

# Church of the Covenant

## Boston, MA



## **Bird Power: FLOCK**

## **Palm Sunday**

## **March 24, 2024**

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



# Church of the Covenant

## Palm Sunday

### Bird Power Lent: FLOCK

March 24, 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.*

#### Prelude

*Allegro from Organ Concerto in F*  
“The Cuckoo and the Nightingale”

G. F. Handel  
arr. M. Dupré

#### Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you.

Many: And also with you.

#### \*Call to Worship

*from Psalm 118*

One: Give thanks to God, who is good;

Many: **God’s steadfast love endures forever!**

One: Let all the people proclaim,

Many: **God’s steadfast love endures forever!**

One: I give thanks to you, God, for you answered me,  
and you have become my salvation.

Many: **The same stone the builders rejected has become the chief  
cornerstone. This is God’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.**

One: This is the day that the Lord has made.

Many: **Let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

One: Blessed is the one who comes in the name of peace.

Many: **Hosanna in the highest!**

## Gospel Reading – John 12:12-15

The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting,

“Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Holy One—the King of Israel!”

Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written:

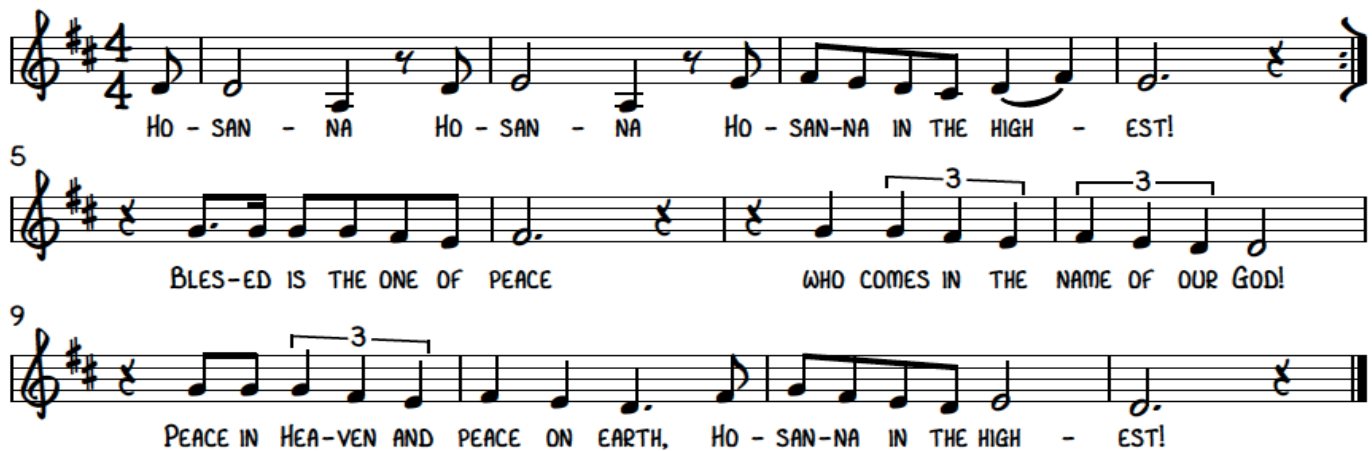
“Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt!”

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

Many: Thanks be to God.

## Invitation to the Procession

### \* Congregational Procession



### \* Opening Hymn NCH (black) 216

*All Glory, Laud, and Honor*

All glory, laud, and honor to you, O Christ, we sing,  
To whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring!  
The people of the Hebrews with palms adorned your way;  
Our praise and prayer and anthems we offer you this day.

O Promised One of Israel, of David's royal line,  
The one called "God's beloved," of flesh and yet divine,  
To you, before your passion, they sang their hymns of praise;  
To you, now high exalted, our melody we raise.

As you received their praises, receive our prayers today,  
Whose justice and whose mercy and sovereignty hold sway.  
All glory, laud, and honor to you, O Christ, we sing,  
To whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring!

### **\* Kindling the Christ Light**

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

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

Many:      **Holy and merciful God, in your presence we confess our failure to be what you created us to be. You alone know how often we have sinned in wandering from your ways, in wasting your gifts, in forgetting your love. By your loving mercy, help us to live in your light and abide in your ways, for the sake of Jesus who saves us.**

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

### **Listening to God in Silent Prayer**

### **Assurance of God's Grace**

One:       Where can we go from your spirit, O God? Or where can we flee from your presence? Whether we ascend into the heavens, or make our bed in hell—you are there. If we were to take wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, you always hold us close in the hollow of your hand. Therefore, 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*



**Readings from Scripture**

**Gospel Reading** – John 13:1-17, 33-35

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Creator. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already decided that Judas son of Simon Iscariot would betray Jesus. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Creator had given all things into his hands and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from supper, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had reclined again, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

"Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and as I said to the people so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I



have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

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

## Sung Response

*God's Eye Is on the Sparrow*

## Invitation to Stations of Solidarity

### \* A Litany for Bird Power



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 journey with Jesus through the holy wilderness,

**May we find blessing in the power of birds.**

As we seek through faith to do more than we thought we could,

**May we imagine our wings and rise up.**

As we long to catch new vistas of what is possible,  
**May our vision become clear and long like the eagle's eye.**

As we strive to do justice and love mercy,

**May we build nests that are wide enough for all.**

As we migrate back and forth in search of You,

**May our movements for love and peace know no boundary.**

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

**May our collective solidarity be beautiful like the song of the chickadee.**

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

**May we continue to flock together as your beloved community.**

In the shadow of your wings, O God, we pray, **Amen.**

## Moment for Mission: One Great Hour of Sharing

## Call to Offering

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

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

## Offertory

*I Call to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ*

J. S. Bach

## \* 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 Bird Power, 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 and birds 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 reign come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
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 is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

### Breaking of the Bread

### Sharing of the Bread & Cup

**Communion Meditation**    *Prelude* on the Irish hymn “St. Columba”    Wilbur Weld

### Post Communion Prayer

### \* Closing Hymn PH (blue) 367

*Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love*

*Refrain:*

Jesu, Jesu,  
Fill us with Your love,  
Show us how to serve the neighbors we have from You.

