Church of the Covenant
Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ

The Fourth Sunday in Lent
Grotto: Reside & Resist

ZOOM LINK (click here)
Welcome and thank you for worshipping together for this “hybrid” service where some will be in the sanctuary of their homes, and some in the sanctuary at 67 Newbury Street. For those joining online, we will plan to begin on Zoom. Service is recorded and later posted online.

Prelude

Prelude on the American Hymn Tune Prospect  
Wilbur Held

Welcome, Breathe & Announcements

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

*Call to Worship

One: As we continue in this sojourn called Lent, as people on a journey,  
Many: May we follow the Spirit’s mystical summons.  
One: As we imagine, create and reside in the grottos God has for us,  
Many: May all that is dear to us find shelter under God’s all-encompassing, loving wing.  
One: And as Christ leads us to emerge into action,  
Many: May we find new strength to resist and persist.  
One: Be Still. God is here.  
Many: May we be still and notice.  
One: Be still. God is here.  
Many: May we be still and worship.

*Kindling the Christ Light

*Opening Hymn: NCH (black) 10  

1. Rock of ages, let our song  
Praise your saving power;  
You, amid the raging foe,  
Were our sheltering tower.  
Furious it assailed us,  
But your arm availed us,  
And your word broke its sword  
When our own strength failed us.

Rock of Ages (Maoz Tsur Y’shnati)
2. Children of the Holy God,  
Whether free or fettered,  
Wake the echoes of that song  
Where you may be scattered.  
Yours the message cheering  
That the time is nearing  
Which will see all set free  
Tyrants no more fearing.

Prayer for Grounding in God’s Grace

People: Rock of Ages, cleft for all of us, hear our prayer. Heartbeat of the universe, Center of spirited change and rebirth, we glorify your ways: the ways of dignity and justice, the ways of love for all creatures, the ways of caring for the earth. In the rush of living, let us not miss you. Let us be simple in our needs, showing compassion for our neighbor, sharing generously what we have, letting go our hurts and fears. For in you we find peace, in you we find hope, and in you we find courage, now and forever.

One: In the sound of silence, let us open ourselves to God…

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God’s Grace

One: Friends, the time to be grateful is now. The time to take heart is now. The time to rejoice is now. For in God, we find total reinvigoration and vitality. In God, we find our deepest grounding. Therefore, let us celebrate together:

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

*Sung Response

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 The Hebrew Bible: 1 Kings 19:1-15a

Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “So may the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.” Then he was afraid; he got up and fled for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongs to Judah; he left his servant there. But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: “It is enough; now, O GOD, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors.” Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, “Get up and eat.” He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again. The angel of GOD came a second time, touched him, and said, “Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you.” He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God. At that place he came to a cave, and spent the night there. Then the word of GOD came to him, saying, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” He answered, “I have been very zealous for the GOD of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.” The word of God said, “Go out and stand on the mountain before GOD, for the Holy One is about to pass by.” Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before GOD, but the Holy One was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but GOD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but GOD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” He answered, “I have been very zealous for GOD, the Holy One of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.” Then GOD said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram.”

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

This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine (x3)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

Sermon

Get In Your Way

Hymn: NCH (black) 488

1. Be still, my soul: for God is by your side;
   Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
   Leave to your God to order and provide;
   In every change God faithful will remain.
   Be still, my soul: you best eternal friend
   Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

2. Be still, my soul: for God will undertake to guide
   in future days as in the past.
   Your hope, your confidence let nothing shake,
   all now mysterious shall be clear at last.
   Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know
   How Jesus’ power ruled them long ago.

Moment for Generosity – “T” – Christine James

Call to Offering

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

Offertory

Prelude on the Irish Hymn Tune St. Columba

Wilbur Held

Doxology

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 and Concerns

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

Pastoral Prayer

Closing Hymn: Sing the Faith, #2128

Come and Find the Quiet Center
TUNE: BEACHSPRING

1. Come and find the quiet center
   in the crowded life we lead,
   find the room for hope to enter,
   find the frame where we are freed:
   Clear the chaos and the clutter,
   clear our eyes, that we can see
   all the things that really matter,
   be at peace, and simply be.

