

Church of the Covenant

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ



The Fourth Sunday of Easter

Celebration of the Word

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



Church of the Covenant, Boston MA

April 30, 2023, 10:30 am

Celebration of the Word

Led by our Nicaragua Companions

[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**

*Prelude from Cello Suite #6*

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**

*UCC Justice Prayers*

One: Our God is an awesome God who breathed into emptiness and created all that is.

**Many: With love and care, God shaped the world in all its diversity with mountains and valleys, rivers and deserts, and people of all colors and sizes.**

One: And threading through it all are beautiful dreams of justice, compassion, liberation, and peace.

**Many: O God, creator of our past, our present, and our future, we thank you for the many blessings you bestow on us each moment.**

One: Be with us now. Draw near to us as we draw near to you.

**Many: Lead us in paths of righteousness. Fill our hearts with compassion and a thirst for justice. Teach us to be co-creators, with You, of a world where all belong and share in the abundance you have given us. Praise be to God.**

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\* You are invited to rise in body or spirit. **NCH** = black New Century Hymnal

## \* Kindling the Christ Light

\* **Opening Hymn:** NCH (black) 340

*We Are People on a Journey (verses below)*

1. We are people on a journey, pain is with us all the way.  
*Refrain:* Joyfully we come together at the holy feast of God.
2. Somos pueblo que camina por la senda del dolor.  
*Estríbillo:* Acudamos jubilosos a la santa comunión.
3. This is bread that God provides us, nourishing our unity. *Refrain.*
4. Christ is ever present with us, to unite us all in love. *Refrain.*
5. All who truly thirst for justice, seek their liberation here. *Refrain.*

## Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

**Many:** God, you desire freedom for all. We confess that sometimes we are bound by unsettling events around us, by fears lurking within us. We pray to be liberated from all that hinders us from being your salt and light in the world. And in your grace, give to us, the nation, and our world the balm of your healing presence. Your presence is light for our world. May we bask in it now.

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

## Listening to God in Silent Prayer

### Assurance of God's Grace

*(from the Nicaraguan Misa Campesina)*

**One:** You are the God of the poor, the human and simple. You struggle in the countryside and town. You line up in the work camps to get your daily wage. That is why we can talk with You. You are the worker God, the worker Christ and we celebrate together:

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

## \* Sung Response

*This Little Light of Mine*

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine (x3)  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine  
Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine (x3)  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

## Introduction to Reflection on the Word

### Reading from the Hebrew Bible— Isaiah 58:6-10

Is not this the fast that I choose:  
to loose the bonds of injustice,  
to undo the thongs of the yoke,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
and to break every yoke?  
Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,  
and bring the homeless poor into your house;  
when you see the naked, to cover them,  
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?  
Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing shall spring up quickly;  
your vindicator shall go before you,  
the glory of the Holy One shall be your rearguard.  
Then you shall call, and the Holy One will answer;  
you shall cry for help, and God will say, Here I am.  
If you remove the yoke from among you,  
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,  
if you offer your food to the hungry  
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,  
then your light shall rise in the darkness  
and your gloom be like the noonday.

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

### Sharing of Words

### Second Reading of Scripture

### Reflections on the Word

### Call to Offering

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

**Offertory** *Misión del Cristiano*(*Un Solo Rebaño*)  
The Christian's Mission (English translation)

Love and justice is what we preach  
demonstrating to all what love is.  
Love is service and brotherhood  
creating the power which leads to triumph.

CHORUS

One shepherd, one pastor, one church  
is what our Lord asks of us today  
that there be among the Lord's people no division  
and united we can accomplish the same mission

Love toward our sisters is the love of our God,  
with concrete actions and without conditions  
making our work an act of true charity  
without hope of gaining anything in return. CHORUS

In order to construct the Reign of God  
we must be united through proclaiming  
the strong teaching of liberty  
denouncing all injustice and evil. CHORUS

**\* 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 526**

*We Are Marching in the Light of God*

1. We are marching in the light of God  
We are marching in the light of God. (x2)  
We are marching, we are marching, oh-hoh,  
We are marching in the light of God. (x2)
2. Marchamos en la luz de Dios,  
Marchamos en la luz de Dios. (x2)  
Marchamos, marchamos, oh-hoh,  
Marchamos en la luz de Dios. (x2)
3. We are praying in the light of God  
We are praying in the light of God. (x2)  
We are praying, we are praying, oh-hoh,  
We are praying in the light of God. (x2)

