Welcome to Church of the Covenant on January 9, 2022, for Epiphany Sunday. Please keep your mic on “mute”, but your voice and heart are free to fully join in with the songs and liturgies as we worship God while on Zoom. Please note this service is recorded and later posted on our church website.

Welcome & Announcements
One: Peace be with you.
Many: And also with you.

Prelude
We Three Kings
arr. Gazda and Clark
Anita Gram & Barbara Englesberg – Violins

Call to Worship
A Sanctified Art
One: We come to this time together –
Many: Each of us in our own place;
      Each of us on our own path.
One: The path is winding,
Many: And the path is not always clear,
One: And the path changes,
Many: But we are here.
One: God is walking us home.
Many: What a gift it is not to walk alone.
One: Let us worship Holy God.

Kindling the Christ Light

Opening Hymn
As with Gladness Those of Old
Tune: Dix
As with gladness those of old did their guiding star behold;
As with joy they hailed its light, leading onward, beaming bright;
So, true Morning Star, may we evermore your splendor see.

As with joyful steps they sped to that lowly manger bed,
There to bend the knee before One whom heaven and earth adore;
So may we with willing feet ever seek your mercy seat.
As they offered gifts most rare at that manger plain and bare,
So may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin’s alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to you from whom they spring.

Prayer for Grounding in God’s Grace

Many: God of changed plans, the Magi heard in a dream that they were to take a new way home—a different path, an untraveled road. And to our amazement, they did just that. The Magi packed their bags and went home by another way. We wish that change could be easy for us, but more often than not, when whispers of change come, we tend to clench our fists and hold on tighter. Forgive us for resisting change that might be holy. Forgive us for ignoring that there is more than one road home. Forgive us for failing to hear your invitation. Guide our steps to unfamiliar places.

One: Let us now continue our prayer to God in silence…

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God’s Grace

One: No matter which roads we take in this one wild and precious life, God walks with us. God never leaves our side. When the road changes and we find ourselves on a new path home, God is always there.

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

Sung Response:  

Gloria, Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, Gloria, alleluia, alleluia!
Reading from Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise magi from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’”

Then Herod secretly called for the wise magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

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

Epiphany Home Blessing – Carrying the Light

Breakout Rooms

Star Words

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

Offertory I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light Kathleen Thomerson
Doxology

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

Prayer of Dedication

Celebrations and Concerns

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

Pastoral Prayer

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.

Participating in Worship:

Worship Leaders – Rev. Rob Mark, Rev. Kate Carlisle
Minister of Music – Tom Handel
Liturgist – Karen Henry
Violin – Anita Gram, Barbara Englesberg

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 a member of staff in the chat. Be most welcome!
STAR WORDS: For several years now, we have received Star Words on Epiphany Sunday to serve as guides for prayer and discernment in the coming year. This year, we're distributing Star Words virtually. In worship today, you can private message Rev. Kate through the Zoom chat and they will randomly select a star word and send it to you in the chat. You can also email Rev. Kate (kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org) this week to request a star word. Whether you write your word on a post-it or cut out and decorate a star, put your star word somewhere you can see it and bring your thoughts back to it over the coming year.

READY TO LIVE OUT YOUR NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTION?? Let’s start the New Year by committing to climate justice! TIME FOR LIVING THE CHANGE: Our Climate Jubilee Team invites you to join “Time for Living the Change: Climate Friendly Lives for People of Faith”. This timely challenge for the rest of January will allow you to live out one simple but impactful climate friendly resolution in solidarity with other people of faith around the globe. Join us after worship THIS SUNDAY JAN. 9 on Zoom for 20 minutes to hear more and learn how to choose a low-carbon resolution, carry it out, and build community and momentum in the process. challenge for January. We will simply remain on the same zoom link as worship. Questions? Email Rev. Rob.

ANNUAL REPORT SUBMISSIONS: Our Annual Meeting will be Sunday, February 6, 2022 following worship. Thanks to all who have submitted contributions to the Annual Report. If you have not done so already, please submit any reports to Rev. Kate at kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org as soon as possible.

OMICRON AND ZOOM: In light of COVID’s Omicron spread, we have decided to prioritize public health and have shifted our worship to ZOOM ONLY through Sunday, February 6. This we pray will help keep our worship leaders and worshippers safe, and reduce the significant burden on our area medical professional caregivers in these challenging times. February 6 is also our Annual Meeting which once again needs to be held online for our community.

