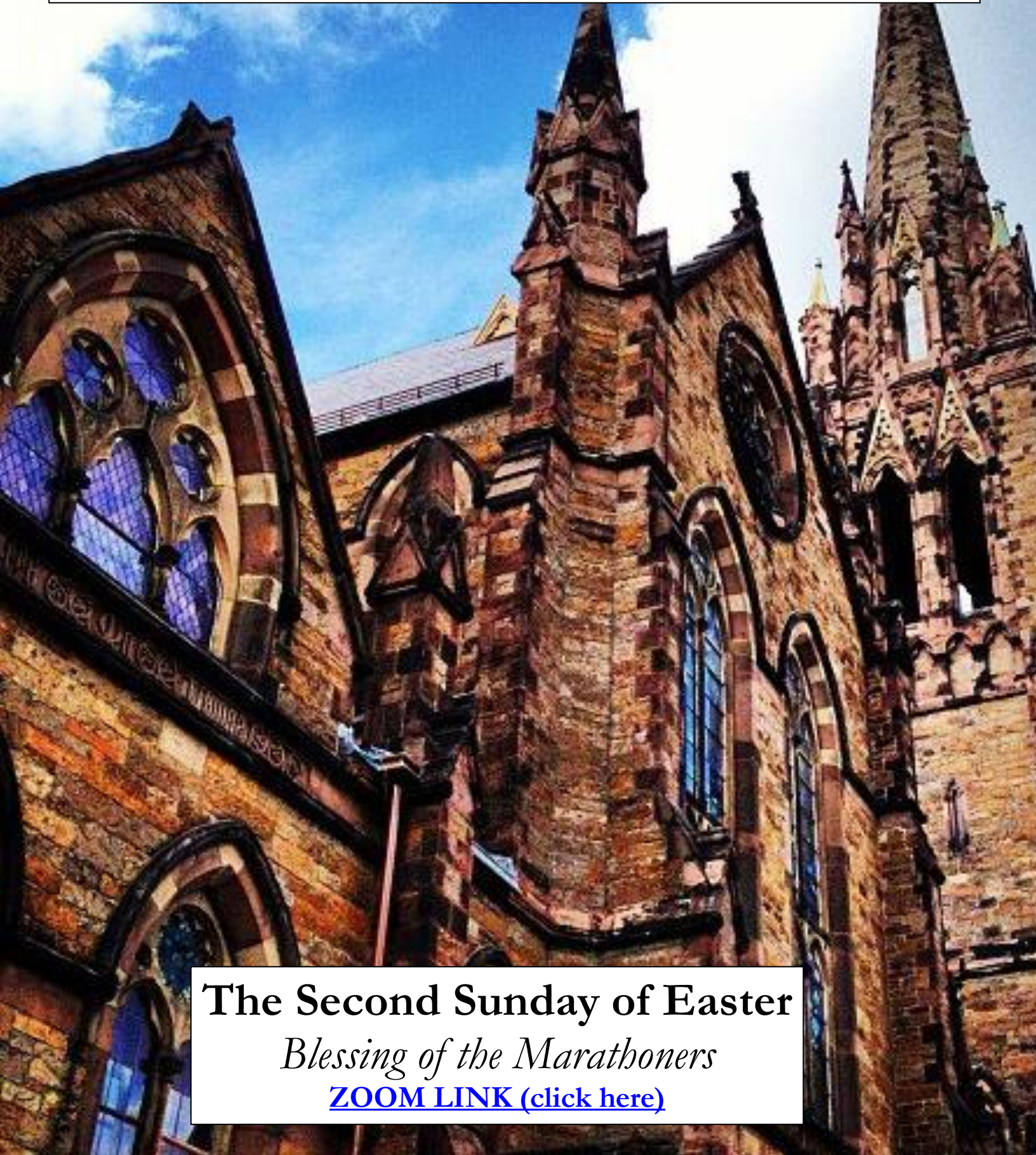


Church of the Covenant

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ



The Second Sunday of Easter

Blessing of the Marathoners

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



Church of the Covenant, Boston MA

April 16, 2023, 10:30 am

Blessing of the Athletes

[Zoom Link](#)

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.

