The Fourth Sunday of Easter
Mothering Hen God of Earth Sunday
Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ
ZOOM LINK (click here)
Welcome and thank you for worshipping together for this “hybrid” service where some will be in the sanctuary of their homes, and some in the sanctuary at 67 Newbury Street. 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.

**Red Book is Back!** If you would like a prayer of Celebration or Concern to be prayed aloud today, and would prefer not to share it yourself with the handheld mic, please take a moment at anytime to write it into the Red Book at the back of the sanctuary. For those online, you will be invited to place a prayer in the chat and we will share aloud.

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

**Welcome & Announcements**

One: Peace be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

One: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Many: **Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

**Prelude**

*Prelude in d minor*  
Clara Schumann

**Call to Worship**

One: It is a miracle that we here,

Many: **Creatures alive on this sacred, wild island, earth home.**

One: Our planet, made by the Light of all lights, formed from stars that lived, died, and poured forth the elements –

Many: **Hydrogen, oxygen, helium, and more.**

One: Born of the sea and walking on earth –

Many: **We are miracles, shaped by history – kin with all beings.**

One: May we worship our Living God who first placed us here,

Many: As beloved animals, seeking God’s image in the rest of nature.

**Kindling the Christ Light**
*Opening Hymn:*

**Impartial, Compassionate God of All Lives**

_Hymn by Adrienne Stricker, 2019, permission granted._

Adrienne Stricker

[Music notation]

1. Impartial, compassionate God of all lives,
   in Christ you have shown us your love actualized,
   incarnate and weak in the arms of the poor,
   destroying all systems that keep closed the door.

2. Unholy, unjustified fear we incite,
   when we shun our neighbors yet cling to our rights.
   your children still wander the streets left in pain,
   we pass laws against them to prove our disdain.

3. Creator of beauty, we stand not in pride,
   to strive for perfection and know all means all.
   For yours is the sacred, untarnished by sin,
   a refuge for outcasts that all may come in.

4. Our hope is your freedom for both great and small,
   your children are worthy to claim victory.
   We challenge and question each law without grace,
   affirming the image of Christ on each face.

5. All honor we give you, O help us to see,
   in Christ you have shown us your love actualized,
   And so let our actions flow out of our praise,
   to seek transformation, your Kingdom to raise.

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Prayer for Grounding in God’s Grace

One: As we look for God’s image in the planet that gives us life,
Many: We see sin, degradation and brokenness.
One: There is sin,
Many: In the plastic straw, the takeout container, the mindless amazon.com purchase.
One: There is degradation,
Many: In the shocking biodiversity loss pointing to a sixth great extinction.
One: There is brokenness,
Many: In dirty, fracked gas pipelines and compressor stations that slither unwanted through our communities.
One: There is sin,
Many: In people’s access to reproductive rights threatened. In people of color displaced by climate gentrification.
One: There is degradation,
Many: In animals unjustly confined for food; in tomatoes grown with pesticides then transported across the world.
One: There is brokenness,
Many: In the times we forget to pause and listen to the birds, to linger in the woods, to frolic in the rain.
One: For all these things, forgive us Mother God. Hear us as we pray with the rest of creation now in silent prayer…

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God’s Grace

One: As we look at our world through the lens of God’s redeeming love, we also see there is hope,
Many: In the children rising up for climate justice.
One: There is new life,
Many: In trees, budding flowers, growing sugar snap peas.
One: There is resurrection,
Many: In the power that comes from the sun, wind and tides.
One: There is resilience,
Many: In the grit of farm workers who share justly the fruits of their labor and the earth’s bounty.
One: There is reconciliation,
Many: In the steadfast love that comes to us freely from our Mothering Hen God.
One: Therefore, fellow beloved animals, let us celebrate together:
Many: In Jesus Christ, we are set free and made whole. Alleluia, Amen!

