

Church of the Covenant

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ



**Sunday Worship
Season of Pentecost
September 8, 2024**



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September 8, 2024, 10:30 am [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 link above. Please keep your mic muted during the service.

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

Prelude

Here Comes the Sun

George Harrison

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you.

Many: And also with you.

*** Call to Worship**

One: God, open our hearts this morning to hear your words of compassion.

Many: God, let us truly listen to you.

One: God, open our eyes this morning to strengthen our faith.

Many: God, let us work for you.

One: God, let us be watchful and patient as we anticipate what you have in store for us.

Many: God, let us be witnesses to your healing love.

*** Kindling the Christ Light**

One: The light of Christ

Many: Thanks be to God!

*** Opening Hymn NCH (black) 473**

Blessed Assurance

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.

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

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

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

Many: Patient God, you know us so well. We are fascinated by healing and can talk all day about the miracles, but we do not understand the compassion of Christ. We often say, "Just heal us"; or "Just make me rich"; or "Just make things go better at work" or other such deals and then we promise our faithfulness and witness. But in our hearts, we just don't get it. Please forgive us, Lord, when our greed and fear get in the way of understanding. Help us to know the transformational power of your love. Get us ready to be faithful witnesses to you in all that we say and do.

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

One: We have restoration and transformation because of Christ Jesus. Praise be to God who has given you new life. Therefore, let us celebrate together:

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

* Sung Response

Amen, Bawo

5 A-men, we praise your name, O God! A-men we praise your name, O God!

A-men, ba- wo. A-men, ba- wo. A-men, we praise your name, O God!

Readings from Scripture

Hebrew Bible Reading – Habakkuk 2:1-2

I will stand at my watch post
and station myself on the rampart;
I will keep watch to see what God will say to me
and what God will answer concerning my complaint.
Then God Almighty answered me and said:
“Write the vision;
make it plain on tablets,
so that a runner may read it.
For there is still a vision for the appointed time;
it speaks of the end and does not lie.
If it seems to tarry, wait for it;
it will surely come; it will not delay.”

Gospel Reading – Mark 13:32-37 (*The Message* translation)

“But the exact day and hour? No one knows that, not even heaven’s angels, not even the Son. Only God in heaven. So keep a sharp lookout, for you don’t know the timetable. It’s like a man who takes a trip, leaving home and putting his servants in charge, each assigned a task, and commanding the gatekeeper to stand watch. So, stay at your post, watching. You have no idea when the homeowner is returning, whether evening, midnight, cockcrow, or morning. You don’t want him showing up unannounced, with you asleep on the job. I say it to you, and I’m saying it to all: Stay at your post. Keep watch.”

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

Many: **Thanks be to God.**

Sung Response

Amen, Bawo

Sermon

“Watching, Waiting, Woke, Pt. 2: The Dilemmas of Deliverance”

Call to Offering

Online Giving Option: www.cotcbos.org/give

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

Offertory

We Christians Now Have Joy

J. S. Bach

*** Doxology**

Tune: *Old Hundredth*

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 & Concerns

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

Pastoral Prayer

*** Closing Hymn** NCH (black) 547

Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound
(verses 1, 2, 3, & 5)

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.

*** 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. Joshua Lawrence Lazard

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Liturgist – Karen Henry

Lector – Chris Gilrein

Covenant Choir

Ushers – Anne Crane, Trisha Thompson

Digital Minister – Trudi Veldman

Audio Visual Tech Team – Venkatesh Balasubramanian, Jon Schwarz

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 our Digital Minister in the chat.

NEW TO COTC? We are so glad you are 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.



UPCOMING WORSHIP. Please join us each Sunday at 10:30 am and during the special services listed below 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, September 15: Rev. Rob Mark preaching, “Welcome Back”
Sunday, Holy Communion, All-Church Potluck After Worship
- Sunday, September 22, Sunday Worship, Autumnal Equinox, Deacons Meeting After Worship
- Sunday, September 29: Sunday Worship

SAVE THE DATES - LIFE ALIVE RETREAT & APPLE PICKING. Life Alive is holding its annual retreat on **Saturday, September 28**. Also, the annual apple picking outing to Honey Pot Hill Orchard will be **Sunday, October 20**, immediately following worship. There are more details to come for both events. If you have any questions, please email Rev. Joshua at joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org.

