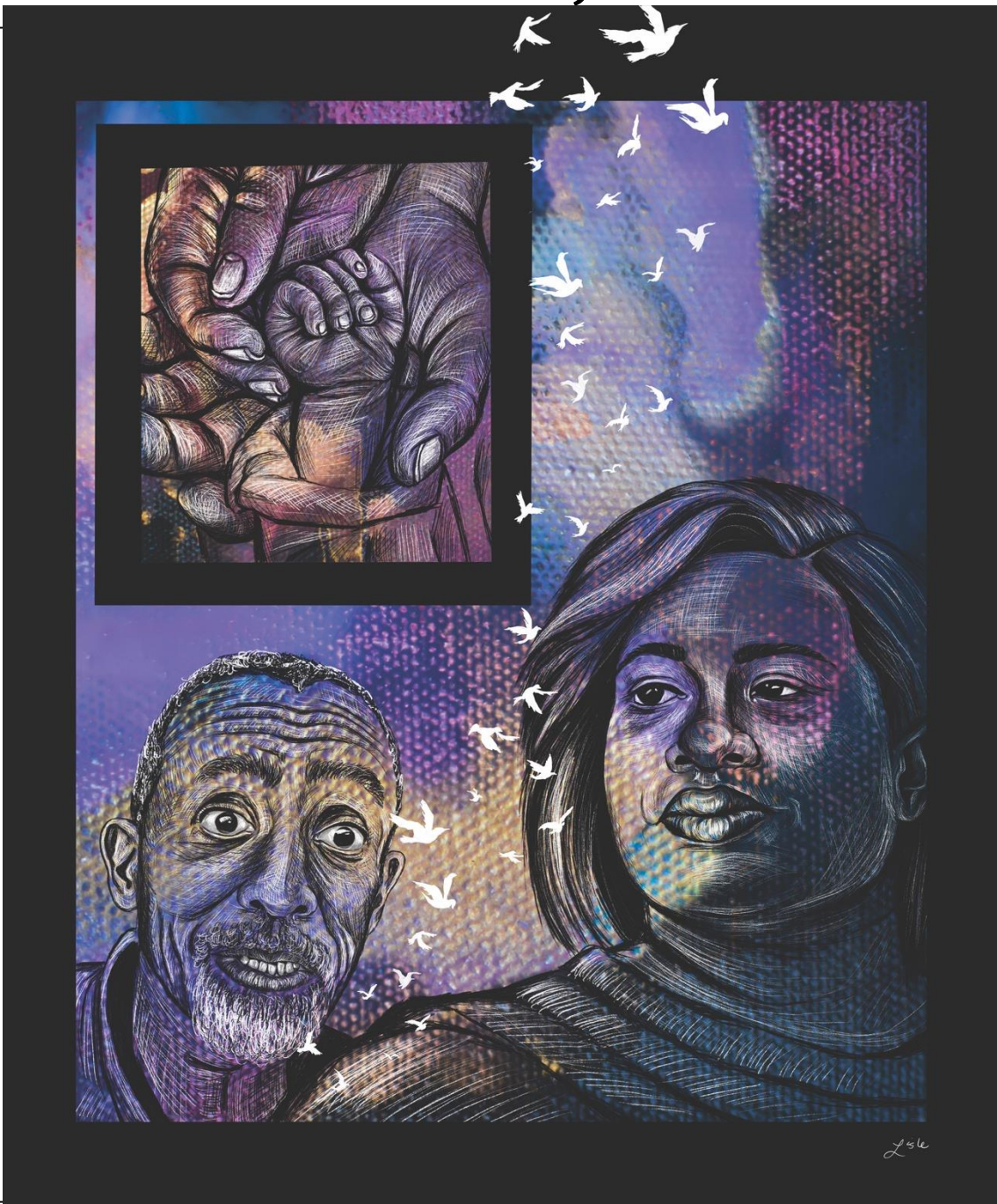


Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



The Feast of the Epiphany
January 7, 2024

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ
[**ZOOM LINK \(click here\)**](#)



Church of the Covenant
The Feast of the Epiphany
January 7, 2024, 10:30 am [Zoom Link](#)

Welcome and thank you for worshipping together for this “hybrid” service where some will be in the sanctuary at 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 *How Lovely Shines the Morning Star* (vs. 1) Dietrich Buxtehude

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you.

Many: And also with you.

*** Call to Worship**

One: We are searching for a light to guide us.

