

Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



The Sixth Sunday of Easter

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ

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



Church of the Covenant

Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 22, 2022, 10:30 am

[Zoom Link](#)

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.

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

Jesu, Joy of our Desiring

J. S. Bach

*Call to Worship

One: Loving God in whom justice and peace kiss,
When the Wicked Ways of the world overwhelm us,

Many: **Guard our spirits from resignation.**

One: When oppression remains the law of the land,

Many: **Fan the flames of our anger into acts of solidarity.**

One: Help us gather with each other and with you --

Many: **For in us and between us, Your Spirit Lives and Moves.**

*Kindling the Christ Light

***Opening Hymn: PH (blue) 356**

Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Come Thou fount of every blessing
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
Mount of God's unchanging love.

Here I raise my Ebenezer;
Hither by Thy help I'm come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood.

O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

Many: God of empty tombs: when we hesitate to speak of your hope, forgive us, and give us voice. When we find it difficult to love another, forgive us, and give us new compassion. When we do not listen to the visions of others, forgive us, and redirect our attention to those who are too often forgotten. When we let the hatred around us to seep inside, forgive us, and fill us anew. When we forget your image deep within, forgive us, remind us, and set us free to remember.

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

One: Wherever you are on the journey, Christ is with you. You are beloved of God and Divine care will always surround you and restore you. Therefore, let us celebrate together:

Many: **In Jesus Christ we are set free. Alleluia, Amen!**

Sung Response:

Easter Celtic Alleluia

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

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

Readings from Scripture

Reading from the New Testament: Acts 16:9-15

During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a person of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Holy One opened her

heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Holy One, come and stay at my home.” And she prevailed upon us.

Gospel Reading: John 5:1-9

After this there was a Jewish festival, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay many invalids-blind, lame, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be made well?” The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.” Jesus said to him, “Stand up, take your mat and walk.” At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk. Now that day was a sabbath.

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

Sung Response

Easter Celtic Alleluia

Sermon

The Color Purple



Song

Down in the River

Refrain:

As I went down in the river to pray
Studying about that good old way
And who shall wear the starry crown,
Good Lord, show me the way

1. O children, let's go down, let's go down, come on down
O children, let's go down, down in the river to pray. **Refrain.**

Call to Offering

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

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

Offertory

Fairest Lord Jesus

arr. Teresa Wilhelmi

*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 (black) 597

Shall we gather at the river,
where bright angel feet have trod,
with its crystal tide forever
flowing by the throne of God?

Shall We Gather at the River

Refrain: Yes, we'll gather at the river,
the beautiful, the beautiful river;
gather with the saints at the river
that flows by the throne of God.

On the margin of the river,
washing up its silver spray,
we will walk and worship ever,
all the happy golden day. **Refrain.**

As we reach the shining river,
lay we every burden down;
grace our spirits will deliver,
and provide a robe and crown. **Refrain.**

Soon we'll reach the shining river,
soon our pilgrimage will cease;
soon our happy hearts will quiver
with the melody of peace. **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.**

Worship Participants

Preacher – Rev. Rob Mark

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Liturgists – Linda Pursley, Rev. Joshua
Lawrence Lazard

Lector – Thiago Santos

Digital Minister – Trudi Veldman

Cantors – COTC Choir

Audio-Video Tech – Jon Schwarz

Door Steward – Jesús Vargas

Sexton – Fred Lopes

Usher – Denice Thornhill

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.

CLIMATE JUBILEE JAUNT TODAY 1:30pm FRANKLIN PARK: As part of the Climate Jubilee Team's continued goal of being outside and appreciating nature with all of you, please join Betty Southwick this afternoon at 1:30 pm, as she takes you exploring in Franklin Park. Did you know that there were bear dens in the Park? And, also that Ralph Waldo Emerson had his home in the Park? We can do a 1 (or 3) mile walk and/or we can send you off on trails to explore. We will email directions, parking and public transportation information, meeting location, and other details to those who sign up. [Sign up here](#). If you have questions in advance of the walk, please feel free to email southwickbetty@gmail.com. And for those of you in our diaspora, please take a walk today, send us pictures, and be with us in solidarity with nature!

