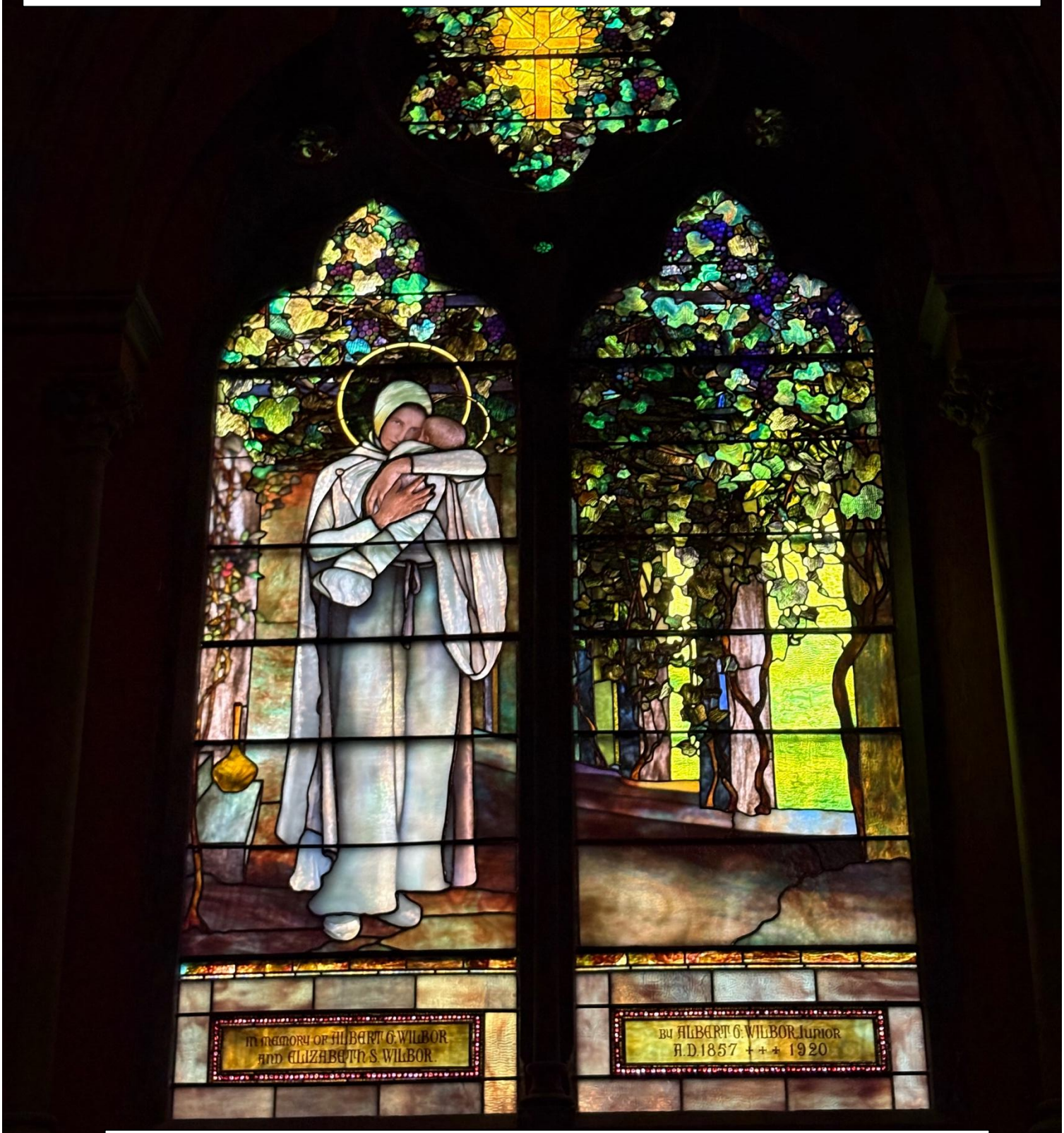
Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



November 9, 2025 – SHARE

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ

Church of the Covenant
Covenant Renewal Sunday | Season of Jubilee – SHARE
Rededication of the Madonna and Child Window

November 9, 2025 10:30 am Zoom Link

From COTC's 5-Year Missional Plan (2025-2030):