CHOIR & MUSIC MINISTRY. Our amazing all-volunteer choir, led by our Minister of Music Tom Handel, is back after taking the summer off. If you would like to join or play an instrument, please email Tom at thomasghandel@gmail.com.

WELCOME CHILDREN & YOUTH!! Welcome to all children, youth, and families—those we know already and those who are here for the first time. Our Godly Play and other classes will resume next week, **September 15**. The nursery is open most Sundays. Families are welcome to drop off young ones in the nursery or to stick around or come and go as you feel comfortable. If you need help finding us, please ask an usher. We share CYCE info regularly via email, so please email Rev. Kate at kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org if you want to receive updates!

BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS. Our weekly Bible Study meets on Wednesday mornings at 9:45 on Zoom. We are studying the book of Acts, exploring the movement of the Christian community throughout the Jewish, Greek, and Roman worlds. If you would like more information or want to be on the list to get regular reminders and Zoom details, contact Jan Gough at revjangough@gmail.com.

WEDNESDAY EVENING PRAYERS ON SUMMER HIATUS. Our weekly Wednesday evening prayers with intentional liturgy, contemplative song, psalms, and sharing of prayers with our siblings from Newton Presbyterian will resume on **September 18**.

VIDEO CAMERAS/POSTING FULL SERVICE RECORDINGS. To best serve our diverse community and new worshippers, we livestream and record each service, including Celebrations & Concerns. If you would prefer not to be in occasional camera shots, you are welcome to sit on the outside aisles on either side of the sanctuary. Recordings of each service are available on our [Worship Recordings Page](http://cotcbos.org/worship-recordings) (cotcbos.org/worship-recordings).

WEEKLY CALENDAR. Click [here](http://cotcbos.org/calendar-of-events) (cotcbos.org/calendar-of-events) to view the weekly calendar of events.

*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!



Visitor or Newcomer? Welcome to Church of the Covenant!

We are glad you are here. Please let us know if there are ways we can help you connect to the church community. Learn more about the church by visiting our website at www.cotcbos.org. To sign up for email updates about worship services and other events in our community, please fill out a visitor's card in your pew, or email us at info@cotcbos.org.

Parking Bargain – Worshippers may park at the Back Bay Garage [Clarendon Street, between Boylston and St. James] on Sundays between 6:00 am and 9:00 pm for the first three (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.

Prayers of Celebration or Concern May Be Shared in the Red Book – At the rear of the Sanctuary is a red book where prayers that you wish to have spoken aloud during the Pastoral Prayer time may be written. The book will be available until the time of the offering.

Time of Greeting – After worship this morning, we hope that you will take a few minutes after going outside the sanctuary to connect with others worshipping with you, especially people you may not know as well.

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. Please remember to return the device at the close of the service. Thank you!

Building Accessibility – Our building includes an exterior ramp on Newbury Street and an elevator (in the Parish House part of the building) which allows access to the fellowship hall, meeting rooms, offices, and other parts of the building. We also have accessible rest rooms. Please ask an usher to help you locate these resources.



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 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. Joshua Lawrence Lazard, *Lead Pastor (pro tem)*
Rev. Rob Mark, *Lead Pastor (on sabbatical)*
Thomas Handel, *Minister of Music*
Bill Brown, *Building Manager*
Rev. Kate Carlisle, *CYCE Coordinator*
Nancy Stockford, *Parish Administrator/Financial Secretary*
Jesús Vargas, *Sexton*
Alan Lane, *Food Cupboard Coordinator*
Venkatesh Balasubramanian, *Digital Communications & Audio Visual Tech Manager*

CHURCH OFFICERS

Kathryn Barry, *President of the Corporation*
Trudi Veldman, *Clerk of the Council*
Jon Schwarz, *Moderator of the Board of Deacons*
Faith Perry, *Treasurer*