Sung Response: 

Easter Celtic Alleluia

Introduction to Reflection on the Word

Sacred Reading 

Remember the sky that you were born under, know each of the star’s stories.
Remember the moon, know who she is.
Remember the sun’s birth at dawn, that is the strongest point of time. Remember sundown and the giving away to night.
Remember your birth, how your mother struggled to give you form and breath. You are evidence of
her life, and her mother’s, and hers...
Remember the earth whose skin you are:
red earth, black earth, yellow earth, white earth
brown earth, we are earth.
Remember the plants, trees, animal life who all have their
tribes, their families, their histories, too. Talk to them,
listen to them. They are alive poems.
Remember the wind. Remember her voice. She knows the
origin of this universe.
Remember you are all people and all people
are you.
Remember you are this universe and this
universe is you.
Remember all is in motion, is growing, is you.
Remember language comes from this.
Remember the dance language is, that life is.
Remember.

Reading from Scripture: Acts 9:36-43
Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is
Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. At that time she
became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room
upstairs. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was
there, sent two people to him with the request, “Please come to us without
delay.” So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took
him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and
showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with
them. Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He
turned to the body and said, “Tabitha, RISE up.” Then she opened her eyes,
and seeing Peter, she sat up. He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then
calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. This became known
throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Holy One. Meanwhile he stayed
in Joppa for some time with a certain Simon, a tanner.

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

Reflection on the Word
*Hymn: PH (blue) 555  Now Thank We All our God (verses 1&2)*

Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things hath done, in whom the world rejoices;
Who, from our mother’s arms, hath blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.

O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us in God’s grace, and guide us when perplexed,
And free us from all ill in this world and the next.

Call to Offering

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

Offertory  Fugue in d minor  Clara Schumann

*Doxology*  Words by Barbara Darling

Let orange maples start the song.
Hills, valleys, oceans sing along.
Dogs, cats and rabbits join the tune!
All beings thank our God triune!

Prayer of Dedication

Celebrations and Concerns

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

Pastoral Prayer

*Closing Hymn: NCH 425  For the Fruit of All Creation*

For the fruit of all creation, thanks be to God;
for the gifts of every nation, thanks be to God;
for the plowing, sowing, reaping, silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth’s safe-keeping, thanks be to God.
In the just reward of labor, God’s will is done;
in the help we give our neighbor, God’s will is done;
in our world-wide task of caring, for the hungry and despairing,
in the harvests we are sharing, God’s will is done.

For the harvests of the Spirit, thanks be to God;
for the good we all inherit, thanks be to God;
for the wonders that astound us, for the truths that still confound us,
most of all that love has found us, thanks be to God.

*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**

**Worship Leader** – Rev. Rob Mark

**Minister of Music** – Tom Handel

**Liturgist** – Barbara Darling

**Lector** – Nancy Hollomon

**Digital Minister** – Linda Pursley

**Cantors** – COTC Choir

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

**Door Steward** – Jesús Vargas

**Sexton** – Fred Lopes

**Usher** – Holly Humphreys

**Cover** – Mosaic from the altar of the Dominus Flevit (Jesus Wept) on the western slope of the Mount of Olives across the Kidron Valley from Jerusalem. With photos from Rob.

**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 a member of staff in the chat.

**A NOTE ON THE PRELUDE AND OFFERTORY:** Clara Schumann is sometimes remembered as the wife of Robert Schumann, but her professional career and personal accomplishments equaled if not surpassed her husband’s. She was an internationally renowned concert pianist; one of the first to perform entire concert
programs by memory. She toured throughout Europe, serving not only as a performer, but also as her own concert manager: booking halls, making travel arrangements and assisting with publicity. On top of this, she raised 8 children and took care of her husband when he became ill and she was the primary breadwinner for the family. Amid this incredibly ambitious career, she still found time for composition. Yet, in her opinion, composition was men’s work. She lamented: “I once believed that I possessed creative talent, but I have given up this idea; a woman must not desire to compose – there has never yet been one able to do it. Should I expect to be the one?” Yet, she expressed joy and satisfaction in the craft of composition, noting that “composing gives me great pleasure... there is nothing that surpasses the joy of creation.” The Prelude and Fugue in d Minor was composed in 1845 but not published until 1994. It is a sophisticated work with clever motivic connections between the prelude and the fugue, and a chromatic fugue subject that is treated with technical mastery and ingenuity. The work was composed for piano, but works equally well, if not better on the organ.

