

Church of the Covenant

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ

Church of the Covenant

Open, Affirming,

and letting more light shine

United Church of Christ / Presbyterian Church (USA)



Pride Sunday
June 11, 2023



Church of the Covenant, Boston MA

June 11, 2023, 10:30 am

Pride Sunday

[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.

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

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**Prelude**

*True Colors*

as sung by Cyndi Lauper

## Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you.

**Many: And also with you.**

## \* Call to Worship

adapted from Kimi Floyd Reisch

One: Each of us is created with worth, imbued with dignity.

**Many: We are the representation of God’s love in the world.**

One: We are diverse in our experiences, vast in our manifestation of how love looks.

**Many: Our families are all different, but each represents and honors the many ways that God’s people live and love.**

One: Our lives are enriched when LGBTQIA+SGL people are welcomed and affirmed in our churches and communities.

**Many: We all suffer when any queer person is oppressed, excluded, or shamed.**

One: When justice is denied to any of us, justice is denied to all of us.

**Many: Until we are all free, none of us are free.**

One: As we seek to follow the Liberating Christ, may we work to build a world where all people are affirmed with love.

**Many: Our sexual and gender diversity come as gifts from our Creator and bring joy in our lives. And in God’s name, we gather and go out to share these blessings with the world.**

# \* Kindling the Christ Light

## \* Opening Hymn:

*For all the Children*

### For All the Children



1. God, we gath - er as your peo - ple to raise our song a -  
2. Oh, we sing for all the chil - dren, that one day they be  
3. Oh, we pray for all the young lives cut short by fear and  
4. God, we're work - ing for the fu - ture when chil - dren far and



bove, and we dare to claim the pro - mise of Your love.  
free; and we sing for gen - er - a - tions yet to be,  
shame so a - fraid of who they are and whom they love.  
wide, can live their lives with dig - ni - ty and pride.



Though the day may not yet be here, we trust it soon will  
that they nev - er have a rea - son to doubt that they are  
May the mess - age now be ban - ished that Your love is for the  
As they grow in strength and sta - ture, may they join us hand in



be, when your chil - dren will be free.  
blest. May they, in Your love, find rest.  
few, may their faith in You re - new.  
hand, as a - gainst all hate we stand.



O, may our hearts and minds be o - pened, fling the church doors o - pen



wide. May there be room e - nough for ev - 'ry - one in - side.



For in God there is a wel - come, in God we all be -



long. May that wel - come be our song.

## A Celebratory Litany for Pride Sunday

One: Resplendent God of the Rainbow,

Many: For this we celebrate and give thanks.

## Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

*Rev. Derek Terry (UCC, ONA)*

Many: Loving God, sometimes we have dishonored ourselves and others in our longing to fit in and to be accepted. At times we have rejected the individuality of others. Sometimes we have allowed the pressure to be liked cause us to bully ourselves and others. Occasionally we have been silent when we have witnessed people being dishonored because of their truth. Please change our hearts and help us to love our own humanity and the awesomeness of other humans. Please help us forgive ourselves for the harsh things that we have said and thought about ourselves and others. Each person is a unique and beautiful expression of God's divine light and love. We confess that we forget this sometimes and pray that you help us to do better.

One: In the gift of silent prayer, let us now open ourselves to God...

## Listening to God in Silent Prayer

### Assurance of God's Grace

One: Beloved, God forgives us of all of our wrongdoings – those we committed consciously and unconsciously. Let us forgive others as God freely forgives us, and let's celebrate together:

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

\* **Sung Response:** PH (blue) 398 (chorus)

*Sweet, Sweet Spirit (refrain)*

Sweet Holy Spirit, sweet heavenly Dove,  
stay right here with us, filling us with your love;  
And for these blessings we lift our hearts in praise,  
Without a doubt we'll know that we have been revived  
when we shall leave this place.

