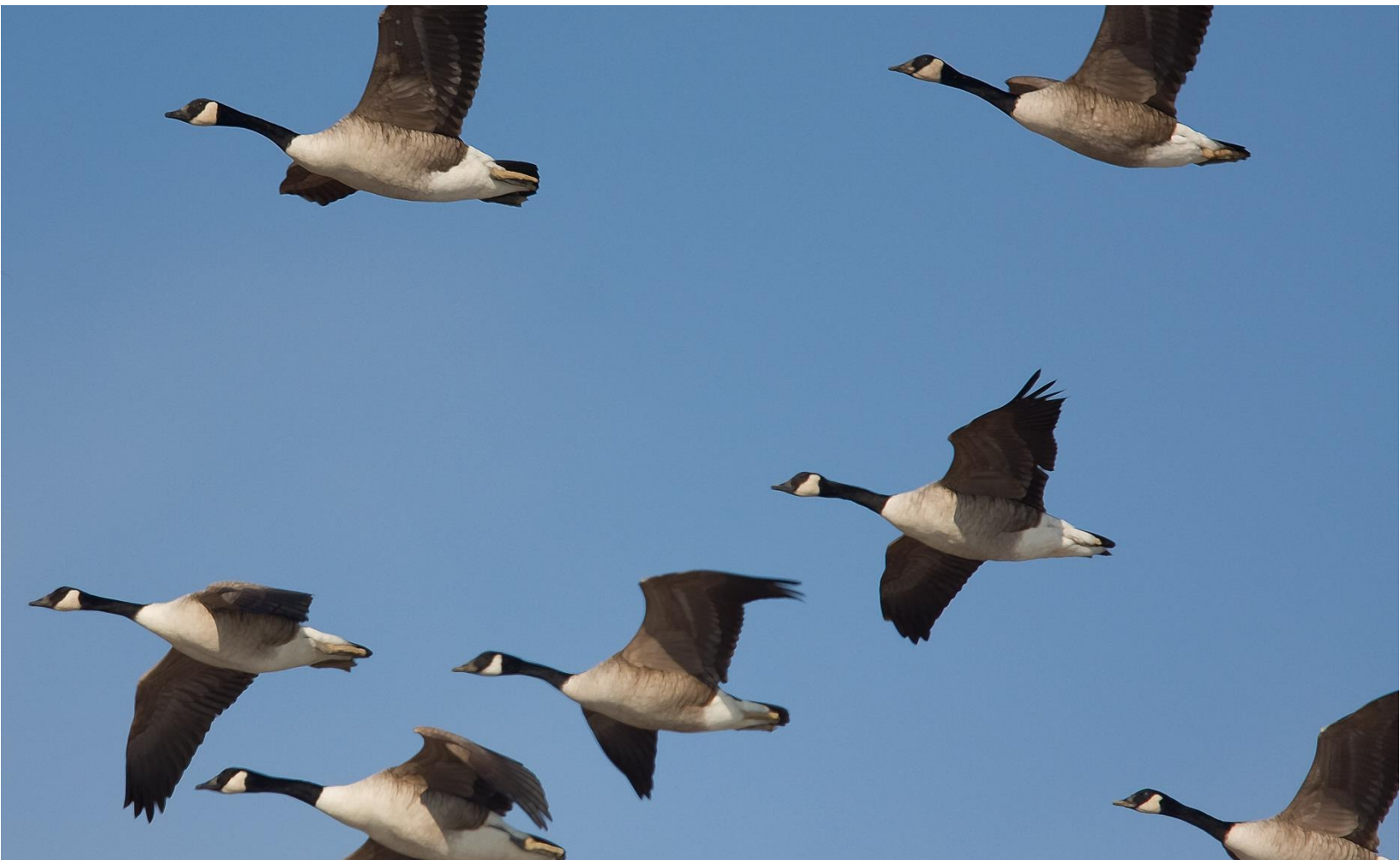


Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



Bird Power: MIGRATE
The Fourth Sunday in Lent
Celebration of the Word Service
March 10, 2024

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ



Church of the Covenant
The Fourth Sunday in Bird Power Lent: MIGRATE
Celebration of the Word Nica Companions Led Service

March 10, 2024, 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.*

Prelude

Canto de Meditación

Carlos Mejía Godoy
(translation at end)

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

*** Call to Worship**

Carlos Mejía Godoy, the composer of Canto de Meditación from the Misa Campesina Nicaragüense (Mass for the working class) is a Nicaraguan composer who has been honored with Nicaragua's highest cultural distinction, the Order of Rubén Darío. The call to worship is drawn from the second verse of the English translation.

