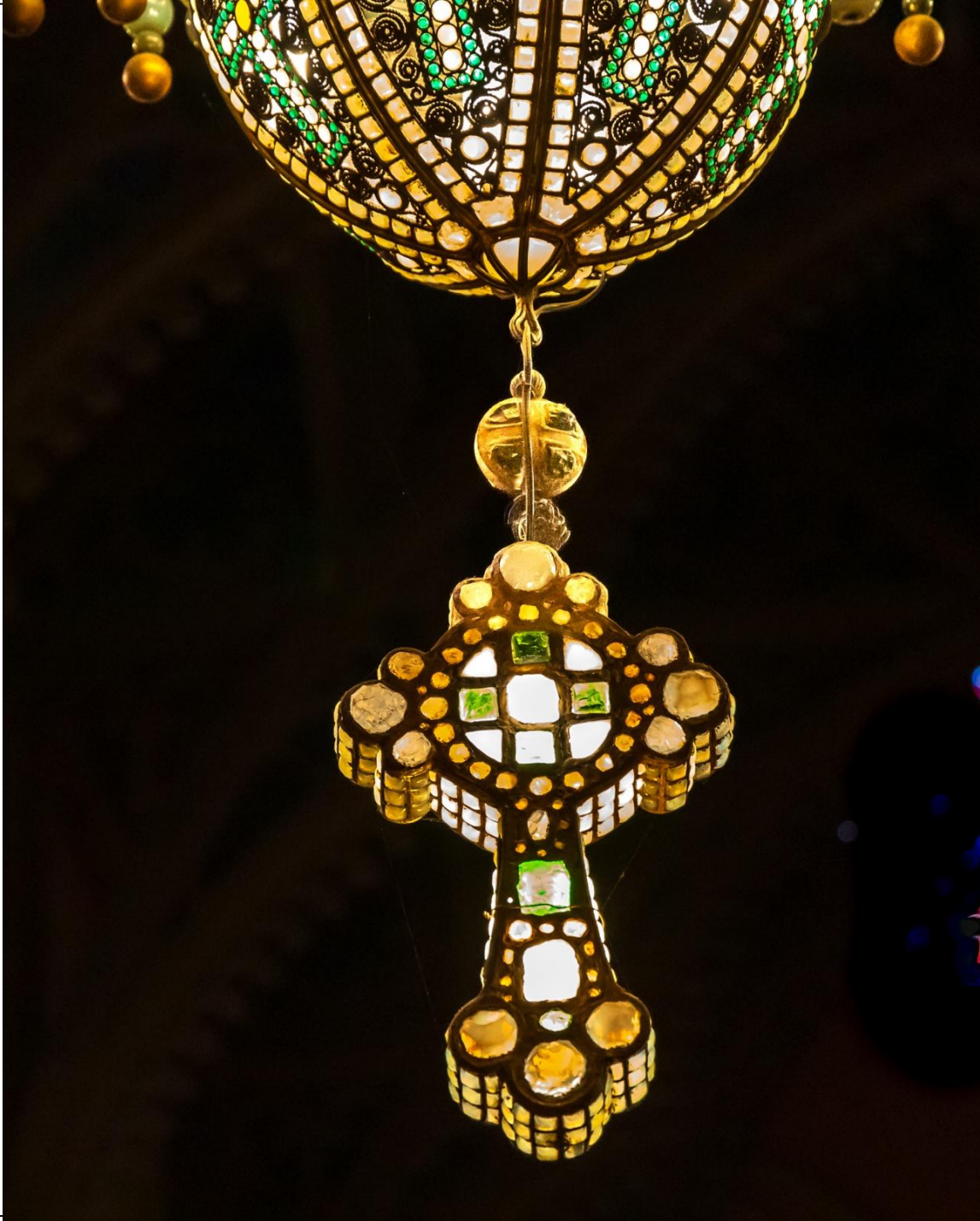


Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



Fourth Sunday in Epiphany
February 2, 2025

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ



Church of the Covenant
Fourth Sunday in Epiphany
February 2, 2025, 10:30 am [Zoom Link](#)

Welcome and thank you for worshipping together for this “hybrid” service where some will be in Bates Hall 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.*

Gathering Song

Down by the Riverside

I'm gonna lay down my burdens
Down by the riverside (x 3)
I'm gonna lay down my burdens
Down by the riverside study war no more

I ain't gonna study war no more
Ain't gonna study war no more
Ain't gonna study war no more (repeat)

Prelude

What a Covenant

arr. Bill Wolaver

Welcome & Announcements

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

*** Call to Worship**

One: Out of the silence at the beginning of time,
Many: **You spoke the Word of life.**
One: Out of the world's primeval darkness,
Many: **You flooded the cosmos with light.**
One: In the stillness of our souls, and from the fathomless depths,
Many: **The senses of our hearts are awake to you.**
One: From fresh soundings of life,
Many: **For new showings of radiant light, we wait in hope, O God.**

*** Kindling the Christ Light**

One: The light of Christ,
Many: **Thanks be to God!**

*** Opening Hymn NCH (black) 85**

I Woke Up This Morning

Woke up this morning with my mind stayed on Jesus (x3)

Refrain:

Hallelu, hallelu, hallejulah.

Singing and praying with mind stayed on Jesus (x3) *Refrain*

You can't hate your neighbor when your mind is – stayed on Jesus (x3) *Refrain*

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

Saint Brigid of Kildare

One: Christ who dwells in every creature, we pray to you,

Many: O Loving Day Star,

One: We would like the angels of Heaven to be among us.

