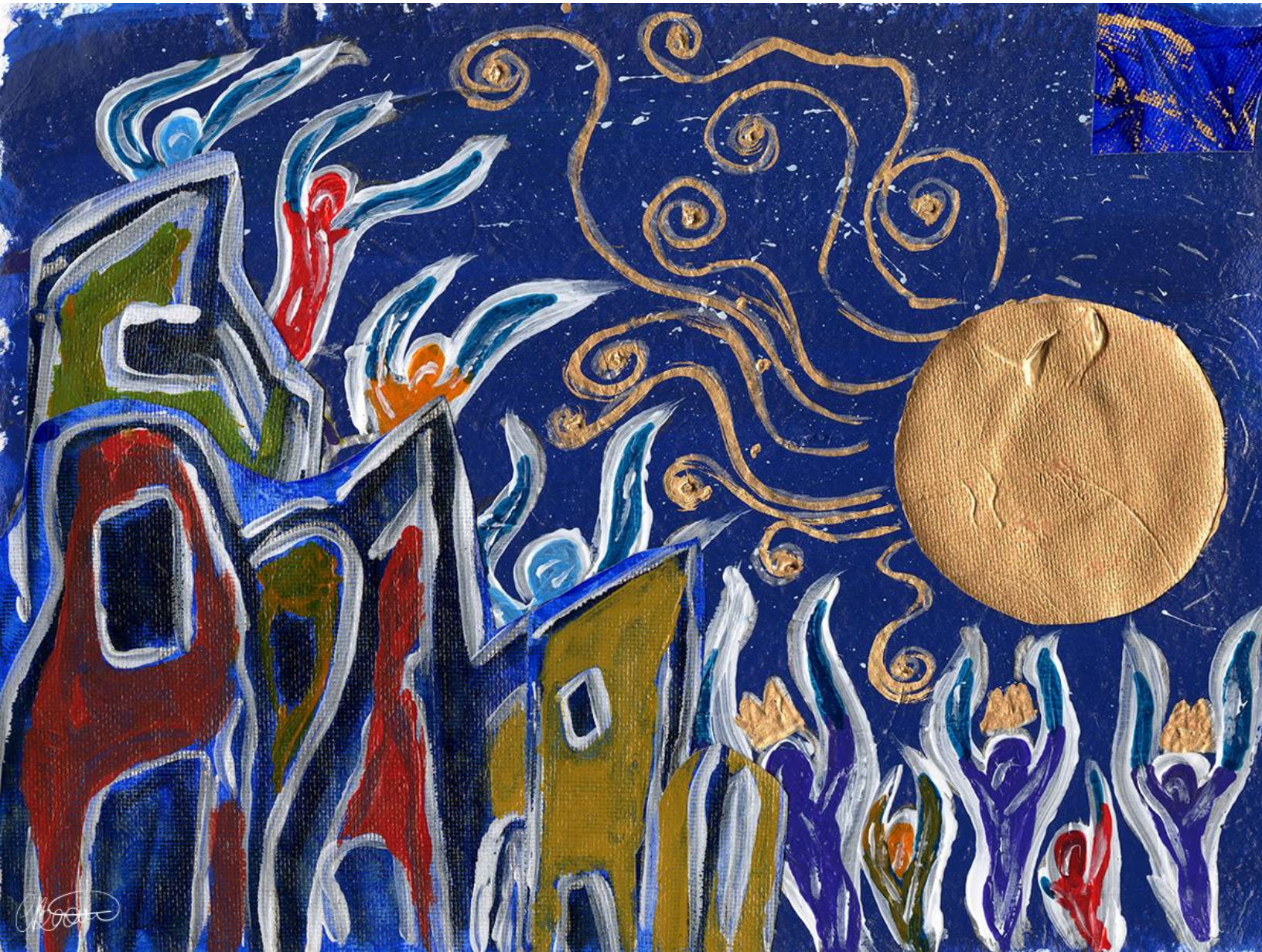


Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



The Feast of the Epiphany

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ

ZOOM LINK ([click here](#))



Church of the Covenant

The Feast of the Epiphany

January 8, 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**            *How Lovely Shines the Morning Star (vs. 1)*            Dietrich Buxtehude

### Welcome & Announcements

One:            Peace be with you.

Many:        **And also with you.**

### \* Call to Worship

One:            We are searching for a light to guide us.

Many:        **Arise, shine for our light has come!**

One:            We are longing for inspiration to motivate us.