I. Christian Spiritual Formation → SHARE

- Christian Formation for Children and Youth (CFCY). Create and sustain a vital curriculum and program for our children and youth, and carry out pastoral care for young families (parents and children). Conduct intentional outreach efforts to grow our CYCE community to ensure critical mass and fellowship.
- Spiritual Formation for all. Inspired by Popular Education, utilize Spiritual Education sessions, Bible Studies, Evening Prayers, Life Alive ministry, Climate Jubilee Equinox and Solstice Evensongs, special liturgical seasons and more to center and ground us in spiritual practices that inspire and inform our faith and life.

* * *

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 *What a Covenant!* arr. Anthony Showalter

Welcome & Announcements

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

Experiencing God

*** Call to Worship** *(from the Celtic Iona Community)*

One: O Christ, you are within each of us. It is not just the interior of these walls, it is our own inner being that you are restoring.
Many: We are your temple not made with hands. We are your body.
One: If every wall should crumble, and every church decay, we are your habitation. Nearer are you than breathing, closer than our hands.
Many: Ours are the eyes with which you look out with compassion on the world.

One: As we gather today in worship of you, Maker of Heaven, Creator of the Earth,

Many: Restore us so that your loving light might shine.

*** Kindling the Christ Light**

One: The light of Christ,

Many: Thanks be to God!

*** Opening Hymn** PH (blue) 376 *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*

Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heaven, to earth come down,
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling, All Thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, Thou art all compassion, Pure, unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation, Enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit Into every troubled breast!
Let us all in Thee inherit, Let us find the promised rest;
Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning, Set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty to deliver, Let us all Thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never, Nevermore Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing, Serve Thee as Thy hosts above;
Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing, Glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish, then, Thy new creation; Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation Perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory, Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee, Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace *(from the Celtic Iona Community)*

One: Because you made the world, and intended it to be a good place, and called its creatures your children; because, when things seemed at their worst, you came in Christ to bring out the best in us; so, gracious God, we gladly say:

Many: Goodness is stronger than evil, love is stronger than hate, truth is stronger than lies.

One: Because confusion can reign inside us, despite our faith; because anger, tension, bitterness, and envy distort our vision; because our minds sometimes worry small things out of all proportion; because we do not always get it right, we want to believe:

Many: Goodness is stronger than evil, love is stronger than hate, truth is stronger than lies.

One: Because you have promised to hear us, and are able to change us, and are willing to make our hearts your home, we ask you to confront, control, forgive, and encourage us. Then let us cherish in our hearts that which we proclaim with our lips:

Many: Goodness is stronger than evil, love is stronger than hate, truth is stronger than lies.

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

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

One: People of God—rise up. Into grace—rise up. Into forgiveness—rise up. Into the sweet, boundless, and never-ending, fierce love of God—let us rise up, and celebrate together:

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

*** Sung Response: Hymn of the Angels** PH (blue) 576 *Gloria, Gloria*

Gloria, Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, Gloria, alleluia, alleluia!

Readings from Scripture

Gospel Reading – Luke 1:39-55 (*interpretation from verse 46 by J. Phillip Newell*)

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my God comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for

joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by God."
And Mary said,

"My soul sings of you, O God.
My spirit delights in your Presence.
You have cherished my womanhood.
You have honored earth's body.
All will know the sacredness of birth.
All will know the gift of life.
Your grace is to those who are open.
Your mercy to the humble in heart.
The dreams of the proud crumble.
The plans of the powerful fail.
You feed the hungry with goodness.
You deny the rich their greed.
The hopes of the poor are precious.
The birth pangs of creation are heard.
You have been faithful to the human family.
You are the seed of new beginnings.
My soul sings of you, O God.
My spirit delights in your presence."

Gospel Reading – Luke 18:15-17
People were bringing even infants to Jesus that he might bless them, and when the disciples saw it, they sternly ordered them not to do it. But Jesus called for them and said, "Let the children come to me, and do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it."

Gospel Reading – John 15:4-5
Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.

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

*** Sung Response: Hymn of the Angels** PH (blue) 576 *Gloria, Gloria*

Gloria, Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, Gloria, alleluia, alleluia!

