

Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA

LOVE.
EQUITY.
JUSTICE.



The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Dismantling Structural Racism Sunday

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ

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



Church of the Covenant

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Dismantling Structural Racism Sunday
January 15, 2023, 10:30 am

ZOOM LINK: tinyurl.com/cotcworship

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, 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**      *Precious Lord, Take My Hand*      arr. Fred Bock

### Welcome & Announcements

One:      Peace be with you.

Many:    **And also with you.**

### \* Call to Worship

One:      Listen, people of God, for the voice of God is calling:  
“The ultimate measure of a [person] is not where [they] stand in moments of comfort and convenience, but where [they] stand at times of challenge and controversy.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MLK, Jr. *Strength to Love*, 1963.

“Every step towards the goal of justice requires...struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> MLK, Jr. *Stride toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story* 1958.

Many:    **In difficult times, God calls us to join the movement of courageous truth-tellers.**

One:      In comfortable times, God calls us to join the movement of silence-breakers.

Many:    **In times of struggle, God calls us to join the movement toward freedom.**

One: In times of peace, God calls us to join the movement toward justice.

Many: **In all times, God calls us to join with the movement of the Spirit.**

One: Listen, people of God, for the voice of God is calling:  
“Make a career of humanity. Commit yourself to the noble struggle for equal rights. You will make a better person of yourself, a greater nation of your country, and a finer world to live in.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> MLK, Jr. March for Integrated Schools, April 18, 1959.

Many: **Let us worship God, listening for the voice that calls us to join the movement of love.**

\* **Opening Hymn** (NCH, 472)

*Precious God, Take My Hand*

Precious God, take my hand,  
Lead me on, let me stand,  
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;  
Through the storm, through the night,  
Lead me on to the light  
Take my hand precious God, lead me home.

When my way grows drear, precious God linger near,  
When my life is almost gone,  
Hear me cry, hear my call  
Hold my hand lest I fall  
Take my hand precious God, lead me home.

When the shadows appear and the night draws near,  
And the day is past and gone,  
At the river I stand,  
Guide my feet, hold my hand,  
Take my hand precious God, lead me home.

**Kindling the Christ Light**

## Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

One: The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King once said, "The person who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as the one who helps perpetrate it. The person who accepts evil without protesting against it, is really cooperating with it."  
Coretta Scott King said, "It doesn't matter how strong your opinions are. If you don't use your power for positive change, you are, indeed, part of the problem."  
Let us take a moment to confess before God and each other the evil we have perpetrated and the evil with which we have cooperated by doing nothing to prevent it. Trusting in the mercy of the God who calls us to justice, let us confess our sin.

**Many: God of justice and mercy, you call us to speak prophetically amid difficult times. We admit that sometimes we are unwilling to give up our comfort and safety to follow where your voice leads us. When we use excuses like: "we can't find the right words, or the moment has passed, or it would have been rude to say"... forgive us. Give us the courage to join the movement toward racial justice by speaking your words of justice, peace, and love, even when we are fearful. Guide us as we seek to find new ways to follow your call of truth-telling and courageous action-taking. In the name of the one who is the Word of love that we speak, Jesus Christ, we pray.**

One: Let us open ourselves to God now in silent prayer...

## Listening to God in Silent Prayer

### Assurance of God's Grace

One: Coretta Scott King said, "The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members, a heart of grace, and a soul generated by love." Friends, the good news is that in Christ, we are called and empowered to be souls generated by love. So let us rise into that reconciling hope, and celebrate together:

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

## \* Sung Response

*This Little Light of Mine*

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine (x3)  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine (x3)  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

## Gospel Reading: John 1:29-42

The next day John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes someone who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel." And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Child of God."

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed). He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

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

## Sung Response

*This Little Light of Mine*

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine (x3)  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

## Sermon

"Come and See the Embrace"

## Call to Offering

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

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

**Offertory**      *Let Us Break Bread Together*

arr. Bradley Sowash

## \* 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 Communion

## \* Communion Hymn

*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.  
I'm gonna eat at the welcome table,  
I'm gonna eat at the welcome table, some of these days.

All God's children gonna eat together  
All God's children gonna eat together, some of these days.  
All God's children gonna eat together  
All God's children gonna eat together, some of these days.

## \* The Great Thanksgiving

One: May God be with you!

