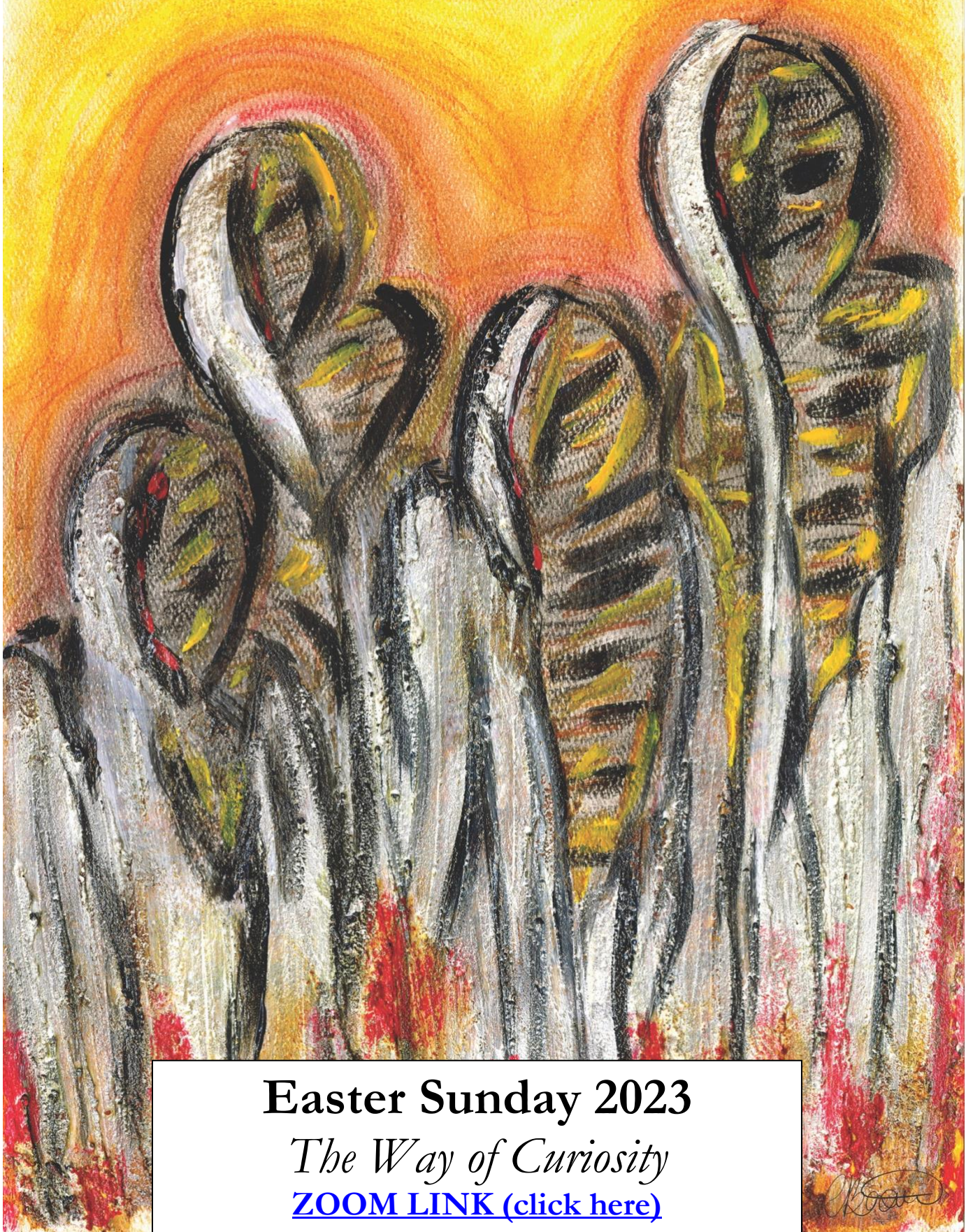


# Church of the Covenant

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



**Easter Sunday 2023**

*The Way of Curiosity*

[ZOOM LINK \(click here\)](#)





# Church of the Covenant, Boston MA

April 9, 2023, 10:30 am

Easter Sunday / The Way of Curiosity

[Zoom Link](#)

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Welcome and thank you for worshipping together for this “hybrid” service where some will be in the sanctuary 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. The full service is recorded and later posted online.

**Prayers:** If you would like a prayer of Celebration or Concern to be prayed aloud today, please take a moment to write it into the Red Book at the back of the sanctuary. You may do so at any time. For those online, please feel free to place a prayer in the chat and we will share aloud.