**\* Charge and Benediction**

*Please remain seated for the postlude.*

**Postlude**

*Courante from Cello Suite #6*

J. S. Bach

**\* 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:

**Worship Leaders** – Karen Henry, Debbie Howland, Diane Lauber, Tim Groves,  
Mocky Day, Byron Sipe, Linda Pursley, Rob Mark

**Guest Cello** – Davis You

**Digital Ministers** – Rev. Kate Carlisle, Rev. Rob Mark

**Organ Assistant** – Nancy Stockford

**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.



FREE TREES!! & ARBOR DAY 4/29 and 4/30 This Saturday at 1pm and following worship today (weather permitting), our Climate Jubilee Team is teaming up with Boston's Speak for the Trees and offering free tree seedlings to anyone who is interested, and handing these out from the steps of COTC. Please email [Betty Southwick southwickbetty@gmail.com](mailto:southwickbetty@gmail.com) if you have any questions.

CLIMATE JUBILEE ADULT ED: Join us next Sunday May 7 following worship for an adult ed on how you can reduce your carbon footprint, reduce your reliance on fossil fuels, and make your kitchen a safer and healthier place to cook and breathe in as we zoom in on Induction Stoves. **All those who attend will have a chance to join in a free raffle to win an Induction Stove Top!!!**

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 May 7, Season of Generosity #1, Communion, Rev. Rob preaching
- Sunday May 14, Season of Generosity #2, Rev. Joshua preaching

UPCOMING ADULT ED SESSIONS POST WORSHIP.

- Sunday April 30, FREE TREES Give Away on steps of church
- Sunday May 7, Climate Jubilee Induction Stoves & Reducing Footprints
- Sunday May 21, End of Life Planning, Estates & Wills with Kathryn Barry

CLIMATE JUBILEE ALL-CHURCH READ. Covenant's Climate Jubilee Team is hosting another Zoom all-church book discussion in June (exact date TBA). We've bought a bunch of copies of *Cathedral on Fire*, by the Rev. Brooks Berndt (Minister of Environmental Justice for the UCC). See Barbara Darling for your own free copy of the book!

SEASON OF GENEROSITY. Join us in worship for the first three weeks in May as our Generosity Generators help us celebrate the spirit of generosity in our lives and in our life together as a community of faith. Our first installment of this series will feature a live “Gabbing on Giving” between two incredible COTC-ers on May 7 – this one is NOT to be missed!!

MOTHER’S DAY WALK FOR PEACE. Please join Church of the Covenant’s team for the Mother’s Day Walk for Peace. You may want to watch this short video about [why people walk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2g6J85VAToM) ([youtube.com/watch?v=2g6J85VAToM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2g6J85VAToM)) or look at the Louis D Brown Peace Institute’s webpage: ldbpeaceinstitute.org. Find our team page: mothersdaywalk4peace.org/Team/View/175583/Church-of-the-Covenant for you to sign up or donate. Contact Diane Lauber (dianelauber@comcast.net) or 978-376-6574 about walking that day! Thank you!

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 in May; date TBA. Want to know more? Email Rev. Joshua at joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org.

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.

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.

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.

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. Tom is away the week of April 30.

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



A Note About Today's Service.....

Today's service incorporates words, music and worship styles from Covenant's sister community in Dulce Nombre de Jesús, Nicaragua. Dulce Nombre is a Base Christian Community influenced by the teachings of liberation theology.