2. Silence is a friend who claims us,
   cools the heat and slows the pace,
   God it is who speaks and names us,
   knows our being, touches base,
   making space within our thinking,
   lifting shades to show the sun,
   raising courage when we're shrinking,
   finding scope for faith begun.

3. In the Spirit let us travel,
   open to each other's pain,
   let our loves and fears unravel,
   celebrate the space we gain:
   There's a place for deepest dreaming,
   there's a time for heart to care,
   in the Spirit's lively scheming
   there is always room to spare.
Call to Resist: Voting Rights

Voting rights are under assault from the swirling powers of sinful white supremacy in the United States. Our faith in the One Who Turned Tables Against Injustice calls us to respond.

As Christine shared, “Decisions by the US Supreme Court over the past decade have weakened federal oversight of elections, resulting in an alarming number of states enacting laws and using other means such as gerrymandering to restrict access to the polls, especially for low-income, non-white and other historically marginalized members of our communities. The John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, named for the late civil rights hero and long-term Congressman from Georgia, would modernize and revitalize the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by strengthening legal protections against discriminatory voting policies. The House passed the bill in 2021, but it has stalled in the Senate.”

- Urge your Senator to pass the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act (via link from ACLU). Invite a relative/ friend in another state!
- Sign this petition from Common Cause MA to support the VOTES Act to keep mail-in voting
- Sign this petition from Common Cause MA to support Same Day Voter Registration here in MA.
- If you live in another state than MA, do some research and support voting rights in your watershed(s)!
- Support the Environmental Voter Project Needham, MA Phone Bank
- Write Postcards for Swing State in PA for May primaries
- Sign up for Ecumenical Advocacy Days (April 25-27 online): “Fierce Urgency” including webinars on how to protect voting rights.

*Charge and Benediction*

*Exchange of the Peace*

(Please exchange greetings of Christ’s peace and reconciliation while respecting personal space preferences and public health safe distancing)

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: And also with you.
**Participating in Worship:**

**Preacher** – Rev. Rob Mark  
**Minister of Music** – Tom Handel  
**Liturgist** – Rev. Joshua Lazard  
**Lector** – Evans Naquin  
**Audio-Video Tech Deacons** – Derek Holbrook, Jon Schwarz  
**Digital Minister** – Linda Pursley  
**Door Steward** – Jesús Vargas  
**Sexton** – Fred Lopes  
**Usher** – Trudi Veldman  
**Moment for Generosity** – Christine James  
**Call to Resist** – Rev. Rob Mark  
**Bulletin Cover** – Photo by Anita Gram, Mass Audubon in Topsfield

**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!

**LENT 2022: GROTTO – RESIDE & RESIST: MARCH 2 – APRIL 17**  
Discovering spiritual power from entering the inner life and emerging for action.  
*Grotto (noun: from Italian grotta, via Latin from Greek kruptē (see crypt)): a small, subterranean cavern or human-made cave-like shrine often linked to gardened landscapes connoting a place of rebirth and renewal.* Join us this Lent as together, inspired by sacred stories from our scriptures, we will build our own at-home grottos and decorate them each week with images, ideas, words, beliefs, mentors, callings, & passions. From these places of residing in God’s nurture, potential & new beginnings, we will emerge in solidarity through weekly calls to action & advocacy as we resist the powers of empire & fear.

**PRE-REGISTER FOR HYBRID WORSHIP:** While we give thanks that the cases continue to drop from the Omicron variant of COVID-19, we continue to ask that those worshiping in person at 67 Newbury pre-register, be up to date on vaccinations, and still wear a mask at all times in the building. Worship will continue to be accessible to all on Zoom. Thanks for your continued commitment to the wellness of the collective! Pre-register for all services at rsvp.church/r/L77KlTal.
CLIMATE JUBILEE BOOK DISCUSSION: Join us tonight Sunday, March 27, 5pm on Zoom, for a third and final book discussion inspired by Katherine Hayhoe’s book: “Saving Us: A Climate Scientist’s Case for Hope & Healing.” Check out some short videos from her PBS page Global Weirding: https://www.pbs.org/show/global-weirding/

