# Church of the Covenant
## Boston Massachusetts

**Ash Wednesday**
**February 18, 2026, 6:30 pm**
**67 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116**

*"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."*

# Church of the Covenant

February 18, 2026

Ash Wednesday, 6:30 pm

**ZOOM LINK:** tinyurl.com/cotcworship

---

Welcome. Thank you for joining us on this sacred night. You are welcome to come in and sit up front, keeping in mind we will likely be a smaller group than on a Sunday. Please settle in as the contemplative music is playing, we will get started a few minutes after 6:30 pm.

Allow the music to guide you in meditative prayer and silent settling.

And remember to breathe.

In this hybrid service, we will celebrate communion. If you are joining us online, please locate something to put in a cup, and something to put on a plate. If you are worshipping with us via Zoom, mics will be automatically muted for the service.

Also in our service, we will engage in an old ritual of the imposition of ashes. Here are some ideas of gathering some sacred dust/soil/ashes equivalent:

- Find a little soil (sacred dirt) from a house plant (if not immunocompromised/ allergic) and mix it with a little water/cooking oil in a dish.
- Make some ash from matches or a candle wick and mix with a little olive/cooking oil in a dish.
- Carefully burn a small piece of paper in some aluminum foil, then when cool, add one drop of oil.
- Ground-up black eye shadow…
- Rumor has it burnt wine corks leave a good smudge…
- Air—if none of the above feels doable, simply use your finger to trace the sign of the cross on your forehead when invited, remembering together.

*When you hide your face, they are dismayed;*
*when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.*
*When you send forth your spirit, they are created;*
*and you renew the face of the ground.*
*But if you turn away from them, they panic. When you take away their breath, they die and turn again to dust. When you give them your breath, life is created, and you renew the face of the earth.*
*– Psalm 104:29-30*

**Gathering Contemplative Music**

**Opening Welcome**

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

**Kindling the Christ Light**

*** Call to Worship**

One: God of Grace, you called us forth from the dust of the earth;
you claimed us for Christ in the waters of baptism.
**Many: Look upon us as we enter these 40 days bearing the mark of ashes, and bless our journey through the valley of Lent to the font of rebirth. May our fasting be hunger for justice; our alms, a making of peace; our prayer, the chant of humble and grateful hearts.**
One: All that we do and pray is in the name of Jesus,
**Many: Through whom you proclaim your fierce love forever and ever. Amen.**

*** Hymn** *Sunday's Palms are Wednesday's Ashes* Tune: Beach Spring

Sunday's palms are Wednesday's ashes as another Lent begins;
thus we kneel before our Maker in contrition for our sins.
We have marred baptismal pledges, in rebellion gone astray;
now returning seek forgiveness; grant us pardon God this day.

We have failed to love our neighbors their offences to forgive,
have not listened to their troubles, nor have cared just how they live.
We are jealous, proud, impatient, loving over-much our things;
may the yielding of our failings be our Lenten offerings.

We are hasty to judge others, blind to proof of human need;
and our lack of understanding demonstrates our inner greed;
we have wasted earth's resources; want and suffering we've ignored;
come and cleanse us, then restore us; make new hearts within us God.

~Rae B. Whitney (1991)

*** An Out There Litany**

One: O Cosmic God of all that is and ever will be,
**Many: This Lent we long to follow and find you out there.**
One: Out there, beyond the walls of tradition, beyond the confines of state-sponsored hate,
**Many: Out there, beyond the comfort zones to seek you through new, sacred, equal exchanges.**
One: As we follow the call of Jesus through the wilderness,
**Many: May we stretch beyond convenience and habit to encounter new people, new ideas, and new life.**
One: For you call us the "called out ones,"
**Many: Help us go out in joy and be led forth in peace! Amen.**

**Readings from Scripture**

**Responsive Hebrew Bible Reading**– Isaiah 58:1-12

Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet!
Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins.
**Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways,**
**as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness**
**and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;**
**they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God.**
Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice? Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers.
**Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high.**
Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself?
Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?
Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to GOD?
**Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice,**
**to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free,**
**and to break every yoke?**
Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

**Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you,**
**the glory of GOD shall be your rear guard.**
Then you shall call, and GOD will answer; you shall cry for help, and God will say, "Here I am." If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,
**if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.**
GOD will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places,
and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.
**Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach,**
**the restorer of streets to live in.**

**Gospel Reading** – Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 (*Reading from the Roots* translation)

> "Careful: do not display righteousness in front of people, to be seen! If you do, you have no compensation from your Creator who is in heaven. When you give charity, do not trumpet your generosity, as the pretentious do in the congregations and in the streets, to be glorified by people. Trust me, I tell you: they already *have* their compensation! You, though, when you give charity, your left hand should not even know what your right hand does, so the charity you do is in secret, and your Creator who sees in secret will make it up to you. And whenever you pray, you shall not be as the pretentious, because they delight to stand up in prayer in congregations and on street corners, to flaunt themselves. Trust me, I tell you: they already *have* their compensation! But when you pray, enter into your most private room, shut your door, and pray to your Creator who is in secret, and your Creator who sees in secret will treasure you.