Many: **Arise, shine for our light has come!**

One: We are longing for inspiration to motivate us.

Many: **The glory of God has risen upon us.**

One: We are wishing for the world to change.

Many: **Look around, people are looking for God’s light in us.**

One: We are ready to see what God can do!

Many: **Our hearts rejoice! Together, let us shine!**

*** Kindling the Christ Light**

One: The light of Christ,

Many: **Thanks be to God!**

*** Opening Hymn**

What Child Is This?

Tune: *Greensleeves*

What Child is this, who laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping?

Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?

This, this is Christ we sing, whom shepherds guard and angels ring.

Haste, haste to bring our laud, the babe, the child of Mary.

Bring gifts of incense, gold, and myrrh, come one and all bring blessing
The holy child though meek and mild, has come, our liberation.
This, this is Christ we sing, whom shepherds guard and angels ring.
Haste, haste to bring our laud, the babe, the child of Mary.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

Many: God of light and darkness, we have seen the glimmer of
your star-light beckoning to us, but we have been distracted
and turned away to follow other paths. We confess that we
have not loved you with all our heart, with all our soul, with all
our mind, and with all our strength. We have not loved our
neighbors as ourselves. Forgive us, Holy One. Strengthen
our steps and guide us in your holy way of peace.

One: Let us now listen to God in silent prayer...

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

One: The God who promised never to leave us or forsake us has
come to us in Jesus Christ who binds up the brokenhearted,
heals all our infirmities, and relieves our burden of sin. So arise,
shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Beloved has
risen upon you:

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

*** Sung Response**

Refrain of We Three Kings

O star of wonder, star of light. Star with royal beauty bright.
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.

Readings from Scripture

Gospel Reading – Matthew 2:1-12

After Jesus's birth—which happened in Bethlehem of (Palestine), during the reign of Herod—astrologers from the east came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the newborn ruler of the Jews? We observed his star in the east and have come to honor him.” At this news Herod became greatly worried, as did all of Jerusalem. He gathered all the chief priests and religious scholars of the people, and he asked them where the Messiah was to be born.

They told him, “In Bethlehem of (Palestine); for this is what the prophet wrote:
‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the leaders of Judah;
since from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.’”

Herod called the astrologers aside and found out from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and get detailed information about the child; and when you have found him, report back to me word so that I may also go and honor him.”

After they heard Herod, the astrologers set out. The star that they had observed in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were filled with joy. Upon entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and honored him. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Because they had been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another route.

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

Sung Response

Refrain of We Three Kings

O star of wonder, star of light. Star with royal beauty bright.
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.

Introduction to Star Words and Prayer Stations

Music During Prayer Stations *Praetorius Christmas Mass (selections)*
Gabrieli Consort

Regathering Song

This Little Light of Mine

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine (x3)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine (x3)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

Call to Offering

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

Offertory

How Lovely Shines the Morning Star (vs. 2)

Dietrich Buxtehude

*** 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

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

* The Great Thanksgiving

One: May God be with you!

Many: And also with you.

One: People of Epiphany, 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

**Our God in heaven, holy is 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

Sharing of the Bread & Cup

Communion Meditation

How Lovely Shines the Morning Star

James Woodman

Post Communion Prayer

* Closing Hymn

A Star Shone Bright

1. A star shone bright a - cross the plain, and calmed the
 2. O Son of God, In - car-nate Word, O Wis dom's
 3. From Beth-le - hem, come to our day; re - veal to
 4. O star shine forth, once more this night, and flood our

earth so Love could reign. 'Twas in a child, that hope was
 Light, whom an - gels heard, come forth a - gain, our hearts con -
 us your ho - ly way. Be born a - gain, E - ter - nal
 streets with heav'n - ly Light; 'til ev' - ry heart in Christ shall

born, a dream ful - filled! O hap - py morn!
 sole. O heal our hurts, and make us whole.
 Fire; O Spir - it come, our souls in - spire.
 see the glo - ry of e - ter - ni - ty!

WORDS: F. Richard Garland, 2006

O WALY WALY

MUSIC: English folk melody; harm. by Dean B. McIntyre

LM

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* Charge and Benediction

* Exchange of the Peace

(Please exchange greetings of Christ's peace and reconciliation)

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: And also with you.

