

Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



The 17th Sunday after Pentecost
September 24, 2023

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ
[**ZOOM LINK \(click here\)**](#)



Church of the Covenant
The 17th Sunday after Pentecost
September 24, 2023, 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 above link. Please keep your mic muted during the service.

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

Prelude

Allegro from Organ Concerto in F
“The Cuckoo and the Nightingale”

G.F. Handel

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

*** Call to Worship**

(from Psalm 136 & Lamentations 3:22-23)

One: God. God.

Many: **Good. Good.**

One: Steadfast. Steadfast.

Many: **Love. Love.**

One: Cease. Cease.

Many: **Never. Never.**

*** Kindling the Christ Light**

One: The light of Christ,

Many: **Thanks be to God!**

*** Opening Hymn PH (blue) 464**

Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee

Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee

God of glory, Lord of love;

Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee,

Opening to the sun above.

Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;

Drive the gloom of doubt away;

Giver of immortal gladness,

Fill us with the light of day.

All Thy works with joy surround Thee,
Earth and heaven reflect Thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around Thee,
Center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Flowery meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain,
Call us to rejoice in Thee.

Mortals, join the happy chorus
Which the morning stars began;
Love divine is reigning o'er us,
Joining all in heaven's plan.
Ever singing, march we onward,
Victors in the midst of strife,
Joyful music leads us sunward
In the triumph song of life.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

Many: God our Creator, Love Divine, you are present with us. You invite us to live into the promise of your never ceasing presence. We confess this is hard. We confess that it is often easier to sense our fears than it is to sense you. Help us to notice you. Help us to love you. Help us to love our neighbors. Help us to *meet* our neighbors. Help us to love our enemies. Free us, change us, renew us, in the power of your love.

One: Let us now listen to God in silent prayer...

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

One: God the Great Liberator led the ancient Hebrew people to freedom on dry ground. God, the Great Manna-Provider gave to those wandering in the wilderness all they needed. God our Liberator, our Provider leads us through the turbulent waters of brokenness and pain to the freedom of forgiveness. Therefore, newly restored, let us celebrate together:

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

*** Sung Response**

Over My Head

Refrain

O-ver my head, I hear mu-sic in the air; o-ver my
head, I hear mu-sic in the air; o-ver my head, I hear
mu-sic in the air; there must be a God some-where.

The image shows three staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff. The lyrics are placed below the notes. The first staff contains the first line of the refrain, the second staff contains the second line, and the third staff contains the third line. The music consists of quarter and eighth notes, with some rests and a final half note.

Readings from Scripture

Hebrew Bible Reading – Exodus 16:2-15

The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the hand of God in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

Then God said to Moses, “I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days.” So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, “In the evening you shall know that it was God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning you shall see the glory of God, because God has heard your complaining against God. For what are we, that you complain against us?” And Moses said, “When God gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because

God has heard the complaining that you utter against God — what are we? Your complaining is not against us but against God.”

Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, ‘Draw near to God, for God has heard your complaining.’” And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of God appeared in the cloud. God spoke to Moses and said, “I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord your God.’” In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat.”

Gospel Reading – Matthew 20:1-16

Jesus said, “For the God Movement is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am

doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

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

Sung Response

Over My Head

Sermon

“Pinch to Zoom”

Call to Offering

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

Offertory

All Good Gifts (Godspell)

Stephen Schwartz

*** 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.

Tune: Old Hundredth

*** Prayer of Dedication**

Celebrations and Concerns

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

Pastoral Prayer

*** Closing Hymn** NCH (black) 425

For the Fruit of All Creation

For the fruit of all creation, thanks be to God;
For God's gifts of every nation, thanks be to God;
For the plowing, sowing, reaping, silent growth while we are sleeping,
Future needs in earth's safe-keeping, thanks be to God.

In the just reward of labor, God's will is done;
In the help we give our neighbor, God's will is done;
In our world-wide task of caring for the hungry and despairing,
In the harvests we are sharing, God's will is done.

For the harvests of the Spirit, thanks be to God;
For the good we all inherit, thanks be to God;
For the wonders that astound us, for the truths that still confound us,
Most of all that love has found us, thanks be to God.

*** 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.**

*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!

Worship Participants

Preacher – Rev. Rob Mark

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Liturgist – Barbara Darling

Lector – Jack Ammerman

Covenant Choir

Digital Minister – Christine James

Audio Visual Tech Volunteers – Derek Holbrook, Jon Schwarz

Usher – Denice Thornhill

Sunday 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.



WELCOME CHILDREN & YOUTH!!

