

# Church of the Covenant

## Boston, MA



**Transfiguration Sunday**  
**All-Ages**  
**February 4, 2024**

*Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ*



## Church of the Covenant Transfiguration All-Ages Sunday

February 4, 2024, 10:30 am [Zoom Link](#)

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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

I'm gonna lay down my sword and shield  
Down by the riverside (x 3)  
I'm gonna lay down my sword and shield  
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

*Fairest Lord Jesus*

arr. Teresa Wilhelmi

### Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

### \* Call to Worship

One: Holy Jesus, as you showed the Wise Ones a new road in a time of cruelty and fear,

Many: **Reveal your hope to us.**

One: As you showed yourself as God's Beloved when you were baptized,

Many: **Reveal your love to us.**

One: As you showed yourself as a prophet proclaiming jubilee,

Many: **Reveal your justice to us.**

One: As you showed your shining face on a sacred mountaintop,

Many: **Reveal your light to us.**

**\* Kindling the Christ Light**

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

**\* Opening Hymn** NCH (black) 433

*In the Bulb There Is a Flower*

In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree;  
In cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free!  
In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be,  
Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

There's a song in every silence, seeking word and melody;  
There's a dawn in every darkness, bringing hope to you and me.  
From the past will come the future; what it holds, a mystery,  
Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

In our end is our beginning; in our time, infinity;  
In our doubt there is believing; in our life, eternity.  
In our death, a resurrection; at the last, a victory,  
Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

**Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace**

**Many:      Again and again, Jesus shows us that he is Emmanuel, God with us. Again and again, Jesus teaches us to work for peace and liberation. Again and again, Jesus reveals God's Love. Sometimes, we miss the point. Sometimes, we continue harmful ways. Sometimes, we are afraid to be who God calls us to be. God of glory, give us clarity and courage. God of glory, guide us along your Way. God of glory, transform this world.**

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

**Listening to God in Silent Prayer**



## Assurance of God's Grace

One: In this season of epiphanies, Jesus shows us who he is and why he came, over and over again. We do not have to comprehend eternity all at once. The work of transformation and liberation are not on our shoulders alone. See, even now, God's purposes and plans are being uncovered. Look, even now, God's love is making all things new. Therefore, let us celebrate together:

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

## Readings from Scripture

**Gospel Reading** – Matthew 17:1-9a (from *The Message*)

Six days later, three of them saw that glory. Jesus took Peter and the brothers, James and John, and led them up a high mountain. His appearance changed from the inside out, right before their eyes. Sunlight poured from his face. His clothes were filled with light. Then they realized that Moses and Elijah were also there in deep conversation with him. Peter broke in, "Teacher, this is a great moment! What would you think if I built three memorials here on the mountain—one for you, one for Moses, one for Elijah?"

While he was going on like this, babbling, a light-radiant cloud enveloped them, and sounding from deep in the cloud a voice: "This is my Son, marked by my love, focus of my delight. Listen to him." When the disciples heard it, they fell flat on their faces, scared to death. But Jesus came over and touched them. "Don't be afraid." When they opened their eyes and looked around all they saw was Jesus, only Jesus. Coming down the mountain, Jesus swore them to secrecy. "Don't breathe a word of what you've seen."

One: God is still speaking, the word of God,

Many: **Thanks be to God.**

**Sung Response**

*This Little Light of Mine*

**Prayer Stations**

**Regathering Song**

*This Little Light of Mine*

**Call to Offering**

Online Giving Option: <http://www.cotcbos.org/give.html>

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

**Offertory**

*You are the Light of the World (Godspell)*

Stephen Schwartz

**\* 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**

*Cast Your Fate to the Wind*

Vince Guaraldi

## **Post Communion Prayer**

**\* Closing Hymn** NCH (black) 181

*You Are Salt for the Earth, O People*

You are salt for the earth, O people: salt for the reign of God!

Share the flavor of life, O people: life in the City of God!

*Refrain:*

Bring forth the reign of mercy, bring forth the reign of peace;

Bring forth the reign of justice, bring forth the City of God!

You are a light on the hill, O people: light for the City of God!

Shine so holy and bright, O people: shine for the City of God! *Refrain*

You are a seed of the Word, O people: bring forth the reign of God!

