

Church of the Covenant

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ



The Seventh Sunday of Easter
May 21, 2023



Church of the Covenant, Boston MA

May 21, 2023, 10:30 am

The Seventh 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

*Over the Rainbow/What a Wonderful World*

*arr. Tom 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

One: As we gather for the revolutionary act called worship, we pray to you O God:

Many: **Renew our minds and rekindle your love in our hearts.**

One: May we see in your Oneness our need for unity.

Many: **May we see in your Threeness our need for community.**

One: May we see in your creativity our need for diversity.

Many: **May we see in your body our need to love everybody.**

## \* Kindling the Christ Light

## \* Opening Hymn: (see below)

*Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound*

Amazing grace how sweet the sound

that saved a wretch like me!

I once was lost but now am found,

was blind but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
and grace my fears relieved;  
how precious did that grace appear  
the hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils, and snares  
I have already come;  
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far,  
and grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years,  
bright shining as the sun,  
we've no less days to sing God's praise  
than when we'd first begun.

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

(from Psalm 68)

**Many: O Comforter, let our fears be transformed; let all that keeps us separated and confused flee! As smoke is blown away, so let our fears rise up before you; as wax melts before fire, let our fears be melted by Love. Then we will be released from bondage; we will exult before the Beloved; we will be jubilant with joy.**

**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*

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

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

## Scripture Readings

### New Testament Reading – 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.

### Gospel Lesson – Matthew 14:14-21

When Jesus went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, ‘This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.’ Jesus said to them, ‘They need not go away; you give them something to eat.’ They replied, ‘We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.’ And he said, ‘Bring them here to me.’ Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

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

**Sung Response**

*Easter Celtic Alleluia*

**Sermon**

“Generosity is the X-factor!”

**Sung Response**

*Easter Celtic Alleluia*

**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**

*The Gift of Love*

Hal Hopson

**\* 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**

**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 (x2).

**\* 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

*(Casa Del Sol)*

**Ground of all being, Mother of life, Father of the universe, Your name is sacred, beyond speaking. May we know your presence, may your longings be our longings in heart and in action. May there be food for the human family today and for the whole earth community. Forgive us the falseness of what we have done as we forgive those who are untrue to us. Do not forsake us in our time of conflict but lead us into new beginnings. For the light of life, the vitality of life, and the glory of life are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

*Please be seated.*

### Breaking of the Bread

### Sharing of the Bread and Cup

### Post Communion Prayer

\*Closing Hymn: NCH (black) 474, v. 1, 3, 1

I'm So Glad, Jesus Lifted Me

1) I'm so glad, Jesus lifted me (x3)  
Singing glory, hallelujah, Jesus lifted me.

3) When I was in trouble, Jesus lifted me (x3)  
Singing glory, hallelujah, Jesus lifted me.

## **\*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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## **Participating in Worship:**

**Guest Preacher** – Rev. Nikita Giselle McCalister

**Minister of Music** – Tom Handel

**Liturgist** – Rev. Rob Mark

**Lector** – Liz Vizza

**Covenant Choir**

**Communion Servers** – Kathryn Barry, Liz Vizza

**Moment for Generosity** – Nancy Stockford

**Digital Minister** – Christine James

**Audio-Video Tech Team** – Derek Holbrook

**Ushers** – Trudi Veldman, Faith Perry

**Sexton** – Jesús Vargas

**Cover Art** – Loaves and Fishes by John August Swanson, 2003

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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.



END OF LIFE PLANNING ADULT ED: Today following worship, join us at the front of the sanctuary (and on Zoom) as Kathryn Barry leads us in a discussion on estates and wills in light of the sacred work of end of life planning.

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*

PENTECOST SUNDAY: Sunday, May 28th is our All Ages Pentecost Service! Remember to wear red!

PENTECOST/STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH SPECIAL OFFERING – May 28, during worship. Each of our denominations takes a Special Offering on the day of Pentecost. The PCUSA Pentecost Offering focuses on programs that benefit youth and young adults. One example that we at Covenant are familiar with is the Young Adult Volunteer program. We had several talented and dedicated Young Adult Volunteers working with both the church and the Women's Lunch Place in years past. The UCC Strengthen the Church Offering's theme is "On Holy Ground." The UCC uses these funds for leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing churches. Covenant may choose a local recipient to receive a small portion of this offering. This year your Mission and Advocacy Committee has chosen to send the local portion to Camp Wilmot – the Presbyterian camp in NH where we held some of our retreats more than a decade ago. Thank you for your consideration. Please give generously.

