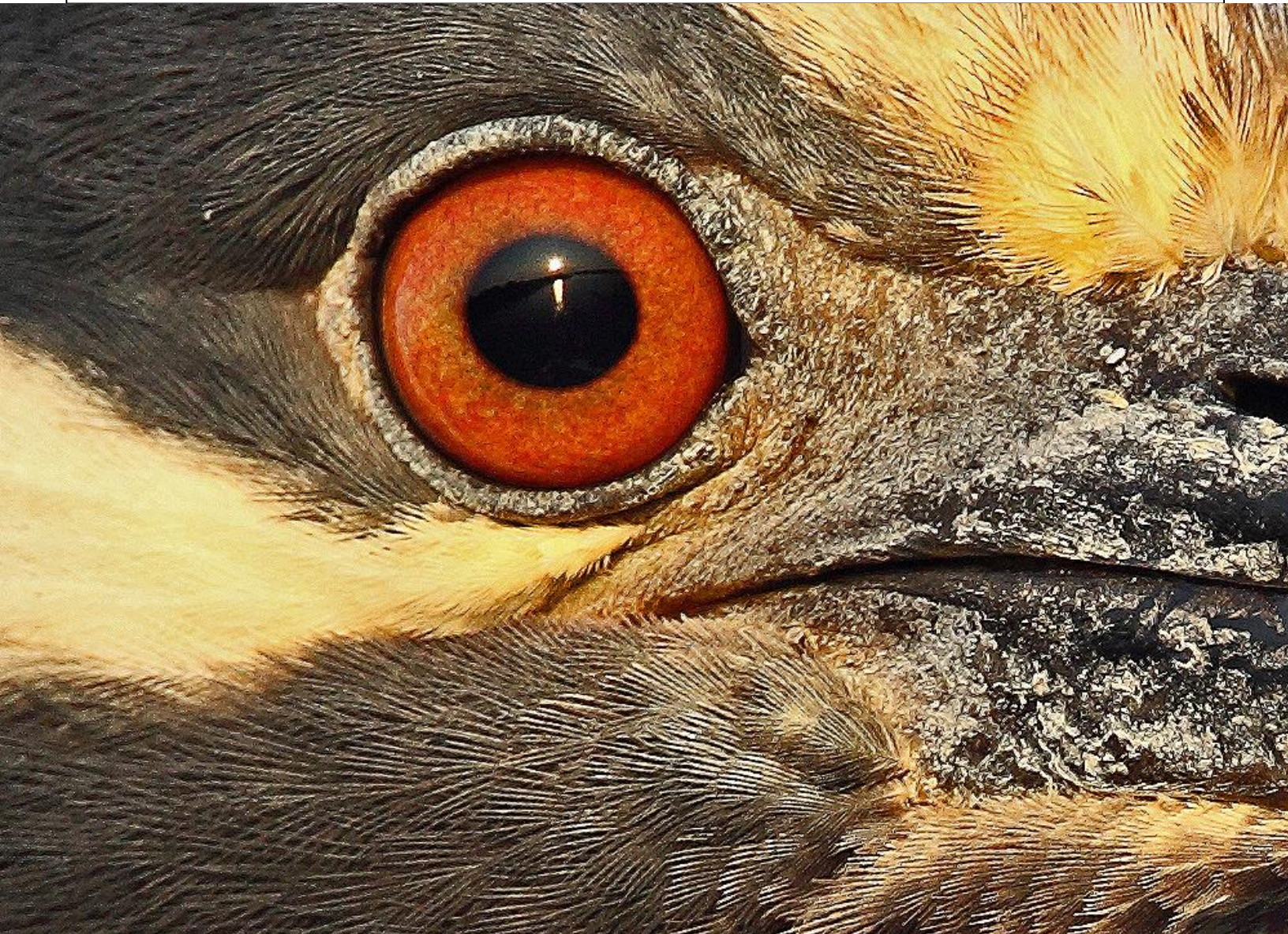


Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



Bird Power: SOAR!