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**Prelude**      *Overture and Air from Water Music*      G.F. Handel

## 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**      (from Mechthild of Magdeburg)

One:      Our Jesus is resurrected!

**Many:      Hallelujah!**

One:      O you beautiful rose in the thorns!

**Many:      O you fluttering bee in the honey!**

One:      O you pure dove in your nature!

**Many:      O you beautiful sun in your shining!**

One:      O you full moon in your standing!

**Many:      We cannot turn away from you.**

One:      Let us worship together.

**\*Kindling the Christ Light**

**\*Opening Hymn:** PH 108

*Christ is Alive!*

Christ is alive! Let us now sing.  
The cross stands empty to the sky.  
Let streets and homes with praises ring.  
Love, drowned in death, shall never die.

Christ is alive! No longer bound  
To distant lands in Palestine,  
But saving, healing, here and now,  
And touching every place and time.

Not throned afar, remotely high,  
Untouched, unmoved by human pains,  
But daily, in the midst of life,  
Our Savior in the God-head reigns.

In every insult, rift and war,  
Where color, scorn or wealth divide,  
Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,  
And lives, where even hope has died.

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

**Many:** God of empty tombs: when we hesitate to speak of your hope, forgive us, and give us voice. When we find it difficult to love another, forgive us, and give us new compassion. When we do not hear the witness of others, forgive us, and redirect our attention to those who are too often forgotten. When we stay locked behind our fears and doubts, forgive us, and send us out to share your grace.

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

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

**One:** Christ comes into every shadowed corner of our lives with the light of Easter. Christ comes into the locked rooms of our faults, and gifts us with grace and hope. Christ comes to fill us with peace, that we may proclaim the good news of mercy and forgiveness. Therefore, let us celebrate:

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

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

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

**Scripture Readings:****First Reading:** Acts 2:32-35

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Sovereign Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

**Gospel Reading:** John 20:19-31

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Authorities, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Sovereign. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As Abba has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Holy One." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." A week

later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Sovereign and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Child of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

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

### **Sung Response**

*Easter Celtic Alleluia*

### **Reflection**

*Doubting Jesus*

### **Sung Response**

*Easter Celtic Alleluia*

### **Call to Offering**

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

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

### **Offertory**

*Hornpipe from Water Music*

G.F. Handel

### **\* Doxology**

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**

### **Blessing of the Marathon Athletes**

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

*Guide My Feet*

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

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

## Celebrations and 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 the Empty Tomb, 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 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

*(from A New Zealand Prayer Book, said in unison)*

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be, Parent of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven: The hallowing of your name echo through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings! Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and testing, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.

*Please be seated.*

## Breaking of the Bread

## Sharing of the Bread and Cup

## Post Communion Prayer

## \*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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*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!*

## Participating in Worship:

**Preacher** – Rev. Rob Mark

**Minister of Music** – Tom Handel

**Liturgist** – Rev. Joshua Lazard

**Lector** – Kathryn Barry

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

**Sexton** – Jesús Vargas

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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.



CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH PROGRAMMING: We have a vibrant program for children and youth, including nursery care and Christian formation opportunities for children and youth during worship. Children and youth are welcome to remain in worship, or to join us downstairs – ask an usher for directions! If you'd like to learn more, please email Rev. Kate at kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org.

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 today, Sunday, April 16, immediately following worship. Want to know more? Email Rev. Joshua at 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.

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 Athletes
- 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

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. 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.

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. Her obituary can be found here: 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

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.



Greater Boston
Interfaith Organization

While the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO) appreciates the progress, we are immensely disappointed that the House has only increased the budget for State-owned public housing to \$102 million. The true cost of bringing public housing to a decent, dignified state is at least \$184 million per year.

“This is an affront to Massachusetts’ most marginalized citizens who are tired of putting up with decades funding neglect resulting in horrendous living conditions.” said GBIO Leader Rev Lydia Shiu of Reservoir Church.

Our people deserve better, and we urge state legislators to demonstrate their commitment to their constituents by supporting a budget amendment for the full \$184 million if filed. Everyone deserves a safe, decent place to call home.

With faith and love,
GBIO



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 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*