

Church of the Covenant

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ



The Sixth Sunday of Easter
May 14, 2023



Church of the Covenant, Boston MA

May 14, 2023, 10:30 am
The Fifth Sunday of Easter
[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.

For those joining online, we will celebrate communion so you are invited to gather a plate and a cup.

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**Prelude**

*Both Sides Now*

Joni Mitchell

## 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 Rev. Elizabeth Dilley

One: God is our light and our salvation; whom shall we fear?

**Many: God is our shelter and refuge on the days of trouble,  
and our hope and joy on the days of celebration!**

One: Day after day, we seek God’s face and the assurance of God’s holy love: O God, do not turn from us or hide your face from us!

**Many: Be our guide and our light instead!**

One: One thing we ask of God:

**Many: That we may live in God’s dwelling place all the days of our life, and never cease to behold the beauty of God’s home.**

One: Beloved of God, enter this worship in thanksgiving,  
for God is among and within us!

**Many: Thanks be to God!**

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

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

### **\*Opening Hymn NCH 25**

*O God, Our Help in Ages Past*

#### *Verse 1*

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,  
Our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home:

#### *Verse 2*

Under the shadow of your throne your saints have dwelt secure;  
Sufficient is your arm alone, and our defense is sure.

#### *Verse 3*

Before the hills in order stood or earth received its frame,  
From everlasting you are God, to endless years the same.

#### *Verse 4*

A thousand ages in your sight are like an evening gone,  
Short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun.

#### *Verse 5*

Time, like an ever-rolling stream, soon bears us all away;  
We fly forgotten, as a dream, fades at the opening day.

#### *Verse 6*

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,  
Still be our God while troubles last, and our eternal home!

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

**Many:**      **Gracious Light-Bearer, into the shadows of our isolation you speak words of life and community. Challenger of our lives, you call us from places we call home to lead us more deeply into the world you love. With your gentle, healing touch you redeem the broken places of our lives and you heal the wounded places of the earth. Inspire our worship here this day, so that we may receive liberation in your word, and be filled to overflowing to share your reconciling love throughout the Earth.**

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

## Listening to God in Silent Prayer

### Assurance of God's Grace

One: Friends, hear again the Good News: God speaks life, provides redemption, and grants us liberation. Therefore, let us celebrate together:

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

### \*Sung Response

*Easter Celtic Alleluia*



### Scripture Readings

#### Old Testament/Hebrew Bible Reading – Jeremiah 52:4-9, 12-16

So, in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his whole army. They encamped outside the city and built siege works all around it. The city was kept under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. By the ninth day of the fourth month the famine in the city had become so severe that there was no food for the people to eat. Then the city wall was broken through, and the whole army fled. They left the city at night through the gate between the

two walls near the king's garden, though the Babylonians were surrounding the city. They fled toward the Arabah, but the Babylonian army pursued King Zedekiah and overtook him in the plains of Jericho. All his soldiers were separated from him and scattered, and he was captured.

On the tenth day of the fifth month, in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard, who served the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. He set fire to the temple of the Lord, the royal palace and all the houses of Jerusalem. Every important building he burned down. The whole Babylonian army, under the commander of the imperial guard, broke down all the walls around Jerusalem. Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard carried into exile some of the poorest people and those who remained in the city, along with the rest of the craftsmen and those who had deserted to the king of Babylon.

But Nebuzaradan left behind the rest of the poorest people of the land to work the vineyards and fields.

### **New Testament Reading – Acts 17:1-10a**

After Paul and Silas had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days argued with them from the scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead and saying, "This is the Messiah, Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you." Some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women.

But some of the Jews became jealous, and with the help of some ruffians in the marketplaces they formed a mob and set the city in an uproar. While they were searching for Paul and Silas to bring them out to the assembly, they attacked Jason's house. When they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some brothers and sisters before the city authorities, shouting, "These people who have been turning the world upside down have come here also, and Jason has entertained them as guests. They are all acting contrary to the decrees of the emperor, saying that there is another king named Jesus." The people and the city officials were disturbed when they heard this, and after they had taken bail from Jason and the others, they let them go.

## **Gospel Lesson – Mark 12:13-17**

Later they sent some of the Pharisees and followers of Herod to Jesus to catch him in his words. They came to him and said, “Teacher, we know that you are a man of integrity. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not? Should we pay or shouldn’t we?”

But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. “Why are you trying to trap me?” he asked. “Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.” They brought the coin, and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?”

“Caesar’s,” they replied.

Then Jesus said to them, “Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.”

And they were amazed at him.

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

Many: **Thanks be to God.**

### **Sung Response**

*Easter Celtic Alleluia*

### **Sermon**

“If You See a Good Fight, Get in It”

### **Moment for Generosity**

### **Call to Offering**

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

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

### **Offertory**

*Simple Gifts*

Aaron Copland

## **\*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 473**

*Blessed Assurance*

### *Verse 1*

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!  
O what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
born of the Spirit, washed in Christ's blood.

### *Refrain*

This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long;  
This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.

### *Verse 2*

Perfect submission, perfect delight!  
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;  
Angels descending, bring from above,  
echoes of mercy, whispers of love. *Refrain*

### *Verse 3*

Perfect submission, all is at rest,  
I in my Savior and happy and blessed;  
Watching and waiting, looking above,  
filled with God's goodness, lost in Christ's love. *Refrain*

## **\*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

**Liturgist** – Rev. Rob Mark

**Lector** – Maria Arruda

**Moment for Generosity** – Holly Humphreys

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

**Usher** – Trudi Veldman

**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.



MOTHER'S DAY WALK FOR PEACE TODAY. Please support Church of the Covenant's team for today's 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.

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 21, Season of Generosity #3, Guest Preacher Rev. Nikita McCalister
- Sunday May 28, Pentecost All Ages Worship
- Sunday June 4, Trinity Sunday, Rev. Rob preaching

UPCOMING ADULT ED SESSIONS POST WORSHIP.

- Sunday May 21, End of Life Planning, Estates & Wills with Kathryn Barry
- Sunday July 16, Climate Jubilee All Church Read – *Cathedral on Fire*

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.

PENTECOST READERS NEEDED IN MANY LANGUAGES! Our All Ages Pentecost Worship on May 28 will feature a reading in many languages. If you speak a language other than English, and would be willing to read a verse of Scripture, in person or on Zoom; or if you're interested but have questions; please let Rev. Kate know at kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org.

LIFE ALIVE BRUNCH. This group of 20s, 30s, and 40s meets monthly for fellowship and community. Our next gathering will be Saturday, May 27 at 12 noon. Want to know more? Email Rev. Joshua at joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org.

CLIMATE JUBILEE ALL-CHURCH READ. Covenant's Climate Jubilee Team is hosting another Zoom all-church book discussion after worship on Sunday, July 16. 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!

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. This week only, we are gathering upstairs for all CYCE activities. Children and youth are welcome to remain in worship, or to join us – ask an usher for directions! If you'd like to learn more, please email Rev. Kate at kate.carlisle@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.

HYMNS STREAMED with permission under One License #A-741135.

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



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*