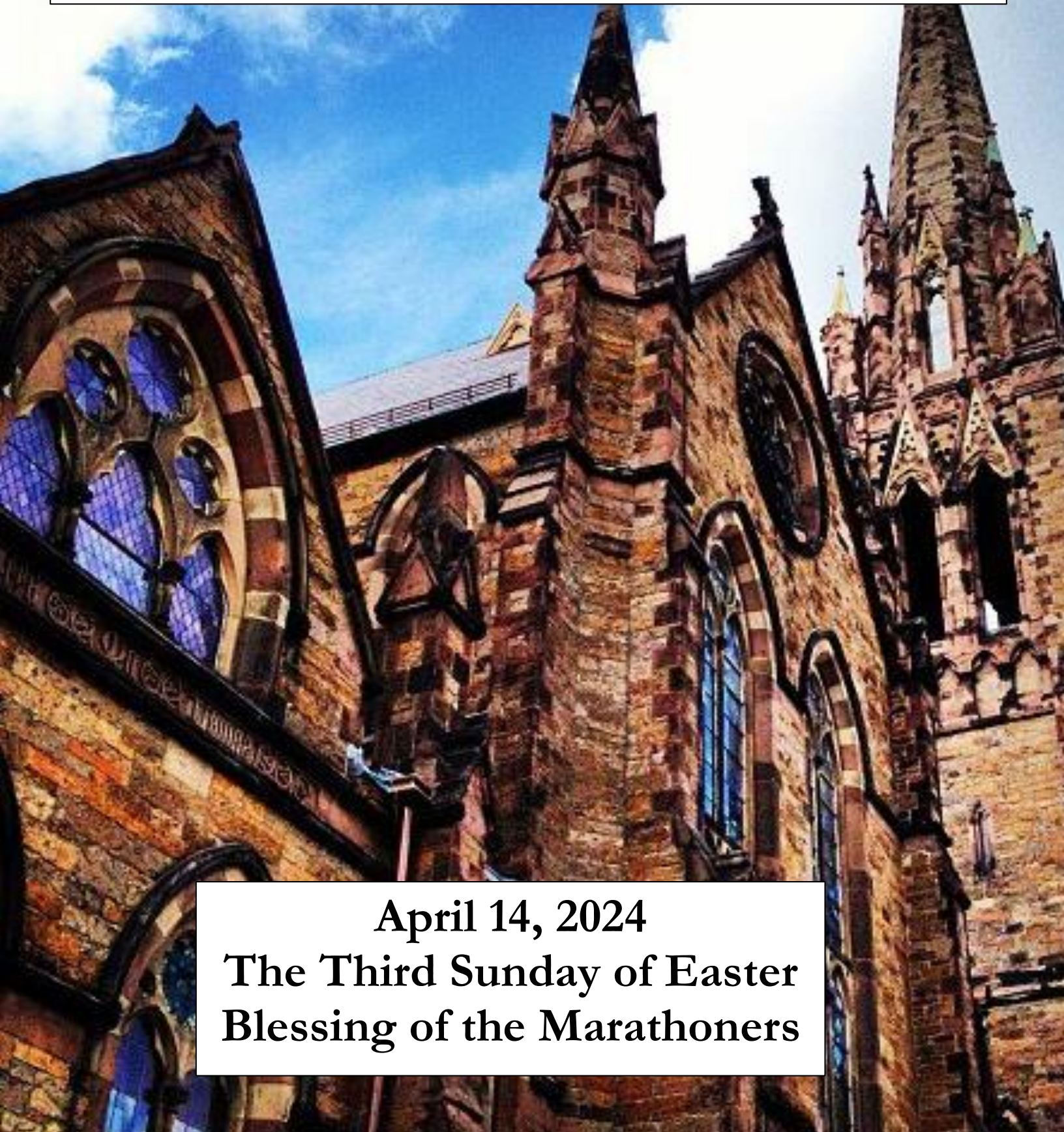


# Church of the Covenant

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



**April 14, 2024**

**The Third Sunday of Easter  
Blessing of the Marathoners**



**Church of the Covenant**  
**Third Sunday of Easter**  
April 14, 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 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.

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

**Prelude**

*Pastoral*

Josef Rheinberger

**Welcome & 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: Risen One, into our locked doors and terror,

**Many: you offer us your peace.**

One: To our startled disbelief and to the ghosts that haunt our land,

**Many: you offer your own healing body.**

One: To our joy and wonderment,

**Many: you invite us to feast with you.**

One: To the closed off corners of our minds,

**Many: you offer your wisdom and word.**

One: To each of us today, in our confusion, grief, and joy,

**Many: You call us to be witnesses and partners in the healing of the world.**

One: Let us worship the Risen Christ.