1. Kneels at the feet of his friends,  
Silently washes their feet,  
Master who acts as a slave to them. *Refrain*



2. Neighbors are rich and poor,  
Varied in color and race,  
Neighbors are near and far away. *Refrain*

3. These are the ones we should serve,  
These are the ones we should love;  
All are neighbors to us and You. *Refrain*

4. Loving puts us on our knees,  
Serving as though we are slaves,  
This is the way we should live with You. *Refrain*

5. Kneel at the feet of our friends,  
Silently washing their feet,  
This is the way we should live with You. *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** – Rev. Kate Carlisle, Rev. Rob Mark, Rev. Joshua Lazard

**Minister of Music** – Tom Handel

**Lector** – Karen Henry

**Moment for Mission** – Anne Crane

**Covenant Choir**

**Ushers** – Anne Crane, Denice Thornhill

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

**Digital Minister** – Diane Lauber

**Sexton** – Jesús Vargas

**Cover Art, “A Flock of Crows in Flight”** – 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](http://cotcbos.org).



### **JOIN US IN ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING**

**TODAY!** Each year, both PCUSA and UCC churches join with many other Christian churches in One Great Hour of Sharing on Palm Sunday. This special offering provides funding for disaster assistance, hunger relief, and sustainable development around the world. This year marks the 75th anniversary of One Great Hour of Sharing. This year's theme is Sharing the Light. OGHS funding supports our denominations' partner agencies around the world in responding to natural disasters, such as hurricanes, cyclones, tornadoes, floods, wildfires, droughts, and earthquakes. OGHS funding goes to provide food, clean water, basic sanitation, training, and development opportunities. You may give online ([cotcbos.org/give](http://cotcbos.org/give)) or use the envelope in your bulletin.

**BACKPACK SOLIDARITY. WE INVITE YOUR HELP.** Our siblings in Haiti are facing an ever-increasing crisis. Many are fleeing to Boston to find sanctuary, seeking some small measure of peace. As people of faith, we have a role to play in welcoming. One small but important action to show this love is to provide summer school backpacks filled with supplies and language dictionaries for 34 recently arrived children who are enrolled at the William Monroe Trotter K-6 Elementary School in Dorchester (a Boston Public School)—where our own Karen Henry works. We will fill these backpacks together in worship on **Palm Sunday, March 24**. In order to offset the costs of supplying backpacks, we need to raise approximately \$1,500. If you are able to make a contribution, please go to <https://tinyurl.com/cotcgive> and click on Special Offerings to make a contribution. This is a small but important way for us to live into the “love” commandment from Jesus that we honor on Maundy Thursday of this coming Holy Week. Thank you!

**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](mailto:nancy.stockford@cotcbos.org).

**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.](#)

- Maundy Thursday, March 28: 5:30 pm, Bird Walk at Arnold Arboretum
- 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

**BIRD WALK ON MAUNDY THURSDAY!** To bring our Bird Power Lent to a close, join us for a bird walk at **5:30 pm on Thursday, March 28**, at the Arnold Arboretum. A knowledgeable birder will be leading us. Bring binoculars if you have them. Meet in front of the Hunnewell Visitor Center at Arborway Gate. Please contact Nancy Stockford ([nancy.stockford@cotcbos.org](mailto:nancy.stockford@cotcbos.org)) with any questions.

**INTERGENERATIONAL GLOW/COTC EASTER VIGIL.** We hope to see you at the All-Ages Multi-Church Easter Vigil on **Holy Saturday, March 30, at 7:00 pm** at COTC, co-hosted with New England GLOW with participation from multiple neighbor churches. We will gather in sacred dimness and quiet, between the cross of Good Friday and the hope of Easter. As sun sets and new light bursts forth, we will celebrate with fire, creative Bible stories, and Communion. We are still looking for volunteers—youth, kids, adults of any age—who might be interested in:

- prayer or liturgist roles
- reading Scripture or poetry or providing music or song leading
- taking part in a creative Scripture reading/interpretation
- planning and sharing a creative Scripture reading (skit, group reading, art)
- bringing a dessert or finger food or something else (plant-based) to share

If you are interested in having a leadership role, please let Kate know as soon as possible at [kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org](mailto:kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org). But whether or not you have a specific role in advance, our celebration won't be complete without you. We hope to see you on Easter Eve!

**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 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 widely throughout New England.

**PUBLIC WORSHIP & ACTION FOR CEASEFIRE.** Join clergy and faith leaders on **Good Friday, March 29, at 4:00 pm**, at Faneuil Hall Square to make it known: we demand a ceasefire now. This action will be grounded in the Christian tradition, but people of all faith or no faith backgrounds are welcome to join us.

**PRO ARTE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA CONCERT ON APRIL 7.** Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra (including violinist Barbara Englesberg) is presenting "The Unbroken Circle" on **Saturday, April 7 at 3:00 pm**, at Second Church in Newton. For more information: <https://www.proarte.org/concerts/the-unbroken-circle>.

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://cotcbos.org)). On March 27, Rev. Rob will interview our Lent bird photographer Brooks Mathewson.



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

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

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*