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**Prelude** *Be Thou My Vision (Irish Traditional Folk Tune “Slane”)* arr. Todd Marchand

## Welcome, *Breathe* & 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.

**Many: Mystery abounds! Wonder is all around!**

One: With bodies and breath fixed on imagining the impossible,

**Many: May our curiosity blossom into hope!**

One: And like the sun that awakens the earth,

**Many: Let us rise!**

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

**Many: Let us rise!**

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

**Many: Let us rise!**

One: For today we hear the truth of hope for all of creation,

**Many: Life emerges from chaos.**

One: Today we celebrate the miracles of vitality and resistance,

**Many: Life emerges from chaos.**

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

**Many: Life emerges from chaos. With brimming curiosity, let us celebrate: Christ is risen indeed, Alleluia!**

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

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

*Christ the Lord is Risen Today*

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!

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

**Many:** O Loving, Creativity-Birthing God – we have journeyed this Lent as your curious children. We have sought to be filled with wonder in each holy breath, each sacred inquiry. But even still, we've encountered a world too often stuck – settling for shallow, black & white answers, afraid of deeper truths. And we've seen such avoidance lead to anger, hurt, and trauma. So today we are sorry for the times we lack curiosity. 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, denial, lies and exploitation. And may we, as People of the Empty Tomb, join you at the exciting threshold of a new beginning once again.

## 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*



### 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.*

### Scripture Readings:

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 19: 38-40

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of God!

Peace in heaven, and glory be on earth!

If people are silent, the stones themselves will start to sing!

**Gospel Reading:** Matthew 28:1-20

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of God, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. The angel's appearance was like lightning, and his

clothing clean as snow. For fear of the angel the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, "He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him." This is my message for you.' So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, 'Greetings!' And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my siblings to go to Galilee; there they will see me.'

While they were going, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests everything that had happened. After the priests had assembled with the elders, they devised a plan to give a large sum of money to the soldiers, telling them, 'You must say, "His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep." If this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.' So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story is still told to this day.

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Creator and of the Redeemer and of the Sustainer, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

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

**Sung Response**

*Easter Celtic Alleluia*

**Sermon**

*Murmurations*





*Ripple of Starlings II, By Sue Side*

**Call to Offering**

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

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

**Offertory**

*Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*

Gustav Holst

**Prayer of Dedication**

**Celebrations and 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.**

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*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!*

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**THE CHANCEL FLOWERS TODAY** are dedicated to the Glory of God &  
given by Deacons to those in our church who have lost a loved one in the last year.

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### **Participating in Worship:**

**Preacher** – Rev. Rob Mark

**Minister of Music** – Tom Handel

**Liturgist** – Rev. Joshua Lazard

**Lector** – Betty Southwick

**Time with Children** – Rev. Kate Carlisle

**Redline Brass:**

Kyle Spraker – trumpet

Andrew Moreschi – trumpet

Nick Rubenstein – horn

Robert Hoveland – tenor trombone

Chuck Morris – bass trombone

**Guest Conductor** – Iverson Eliopoulos

**Digital Minister** – Christine James

**Audio-Video Tech Team** – Jon Schwarz, Abhishek John

**Sexton** – Jesús Vargas

**Ushers** – Trudi Veldman, Anne Crane



Orchid at Wegter-McNelly's home



**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 in the chat.

**NEW TO COTC?** We're so glad you're 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).



**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.

**EASTER EGG HUNT:** 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.

**CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH PROGRAMMING:** We have a vibrant program for children and youth, please [email Rev. Kate](mailto:Rev.Kate) if you'd like to join us!

**LENT 2023: The Way of Curiosity:** *Creatively opening ourselves to deeper truths through bolder questions.* Join us this Lent (Feb. 22-April 9) as we journey through the wilderness with Jesus, cultivating more joyful curiosity around topics related to our daily living in search of deeper truths. Together we will consider: Embodied Practices, Make Believe, Simple Living, Active Art & Banned Subjects. Let's get inquisitive & imagine a world where *more (beauty, joy, vision, love, God)* is possible.



**LIFE ALIVE MINISTRY.** This group of 20s, 30s, and 40s meets monthly for fellowship and community. Our next gathering will be for a small brunch on Sunday, April 15, immediately following worship. Want to know more? Email Rev. Joshua at [joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org](mailto:joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org).

**BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS.** Join our Bible Study group 9:15am Wednesdays to explore the Gospel of Matthew. You are welcome to join this group of comics and scholars, cynics and believers, in a warm online embrace, having fun debating the meaning and relevance of the Bible, then and now. If you'd like more information, contact Jan Gough at [revjangough@gmail.com](mailto:revjangough@gmail.com).

**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.

- Sunday April 16, Communion, Rev. Rob preaching, Blessing of the Runners
- Sunday April 23, Rev. Joshua preaching
- Sunday April 30, Celebration of the Word led by Nica Companions
- Sunday May 7, Season of Generosity #1, Communion, Rev. Rob preaching

**CLIMATE JUBILEE.** Our congregation is committed to living out of our faith in God's love for all of creation through the work for climate justice. Under the umbrella of jubilee, we long to see liberation for our earth's climate and all people. Recently, we celebrated a public action here in Boston on 3-21-23 as we joined Third Act & 350 Mass to tell Chase and Bank of America to stop funding the fossil fuel chaos that is violating our climate. The protest was one of more than 100 around the country organized by Third Act, a climate activism group largely made up of retirees. The energy and spirit were terrific — a band led the procession between the banks, people cut up credit cards, there were lots of chants and singing that inspired many of those attending. Our church showed up in a big way with signs held high with passion in our marching. We believe it is the start of more actions to come! Want to join us? Email Betty at [southwickbetty@gmail.com](mailto:southwickbetty@gmail.com)

**UPCOMING ADULT ED SESSIONS POST WORSHIP.**

- Sunday April 30, Mother's Day Walk for Peace Discussion
- Sunday May 7, Climate Jubilee Induction Stoves & Reducing Footprints
- Sunday May 14, End of Life Planning, Estates & Wills with Kathryn Barry

**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.

**PARKING BARGAIN.** Worshipers may park at the Back Bay Garage [Clarendon Street, between Boylston and St. James] on Sundays between 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. for the first (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.

**BOSTON MARATHON RELATED STREET CLOSURES.** Next weekend we celebrate the Boston Marathon – we will bless runners in worship on the 16<sup>th</sup> – and please be aware of many street closures all weekend in the Back Bay – plan for extra time in getting to worship in-person, and check online for updates.

**PHYLLIS GALT MEMORIAL SERVICE.** Will be held Saturday, April 29 at 11am at the First Presbyterian Church of Stamford, CT. Service might be live-streamed: [events.locallive.tv/worship/fishchurch](https://events.locallive.tv/worship/fishchurch). Her obituary can be found here: [legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/phyllis-galt-obituary?id=51545766](https://legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/phyllis-galt-obituary?id=51545766)

**KAY OLM'S MEMORIAL SERVICE.** Will be held on June 4, 2pm in Bend, Oregon, and will be livestreamed. For link, email [johannathomas@gmail.com](mailto:johannathomas@gmail.com)

**POSTING FULL SERVICE RECORDINGS/ CELEBRATIONS & CONCERNS ONLINE.** We will be posting the entire service, including our sharing of celebrations and concerns, that is livestreamed online on our [Worship Recordings Page](#). Please let us know if you have any questions. Thanks.

**STAFF AWAY.** Rev. Rob will be on vacation April 17-23. Kate is away April 19-23. Tom is away April 30.

**WEEKLY CALENDAR** Click [here](#) to view the weekly calendar of events.

**COVER ART.** *Rubble*, by Carmelle Beaugelin, A Sanctified Art, Inspired by Ezekiel 37:1-14. Conté crayon, charcoal, acrylic, paprika paste, cinnamon. Note from artist: “Rubble speaks to the realities of being made alive and yet not being allowed to live –a nameless multitude of God’s people resurrected yet still bearing the scent of burial spices on their bodies. Who are we in this story? Are we the bones seeking life? Do we perceive ourselves as spectators of suffering? Or will we choose to be participants in healing as active agents of God’s resurrecting power out of the rubble?”





**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 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 marginalized, to enjoy seats at God's table. This congregation seeks to demonstrate that vision by welcoming individuals and families of all races, gender identities, ages, physical/mental abilities, and 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 and gender identities 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*  
Jesús Vargas *Sunday Sexton*  
Anita Goncalves, *Child Care Provider*  
Alan Lane, *Food Cupboard Coordinator*  
Kelsie Lawhorn, *Childcare Provider*

#### **CHURCH OFFICERS**

Liz Vizza, *President of the Corporation*  
Trudi Veldman, *Clerk of the Council*  
Anita Gram, *Moderator of Board of Deacons*  
Faith Perry, *Treasurer*