"When you fast, do not be morose like the pretentious, who put on an expression to parade their fasting. Trust me, I tell you: they already *have* their compensation! But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that your fasting is not apparent to people, but only to your Creator who is in secret, and your Creator who sees in secret will treasure you. Do not store up valuables on earth, where moth and decay ruin them, and where thieves break in and steal. Instead, store up valuables in heaven, where neither moth nor decay ruin, and where thieves do not break in and steal. Where your treasure is, there will be your heart."

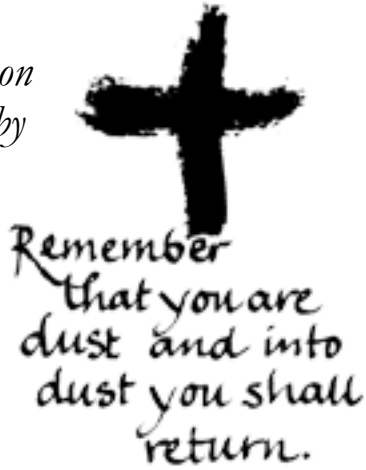
One: God is still speaking, the word of God,
**Many: Thanks be to God.**

**Collective Silence**

**Meditation**

**Prayer and Invitation to a Holy Lent**

*One: The first Christians observed with great devotion the days of Jesus' passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church to prepare for them by a season of penitence and fasting.*
*We invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word.*
*Let us contemplate more deeply, seek reconciliation more intentionally, and pursue justice more passionately.*




*** The Imposition of Ashes**

*At this time, you are invited to engage in a sacred ritual to remind yourself of your mortality, and your beloved nature. For those in person who wish to receive the imposition of ashes, while singing the chant, please come forward at this time. After receiving, please return via the outer aisle.*
*For those joining online, while singing the Taizé chant, you are invited to impose whatever ash-like reminder you have on yourself and/or someone you are with. If you don't have any ash-like substance, you are invited to use your finger and trace the sign of the cross on your forehead or hand.*

**Chant** *Jesus Remember Me*

**Holy Communion of the People**

**The Great Thanksgiving**

One: May God be with you!

**Many: And also with you.**

One: Beloved Dust, 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…

**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 (New Zealand Prayer Book)** (in unison)

**Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be, Mother and Father of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven: The hallowing of your name echo through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings! Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and testing, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.**

**Breaking of the Bread & Sharing of the Cup**

**Post Communion Prayer**

**Sending Hymn** *Day Is Done* James Quinn (b. 1919)

Day is done, but love unfailing dwells ever here;
Shadows fall, but hope, prevailing, calms every fear.
God our Maker, none forsaking,
Take our hearts, of Love's own making,
Watch our sleeping, guard our waking, be always near.

Dark descends, but light unending, shines through our night;
You are with us, ever lending new strength to sight:
One in love, your truth confessing,
One in hope of heaven's blessing,
May we see, in love's possessing, Love's endless light!

Eyes will close, but you unsleeping, watch by our side;
Death may come, in love's safekeeping, still we abide.
God of love, all evil quelling,
Sin forgiving, fear dispelling,
Stay with us, our hearts indwelling, this eventide.

**Closing Litany**

**The End is God's. The Beginning is God's.**
The Storm is God's. The Peace is God's.
**The Depths are God's. The Heights are God's**
The Shadow is God's. The Light is God's.
**For all times, all things and all, all belong to God.**
Travel with God to the end from the beginning.
**Walk slowly with the God of your salvation.**
Continue with God during the storm as well as the peace.
**Walk surely with the God of your liberation.**
Journey with God through the depths and the heights.
**Walk fully with the God of your restoration.**
Wait with God in the dark and the light.
**Walk always with the God of your assurance;**
For all times, all things and all, all belong to God.
**Amen.**

*** Benediction & Passing of the Peace**

## Worship Participants

**Worship Leaders** –Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard, Rev. Kate Carlisle
**Minister of Music** – Tom Handel
**Usher** – Trudi Veldman
**Digital Minister** – Diane Lauber
**Audio Visual Tech Team**
**Sexton** – Hudson Sangi
**Cover Art** – *Sow in Tears,* by Hannah Garrity © A Sanctified Art|sanctifiedart.org

## *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*