## Readings from Scripture

### **Hebrew Bible Reading:** Daniel 3:16-28

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, ‘O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to present a defense to you in this matter. If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire and out of your hand, O king, let him deliver us. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods and we will not worship the golden statue that you have set up.’ Then Nebuchadnezzar was so filled with rage against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face was distorted. He ordered the furnace to be heated up seven times more than was customary, and ordered some of the strongest guards in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and to throw them into the furnace of blazing fire. So the men were bound, still wearing their tunics, their trousers, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the furnace of blazing fire. Because the king’s command was urgent and the furnace was so overheated, the raging flames killed the men who lifted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. But the three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down, bound, into the furnace of blazing fire.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up quickly. He said to his counsellors, ‘Was it not three men that we threw bound into the fire?’ They answered the king, ‘True, O king.’ He replied, ‘But I see four men unbound, walking in the middle of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the fourth has the appearance of a god.’ Nebuchadnezzar then approached the door of the furnace of blazing fire and said, ‘Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!’ So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king’s counsellors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men; the hair of their heads was not singed, their tunics were not harmed, and not even the smell of fire came from them.

Nebuchadnezzar said, ‘Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him. They disobeyed the king’s command and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God.’

### **Gospel Lesson:** Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

As Jesus was walking along, he saw someone called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ And Matthew got up and followed Jesus.

And as Jesus sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” But when he heard this, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.”

While Jesus was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader of the synagogue came in and knelt before him, saying, “My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.” And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples. Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, for she said to herself, “If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well.” Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, “Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.” And instantly the woman was made well. When Jesus came to the leader’s house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, he said, “Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping.” And they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. And the report of this spread throughout that district.

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

Many: **Thanks be to God.**

**Sung Response:** PH (blue) 398 (chorus)

*Sweet, Sweet Spirit (refrain)*

Sweet Holy Spirit, sweet heavenly Dove,  
stay right here with us, filling us with your love;  
And for these blessings we lift our hearts in praise,  
Without a doubt we’ll know that we have been revived  
when we shall leave this place.

**Sermon**

“Smoke Signals”

The Sacred embraces us in our multiplicity.

In our desires, our longings, our many practices of kinship and community.

Our love is declared holy – platonic and erotic, queer and collective.

As we each wish to know and be known – for who we've been, who we are, and who we are becoming, we honor the simple fact that identities change, flow, transition.

We delight in authentic self-expression, quickly shifting or slowly emerging strange or familiar.

We remember the incarnation is an eternally unfolding event.

We look and feel and listen all around us – indeed, God is here.

Let us not cower. Let us not turn on each other.

Let us protect one another, divesting from all white supremacy, misogyny, classism, ableism, ageism, and nonbinary erasure among us.

May we each examine – in what ways do we contribute to the struggles of our own trans siblings?

Let us bind our lives, our resources, our spirits together.

May we live into the truth that every loss of one is a loss to us all.

Let all who desire to be in solidarity come.

Let the memories of our queer ancestors sustain us.

Let us remember that all forces of dominance work against our thriving.

No appealing to structures of privilege can save us.

We will not be legislated out of existence.

We are truly ourselves when we tell the truth about our stories, our bodies, our communities.

We are truly ourselves when we fight for each other.

We are truly ourselves when we resist destructive policies, practices, theologies, and authorities.

Today.

In the days ahead.

In struggle. In joy. In death. In transition. In collective rising.

We are truly ourselves. This will always be so.

## Call to Offering

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

## Offertory

*Singababambayo*

South African Folk Song

*Translation:* We are pilgrims on this earth,  
but our home is in heaven.  
We say Hallelujah!

## \* 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

### Annual Appreciations for CYCE Stewards and COTC Music Ministry

### Celebrations and Concerns

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

## Pastoral Prayer

## \* Recessional Song

*We Are Building Up a New World*  
*New lyrics by Vincent Harding, Luke Rackers*

*During the recessional song, please follow song leaders as we recess onto the Berkeley Street steps to finish our service outside. Following the service, please join us for our all church picnic in the Public Gardens.*



1. We are building up a new world (x3)  
Builders must be strong!
2. Courage, siblings, don't get weary (x3)  
Though the way be long.
3. We seek justice for all people  
We seek justice for all creatures  
We seek justice for all beings  
Even through the trials.
4. Rise, shine & give God glory (3x)  
Children of the Light