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.

PRIDE SUNDAY JUNE 11: Also please email Rev. Kate if you have interest in marching in Saturday's PRIDE Parade, 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!

COVENANT CABARET, Saturday, June 24th, starting at 7pm. Come join us for this convivial event with tasty refreshments and fun entertainment. Please let Tim Groves know if you would like to perform, twgroves@comcast.net. The Cabaret is a fund-raiser to support our sibling relationship with the Church of the Poor in Dulce Nombre de Jesus, Nicaragua.

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.

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

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.

SUMMER SOLSTICE EVENSONG SERVICE. Join us Wednesday, June 21 at 7:30pm on the Arthur Fiedler dock along the Quinobequin (Charles) River as we give thanks again to God for the changing season and gift of light and life.

HEARING ASSISTED DEVICES. Speak with an usher if you would like to use these devices that work with or without a hearing aid.

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.

WE WELCOME TODAY'S SPECIAL GUEST PREACHER.

Rev. Nikita Giselle McCalister was born to the Rev. Robert, Sr. and (late) Rev. Deborah L. Shumake. Rev McCalister received her license to preach the Gospel in 2001 and was ordained in 2005, under the leadership of Rev. James C. Perkins, Pastor of Greater Christ Baptist Church (Detroit, MI).



She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Human Resources Management from Central Michigan University (1993), a Master of Business Administration from the University of Detroit Mercy (1999), and a Master of Divinity from Boston University School of Theology (2005).

She currently serves as the Transitional Consultant for the American Baptist Churches of Michigan. She previously served as the Associate Executive Minister for Administration for the American Baptist Churches of Rhode Island (ABCORI); Senior Pastor of Bethany Baptist Church, Pawtucket, RI; Assistant Pastor of Ministry Development at Greater Christ Baptist Church in Detroit, MI; and the co-youth pastor at First Baptist Church in Randolph, MA. While at Boston University School of Theology, she worked as administrative support for the Sustaining Urban Pastoral Excellence Program in Boston, MA., a two million-dollar Lilly Endowment Fund project. Formally, Rev. McCalister was employed in management at Electronic Data Systems.

Rev. McCalister currently serves on the Boston University Alumni Council Board (BUAC), Boston University Dean's Advisory Board (DAB), the School of Theology Dean's Advisory Board for Boston University School of Theology, The Ministers & Missionaries Benefits Board (MMBB), and the Advisory Board Member American Baptist Women in Ministry (ABWIM). She was the assistance coach for the Girl's Varsity Basketball team at Southfield Christina School. She was a member of the ecumenical planning team for the 59th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at the United Nations in New York which hosted a Parallel Event entitled: "Sacred and Safe: Building Capacity of Faith Communities to Address Gender-Based Violence." Also at the invitation of the Ambassador to the Permanent Mission of Botswana to the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Charles Thembani Ntwaagae, she helped plan the Side Event: Real Talk/Real Action: Engaging Men and Boys in Prevention and Intervention Strategies that Address Gender-Based Violence.

She has been a NCAA Women's Division I basketball player and track and field athlete, guest preacher, workshop leader, liturgical dancer, and singer at various conferences and churches throughout the nation.

She previously served on Rep. David Cicilline's Women's Advisory Council, Board Member of Rhode Island Kids' Count, Member of Chaplains Association of the University of Rhode Island (URI), Treasurer of Minister's Alliance of Rhode Island. She has served as the Chairperson of the American Baptist Churches of United States of America (ABC-USA) Transformed by the Spirit Journey Team Task Force, the Board of Directors for the Robert S. Shumake Foundation, the Metropolitan Detroit Association of American Baptist Churches, the Benjamin E. Mays Male Academy, and treasurer of ABC-MI Ministers Council. Her other organizational ties include: past President of the Black Seminarians, Boston University School of Theology, Roothbert Fellow, Boston University Woman's Graduate Club, Boston University School of Theology Seminary Singers, and the National Black MBA Association Incorporated, Central Michigan University Women's Basketball, and Magni-Beigan Scholar Athlete.

Rev. Nikita McCalister is married to Rev. Jabulani McCalister. They are the proud parents of two children Jaden and Azriel McCalister.



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*