Seeds of mercy and seeds of justice, grow in the City of God! *Refrain*

We are a blessed and a pilgrim people: bound for the reign of God!

Love our journey and love our homeland: love is the City of God! *Refrain*

**\* 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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**Worship Participants**

**Worship Leaders** – Karen Henry, Diane Lauber, COTC children & youth, Rev.

Kate Carlisle, Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard, Rev. Rob Mark

**Minister of Music** – Tom Handel

**Covenant Choir**

**Vocal Soloist** – Kathryn Barry

**Communion Servers** – Debbie Howland, Sally Pomeroy

**Ushers** – Anne Crane, Holly Humphreys

**Digital Minister** – Trudi Veldman

**Audio Visual Tech Team** – Venkatesh Balasubramanian, Jon Schwarz

**Sextons** – Jesús Vargas, Fred Lopes

**Cover Art** – Jesus Mafa, Cameroon, 1973. [diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=48307](http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=48307)

**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](https://cotcbos.org).



**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, February 11: Winter Walk "Worship in the Streets"
- Wednesday, February 14 at 6:30 pm: Ash Wednesday Service in Bates Hall
- Sunday, February 18: First Sunday in Lent, Rev. Rob Mark preaching, Life Alive Brunch After Worship
- Sunday, February 25: Second Sunday in Lent, Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard Preaching, All-Church Potluck & Deacons Meeting After Worship

**ANNUAL MEETING TODAY!** The annual meetings of the Corporation and Congregation will be held today, **Sunday, February 4**, following worship at Church of the Covenant and on Zoom (hybrid meeting) for the purpose of adopting the 2024 budget, electing members to the Covenant Council and the Board of Deacons, and accepting members to the Nominating Committee as elected at the denominational meetings. Lunch will be provided by members of Council.

**WELCOME CHILDREN & YOUTH!!** Today is an All-Ages Worship, and kids and youth of all ages are encouraged to stay in worship for some or all of the service and to participate fully in the prayer stations. Families should feel free to come and go from the nursery during worship. 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 information regularly via email, so please email Rev. Kate at [kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org](mailto:kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org) if you want to receive updates!



## **WORSHIP IN THE STREETS: BOSTON'S WINTER WALK NEXT**

**SUNDAY!** On **Sunday, February 11**, we will once again take our worship to the streets by joining the 8th 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 <http://tinyurl.com/cotcwinterwalk-inperson> and RSVP to Covenant staff at <http://tinyurl.com/cotcwinterwalk2024>.

**GBIO IN-DISTRICT MEETING.** On **Thursday, February 15, at 7:00 pm**, the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization is organizing an In-District Meeting with Representatives Livingston and Michlewitz at First Church Boston UU. This is one of several meetings with state senators and representatives where we will be asking for their commitment to:

- \$1.6 billion for state-funded public housing
- at least \$189 million for the operating budget in public housing
- the real estate transfer fee to increase affordable housing
- state IDs for people who are returning from prison upon release
- \$9 million in rental assistance for those who are returning from incarceration

GBIO is hoping to turn out 50 to 80 people to show our representatives that this matters to us. Bring your friends, neighbors, family members. The more people we have the more power we have to educate our legislators and hold them accountable—so let’s turn out strong on February 15 for housing justice! Register here: <https://secure.everyaction.com/Ms0kp9crDU28bkCwC8avfg2>.

## **GREATER BOSTON INTERFAITH ORGANIZATION HOUSING**

**JUSTICE ACTION.** Join GBIO on **Sunday, March 3, at 3:00 pm**, to push the Housing Justice Campaign across the finish line! Major action to call for the passing of the Affordable Homes Act and GBIO’s budget and legislative asks to:

- Improve public housing,
- Expand affordable homeownership and rental, and
- Improve housing access for Returning Citizens.

At the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center, 100 Malcolm X Boulevard, Roxbury, MA 02120. To register: [bit.ly/gbiomarch3](http://bit.ly/gbiomarch3).

**BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS.** Our weekly Bible Study meets on Wednesday mornings at 9:45 on Zoom. We are studying the Gospel of Mark. 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](mailto: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](http://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.

**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](http://cotcbos.org/worship-recordings)).

**WEEKLY CALENDAR.** Click [here](#) ([cotcbos.org/calendar-of-events](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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, *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*