OUR CHILDREN & YOUTH ARE BACK IN THE BUILDING! BATES HALL FOR CYCE ONLY PLEASE: We are so grateful our Children & Youth Christian Education programs are, after 2 years, finally back to safely gathering on Sunday mornings in Bates Hall & the nursery! Thank you to our teachers and staff and families for their ongoing commitment to these vital programs. We therefore ask all adults not connected to CYCE to refrain from using Bates Hall on Sundays, as per our policies set before the pandemic. As we have not yet returned to Adult Education programming, there is no need for anyone outside of our CYCE program to be down in Bates Hall on Sundays. The one exception is our Choir that regularly rehearses in Bates Hall from 9:30-10:00am. The two all-gender bathrooms we ask people to use are on the same floor as the sanctuary, and will remain open and available during the service. One is located near the elevator, one just outside the “secret door” in the sanctuary, just past the baptismal font. Also, to reiterate, the small bathroom just in front of our Nursery will now only be used for children and youth on Sundays.

SUPPORTING UKRAINE: As we continue to hold the people of Ukraine and Russia in our prayers in light of Putin’s horrifying “war of choice,” here are some places to support:
  • Presbyterian Disaster Assistance: https://pda.pcusa.org/situation/ukraine/
  • United Church of Christ ACT Alliance: https://www.ucc.org/global-h-o-p-e/ukraine-emergency-appeal/
  • World Central Kitchen: https://wck.org

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 in these Hybrid services (in-person and Zoom options). Zoom Link for each service.
  o Sunday, April 3, Lent 5, Rev. Julie Avis Rogers, Director of Religious and Spiritual Life & Campus Chaplain at Emerson College guest preaching
  o Sunday, April 10, Palm Sunday All Ages Service
BUILDING YOUR OWN GROTTO: This Lent, we invite you to put on your creativity hat, and join us in making your own home-grotto. Inspired by sacred stories from our scriptures, we will build our own at-home grottos and decorate them each week with images, ideas, words, beliefs, mentors, influencers, callings, and passions. You can start with a shoebox, any cardboard box bound for the recycling bin, a matchbox, a little wooden box, a special corner of your room, or a sacred spot in your back yard. Any “place” is fine – we just invite you to think of a place that will remain intact over the 6 weeks journey through Lent. Each week, following worship, we invite you to spend the week adding things to your grotto. Perhaps a word or a phrase from the scripture or hymns or liturgy in worship. Perhaps a photo from a bulletin cover, or an image you take and print out, or find on the internet. Perhaps something you make. Perhaps an item from nature. The sky is the limit. Think creativity and build a grotto that will become a sacred place for you to “go” and further reside in the expansive and wild love of God during your Lenten journey. A journey that is both yours individually, and ours collectively in community. For those who wish to share photos of their grottos along the way or around Holy Week, we welcome the sharing and mutual inspiration. Questions? Ask away.

SUNDAY PRELudes – COME EARLY: As we begin to re-emerge into hybrid worship again, we will for the first time in 2 years begin to place the prelude back to its original place at the head of our worship services. Therefore, please come to worship by 10:25 in-person or on Zoom in order to take in the prelude.

NEW DIRECTORY: We have a new one hot off the press! If you’d like a PDF copy, please email Kate.

LENTEN EVENING PRAYERS 6-6:30pm: Our weekly Wednesday evening prayers w/ intentional liturgy, contemplative song, psalms & sharing of prayers will meet this Wednesday, March 30 with our siblings from Newton Presbyterian Church 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.
COVENANT BOOK DISCUSSION SUNDAY, APRIL 24: Our next book discussion will be Sunday, April 24 at 5 PM over Zoom, and we'll be discussing Rowan Williams' *Where God Happens: Discovering Christ in One Another*. The Zoom link will be sent out later. As always, you are very welcome whether you've ever attended book group before, or whether you have read 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. We are expecting to have our next brunch in April in-person. If you have more questions or would like to be added to our email list, contact Rev. Joshua at joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org.

CHILDREN’S AND YOUTH PROGRAMMING: At long last, we have resumed in-person CYCE activities downstairs for vaccinated children and youth, ages 5 and up. We’re also looking forward to our next all-ages service on Palm Sunday, April 10. Parents of younger kids, we’re also able to open the nursery for one household at a time – let us know if you’re interested. We’ll continue to send updates and more details 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