**\* Kindling the Christ Light**

One: The light of Christ

**Many: Thanks be to God!**

**\* Opening Hymn NCH (black) 238**

*Now the Green Blade Rises*

Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,  
Wheat that in dark earth for many days has lain;  
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:  
Love is come again like wheat that rises green.

In the grave they laid their Love whom hate had slain,  
Thinking that their Love would never awake again,  
Laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:  
Love is come again like wheat that rises green.

Christ came forth at Easter, like the risen grain,  
Jesus, who for three days in the grave had lain;  
Quick from the dead the risen One is seen:  
Love is come again like wheat that rises green.

When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,  
Christ's warm touch can call us back to life again,  
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:  
Love is come again like wheat that rises green.

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

**Many:** Holy God, Source of all life and healing, you made the world in chaos and beauty. We admit that sometimes we are overwhelmed by the chaos and we cannot always see the beauty. We have wounded each other and the whole network of creation. Like our sibling Jesus, we are each marked by scars. We don't quite believe how all that is broken can be mended. Open our minds and hearts that we might experience your healing today...

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

**Listening to God in Silent Prayer**

## Assurance of God's Grace

One: God of the dawning day, you are making us new. Joining with Jesus, we rise with scars and turn toward your love, celebrating together:

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!

## Readings from Scripture

### Hebrew Bible Reading – Psalm 4:1-8

*To the leader: with stringed instruments. A Psalm of David.*

Answer me when I call, O God of justice!  
You gave me room when I was in distress.  
Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer.  
How long, you people, shall my honor suffer shame?  
How long will you love vain words, and seek after lies? *Selah*  
But know that the Holy One has set apart the faithful;  
and hears when they call.  
When you are disturbed, do not sin;  
ponder it on your beds, and be silent. *Selah*  
Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the Holy One.  
There are many who say, “O that we might see some good!  
Let the light of your face shine on us, O God!”  
You have put gladness in my heart  
more than when their grain and wine abound.  
I will both lie down and sleep in peace;  
for you alone, O God, make me lie down in safety.

## **Gospel Reading** – Luke 24:36b-48

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence. Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

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

**Many:** **Thanks be to God.**

**Sermon**

“Rising Hungry”



## Taizé Chant Response

## *My Peace I Leave You*

My peace I leave you, my peace I give you:  
trou - ble not your hearts. My peace I leave you, my  
peace I give you: Be not a - fraid. My

*Fine*

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of three systems of music. The first system begins with a tempo marking of quarter note = 60. The music is in 2/4 time and features a simple harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics are: "My peace I leave you, my peace I give you:". The second system continues the melody and accompaniment with the lyrics: "trou - ble not your hearts. My peace I leave you, my". The third system concludes the piece with the lyrics: "peace I give you: Be not a - fraid. My". The piece ends with a "Fine" marking and a fermata over the final note.

## Call to Offering

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

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

## Offertory

*Intermezzo*

Josef Rheinberger

## \* 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 of the Marathoners**

### **Blessing Hymn PH (blue) 354**

*Guide My Feet*

Guide my feet, while I run this race (x3)  
For I don't want to run this race in vain

I'm your child, while I wheel this race (x3)  
For I don't want to wheel this race in vain

## **Celebrations & Concerns**

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

## **Pastoral Prayer**

### **\* Closing Hymn NCH 241**

*Joy Dawned Again on Easter Day*

Joy dawned again on Easter Day,  
the sun shone out with bright array;  
For when the Apostles hid in fear,  
the Risen Christ to them appeared.

O Jesus, Savior, Gentle One,  
come take our hearts to be your own,  
That we may give you all our days  
the willing tribute of our praise.

O Sovereign One, with us abide  
in this our joyful Easter-tide;  
From every weapon death can wield,  
your own redeemed forever shield.

**\* 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**

**Preacher** – Rev. Rob Mark

**Minister of Music** – Tom Handel

**Lector/Liturgist** – Linda Pursley

**Ushers** – Anne Crane, Denice Thornhill

**Digital Minister** – Christine James

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

**Sexton** – Jesús Vargas

**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.

**ALL-CHURCH POTLUCK AFTER WORSHIP TODAY!** Please join us for a plant-based, all-church potluck immediately after worship today, **April 14**. You are welcome to come whether you brought food or not.