We offer Christian education through Godly Play for ages 3-9 and youth classes for ages 10-13 and 14+. We welcome all children, youth, and families—those we know already and those who are here for the first time. If you need help finding us, please ask an usher. Feel free to come back and forth as needed—parents are always welcome to stay with their kids downstairs, and all ages are welcome to stay in worship as you'd prefer. Here are some upcoming CYCE highlights:

- Sunday, October 1, All Ages Worship for World Communion Sunday
- Sunday, October 22, Parents' Day Out: child care & lunch provided post worship
- Saturday, October 28, All church retreat in Hingham—families welcome!

We share CYCE info regularly via email, so please email Rev. Kate at kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org if you want to receive updates!

CHOIR INVITATION. We would love new members of the choir! If you are interested, speak to Minister of Music Tom Handel or email thomasghandel@gmail.com.

UPCOMING WORSHIP. Please join us each Sunday at 10:30 am 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, October 1, All-Ages Service for World Communion Sunday, All-Church Potluck
- Sunday, October 8, Worship Service
- Sunday, October 15, Rev. Joshua Lazard preaching, Communion, Generosity Season
- Sunday, October 22, Rev. Rob preaching

BUILDING COMMUNITY. In the spirit of building deeper connections, community, and momentum as a church, Council requests you consider making an extra effort to attend in-person as is possible, the following events:

- Jubilee Jaunt following worship Sunday, October 15
- All-Church Retreat, October 28
- All-Church Potlucks following worship: Sundays, October 1 & November 5
- Celebration of Renew the Light and Rededication of Windows, November 5

ALL-CHURCH RETREAT: "Enough." Saturday, October 28, 9:30 am-4:30 pm, Glastonbury Abbey, Hingham, MA. Please join us for our annual all-church retreat as we return to the sacred setting at Glastonbury Abbey in Hingham, where we will enjoy a Saturday together to take in the blessings of God's nature just a few miles from the ocean, surrounded by sacred pines and cedars and the fellowship of our community as we focus on the themes of "what is enough/I've had enough/we are enough." "Second" breakfast and lunch will be provided.

Register: tinyurl.com/cotcretreat23 by 10/15 or use this QR code:



We are very excited about our theme this year of Enough! Creating the retreat itself is a practice in the theme: we know this congregation holds *enough* gifts to create a totally stimulating, nourishing, productive, relaxing, and amazing day together. We also want everyone to follow the call for what feels like *enough* for them to contribute, so no one is burdened, and everyone is filled. Look/listen inside, and tell Rob, Diane, Joshua, and/or Nancy Stockford if you feel called to offer spiritual practices, rituals, music, prayers, logistics with rides or registration, kid activities, or to be on call for assistance. We can get you more details about all we're envisioning once you express an interest, and we'll be interested to hear from your visions too! We are thrilled to have this day to spend together, and are feeling already how rich it will be.

BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS. Our weekly Bible Study meets on Wednesday mornings at 9:45 on Zoom. We are studying the book of Romans. If you'd like more information or want to be on the list to get regular reminders and Zoom info, contact Jan Gough at revjangough@gmail.com.

WEDNESDAY EVENING PRAYERS 6:00-6:30 pm. Join us for our weekly Wednesday evening prayers with intentional liturgy, contemplative song, psalms, and sharing of prayers with our siblings from Newton Presbyterian [on Zoom](#) (link on cotcbos.org).

JUBILEE JAUNT IN FRANKLIN PARK. Sunday, October 15, 1:30 pm. Our Climate Jubilee-ers continue to encourage us to enjoy God's creation as it is now—and once again invite us to jaunt together! Betty Southwick will lead a walk to explore this local gem, Boston's largest open space, a partially-wooded parkland in the Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, and Dorchester neighborhoods of Boston. The colors of autumn will be showing off the woodland for us. Come to hear the history of the park, Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.'s vision and planning, and to see the site of the historic Bear Cages and White Stadium. We will visit Schoolmaster Hill where Ralph Waldo Emerson lived for two years. Wear comfortable shoes we—can choose to walk 1, 2, or 3 miles!

VIDEO CAMERAS/POSTING FULL SERVICE RECORDINGS. To best serve our diverse community and new worshippers, we livestream and record each service, including Celebrations and 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](#) (cotcbos.org/worship-recordings).

OPEN NEWBURY STREET CONTINUES. Newbury Street between Berkeley Street and Mass. Ave. will be closed to vehicles, and open to pedestrian traffic, on **Sundays through October 15**. Please keep this in mind when planning travel to and from COTC.

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

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 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.

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 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 Lawrence Lazard, *Associate Pastor*
Thomas Handel, *Minister of Music*
Bill Brown, *Building Manager*
Rev. Kate Carlisle, *CYCE Coordinator*
Nancy Stockford, *Parish Administrator/Financial Secretary*
Jesús Vargas, *Sunday Sexton*
Alan Lane, *Food Cupboard Coordinator*
Kelsie Lawhorn, *Child Care 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*