REV. NANCY TAYLOR RETIRES FROM OLD SOUTH: Today, Sunday, May 22, our sibling church Old South Church sees its last Sunday with the Rev. Nancy S. Taylor as their Senior Minister/ CEO. There is a noon Celebration Sunday today featuring voices near and far. More details [here](#) and here for their [livestream](#). Let us give thanks to God for the faithful, prophetic and loving minister of our colleague and sibling in Christ Nancy and pray for our friends at Old South in this transition.

CORO ALLEGRO CONCERT 7PM TODAY AT OLD SOUTH CHURCH: Letters to our Children: Voices Across Generations For LGBTQ+ Youth. Support our wonderful partners who share space with us at 67 Newbury Street for this important concert that is based on moving letters to a transgender child and to a survivor of conversion therapy by LGBTQ+ advocates Mimi Lemay and Sam Brinton, including a World Premiere of "Here I am: I am Here" by Andrea Clearfield. Tickets and more info here: <https://www.coroallegro.org/>

NEXT SUNDAY MAY 29 – We will be on ZOOM only – there will be no one worshipping from the sanctuary at 67 Newbury Street.

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

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 22, Rev. Rob preaching
- Sunday, May 29, **ZOOM ONLY**, Memorial Day Weekend
- Sunday, June 5, Pentecost All Ages Service, Communion
- Sunday, June 12, Rev. Rob preaching, All Church End of School Year Picnic

“COTC 101” NEW MEMBERS CLASS UPDATE (NEW DATE & TIME) TUESDAY MAY 31, 6pm on Zoom ([registration link](#)): 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 on Tuesday, May 31, 6pm for an hour or so on Zoom while we cover some of these topics together. [Please register here](#) or email Rob at rob.mark@cotcbos.org

SHAW 54th REDEDICATION JUNE 1, 11am, Boston Common: We are all invited to the National Rededication of the Shaw 54th Memorial on June 1 at 11am. This event planned in part by our own Liz Vizza at the helm of the Friends of the Public Gardens, will include great speakers talking about the importance of the monument, the 54th Regiment as the first Black regiment organized in the North to fight for their freedom in the Civil War, how their sacrifice still inspires Black military members today, and a call to action to renew our commitment to the cause that these men fought and died for - social justice and racial equity. Speakers include Mayor Wu, Ibram X. Kendi, and David Blight who wrote the Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Frederick Douglass. [Here is a link to RSVP.](#)

CYCE UPDATES: We continue to offer weekly Christian Education opportunities for children and youth ages 5 and up, when COTC worship meets in person. We've also reopened the nursery for young ones under 5! Our next All Ages Worship is on Pentecost, June 5. Please remember that Bates Hall is for CYCE use only during and following worship, so we ask adults who aren't connected with CYCE to use the restrooms on this floor. If you are a visitor with little ones, we would welcome you to come downstairs and learn more (find the stairs down to Bates Hall at the back of the sanctuary). We send the latest info on CYCE activities via email, so if you want to receive those updates, contact kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org.

COVENANT BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP JUNE 12: The next Church of the Covenant book discussion will take place on Sunday, June 12, at 5 PM via Zoom. (Link will be sent as the date grows closer.) We will be discussing *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. As always, you are welcome to join us whether or not you have ever come to a Covenant book discussion before, and whether or not you have read the book. Ask Barbara if you have any questions: barbarakdarling@yahoo.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](#).

LIFE ALIVE is our 20s30s40s young adult group that meets monthly for brunches. If you have any questions or would like to join us, please email Rev. Joshua joshua.lazard@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: [Sign up here](#)
- Sunday June 26, 1:30pm Arboretum with Nancy Stockford & Mark Huston: [Sign up here](#)
- Sunday July 25, 1:30pm Middlesex Fells with Holly Humphreys: [Sign up here](#)
- *Want to add a jaunt?? Email [Betty](#) and we'll add it to the list!*

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.

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.

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:

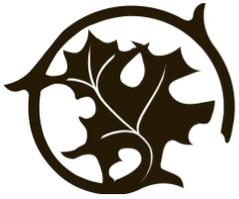
<https://www.sneucc.org/newsdetail/getting-aid-to-ukraine-16383498>

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>

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 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*