**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).





**SACRED RECKONINGS ADULT ED. CLASS TODAY!** We hope you can join us today, **April 14**, immediately after the potluck, for the second of two hybrid (in-person and on Zoom) Adult Education classes to learn about a justice-focused project designed for churches. Sacred Reckonings calls us to the deep spiritual work of reckoning with the histories of colonization and White supremacy, and beginning the work of repair. “It also calls us to the promise of liberation that is woven into the work of reckoning.” Last fall, Rev. Rob sent an open invitation to participate in a Sacred Reckonings remote training. Six people from Covenant attended. It was a powerful training and we haven’t stopped learning since. We hope you can come, whether you came last week or not. You can access the rough recording of last week’s session here: <https://tinyurl.com/cotcsacredreckonings>.

**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).

**BOSTON MARATHON RELATED STREET CLOSURES.** This weekend we celebrate the Boston Marathon—we will bless runners in worship—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. For more information about marathon events over the weekend visit <https://tinyurl.com/cotcmarathon>.

**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 21: Holy Communion, Climate Jubilee All-Church Read After Worship
- Wednesday, April 24: 5:30 pm, Bird Power Bird Walk, at the Arnold Arboretum (in-person only)
- Sunday, April 28: Rev. Rob Mark preaching, Deacons Meeting After Worship
- Sunday, May 5: Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard preaching, Sacred Reckonings Adult Ed. Part 3

**ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING: IT'S NOT TOO LATE!** With all the excitement about the backpack project, our opportunity to join with lots of other churches in One Great Hour of Sharing may have gotten lost. But it is not too late! This special offering provides funding for disaster assistance, hunger relief, and sustainable development around the world. OGHS funding goes to provide food, clean water, basic sanitation, training, and development opportunities. Our denominations and their partner agencies respond to increasingly common natural disasters as well as suffering resulting from war and conflict. You may give online (at <http://www.tinyurl.com/cotcgive>) or send a check marked for OGHS to the church. The Mission and Advocacy Committee thanks you for your generosity!

**TREE GIVEAWAY.** The Climate Jubilee Team will be handing out tree seedlings outside the church on Newbury Street on **Saturday, April 27, from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm.** Please let Betty Southwick ([bettrysouthwick@gmail.com](mailto:bettrysouthwick@gmail.com)) know if you are interested in helping out.

**COVENANT CABARET! Saturday, June 1, starting at 7:00 pm.** Come join us for this lively event with tasty refreshments and fun entertainment (music, poetry, storytelling, standup comedy, and whatever else YOU want to offer). More information to come. In the meantime, please **save the date.** The Cabaret is a fundraiser to support our sibling relationship with the Church of the Poor in Dulce Nombre de Jesús, Nicaragua.

**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!

**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>).

**BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS WILL RESUME IN MAY.** Our weekly Bible Study typically meets on Wednesday mornings at 9:45 on Zoom. Due to travel schedules, Bible Study will be taking a break during the month of April. The next meeting will be on May 1. 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).

**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)).

**UPCOMING EXTENDED REFLECTION LEAVE FOR REV. ROB:** From May 1-September 12, Rob will be away on three months' Extended Reflection/Study Leave followed by four weeks of vacation and two weeks' unpaid leave. As sent out at the beginning of this year, Rob has shaped his leave around his ongoing love of the deep mystical roots of Celtic Christian spirituality: *The Sophia of Anam Cara: The Wisdom of Soul Connections*. Rob plans to use this leave to create space to breathe, be, and love more. He hopes this time will allow him and at times his family to pray for the life of our world and take stock of the enormous shifts that have happened and are happening in our world, the Church, and in their lives over these past six years—trusting that these months away may help him refocus, reflect, and refresh in the spirit of Sabbath and Jubilee. In order to continue the critical work of the gospel of Christ's love in these days where justice, peace, and liberation continue to be assaulted on so many fronts, some intentional reflection time comes as a timely balm. We are overjoyed that Rev. Joshua will shift from half-time Associate Pastor to full-time Lead Pastor during this reflection leave, ensuring us a smooth transition and pastoral continuity. This leave is not only a great opportunity for Rob and his family to find spiritual refreshment and grounding, it is also a gift for our entire congregation. We are invited to see this short "season" in the life of COTC not as reduced ministry, but as refreshed ministry. Before May 1, please feel free to be in touch with Rob ([rob.mark@cotcbos.org](mailto:rob.mark@cotcbos.org)) with any questions.

**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!*



Sthembile Msezane, Cape Town, South Africa, “Chapungu”

*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*