Church of the Covenant
Boston, MA

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ

ZOOM LINK (click here)
Welcome!!! Unless sharing, please keep your mic on “mute”, but your voice and heart liberated 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
How Lovely Shines the Morning Star (v. 1) Dietrich Buxtehude

Call to Worship

One: The heavens are telling the glory of God, and the sky proclaims its maker’s handiwork. One day tells its tale to another, and one night imparts knowledge to another.
Many: Although they have no words or language, and their voices are not heard, their sound has gone out into all lands, and their message to the ends of the world, where God has pitched a tent for the sun.
One: God’s teaching is perfect and revives the soul; God’s testimony is sure and gives wisdom to the foolish.
Many: God’s statutes are just and rejoice the heart;
God’s commandment is clear and gives light to the eyes.
One: The fear of God is clean and endures forever;
God’s judgments are true and righteous altogether.
Many: More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold, sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb.
One: Let the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our strength and our redeemer.

Kindling the Christ Light
Refrain: Healer of our every ill, light of each tomorrow, give us peace beyond our fear, and hope beyond our sorrow.

You who know our fears and sadness, grace us with your peace and gladness; Spirit of all comfort, fill our hearts. Refrain

In the pain and joy beholding how your grace is still unfolding, give us all your vision, God of love. Refrain

Give us strength to love each other, every sister, every brother; Spirit of all kindness, be our guide. Refrain

You who know each thought and feeling, teach us all your way of healing; Spirit of compassion, fill each heart. Refrain

Prayer for Grounding in God’s Grace

One: Beloved, we are each made in the divine image, and God called us good. Yet we go our own way, causing harm to ourselves, to one another, and to the planet. We fail to see the divine image in one another, and we act selfishly and without solidarity. We believe the lies of the powerful and repeat falsehoods that shape an unjust and cruel word. Trusting in the love and mercy of God, let us confess together:

Many: Merciful God, your justice protects those who are weak, yet we seek the shelter of privilege and power. Your righteousness redeems those who are poor, yet we seek the status of wealth and possessions. Your peace upholds those who are oppressed, yet we seek the security of weapons and retribution. Forgive us our sins, and lead us to true repentance, that we may trust you in all things; through Jesus Christ, we pray.

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

Assurance of God’s Grace

One: God’s mercy is from everlasting to everlasting. In Christ, we are a new creation, called to participate in the work of jubilee! Jesus proclaims good news to the poor and oppressed, announcing jubilee, sharing abundance, offering healing and wholeness, and bringing liberation to all of us. Therefore, let us celebrate together:

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

Sung Response:  

Gloria

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

Scripture Readings:

Hebrew Bible Reading: Nehemiah 8: 1-3, 5-6, 8-10

All the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had given to Israel. Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, ‘Amen, Amen’, lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground. So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading. And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, ‘This day is
holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep.’ For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. Then he said to them, ‘Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.’

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 4:14-21

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. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” 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.

**Sermon**

_Speaking Jubilee_

**Call to Offering**

Online Giving Option: [http://www.cotcbos.org/give.html](http://www.cotcbos.org/give.html)

*Click on Give Now, then choose Pledges or Gifts-General.*

**Offertory**

*How Lovely Shines the Morning Star* (v. 2) Buxtehude

**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.

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Participating in Worship:

Preacher – Rev. Kate Carlisle
Minister of Music – Tom Handel
Liturgist – Rev. Rob Mark
Lector – Mocky Day
Digital Minister – Rev. Joshua Lazard
Cantor – Austin Burns

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!

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 at least 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 23, Rev. Kate preaching
- Sunday, January 30, Rev. Joshua preaching
- Sunday, February 6, Rev. Rob preaching, Communion, Annual Meeting
- Sunday, February 13 – WINTER WALK

WORSHIP ON THE STREETS: Feb 13, Boston’s Winter Walk: Our worship service on Sunday, February 13 will be a bit different than usual. We will join in the 6th Annual Boston Winter Walk, as we walk 2 miles in solidarity with those experiencing homelessness in our city, and re-commit ourselves to the prayerful work of housing justice. There will be 3 options: to join the walk in person at 9am / to join it virtually on your own / or to join in a virtual “prayer” walk at home. Stay tuned for more details on how we will register. Info: [https://www.winterwalkboston.org/](https://www.winterwalkboston.org/)

BOOSTERS & FREE AT-HOME COVID TESTS: As a reminder, being “fully vaccinated” now includes having a booster within 60 days of when eligible. If you have questions about this, please reach out to pastors, staff or Deacons – we are here to help. **Every household is entitled to 4 free at-home kits** – sign up to have them sent to you (and even if you don’t plan to need them, think about getting them to have on hand to donate to neighbors in need): click here.

TIME FOR LIVING THE CHANGE: NOT TOO LATE TO JOIN!!!!!!!! Our Climate Jubilee Team invites our congregation to join in a “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. CLICK HERE TO SHARE YOUR RESOLUTION. For ideas, click here. Questions, please email Rev. Rob or Betty Southwick.

THE DENOMINATIONAL MEETINGS of the Central Congregational Society (Barbara Darling, chair) and the First Presbyterian Society (Nancy Hollomon & Anne Crane, co-chairs) will be held on 30 January 2022 at 11:50 AM on Zoom for the purpose of electing the nominees – Joan Tighe (UCC) and Donald Denniston (PCUSA) – to serve on the Nominating Committee for 2 years in the class of 2023.
THE ANNUAL MEETINGS OF THE CORPORATION AND CONGREGATION will be held on Sunday February 7, 2022 at 11:45 AM on Zoom for the purpose of adopting the 2022 budget, electing 3 members to the Covenant Council for a 3-year term, 4 members to the Board of Deacons for a 3-year term, and accepting 2 members to the nominating committee as elected at the denominational meetings.

WEDNESDAY EVENING EPIPHANY PRAYERS 6-6:30pm: Our next weekly evening prayers will be this Wednesday, January 26, 2022, on Zoom.

BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS: Our weekly morning Bible Study is each 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.

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. 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. See this TED Talk to get excited about the book!

20s-30s-40s UPCOMING BRUNCHES WITH ANIMATE VIDEO SERIES: 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. Our upcoming brunches that will also include some short video clips on faith that we will then discuss together, are February 20 and March 20—and the Zoom link is here. If you would like to be added to our email list, contact Rev. Joshua at joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org.
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.

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.

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*