorialize the 219 identified children, women, and men enslaved by ministers and members of King's Chapel. On **Sunday, September 14, at 1:00 pm** (prelude begins at 12:45 pm), at King's Chapel, 58 Tremont Street (corner of School and Tremont Streets). Reception to follow. RSVP to Bailey Thaxton (*bailey.thaxton@gmail.com*).

SUN WAY. Sun Day (Rise Up for a Sun-Powered Planet) Pilgrimage on **Sunday, September 21, 1:00-2:30 pm**. This is a Worship in the Streets Sunday, so we will not have our usual service in the sanctuary. Instead, we will meet at Covenant at **11:30 am**. The pilgrimage is being organized by our own Boston Interfaith Climate Allies (BICA) for this multifaith "spiritual public action," as part of the Day of Global Action for a Solar Revolution. Please RSVP at: *https://bica.earth*. Bring your friends!

ALL-CHURCH RETREAT: SAVE THE DATE! The all-church retreat will be held on **Saturday, November 1**, at Rolling Ridge in North Andover (new location!). Please put it on your calendar and plan to join us!

CLIMATE JUBILEE ALL-CHURCH READ ON NOVEMBER 9. Our next Climate Jubilee-sponsored all-church read will be held after worship on **Sunday, November 9**, and will focus on the book *The Serviceberry* by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

WANT TO HOST A SUPPER FOR 8? One of our favorite traditions here at COTC Membership Development Committee is back, and we'd love YOU to help you host one. Eight people around a table sharing a meal. It can be a potluck, it can be takeout–or anything in between. We can provide the guidance and funds as needed. It is truly simple. All you do is simply pick a date this summer or fall and then pick some people from the congregation to invite. Only have space for 4 or 6? Totally fine. Wherever 2 or 3 are gathered, God is present (and gathered for food and fellowship, extra experienced). If interested, please contact Trudi at *trudi.veldman@gmail.com*. And also, if you'd like to be invited to a Supper for 8–you can likewise, contact Trudi.

OPEN NEWBURY. Newbury Street is closed to motor vehicle traffic on **Sundays through September 21 from 10:00 am to 8:00 pm**. That means no parking on Newbury Street and Berkeley Street. Please plan your travel to church accordingly. For more information, visit *https://www.boston.gov/departments/transportation/open-newbury-street*.

BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS. Bible Study meets weekly on Wednesday mornings at 9:45 on Zoom. Having delved into the origin stories of Genesis, we are reading the book of Exodus, exploring how the Hebrew people became a nation and what their experience with God has to tell us about our own lives. If you would like more information or want to be on the list to get regular reminders and Zoom details, contact Jack Ammerman at *jwacooks@gmail.com*.

WEDNESDAY EVENING PRAYERS 6:00-6:30 PM. Join us for our weekly Wednesday evening prayers with intentional liturgy, contemplative song, psalms, and sharing of prayers with our siblings from Newton Presbyterian on Zoom (link on *http://www.cotcbos.org*).

BRAIDING JUBILEE

The Jubilee of Jesus is a vision for liberation, repair, restoration, and joy.

A cord braided of three strands is not easily torn apart.
Ecclesiastes 4:12

Motivated by Jesus' vision of justice and inspired by the past five years of our Climate Jubilee ministry, Church of the Covenant is braiding together our missional goals, with the Spirit's help, as we continue to strive to love God, neighbor, and earth. Through a fall preaching series, we will center our values of **participation** in Christ's body as the church, **connection** through fellowship with one another, and a **public witness** that moves us beyond the four walls of a church building to share the message of Jubilee about a loving, caring, and forgiving Jesus.

CHURCH OF THE COVENANT

cotcbos.org

AWARE
Calling & Capacity
SEPTEMBER 7

BEAR
Grounded Public Witness
SEPTEMBER 14

worship in the streets
Sun Way Pilgrimage
SEPTEMBER 21, 1-2:30PM
Meet at COTC at 11:30am

DARE
Generosity Generation
SEPTEMBER 28

CARE
Compassion & Caring
OCTOBER 12

DECLARE
Outreach
OCTOBER 19

PRAYER
Vitality
OCTOBER 26

SHARE
Christian Formation
NOVEMBER 9

>>> COVENANT RENEWAL SUNDAY

REPAIR
Truth Telling
NOVEMBER 16

PREPARE
Climate Jubilee
NOVEMBER 23

SUN WAY Pilgrimage

Boston Interfaith Climate Allies

Sunday Sept. 21, 2025

1:00-2:30pm

Joyfully march from Old South Church to Boston Common | bica.earth

Visitor or Newcomer? Welcome to Church of the Covenant!