One: Like these little birds we sing to you today, O God,

Many: **Asking you to join us in strength and love,
We praise you a thousand times ...**

One: because you were rebellious,

Many: **fighting night and day**

One: against the injustice of humanity,

Many: **fighting night and day**

One: against the injustice of humanity.

Like these little birds we sing to you today, O God.

Many: **We praise you a thousand times...**

*** Kindling the Christ Light**

One: The light of Christ,

Many: **Thanks be to God!**

*** Opening Hymn** NCH (black) 340 (*verses below*)

We Are People on a Journey

1. Somos pueblo que camina por la senda del dolor.

Estribillo: Acudamos jubilosos a la santa comunión.

2. We are people on a journey, pain is with us all the way.

Refrain: Joyfully we come together at the holy feast of God.

3. God has sent the invitation to the humble and the poor. *Refrain*

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

Many: O Loving God, Our Mothering Hen, this Lent we long to become free and unfettered. As we engage this sacred season, help us to shatter the chains of all that holds us from your love. As we look at our world, we confess there is too much injustice and pain. Too many people are forced by climate, war, economic inequality, and political unrest to leave their homes in search of safe nests. And too often these your beloveds only encounter hatred, judgment, and separation. So we pray to you Our Loving Migrant God—who keeps no borders—help us bring lasting sanctuary and healing to all communities.

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

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

One: Friends, as we migrate back and forth in search of God's healing,

Many: May our movements for love and peace know no boundary.

One: As we call out to each other in accompaniment and prayer,

Many: May our collective solidarity be beautiful like birdsong.

One: And as we remember we are as precious as the sparrow,

Many: May we continue to flock together as your beloved community.

One: In the shadow of God's wings, let us celebrate together:

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

*** Sung Response** NCH (black) 475 (refrain)

I sing because I'm happy,
I sing because I'm free,
God's eye is on the sparrow,
And I know God watches me.

God's Eye is on the Sparrow



Introduction to Reflection on the Word

New Testament Reading – Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Holy One added to their number those who were being saved.

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

Many: **Thanks be to God.**

Reflections from Dulce Nombre de Jesús

Order of Sharing: Gloria, Ruber, Mildren, Mariana, Elda, Cristel,
Johanna, Tahina, Marianna, Ruber

Reflections from Covenant

Call to Offering

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

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

Offertory

The Old Year Has Passed Away, Chorale and Prelude

J. S. Bach

*** Doxology**

Tune: Old Hundredth

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

*** Prayer of Dedication**

Celebrations & Concerns

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

Pastoral Prayer

*** Closing Hymn**

God, You Move Across the Borders

(HOLY MANNA 8.7.8.7 D, "God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens")

God, you move across the borders with the ones who need to flee.
You walk with the weary traveler; you go with the refugee.
You cry out from mass detention; you seek justice, here denied.
You enfold with great compassion those the nations push aside.

God, you move among the suffering in this time of illness here.
You work through the people offering care amid the pain and fear.
In our grief and isolation, in the times it's hard to cope,
You bring peace and consolation; you bring joy and love and hope.

God, you break down mighty barriers—sins we've sanctioned far too long.
We have walked on paths of privilege; you have moved to right the wrong.
You have sent your prophets to us, calling racist ways a sin.
You have judged us and renewed us; you have shown that love will win.

God, you move across the barriers, offering love in Jesus Christ.
Through your Son, our Lord and Savior, you have called: "Now share my life!"
By your Spirit, give us courage; help us boldly move to be
Loving, justice-seeking neighbors building your community.

*** 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 – Kathy Bull, Mocky Day, Tim Groves, Karen Henry, Debbie Howland, Diane Lauber, Linda Pursley, Jesús Vargas, Rev. Rob Mark

Guest Organist – Tomer Rozen

Cantors – Mocky Day, Tim Groves

Ushers – Anne Crane, Denice Thornhill

Audio Visual Tech Team – Venkatesh Balasubramanian, Abhishek John

Digital Minister – Trudi Veldman

Sexton – Jesús Vargas

Cover Art, “Migrating Canada Geese” – Brooks Mathewson

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.



WANT TO JOIN COTC? We'd love to welcome you as our newest member. Did you know we have three forms of membership at Church of the Covenant? Speak to pastors Rob or Joshua at any point, or email our Parish Administrator Nancy if you'd like to know more: nancy.stockford@cotcbos.org.

