

Church of the Covenant

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ



The Third Sunday of Easter

Earth Day

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



Church of the Covenant, Boston MA

April 23, 2023, 10:30 am

Earth Day

[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**

*Pastoral*

J.S. Bach

## **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: Morning has broken!

**Many: We gather to greet the new day by praising God.**

One: God created us for relationship with God, one another, and the earth.

**Many: Let us honor those relationships today and every day.**

One: We seek to care for our brothers and sisters around the world and to God’s good Creation.

**Many: Let us honor those relationships today and every day.**

One: May we commit to new ways of honoring your Creation as a means of sharing Jesus’ transforming love,

**Many: And let us seek God’s grace, justice, and mercy for all.**

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

**\*Opening Hymn** NCH 556     *God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens*

*Verse 1*

God who stretched the spangled heavens, infinite in time and place,  
Flung the suns in burning radiance, through the silent fields of space;  
We, your children, in your likeness, share inventive powers with you;  
Great Creator, still creating, show us what we yet may do.

*Verse 2*

We have ventured worlds undreamed of, since the childhood of our race;  
Known the ecstasy of winging through untraveled realms of space;  
Probed the secrets of the atom, yielding unimagined power,  
Facing us with life's destruction or our most triumphant hour.

*Verse 3*

As each far horizon beckons, may it challenge us anew,  
Children of creative purpose, serving others, honoring you.  
May our dreams prove rich with promise, each endeavor, well begun;  
Great Creator, give us guidance, till our goals and yours are one.

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

One:        To bring new life to the land,  
              To restore the waters,  
              To refresh the air,

**Many:     We join with the earth and with each other.**

One:        To renew the forests,  
              To care for the plants,  
              To protect the creatures,

**Many:     We join with the earth and with each other.**

One:        To celebrate the seas,  
              To rejoice in the sunlight,  
              To sing the song of the stars,

**Many:     We join with the earth and with each other.**

One:        To recall our destiny,  
              To renew our spirits,  
              To reinvigorate our bodies,

**Many:     We join with the earth and with each other.**

One: To recreate the human community,  
To promote justice and peace,  
To remember our children,

**Many: We join with the earth and with each other.**

One: We join together as many and diverse expressions of one loving  
mystery: for the healing of the earth and the renewal of all life.

## Listening to God in Silent Prayer

### Assurance of God's Grace

One: Creator, forgive us for our sins against you and your Creation. In your name, may we turn from our sins and work towards a new creation, one in which all creatures are freed from the bondage of greed and accumulation and are able to flourish into their creatureliness. May this church be a site of redemption, resilience, and hospitality; an extension of your love to all who are affected by the climate crisis. In this land, this structure, this community, this worship, may we love you more fully by seeking justice for our neighbors. Therefore let us celebrate:

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

### Sung Response

*Easter Celtic Alleluia*

Musical notation for the first line of the sung response. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/8. The melody is written on a treble clef staff. Above the staff, the chords G, G D, C, G, C, D are indicated. The lyrics "Al - le - lu - ia, a - le - lu - ia!" are written below the staff.

Musical notation for the second line of the sung response. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/8. The melody is written on a treble clef staff. Above the staff, the chords G, G D, C, G, C D G are indicated. The lyrics "Al - le - lu - ia, a - le - lu - ia!" are written below the staff.

## Scripture Readings

### **Reading from the Psalms** – Psalm 24:1-6

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it, for he has founded it on the seas and established it on the rivers. Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false and do not swear deceitfully. They will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from the God of their salvation. Such is the company of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

### **New Testament Reading** – Acts 2:14a, 36-41

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them...

“Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.” Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.”

And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.

## **Sung Response**

*Easter Celtic Alleluia*

## **Sermon**

## **Call to Offering**

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

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

## **Offertory**

*Pastoral*

Josef Rheinberger

## **\*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** NCH 567 (v. 1-4) *Stars and Planets Flung in Orbit*

#### *Verse 1*

Stars and planets flung in orbit, galaxies that swirl through space,  
Powers hid within the atom, cells that form an infant's face:  
These, O God, in silence praise you; by your wisdom they are made.

#### *Verse 2*

Skies adorned with sunset splendor, silent peaks in calm repose,  
Golden fields awaiting harvest, foaming surf and fragrant rose:  
Earth, its bounty clothed with beauty, echoes all creation's praise.

#### *Verse 3*

Life in wondrous, wild profusion, seed and fruit, each flower and tree,  
Beast and fish and swarming insect, soaring bird, rejoicing, free:  
These, your creatures, join in chorus, praising you in wordless song.

#### *Verse 4*

Humankind, Earth's deepest myst'ry, born of dust but touched by grace,  
Torn apart by tongue and color, yet a single, striving race:  
We, in whom you trace your image, add our words to nature's song.

## **\*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. Joshua Lawrence Lazard

**Minister of Music** – Tom Handel

**Digital Minister** – Evelyn Kimber

**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 in May for a small brunch after the third Sunday immediately following worship. Want to know more? Email Rev. Joshua at joshua.lazard@cotcbos.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.

- 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

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.

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.

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*