We are glad you are here. Please let us know if there are ways we can help you connect to the church community. Learn more about the church by visiting our website at www.cotcbos.org. To sign up for email updates about worship services and other events in our community, please fill out a visitor's card in your pew, or email us at info@cotcbos.org.

Parking Bargain – Worshippers may park at the Back Bay Garage [Clarendon Street, between Boylston and St. James] on Sundays between 6:00 am and 9:00 pm for the first three (3) hours for only $5. To get this discounted rate, please ask an Usher before or after the worship service for a parking discount sticker.

Prayers of Celebration or Concern May Be Shared in the Red Book – At the rear of the Sanctuary is a red book where prayers that you wish to have spoken aloud during the Pastoral Prayer time may be written. The book will be available until the time of the offering.

Time of Greeting – After worship this morning, we hope that you will take a few minutes to connect with others worshipping with you, especially people you may not know as well.

Hearing Assisted Devices – Speak with an usher if you would like to use these devices that work with or without a hearing aid. These devices are specifically designed to work only with our sound system. Please remember to return the device at the close of the service. Thank you!

Building Accessibility – Our building includes an exterior ramp on Newbury Street and an elevator (in the Parish House part of the building) which allows access to the fellowship hall, meeting rooms, offices, and other parts of the building. We also have accessible restrooms. Please ask an usher to help you locate these resources.

NEW TO COTC? We are so glad you are here! Let us know a little bit about how we can welcome you by filling out the form at this QR code, and learn more on our website at *cotcbos.org*. Note that your information goes only to our pastors and you will not be added to any email lists.

Church of the Covenant is focused on following Jesus in our world through accompaniment, compassion, peace, joy and creative beauty.
We are passionate about hospitality, committed to justice, and wild about faith.
We embrace an embodied spirituality that is not afraid of questions.
We advocate for a just climate for our earth, liberation in our world, and equality in our neighborhoods.
We are a community where ALL are welcome and celebrated as beautiful reflections of God– all genders, all faiths, all orientations, all backgrounds, all abilities, all ages, all struggles, and all hopes. Come journey with us!

Church of the Covenant
Boston Massachusetts

67 Newbury St., Boston MA 02116 | (617) 266-7480 | www.cotcbos.org

Worship at Church of the Covenant is the heart and soul of our life together as a community of faith. Since 1932 we have been a federated church, maintaining membership in the United Church of Christ and the Presbyterian Church (USA) and welcoming pilgrims from all traditions to our life and work. Through our prayer and praise, in our concerns and celebrations, by word and sacrament, art and silence, we seek empowerment, together and individually, as a covenant people, for the work of Christ.

Jesus taught that the Spirit invites all people, including society's marginalized, to enjoy seats at God's table. This congregation seeks to demonstrate that vision by welcoming individuals and families without regard to race, gender identity, age, physical/mental condition, or sexual orientation. We rejoice in the presence of children among us as integral to our community. We maintain vital ties of faith with the Church of the Poor in the community of the Sweet Name of Jesus, in Northwestern Nicaragua.

We believe God's blessings are found in marriage equality for all. Thus, we joyfully welcome the opportunity afforded us by our Commonwealth and both denominations to join couples of any sexual orientation in fully legal and holy marriage.

Covenant's sanctuary resides on the ancestral and unceded lands and waterways of the Massachusett people. We lament the pain of displacement, honor the ongoing work of repair, and give thanks for all past, present and future stewards of this sacred place.

In our worship we use language and imagery that reflect the wonderful diversity of the image of God in humanity and all of creation; that transcend the exclusive language of the church's past. And as stewards, we seek to live into the Spirit's blessing as we move in solidarity on this shared and sacred, common home we call earth. We invite you to join us in the journey toward God's justice and peace for all of Boston and beyond!

CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Rob Mark, *Lead Pastor*
Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard, *Associate Pastor*
Thomas Handel, *Minister of Music*
Bill Brown, *Building Manager*
Rev. Kate Carlisle, *CYCE Coordinator*
Nancy Stockford, *Parish Administrator/Financial Secretary*
Jesús Vargas, *Sexton*
Venkatesh Balasubramanian, *Sound Engineering & Audio Visual Tech Manager*
Soyoung Cho, *Childcare Provider*

CHURCH OFFICERS

Brian Bigler, *President of the Corporation*
Trudi Veldman, *Clerk of the Council*
Anita Gram, *Moderator of the Board of Deacons*
Faith Perry, *Treasurer*