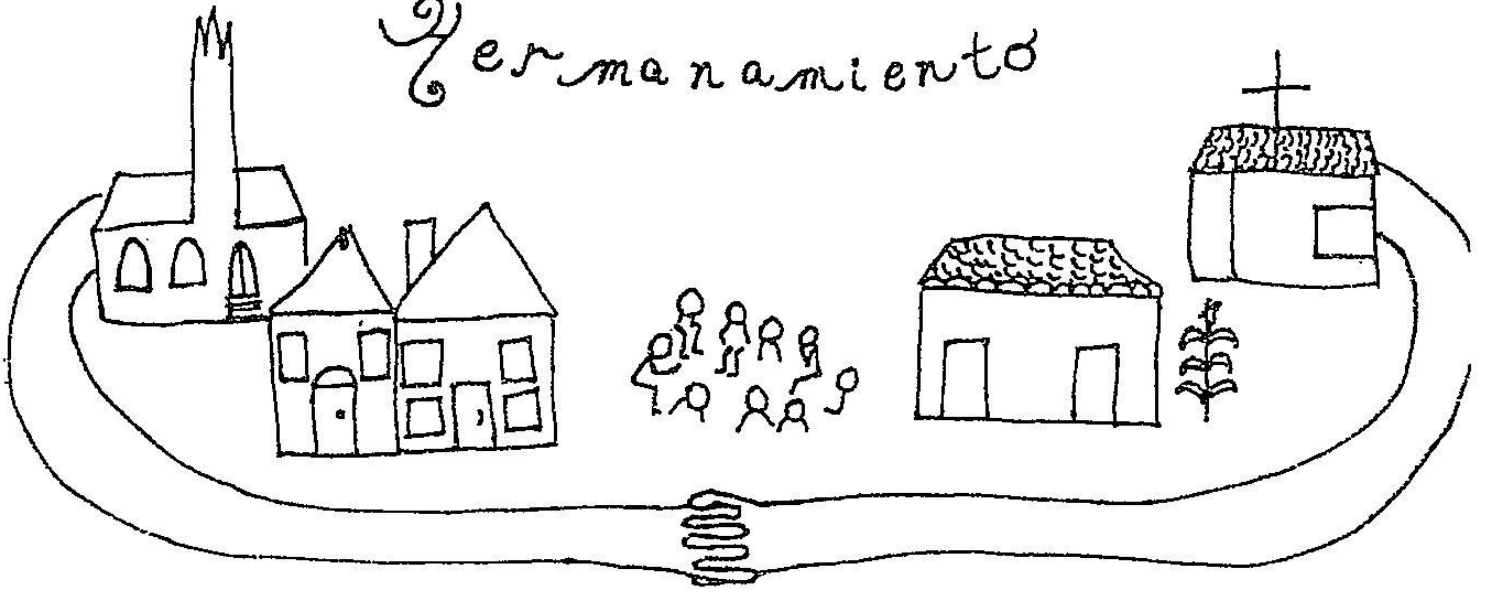
Liberation theology interprets the teachings of Jesus in relation to liberation from unjust economic, political, or social conditions. It may be described as "an interpretation of Christian faith through the suffering of the poor, their struggle and hope, and a critique of society and Christianity through the eyes of the poor." (Phillip Berryman)

One dramatic aspect of liberation theology is the social organization of church practice through the model of Christian base communities. The model emphasizes a "bottom-up" movement, with Biblical interpretation and liturgical practice designed by lay practitioners themselves, rather than by orthodox Church hierarchy.

In much of Nicaragua, Christian base communities are seldom embraced by the official Catholic church. Nor is Liberation Theology frequently taught or practiced by religious groups in the United States (with exceptions like here at COTC). Religious organizations and leaders and ecumenical movements who share the calling to Liberation Theology come from poor communities and from those seeking to learn through the eyes of the poor. In this practice, communities choose leaders who learn from those trained and committed to Liberation Theology to lead worship services, "Celebrations of the Word."

In today's service at Covenant, we seek to lead a "Celebration of the Word," as many of us have learned from our sibling *hermanamiento* with the Christian base community of Dulce Nombre de Jesús. This service is a reflection of some of the music, worship styles, and theology of Dulce Nombre mixed with the traditions of Church of the Covenant. We trust that participating in this Celebration together will help us imagine our faith as viewed "through the eyes of the poor."

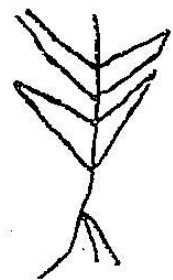
Hermanamiento



Our hermanamiento, or sister relationship, with the community of Dulce Nombre de Jesus, Nicaragua, had its beginning in 1995. Luis Aguirre and Elena Hendricks¹ came to our church to talk about the possibility of a new² sibling community relationship.

The following year, the first delegation travelled from Church of the Covenant to Dulce Nombre de Jesus.

Our hermanamiento is realized by visits to each other's communities, monthly letters, prayers that include each other, and decisions in our daily lives to be aware, to engage in honest dialogue, to face problems together, and to live the empowering word of God.





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*
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*