Worship Participants

Worship Leaders – Rev. Rob Mark, Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Liturgist – Karen Henry

Lector – Evans Naquin

Covenant Choir

Communion Servers – Tim Groves, Debbie Howland

Ushers – Holly Humphreys, Trudi Veldman

Digital Minister – Christine James

Audio Visual Tech Team – Venkatesh Balasubramanian, Abhishek John, Jon Schwarz

Sunday Sexton – Jesús Vargas

Cover Art – *Revelation* by Lisle Gwynn Garrity, A Sanctified Art, inspired by Luke 2:21-38, acrylic painting on canvas with digital drawing.

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 welcomed 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.

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.



COTC SNOW CANCELLATION PROCEDURE. In the event of a significant snowstorm over a weekend, please check our website to find out whether our in-person service has been cancelled. Zoom worship will still be held at the same link.

AN EPIPHANY CELEBRATION AFTER CHURCH TODAY! Please join us for an Epiphany Celebration for All Ages. Come on a flashlight walk through the darkened church right after the service. Led by three Wise Ones, we will bring light to all corners of the church. We will start in Bates Hall with a special cake that has beans inside. Whoever gets a piece of cake with a bean in it becomes a Wise One and helps guide us on our walk. Epiphany is a very special day, especially in Latin America and in our sister community in Dulce Nombre de Jesús, Nicaragua.

ALL-CHURCH PLANT-BASED POTLUCK NEXT WEEK! Please stay after worship on **Sunday, January 14**, to share food and conversation in Bates Hall. All are welcome, even if you didn't bring any food!

NICA COMPANIONS ADULT ED ON JANUARY 21. Please join us after church on **Sunday, January 21**, for a hybrid Adult CE conversation, led by Covenant's Nicaragua Companions, to discuss some of our members' experiences with economic inequity.

WELCOME CHILDREN & YOUTH!! 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. We welcome all children, youth, and families—those we know already and those who are here for the first time. 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 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 services (in-person and Zoom options). [Zoom Link for each service.](#)

- Sunday, January 7: Epiphany, Prayer Stations, Following the Light After Church
- Sunday, January 14: Rev. Rob Mark preaching, All-Church Plant-Based Potluck After Worship
- Sunday, January 21: Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard preaching, Nica Companions Adult Ed on Economic Inequity After Church, Life Alive Brunch After Church
- Sunday, January 28: Rev. Rob Mark preaching, Deacons Meeting After Church

ANNUAL MEETING. Our Annual Meeting will be **Sunday, February 4, 2024**, following worship.

ANNUAL REPORTS ARE DUE JANUARY 15, 2024! Please submit your 2023 annual reports for committees and staff members to our Parish Administrator, Nancy Stockford, at nancy.stockford@cotcbos.org. Deadline: no later than noon on Monday, January 15, 2024. Thank you!

ZOOM CHAT ON CONFLICTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND EUROPE.

Two Wars, One Morality: A comparative analysis of the conflicts in the Middle East and Europe. On **Wednesday, January 17, from 6:30 to 7:30 pm**, join A Faith That Does Justice for an online conversation with Peter Gyves, SJ MD, Founder and Executive Director of A Faith That Does Justice and Rev. Bryan Hehir, Secretary for Health and Social Services in the Cardinal's Cabinet in the Archdiocese of Boston. This virtual event is free and open to the public. Visit A Faith That Does Justice's website (<https://faith-justice.org/>) for more information.

BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS. Our weekly Bible Study meets on Wednesday mornings at 9:45 on Zoom. We are studying the book of Isaiah. If you'd like more information or want to be on the list to get regular reminders and Zoom info, contact Jan Gough at revjangough@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 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 and Concerns. If you would prefer not to be in occasional camera shots, you are welcome to sit on the outside aisles on either side of the sanctuary. Recordings of each service are available on our [Worship Recordings Page](#) (cotcbos.org/worship-recordings).

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

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 voucher.

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 after going outside the sanctuary 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 rest rooms. Please ask an usher to help you locate these resources.



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 outcasts, 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, and we strive to include them in our ministry. We maintain 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 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the United Church of Christ, and the Presbyterian Church USA to join couples of all sexual orientations in fully legal and holy marriage.

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, *Sunday Sexton*
Alan Lane, *Food Cupboard Coordinator*
Kelsie Lawhorn, *Child Care Provider*
Venkatesh Balasubramanian, *Digital Communications & Audio Visual Tech Manager*

CHURCH OFFICERS

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