Easter Sunday

March 31, 2024

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ



Church of the Covenant

Easter Sunday | Bird Power: SOAR!

March 31, 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.

If you would like a prayer of Celebration or Concern to be prayed aloud today, please take a moment at any time to write it into the Red Book at the back of the sanctuary. For those online, you will be invited to place a prayer in the chat. We will not be passing the mic during Celebrations & Concerns today.

**You are invited to rise in body or spirit.*

Prelude

Amazing Grace

arr. Jari Villanueva

Welcome, Bird Power & Announcements

One: Peace be with you.

Many: And also with you.

One: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Many: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

* Call to Worship

One: A stone is rolled away, a crocus emerges from cold ground, a chick begins to fledge,

Many: Mystery abounds! Wonder is all around! New Life unfurls!

One: On this gift of an Easter morning, with the birds,

Many: May we become free and unfettered.

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

Many: May we imagine our wings and rise up.

One: From the prison of cynicism that nothing will change,

Many: Let us rise!

One: From the confines of self-doubt and judgment of others,

Many: Let us rise!

One: For today we confess the radical refrain that Christ is Risen!

Many: Life emerges from chaos. Let us celebrate: Christ is risen indeed, Alleluia!

*** Kindling the Christ Light**

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

*** Opening Hymn NCH (black) 233**

Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!
Mortal tongues and angels say: Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
Sing, glad heavens, and earth reply: Alleluia!

Let the Victor's people sing, Alleluia!
Where, O death, is now your sting? Alleluia!
Dying once, Christ lives to save, Alleluia!
Where your victory, O grave? Alleluia!

Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!
Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!
Death in vain forbids Christ rise, Alleluia!
God has opened paradise, Alleluia!

Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia!
Following our exalted Head, Alleluia!
Made like Christ, like Christ we rise, Alleluia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!

Christ the Lord Is Risen Today



“Jesus of the Bayou”
by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman
A Sanctified Art

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

Many: **O Loving God, Our Mothering Hen—we have journeyed this Lent seeking to become free and unfettered. Yet there is so much that holds us back from the fullness you desire for us and all of creation. We are sorry for all the ways we have fallen short and forgotten our wings. We lament our complicity in unjust systems that privilege only some. We grieve our complacency in the face of a hurting earth's climate. And we long for a new way forward that shatters the shackles of “it can't be done.” May we rise up with you and topple the forces of empire, lies, and exploitation. And may we, as People of the Empty Tomb, join you at the exciting threshold of a new beginning once again.**

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

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

One: Christ is Risen! The stone is rolled away, the tomb found empty. And today our hearts are found filled. Filled with the very Breath of God. Filled with new life, curiosity, and hope. Therefore, let us celebrate:

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

Sung Response

Easter Celtic Alleluia

Al - le - lu - ia, a - le - lu - ia!

Al - le - lu - ia, a - le - lu - ia!

A Time with Children

Rev. Kate Carlisle

Following this, children through grade 5 are invited downstairs to Bates Hall for nursery care & Godly Play lessons. Children & youth are also fully welcome to remain in worship.

Readings from Scripture

Hebrew Bible Reading – Job 12:7-10

But ask the animals, and they will teach you,

the birds of the air, and they will tell you; ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you, and the fish of the sea will declare to you.

Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Holy One has done this? In God's hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being.

Gospel Reading – Mark 16:1-8

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?” When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.” So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

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

Many: **Thanks be to God.**

Sung Response

Easter Celtic Alleluia

Sermon

“Soar We Now”

* **Sermon Hymn** NCH (black) 231

Because You Live, O Christ

1. Because you live, O Christ,
The garden of the world has come to flower,
The shadows of the tomb
Are flooded with your resurrection power.

Refrain:

The stone has rolled away and death cannot imprison!
O sing this Easter Day, for Jesus Christ has risen,
Has risen, has risen, has risen!