UPCOMING WORSHIP: Please join us each Sunday at 10:30am as we come together in community to pray, sing, share celebrations and concerns, and hear God’s still-speaking Word proclaimed. Zoom Link for each Sunday.
  ○ Sunday, January 9, Epiphany Sunday
  ○ Sunday, January 16, Rev. Rob preaching, Communion
  ○ Sunday, January 23, Rev. Kate preaching
  ○ Sunday, January 30, Rev. Joshua preaching
BOOSTERS: As a reminder, being “fully vaccinated” now includes having a booster when eligible. If you have questions about this, please reach out to pastors, staff or Deacons – we are here to help.

WEDNESDAY EVENING EPIPHANY PRAYERS 6-6:30pm: Our next weekly evening prayers will be this Wednesday, January 12, 2022, on Zoom.

BIBLE STUDY NEW DAY & TIME: The weekly Friday morning Bible Study has CHANGED TIMES AND DAY – and will now be held every Wednesday morning on Zoom at 9:15am. We’ve bid farewell to the Apostle Paul and his early church friends and will say hello to Hosea and the other ‘minor prophets.’ If you’d like more information or want to be on the list to get regular reminders and Zoom info, contact Nancy Ammerman, ntammerman@gmail.com.

NO PLACE AT THE INN? A CHALLENGING WINTER: For many reasons, this will be a challenging winter. One way we can help those experiencing homelessness in downtown Boston is to support our partners Women’s Lunch Place, who have an ongoing wish list for items, found here: https://womenslunchplace.org/in-kind-donations.

OUR TIFFANY WINDOWS WEBINAR: Jan. 13, 6pm: Historic New England is sponsoring a webinar on Thursday, January 13, 2022, from 6-7 PM, where Roberto Rosa will be presenting his preservation work on Covenant’s priceless Tiffany windows. We expect that this will not only be informative to a much larger preservation audience, but will generate interest in supporting the ongoing Renew the Light Campaign. Please attend this online event as it promises to be fascinating. Register here for the webinar.

CLIMATE JUBILEE BOOK DISCUSSION: Join us on Sunday January 30, 5pm on Zoom for a book discussion on Katherine Hayhoe’s new book Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World. This could make a great CHRISTMAS GIFT to someone you’d like to invite into this discussion, or for yourself! Please though, we ask you to avoid buying from Amazon.com and instead use this link to find a local bookstore if you feel safe going to in person, or a less eco-impactful company than Amazon to purchase from.

CHILDREN’S AND YOUTH PROGRAMMING: Once again, we’re postponing in-person gatherings to prevent COVID spread, and we’ll continue sending updates and resources via email. If you’re interested in getting involved with CYCE, please email Rev. Kate.
20s-30s-40s GROUP AT COVENANT: We have an active young adult group that meets regularly to create community, even while we can’t be together physically, including weekly prayer calls, brunches (sometimes online!), fellowship and support. If you would like to be added to our email list, contact Rev. Joshua at joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org

POSTING FULL SERVICE RECORDINGS/ PRAYERS ONLINE: Due to techno-challenges we have decided we will be posting the entire service that is livestreamed online on our Worship Recordings Page. Please let us know if you have any questions. Thanks.

BULLETIN COVER ART: “The Wise Men’s Dream” by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman, A Sanctified Art. Inspired by Matthew 2:1-12 | Digital painting. Statement from the artist: “The Wise Men follow the direction of the shimmering, dotted lights of the night sky, and receive instruction in the subconscious world of sleep. They are ready and willing to discern God’s will in the outward, tangible signs of Creation, as well as the inner contours of their own minds. God is in it all, and they are paying attention. Is this what it means to be wise? In this image, the Wise Men are sleeping, and the viewer has a window into their vibrant dream. Surrounding the dream is the deep blue patterning of stars and hands pointing in every direction except for the direction of God’s leading. These hands represent King Herod’s desperate search and desire to take out this threatening, newborn King of the Jews. The Wise Men have a choice. They could succumb to the pressure of the King, which is thick in the air and pressing in all around them, or they could choose to listen to the mysterious guiding of their sleeping vision. They decide to change up the narrative and resist the domineering, violent powers of this world, trusting their dream, and taking the long, likely dangerous, journey home by another way.”

WEEKLY CALENDAR Click here to view the weekly calendar of events.

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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 and inquirers 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 Lazard, *Associate Pastor*
- Thomas Handel, *Minister of Music*
- Bill Brown, *Building Manager*
- Rev. Kate Carlisle, *CYCE Coordinator / Parish Administrator*
- Nancy Stockford, *Financial Secretary*
- Fred Lopes, *Sunday Sexton*
- Alan Lane, *Food Cupboard Coordinator*

**CHURCH OFFICERS**

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