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 8, Reflection on the Word
- Sunday, May 15, Rev. Joshua preaching, Communion
- Sunday, May 22, Rev. Rob preaching
- Sunday, May 29 – ZOOM ONLY, Memorial Day Weekend
- Sunday, June 5, Pentecost All Ages Service, Communion

EXIT CLOSURE: Please note the Copley Square exit off Mass Pike is closed until June. Plan accordingly or take public transportation as/if possible.

WOMEN’S LUNCH PLACE COMMUNITY GARDEN: In the spirit of Climate Jubilee, we are very excited to help support a mutual effort between COTC and WLP to birth some raised bed garden boxes on our Berkeley Street side. Please read this and consider signing to support this new effort:
https://forms.gle/btCbbfKpyU3QSyME6
“COTC 101” NEW MEMBERS CLASS MAY 15: Are you new-ish to Church of the Covenant and want to find out more about who we are, our history, our two denominations, our 5-point missional plan we feel called by God to live out through 2025, and what it means to join in membership? Then please join us after worship on Sunday, May 15 for an hour or so in person and on Zoom while we cover some of these topics together. Please RSVP to Rob at rob.mark@cotcbos.org

JUBILEE JAUNTS: As Spring is upon us again, our Climate Jubilee Team has also brought our Jubilee Jaunts back! Let’s get out into the beauty of God’s natural world in the gift of our watershed as it is now, and find peace and blessing from it. Mark your calendars now for these simple jaunts for an hour or two together in community being blessed by Creation.

- Sunday May 22, 1:30pm Franklin Park with Betty Southwick
- Sunday June 26, 1:30pm Arboretum with Nancy Stockford & Mark Huston
- Sunday July 25, 1:30pm Middlesex Fells with Holly Humphreys
- Want to add a jaunt?? Email Betty and we’ll add it to the list!

CONTRIBUTING TO UKRAINE RELIEF: All of us are heart-broken by the devastation and violence in Ukraine. You may have donated through the websites mentioned in the bulletin below in previous weeks. Covenant's Mission and Advocacy Committee has contributed to relief to Ukrainian refugees fleeing to Poland - as of now, over half a million, most of them children -- through First Church in Marlborough (Congregational), which has been asked by the Southern New England Conference of the UCC to coordinate contributions: https://www.sneucc.org/newsdetail/getting-aid-to-ukraine-16383498

Mission and Advocacy encourages you to consider contributing to this effort. You can write a check to "First Church in Marlborough" and put "Ukraine Relief" in the memo line. The address is 37 High Street, Marlborough Ma 01752. You can also donate directly online with this donation option. Just put "Ukraine relief" in the memo line.

As we continue to hold the people of Ukraine and Russia in our prayers in light of Putin’s horrifying “war of choice,” here are some other places to support:

- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance: https://pda.pcusa.org/situation/ukraine/
- United Church of Christ ACT Alliance: https://www.ucc.org/global-h-o-p-e/ukraine-emergency-appeal/
- World Central Kitchen: https://wck.org
BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS: Our weekly morning Bible Study is each Wednesday morning on Zoom at 9:15am. We are studying the Gospel of John. If you'd like more information or want to be on the list to get regular reminders & Zoom info, contact Jan Gough at revjangough@gmail.com.

EASTER EVENING PRAYERS 6-6:30pm: Join us for our weekly Wednesday evening prayers w/ intentional liturgy, contemplative song, psalms & sharing of prayers with our siblings from Newton Presbyterian on Zoom.

CHILDREN’S AND YOUTH PROGRAMMING: We have a vibrant program for children and youth, meeting during in-person worship. We send out updates regularly via email, so please email Rev. Kate if you’d like to know more!

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.

WEEKLY CALENDAR Click here to view the weekly calendar of events.
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 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 Lazard, *Associate Pastor*
- Thomas Handel, *Minister of Music*
- Bill Brown, *Building Manager*
- Rev. Kate Carlisle, *CYCE Coordinator / Parish Administrator*
- Nancy Stockford, *Financial Secretary*
- Fred Lopes, *Sunday Sexton*
- Alan Lane, *Food Cupboard Coordinator*

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