2. Because you live, O Christ,
The spirit bird of hope is freed for flying,
Our cages of despair
No longer keep us closed and life-denying. *Refrain*

3. Because you live, O Christ,
The rainbow of your peace will span creation,
The colors of your love
Will draw all humankind to adoration. *Refrain*

Call to Offering

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

Offertory

The Lord Is Risen Indeed!

William Billings

*** 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**

Blessing the Composter: Black Earth | Women's Lunch Place

Celebrations & Concerns

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

Pastoral Prayer

*** Hymn PH (blue) 104**

Christ is Risen! Shout Hosanna!

Christ is risen! Shout Hosanna! Celebrate this day of days!
Christ is risen! Hush in wonder: All creation is amazed.
In the desert all surrounding, See, a spreading tree has grown.
Healing leaves of grace abounding Bring a taste of love unknown.

Christ is risen! Raise your spirits From the caverns of despair.
Walk with gladness in the morning. See what love can do and dare.
Drink the wine of resurrection, Not a servant, but a friend.
Jesus is our strong companion. Joy and peace shall never end.

Christ is risen! Earth and heaven Nevermore shall be the same.
Break the bread of new creation Where the world is still in pain.
Tell its grim, demonic chorus: "Christ is risen! Get you gone!"
God the First and Last is with us. Sing Hosanna, everyone!

*** Charge and Benediction**

Please be seated following the benediction.

Postlude

Finale from *Firebird*

Igor Stravinsky

Please remain seated during the postlude before we conclude with the passing of the peace.

*** 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.**



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!

Worship Participants

Preacher – Rev. Rob Mark

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Liturgists – Rev. Dr. So Jung Kim, Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard

Lector – Faith Perry

Time with Children – Rev. Kate Carlisle

Covenant Choir

Trumpets – Kyle Spraker, Toby Monte

Horn – Nick Rubenstein

Trombone – Adam Hanna

Bass Trombone – Chuck Morris

Ushers – Holly Humphreys, Linda Pursley, Byron Sipe, Denice Thornhill, Marnie Warner

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

Digital Minister – Trudi Veldman

Sextons – Jesús Vargas, Fred Lopes

Cover Art, “Sunrise Through the Eye of a Yellow-Crowned Night Heron” – 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.



EASTER EGG HUNT TODAY! Welcome to all beloved kiddos who are with us on this sacred day! Please stick around after worship for our Easter Egg Hunt in our Sanctuary—we'll give directions at that time.

OUR BRASS MUSIC TODAY CELEBRATES THE LIFE OF ED CUTLER

(May 1935 – September 2006). Ed was a beloved member of Church of the Covenant with a passion for music. In his youth he sang and played the violin. Before he lost his vision he sang in community and church choirs. He was a biology professor, avid “birder,” and environmentalist who served on many local environmental committees. At COTC, he served on the Personnel Committee, supported youth group pilgrimages, and chaired the committee that called Minister of Music Tom Handel.

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, April 7: Reflection on the Word, Holy Communion, Sacred Reckonings Adult Ed. After Worship
- Sunday, April 14: Rev. Rob Mark preaching, All-Church Potluck & Sacred Reckonings Adult Ed. After Worship
- Sunday, April 21: Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard preaching, Holy Communion, Climate Jubilee All-Church Read After Worship
- Sunday, April 28: Rev. Rob Mark preaching, Deacons Meeting After Worship

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. For Rev. Rob’s interview with Brooks, visit

<https://youtu.be/T8SXBLIQGbo?>

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. Emmy-winning composer Jeff Beal will be the guest conductor. The varied program will include Strauss’ French Horn Concerto, played by BSO hornist Michael Winter, and Ottorino Respighi’s “Gli Uccelli” (“The Birds”). 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 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 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](https://www.cotcbos.org) (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 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://www.cotcbos.org/worship-recordings) ([cotcbos.org/worship-recordings](http://www.cotcbos.org/worship-recordings)).

WEEKLY CALENDAR. Click [here](http://www.cotcbos.org/calendar-of-events) ([cotcbos.org/calendar-of-events](http://www.cotcbos.org/calendar-of-events)) to view the weekly calendar of events.

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*