Many:        **The glory of God has risen upon us.**

One:            We are wishing for the world to change.

Many:        **Look around, people are looking for God’s light in us.**

One:            We are ready to see what God can do!

Many:        **Our hearts rejoice! Together, let us shine!**

**\* Opening Hymn**            *What Child Is This?*            Tune: Greensleeves

What Child is this, who laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping?

Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?

This, this is Christ we sing, whom shepherds guard and angels ring.

Haste, haste to bring our laud, the babe, the child of Mary.

Bring gifts of incense, gold and myrrh, come one and all bring blessing

The holy child though meek and mild, has come, our liberation.

This, this is Christ we sing, whom shepherds guard and angels ring.

Haste, haste to bring our laud, the babe, the child of Mary.

## Kindling the Christ Light

### Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

**Many:** God of light and darkness, we have seen the glimmer of your star-light beckoning to us, but we have turned away and followed other paths. We confess that we have not loved you with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. Forgive us, Holy One. Strengthen our steps and guide us in your holy way of peace.

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

### Listening to God in Silent Prayer

#### Assurance of God's Grace

**One:** The God who promised never to leave us or forsake us has come to us in Jesus Christ who binds up the brokenhearted, heals all our infirmities, and relieves our burden of sin. So arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Beloved has risen upon you:

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

#### Sung Response

*Refrain of We Three Kings*

O star of wonder, star of light. Star with royal beauty bright.

Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.

#### Gospel Reading: Matthew 2:1-12

After Jesus's birth—which happened in Bethlehem of Judea, during the reign of Herod—astrologers from the east came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the newborn ruler of the Jews? We observed his star in the east and have come to honor him." At this news Herod became greatly worried, as did all of Jerusalem. He gathered all the chief priests and religious scholars of the people, and he asked them where the Messiah was to be born.

They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what the prophet wrote:

‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the leaders of Judah;  
since from you shall come a ruler  
who is to shepherd my people Israel.’”

Herod called the astrologers aside and found out from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and get detailed information about the child; and when you have found him, report back to me word so that I may also go and honor him.”

After they heard Herod, the astrologers set out. The star that they had observed in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were filled with joy. Upon entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and honored him. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Because they had been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another route.

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

### **Sung Response**

*Refrain of We Three Kings*

O star of wonder, star of light. Star with royal beauty bright.  
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.

### **Introduction to Star Words and Prayer Stations**

#### **Regathering Song**

*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

#### **Call to Offering**

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

**Offertory**      *How Lovely Shines the Morning Star (vs. 2)*

Buxtehude

**\* 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**

*A Star Shone Bright (see next page)*

**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

**Liturgist** – Rev. Rob Mark

**Lector** – Betty Southwick

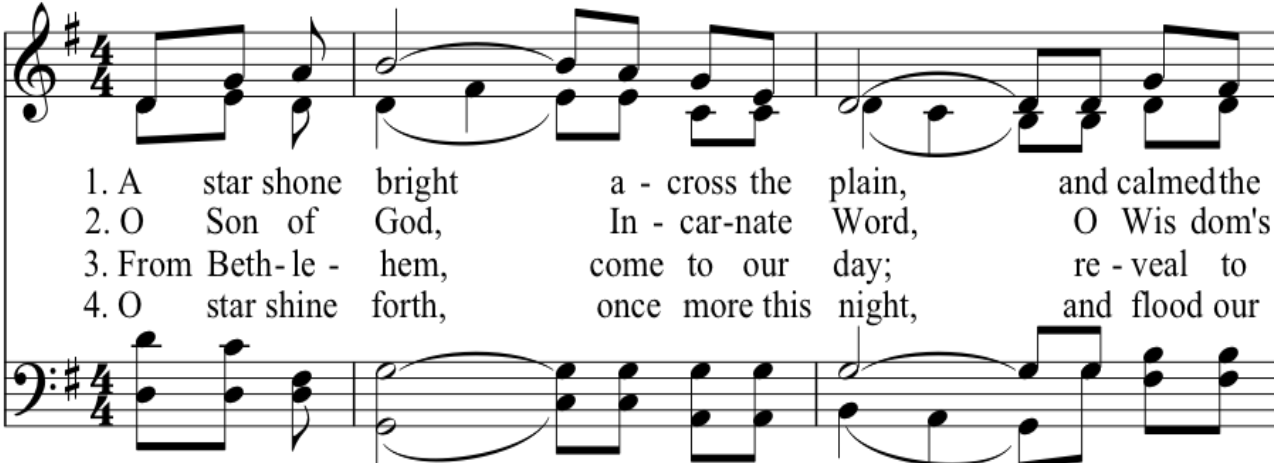
**Ushers** – Denice Thornhill, Trudi Veldman