Many: We would like an abundance of peace.

One: We would like full vessels of charity.

Many: We would like rich treasures of mercy.

One: We would like cheerfulness to preside over all.

Many: We would like Jesus to be present.

One: Let us open our hearts to God now in silent prayer..



Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

One: God has promised that whenever we desire to turn around and seek a new union with God, forgiveness is ours. That promise comes true now. Friends, know that in Christ Jesus, we are forgiven:

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

* Sung Response

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

Reading from Scripture

Gospel Reading – Luke 2:22-40

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to God (as it is written in the law of God, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to God”), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.” Now there was someone in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; who was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the God’s Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

“Holy One, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;
for my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people.”

And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by the law of God, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

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

Sung Response

This Little Light of Mine

Reflection on the Word

Call to Offering

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

Offertory

Say, Say Yes!

Melanie DeMore

*** 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**

Commissioning of the Nicaragua Delegation

Celebrations & Concerns

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

Pastoral Prayer

Celebration of Holy Communion

* Invitation

* Communion Hymn

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: Epiphany people, 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 and earth, 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

(in unison)

Our God in heaven, holy is your name. Your reign come; your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil, for yours are the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Post Communion Prayer

* Sending Song

We Shall Not Be Moved

We shall not, we shall not be moved (x2)

Just like a tree that's planted by the water, we shall not be moved.

The Spirit is upon us now, we shall not be moved (x2)

Just like a tree that's planted by the water, we shall not be moved.

On our way to freedom we shall not be moved (x2)

Just like a tree that's planted by the water, we shall not be moved.

* 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 – Evans Naquin

Lector – Tim Groves

Covenant Choir

Communion Servers – Debbie Howland, Sally Pomeroy

Ushers – Linda Pursley, Marnie Warner

Digital Minister – Trudi Veldman

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

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 welcomed during this service. If you have any questions about who we are as a community of faith, please reach out an Usher in person or to 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.



ANNUAL MEETING TODAY! The annual meetings of the Corporation and Congregation will be held today, **Sunday, February 2**, after worship at Church of the Covenant and on Zoom (hybrid meeting) for the purpose of adopting the 2025 budget, electing three members to the Covenant Council for three-year terms, three members to the Board of Deacons for three-year terms, one member to the Board of Deacons for a two-year term, and accepting two members to the Nominating Committee as elected at the denominational meetings. **Note:** If you join online, please use the same Zoom link as the worship service. The meeting will start approximately 25 minutes after the end of the worship service to allow for setting up tables and eating a simple lunch. You are invited to take a break, have a bite to eat, and join us for the meeting.

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.

UPCOMING WORSHIP. Please join us each Sunday at 10:30 am and during the special services listed below 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, February 9: Boston Winter Walk (Worship in the Streets)
- Sunday, February 16: Rev. Rob preaching, Holy Communion, Return to Sanctuary!, All-Church Potluck Following Worship
- Sunday, February 23: Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard preaching

WORSHIP IN THE STREETS: BOSTON'S WINTER WALK. On **Sunday, February 9**, we will once again take our worship to the streets by joining the 9th annual Boston Winter Walk, walking two miles in shoulder-to-shoulder solidarity with those experiencing homelessness in our city, and re-committing ourselves to the prayerful work of housing justice. There will be three options: to join the walk in person at 9:00 am; to join the walk virtually on your own; or to join in a virtual “prayer walk” at home. We are invited to join Women’s Lunch Place for a pancake brunch afterward in Bates Hall! To register, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/ww2025register> and RSVP to Covenant staff at <https://tinyurl.com/cotcwinterwalk2025>.

SPIRITUAL EDUCATION ON FEBRUARY 23. Join us after worship on **Sunday, February 23**, for a Spiritual Education session to discuss the documentary *Bad Faith*. This film explores the dangerous rise of Christian Nationalism in the United States. Part archival chronicle, part exposé, the documentary shows the secretive religious machinery that has relentlessly sought to destroy American democracy in order to promote its theocratic and authoritarian vision. Please watch the documentary before our discussion. You can watch the film for free through the following streaming services: Amazon Prime, Peacock TV, and Tubi. For more information, please contact Rev. Joshua at joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY UPDATE. The Membership Development Committee will be preparing the 2025 edition of Covenant’s Membership Directory. If you have any changes to your contact information (email, phone, address), please email Parish Administrator Nancy Stockford: nancy.stockford@cotcbos.org.

WORSHIP IN BATES HALL. Due to repair of the chandelier in the sanctuary, we will hold in-person worship downstairs in Bates Hall until February 16.

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.

BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS. Our weekly Bible Study meets on Wednesday mornings at 9:45 on Zoom. We are studying the book of Acts, exploring the movement of the Christian community throughout the Jewish, Greek, and Roman worlds. 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 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](http://cotcbos.org/calendar-of-events) (cotcbos.org/calendar-of-events) to view the weekly calendar of events.

*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!*

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. A weekend discount is also available for longer periods: \$10 for up to eleven (11) hours. A scannable parking voucher is available from an usher and at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/cotcsundayparking>

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 restrooms. 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 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 Massachusetts 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*
Alan Lane, *Food Cupboard Coordinator*
Venkatesh Balasubramanian, *Sound Engineering & Audio Visual Tech Manager*
Soyoung Cho, *Childcare Provider*

CHURCH OFFICERS

Kathryn Barry, *President of the Corporation*
Trudi Veldman, *Clerk of the Council*
Jon Schwarz, *Moderator of the Board of Deacons*
Faith Perry, *Treasurer*