UPCOMING WORSHIP. Please join us each Sunday at 10:30 am (and Holy Week services) 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, March 17: Fifth Sunday in Lent, CALL, Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard preaching, Communion, Life Alive Brunch After Worship
- Sunday, March 24: Palm Sunday, FLOCK, All-Ages Worship
- Friday, March 29: 7:00 pm, Good Friday Tenebrae Service with Seven Last Words, with Newton Presbyterian Friends
- Saturday, March 30: 7:00 pm, Intergenerational Easter Vigil Service
- Sunday, March 31: Easter, Rev. Rob Mark preaching, Redline Brass

ALL-CHURCH BOOK DISCUSSION TODAY! Join us after worship today, **Sunday, March 10**, for an Adult Ed. and all-church read of *Transforming: The Bible & the Lives of Transgender Christians* by Austen Hartke. During this Lenten season in which we seek a more “free and unfettered” world, and as Covenant continues living into and growing our Open and Affirming and More Light commitments, we will read this important book, sharing the stories of several trans Christians and inviting readers into trans theology. Rev. Kate and Rev. Rob will lead the discussion, and we hope you'll come ready to participate, even if you haven't read the book!

LENTEN BIRD COVER PHOTOS. Throughout Lent, our bulletin images are being provided to us by **Brooks Mathewson**. Brooks is an ecologist, educator, and photographer with a Master's in Forest Science from Harvard University. He has published over two dozen peer-reviewed papers, technical reports, and popular articles on his research on terrestrial salamander ecology, tree phenology, breeding bird biology, and bird migration. Brooks' photography has been published in magazines, newspapers, textbooks, and conservation reports and has been displayed at the National Science Foundation, Harvard Forest, Appalachian Mountain Club, National Wildlife Refuges, Massachusetts and Rhode Island Audubon Society Sanctuaries, libraries, and in personal collections. Brooks has designed and led numerous citizen science research projects focusing on urban ecology and has taught natural history, ecology, and photography to elementary, middle school, high school, college, and continuing education students. He has appeared on radio and television programs and has given over one hundred lectures to the general public.

CLIMATE HOPE & RESILIENCE MAPPING. Receive the invitation from our Climate Jubilee Team to join us on **Sunday, March 17**, for part two of the workshop led by climate resilience ethicist Dr. Tallessyn Zawn Grenfell-Lee, MDiv, PhD. We will gather with sustainable snacks and hot beverages in the sanctuary (and on Zoom) to do some important followup work to our workshop on Unshakeable Hope after worship on Sunday, March 3, and specifically dive deeper into some community capacity mapping as we look at how our church community can specifically respond with faith and action to the climate crisis. Questions? Email Rob at revrobmark@gmail.com.

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!

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.

WEDNESDAY EVENING PRAYERS “A Word from a Bird” 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). During Lent, we will start each service with congregants and experts sharing some bird wisdom (“word from a bird”).

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.

Translation of *Canto de Meditación*, from “Misa Campesina Nicaragüense”
Carlos Mejía Godoy

Before the day is born, the birds of the bush
give us your tunes, los güises and zenzontes,
loud pecking from a carpenter you hear,
that at the top of a tree his house builds, where he will live,
and a sparrow jumps from one branch to another, very close to there.

Like these little birds I sing to you today, Lord,
asking you to join us in strength and love,
I praise you a thousand times ... because you were rebellious,
fighting night and day against the injustice of humanity,
fighting night and day against the injustice of humanity.

A thousand united peasants we sing to you,
we come down from the hills with our saddlebags full of love,
for being the rock, the rock, the guide and vigilante,
for being the tayacán, the tayacán of my entire town,
for being the tayacán, the tayacán of my entire town.

Sing pijules, zanates and pocoyos,
come chichilotes, the grasshoppers and the curlew
let the hummingbird sing canaries and chocoyos
together with the macuá, cua, cua, cua,
sing happy everyone, together with the macuá, cua, cua, cua,
sing happy everyone, together with the macuá, cua, cua, cua,
sing happy everyone.



Guardabarranco – National bird of Nicaragua

“Migratory Birds”

Dora Sigerson Shorter

I have listened for the beat
Of slow wings across the sea.
In their strange and dumb retreat
From their foreign liberty.
Come the birds from northern lands,
Where the Russian sleigh-bells chime,
From the hungry desert sands
Of a southern clime.
Come the birds where Eastern air,
Pierced by lofty minaret,
Echoes far the Turkish prayer
Of a God we half forget.
In my garden I have strayed
Through the warm sweet days of Spring,

Bent to each small nest, delayed
By the young birds' fluttering.

To the soft, song-laden wind
Leant in hope and half in fear,
One low perfect note to find
In the joyous tumult here.
'There's no bird upon the wing,
'There's no fledgeling in the nest,
'There's no song where others sing
More glorious than the rest.
Is he caged without release
Who makes all lovely things to be?
What holds the gentle bird of Peace,
God's hand, or human frailty?

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, *Sexton*

Alan Lane, *Food Cupboard Coordinator*

Venkatesh Balasubramanian, *Digital Communications & Audio Visual Tech Manager*

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*