**Audio-Visual Tech** – Jon Schwarz

**Digital Minister** – Evelyn Kimber

**Covenant Choir**

## *A Star Shone Bright*



1. A star shone bright a - cross the plain, and calmed the  
2. O Son of God, In - car-nate Word, O Wis dom's  
3. From Beth - le - hem, come to our day; re - veal to  
4. O star shine forth, once more this night, and flood our



earth so Love could reign. 'Twas in a child, that hope was  
Light, whom an - gels heard, come forth a - gain, our hearts con -  
us your ho - ly way. Be born a - gain, E - ter - nal  
streets with heav'n - ly Light; 'til ev' - ry heart in Christ shall



born, a dream ful - filled! O hap - py morn!  
sole. O heal our hurts, and make us whole.  
Fire; O Spir - it come, our souls in - spire.  
see the glo - ry of e - ter - ni - ty!

WORDS: F. Richard Garland, 2006

MUSIC: English folk melody; harm. by Dean B. McIntyre

O WALY WALY

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**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.

### **AN EPIPHANY CELEBRATION AFTER CHURCH TODAY!**

Please join us for an Epiphany Celebration for All Ages. Come on a flashlight walk through the darkened church from 11:45 to 12:15, right after the service. Led by three Wise Ones, we'll bring light to all corners of the church.

We'll start in Bates Hall with a special cake that has 3 beans inside. Whoever gets a piece of cake with a bean in it becomes a Wise One and helps guide us on our walk. Epiphany is a very special day especially in Latin America and in our sister community in Dulce Nombre de Jesús, Nicaragua.

**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

**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).

**NO PLACE AT THE INN? A CHALLENGING WINTER:** For many reasons, this will be a challenging winter. One way we can help those experiencing homelessness in downtown Boston is to support our partners Women's Lunch Place, who have an ongoing wish list for items, found here:

<https://womenslunchplace.org/in-kind-donations>.

**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: <https://forms.gle/4Ykv7SNg5fG25zQm9>

# DREAM. GO. DO.

Newcomers to Life Alive are invited to our **Imagine What's Next** session with both pastors, geared to discuss who we are as a church as well as a space to dialogue about vocation and what the future holds.

**Sunday, January 29, 2023**  
(immediately following service)  
12 noon - 1:30pm  
Bates Hall

Food will be served at no cost to participants.

[Click here to RSVP January 22.](#)



**Church of the Covenant - 67 Newbury Street - Boston, Mass. 02116**



## **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* (<https://www.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*.

**HYMNS STREAMED** with permission under One License #A-741135

**COVER ART.** *The Golden Pilgrimage*, by Carmelle Beaugelin, A Sanctified Art. Inspired by Matthew 2:1-12 | Acrylic, gilding paint, canvas collage on handmade reclaimed paper | [asanctifiedart.org](http://asanctifiedart.org)

*Imagine the whispers in the town of Bethlehem. The relatives of Mary and Joseph, curious about the absence of the soon to be young mother, grateful to have a sense of distance from the silent scandal of an unwed wife and a man who remains with her in her apparent dishonor. Members of the community whispering of Herod's increasing anxiety over the birth of one of their own. Those learned in the ways of the stars gazing up to search the dark skies for a prominent golden orb, over which the elders have been speculating. The Feast of the Epiphany celebrates the pilgrimage of three distinguished individuals to the newborn revelation of God revealed in the Christ child. Whether there were only three wise men, or kings, or Magi does not matter. However many of them made the harrowing pilgrimage to the newborn Jesus, they were most likely foreigners and outsiders. Often the community we begin a journey with is not the same community that supports us throughout our*

*journey's length. The Golden Pilgrimage depicts the kind of surrogacy that occurs when a friend, a sibling, a neighbor, a father, or a pastor steps in as a much-needed friend. Even in the story of our Savior's birth, it is not a matter of whether blood is thicker than water. Instead, what matters are the bonds that tie a community together when love and acceptance flow like the healing frankincense and myrrh of the gift-bearers.*

**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*