**\* 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.**

*Join us for the All Church Picnic at the Public Garden following worship! For those worshipping online, we pray you can go enjoy some lunch outside somewhere if weather allows!*

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**Participating in Worship:**

**Preacher** – Rev. Rob Mark

**Minister of Music** – Tom Handel

**Lector** – Kim Spanier

**Liturgists** – Rev. Joshua Lazard, Rev. Kate Carlisle

**Covenant Choir**

**Worship Leaders** – Rev. Dr. So Jung Kim, Kathy Bull, Jon Schwarz, Thiago Santos,  
Barbara Darling, Anne Crane

**Audio-Video Tech Team** – Jon Schwarz

**Usher** – Anne Crane

**Sexton** – Jesús Vargas

**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](http://cotcbos.org).



**ALL CHURCH BEGINNING OF SUMMER PICNIC, TODAY.**

Come one, come all to the All Church Beginning of Summer Picnic Sunday, June 11, following worship in the Boston Public Garden. Bring your lunch, perhaps a simple finger food to share, something to sit on, a ball or frisbee etc. Rides will be available.

**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 June 18, Juneteenth Sunday, Rev. Kate preaching, Communion
- Sunday June 25, Rev. Joshua preaching
- Sunday July 2, Reflection on the Word, Communion

**UPCOMING ADULT ED SESSIONS POST WORSHIP.**

- Sunday, June 18, Rev. Dr. So Jung Kim on PCUSA document "denouncing Antisemitism and Islamophobia"
- Sunday July 16, Climate Jubilee All Church Read – *Cathedral on Fire*

**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 – for info please email Rev. Kate at [kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org](mailto:kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org).

**BIBLE STUDY TUESDAYS.** Join our Bible Study group 9:15am Tuesdays to explore the Gospel of Matthew. For more info, Jan at [revjangough@gmail.com](mailto:revjangough@gmail.com).

**WEDNESDAY EVENING PRAYERS on ZOOM, 6-6:30pm** Join our weekly evening prayers with intentional liturgy, contemplative song, psalms and sharing of prayer.

**DENOUNCING ANTISEMITISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA, JUNE 18.** How do we love our Jewish and Muslim neighbors? Let it Sing - [PC\(USA\) General Assembly Study Document](#). Join us as we are led by Rev. Dr. So Jung Kim in a post worship adult ed.

**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.

**JP MORGAN CHASE CLIMATE PROTEST.** Thurs, 6/22 6pm, Leif Erikson Statue.

**GBIO HOUSING ACTION,** Monday June 26, 6:30 pm, Temple Israel, Brookline.

**CLIMATE JUBILEE ALL-CHURCH READ.** Covenant's Climate Jubilee Team invites you to a hybrid all-church book discussion after worship on Sunday, July 16, to discuss *Cathedral of Fire* by Brooks Berndt.

**COVENANT CABARET,** Saturday, June 24th, starting at 7pm. Come join us for this convivial event and let Tim know if you would like to perform, [twgroves@comcast.net](mailto:twgroves@comcast.net).

**COVENANT BOOK DISCUSSION JULY 23.** Our next book discussion will be held Sunday, July 23, at 5pm, in Roslindale for discussion & potluck *When God Talks Back: Understanding the American Evangelical Relationship with God* by T. M. Luhrmann (first half).

**LIFE ALIVE MONTHLY BRUNCH.** This group of 20s, 30s, and 40s meets monthly for fellowship and community. Email Rev. Joshua at [joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org](mailto:joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org).

**PARKING BARGAIN.** Worshipers may park at the Back Bay Garage on Sundays between 6am and 9pm for the first (3) hours for only \$5. Speak to an usher for a coupon.

**POSTING FULL SERVICE RECORDINGS/ CELEBRATIONS & CONCERNS ONLINE.** We post the entire service, including our sharing of celebrations and concerns, that is livestreamed online on our [Worship Recordings Page](#).

**STAFF AWAY:** Rev. Rob is away on clergy renewal and continuing ed June 14-28.

**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](http://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*