Sermon "Mother Knows"

*** Hymn** *Canticle of the Turning*

My soul cries out with a joyful shout
That the God of my heart is great,
And my spirit sings of the Wondrous things
That you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight,
And my weakness you did not spurn,
So from east to west shall my name be blest.
Could the world be about to turn?

Refrain: My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near
And the world is about to turn.

Though I am small, my God, my all, you
Work great things in me,
And your mercy will last from the depths
Of the past to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shame,
And to those who would for you yearn
You will show your might
Put the strong to flight, for the world is about to turn. *Refrain*

From the halls of power to the fortress tower,
Not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your
Justice tears every tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more,
For the food they can never earn;
There are tables spread; every mouth be fed,
For the world is about to turn. *Refrain*

Though the nations rage from age to age,
We remember who holds us fast:
God's mercy must deliver us from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears
Heard is the promise which holds us bound,
Till the spear and rod can be crushed by God,
Who is turning the world around. *Refrain*

Rededication of The Madonna and Child Window

As we rededicate this restored window to the task of bringing more beauty and light into this sacred space, so too we rededicate our lives to the service of God in the work of compassion, justice and peace. And so:

One: With Madonna Mary,
Many: We outstretch our arms to provide sanctuary and God's radical welcoming to all.
One: With Infant Jesus,
Many: We join in solidarity with all who need to be held in safety, dignity and peace.
One: With Revolutionary Mary and Resurrected Jesus,
Many: We rise up in love to counter hate.
One: With the grape vine trellis,
Many: We extend our hands to neighbor to build unity across difference.
One: With Albert who graciously memorialized his parents,
Many: We live into generosity, grateful for all the saints who have gone before us in hope.
One: With artists Frederick and Louis Comfort,
Many: We all become essential layers of rainbowed hues that together, let more light in.
One: And with Serpentino, and all who work to restore and repair,
Many: We choose beauty, we choose joy, we choose love!

Call to Offering

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

Offertory *A la Nanita Nana* arr. Wendy Sergeant

Come, let's sing a little lullaby.
Come, let's sing a little.
My Jesus is sleepy.
Blessed be, blessed be.
Little spring running clear and loud,
Nightingale that in the forest
Sings and weeps,
Hush while the cradle rocks.

(During the offertory anthem, you are invited to contemplate the restored Madonna and Child window while the choir sings a lullaby to the baby Jesus.)

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

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God all creatures here below,
Praise God for all that love has done,
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One.

*** Prayer of Dedication**

Moment for Generosity

Celebrations & Concerns

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

Pastoral Prayer

*** Renewal of the Covenant** *(lyrics from hymn written for laying of foundation stone 1865)*

Many: Here as the chimes of Sabbath call,
The Gospel feast be ever spread;
Redeeming love's great festival, —
The wine of joy, the living bread.

*** Closing Hymn** PH (blue) 432 *Song of Hope/Canto de Esperanza*

May the God of hope go with us everyday,
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.

Refrain:
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.

*** 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
Minister of Music – Tom Handel
Liturgists – Rev. Kate Carlisle, Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard
Lector – Liz Vizza
Moment for Generosity – Holly Humphreys
Covenant Choir
Ushers – Debbie Howland, Linda Purlsey
Digital Minister – Christine James
Audio Visual Tech Team
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.

CLIMATE JUBILEE ALL-CHURCH READ TODAY. Join us downstairs in Bates Hall (or on Zoom, same link as worship) after worship **today** for a Climate Jubilee-sponsored all-church discussion of *The Serviceberry* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. She is an indigenous scientist and author who harvests serviceberries alongside the birds and considers the ethic of reciprocity that lies at the heart of the gift economy. She writes that "the serviceberry's relationship with the natural world is an embodiment of reciprocity, interconnectedness, and gratitude." Even if you haven't read the short book, join us for a conversation of community and interconnectedness, which we all need in these chaotic times.

COTC 101 TODAY. Are you new-ish to Church of the Covenant and want to find out more about who we are, our history, our two denominations, our 5-point missional plan, and what it means to join in membership? Then please join us **today** after worship upstairs in the Williams Library for about an hour. Please see Rev. Rob if you are interested or have questions.