Many: **And also with you.**

One: People of Epiphany, 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, with Martin, Coretta, Fannie, & 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 Casa Del Sol Prayer of Jesus

*(in unison)*

**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 forever. Amen.**

## Breaking of the Bread

## Sharing of the Bread and Cup

## Post Communion Prayer

## \* Closing Hymn (PH 563)

*Lift Every Voice and Sing*

1. Lift ev'ry voice and sing,  
Till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of  
liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise  
High as the list'ning skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling  
sea.  
Sing a song full of the faith  
that the dark past has taught us;  
Sing a song full of the hope  
that the present has brought us;  
Facing the rising sun  
Of our new day begun,  
Let us march on till victory is  
won.
2. Stony the road we trod,  
Bitter the chast'ning rod,  
Felt in the days when hope  
unborn had died;  
Yet with a steady beat,  
Have not our weary feet  
Come to the place for which our  
people sighed?  
We have come over a way  
that with tears has been watered;

We have come, treading our path  
through the blood of the  
slaughtered;  
Out from the gloomy past,  
Till now we stand at last  
Where the bright gleam of our  
bright star is cast.

3. God of our weary years,  
God of our silent tears,  
You who have brought us thus far  
on the way;  
You who have by your might  
Led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we  
pray.  
Lest our feet stray from the  
places,  
our God, where we met you;  
Lest, our hearts drunk with the  
wine  
of the world, we forget you;  
Shadowed beneath your hand,  
May we forever stand,  
True to our God, true to our  
native land.

### **\* 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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## Worship Participants

**Minister of Music** – Tom Handel

**Preacher** – Rev. Rob Mark

**Liturgist** – Rev. Joshua Lazard

**Lector** – Holly Humphreys

**Ushers** – Denice Thornhill, Holly Humphreys

**Audio-Visual Tech** – Jon Schwarz, Abhishek John

**Covenant Choir**

**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.

**EPIPHANY STAR WORDS:** For several years now, we have received Star Words on Epiphany Sunday to serve as guides for prayer and discernment in the coming year. If you didn't get a Star Word last week in worship, email Rev. Kate ([kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org](mailto:kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org)) to request one to help guide your 2023 intentions.

**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, January 15, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday with Field Trip to the new King "Embrace" Memorial on the Common
- Sunday, January 22, Reflection on the Word
- Sunday, January 29, Rev. Joshua preaching

**THE DENOMINATIONAL MEETINGS** of the Central Congregational Society and the First Presbyterian Society will be held on 29 January 2023 at 11:50 AM following worship (hybrid) for the purpose of electing the nominees – Linda Pursley (UCC) and Sharon Wright (PCUSA) – to serve on the Nominating Committee for 2 years in the class of 2024.

**ANNUAL MEETING:** Our Annual Meeting will be **Sunday, February 5, 2023** following worship, and the deadline has now passed for reports to be submitted to our Parish Administrator Kate [kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org](mailto:kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org).

**IMAGINE WHAT'S NEXT.** Save the date: **Sunday, January 29, 2023**, newcomers to Life Alive are invited to a free pizza lunch forum with the pastors session immediately following service. This will be an opportunity to discuss who we are as a church and for young adults to imagine what's next in their lives. PLEASE RSVP: [forms.gle/4Ykv7SNg5fG25zQm9](https://forms.gle/4Ykv7SNg5fG25zQm9)

### **LOOKING AHEAD: CLIMATE JUBILEE ALL CHURCH BOOK**

**DISCUSSION:** Join us on **Sunday February 19, 12pm** following worship for a hybrid (in-person and online) book discussion on Robin Wall Kimmerer's book *Braiding Sweetgrass* ([indiebound.org/book/9781571313560](https://indiebound.org/book/9781571313560)). This could make a great CHRISTMAS GIFT to someone you'd like to invite into this discussion, or for yourself! Please though, we ask you to avoid buying from Amazon.com and instead [use this link](#) to find a local bookstore if you feel safe going to in person, or a less eco-impactful company than Amazon to purchase from.

**LIFE ALIVE MINISTRY.** Our young adults (aka "Life Alive") enjoy a robust fellowship and community that gathers monthly for brunches and weekly for prayers. Want to join us or have questions? Email Rev. Joshua at [joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org](mailto:joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org).

**BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS.** Our weekly morning Bible Study is each Wednesday morning on Zoom at 9:15am. We are studying the Gospel of Matthew. 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](mailto:revjangough@gmail.com).

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

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**COVER ART.** *The Embrace*, Boston [embraceboston.org](https://embraceboston.org)

**WEEKLY CALENDAR** Click here 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](http://www.cotcbos.org). To sign up for email updates about worship services and other events in our community, please fill out a New Visitor's Card and place it in the offering plate, or email us at [churchofthecovenant@cotcbos.org](mailto:churchofthecovenant@cotcbos.org)

**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.

**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!

**Worship Recordings** – 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.

**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](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 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 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*  
Fred Lopes & Jesús Vargas, *Sunday Sextons*  
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*