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.

SEASON OF GENEROSITY – HELD. Starting today for the next three Sundays, our Generosity Generators will lead us through a season of Generosity. Be on the lookout for a letter that will be old school mailed to you. If you don't receive it by November 14, contact Nancy Stockford (*nancy.stockford@cotcbos.org*). We will dedicate our pledges during worship on **Sunday, November 23**.

SCHOLARS, ACTIVISTS, CHURCH FOLX! Join us on **Sunday, November 23, at 7:00 pm**, at COTC, as we host an important gathering of faith scholars and activists who will be attending the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature's Wisdom Circle: Gathering the resources of Scripture, Scholarship and Solidarity for a time such as this. More info at *https://clbsj.org/events/2025/11/23/wisdom-circle-at-sbl-aar/*. As a part of this gathering, we will be hosting a special vegan meal for this wisdom sharing "teach-in"–if you'd like to help prepare a dish, please email Rev. Rob (*rob.mark@cotcbos.org*). Thank you!

SACRED RECKONINGS SPIRITUAL EDUCATION SESSIONS. Join us on the first Sunday of each month after worship (in-person and online) as our Sacred Reckonings Team engages us in a series related to the beauty of repair through truth-telling, spiritual practices, relationships, advocacy, and wealth return. This is a learning opportunity that we pray will help us in these challenging days. Next session: **December 7**. Questions? Kathy Bull: *kaxianna@yahoo.com* or Rev. Rob: *rob.mark@cotcbos.org*.

SIGNATURE GATHERING FOR STATEWIDE RENT CONTROL. Through **November 16**, Trisha Thompson will be gathering signatures in the sanctuary after worship in support of a statewide effort to put rent control on the ballot for 2026. This initiative would effectively end Massachusetts' current ban on rent control by capping annual rent increases to no more than 5% across the Commonwealth. Massachusetts is currently experiencing a housing crisis and has become the fourth most costly state in the US for renters with nearly 60% of renters being rent burdened (spending over one-third of their income on rent). A coalition of interfaith and grassroots groups, including UU Mass Action, Episcopal City Mission, United Interfaith Action, and others are working to collect over 75,000 signatures in order to qualify for the 2026 ballot. Further details on this initiative and how to get involved can be found at *keepmasshome.com*.

SEASON OF JUBILEE. During the Season of Jubilee (September-November), we will be touching on themes from Covenant's 5-Year Missional Plan. You can access the plan on Covenant's website: *http://www.tinyurl.com/cotcbos5ymp*.

CORO ALLEGRO CONCERT. Covenant's tenant partner Coro Allegro (Boston's LGBTQ+ and allied classical chorus led by David Hodgkins) opens their season on **Sunday, November 16, at 3:00 pm,** in our sanctuary. This concert will feature Covenant's glorious organ, played by Jerick Cavagnaro. The program will consist of three radiant works that offer reflection, beauty, and solace in uncertain times. From grand organ-powered masterpieces to an intimate a cappella prayer, this concert invites the listener on a journey of spiritual and emotional depth.

BOSTON TROUBADOURS PRESENT: A MUSIC AND POETRY FAIR. Covenant's occasional guest organist, Yangfan Xu, will be performing in an exciting collaboration with the Trident Poetry Collective on **Thursday, November 20, at 8:00 pm**, in the Covenant sanctuary. The composer-performer collective presents an evening of original songs, organ music, and live poetry. Expect the unexpected: declamations dramatic, comic, rhymed, free, reflective, or totally nonsensical. Three musical sets will be played by the TroubaDours and their travelling circus of eclectic musicians. More information at: *https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-boston-troubadours-present-a-music-and-poetry-fair-tickets-1883236042699*.

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 also on *http://www.cotcbos.org*).

VIDEO CAMERAS/POSTING FULL SERVICE RECORDINGS. To best serve our diverse community and new worshippers, we livestream and record each service, including Celebrations & Concerns. Recordings of each service are available on our Worship Recordings Page (*cotcbos.org/worship-recordings*).

WEEKLY CALENDAR. Click here (cotcbos.org/calendar-of-events) to view the weekly calendar of events.

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

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, *Music Composition Fellow 2025-2026*
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*