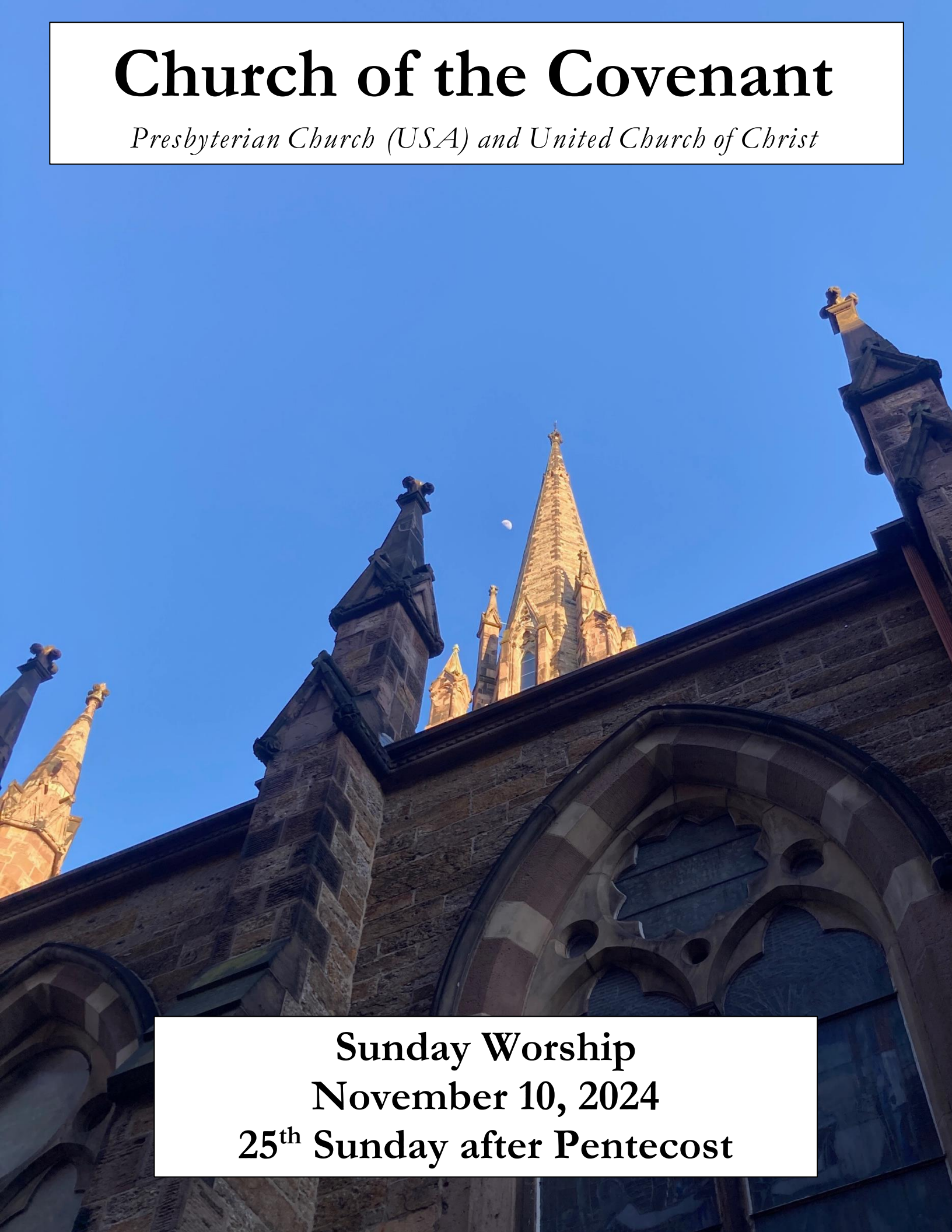


Church of the Covenant

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ



Sunday Worship
November 10, 2024
25th Sunday after Pentecost



Church of the Covenant
Sunday Worship
25th Sunday after Pentecost

November 10, 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

Adagio from Sonata I

Felix Mendelssohn

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

Collect:

Just for today, what does it matter, O Lord, if the future is uncertain? To pray now for tomorrow I am not able. Keep my heart only for today, grant me your light—just for today, Amen.

(Teresa of Lisieux: 1873-1897)

*** Call to Worship**

One: Loving God, in the range of our emotions,

Many: **Meet us.**

One: In our fatigue,

Many: **Rest with us.**

One: In our anxieties,

Many: **Calm us.**

One: In our angers,

Many: **Wrestle with us.**

One: In our confusion,

Many: **Counsel us.**

One: And in our rising,

Many: **Transform us.**

One: In our advocacy,

Many: **Amplify us.**

One: In our hopes,

Many: Sustain us.

One: And in all things, and in all places, O God,

Many: Bring your fierce movement of love. Amen!

*** Kindling the Christ Light**

One: The light of Christ

Many: Thanks be to God!

*** Opening Hymn NCH (black) 436**

God of Grace and God of Glory

God of grace and God of glory, on your people pour your power;
Crown your ancient church's story; brings its bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
For the facing of this hour, for the facing of this hour.

From the evils that surround us and assail the Savior's ways,
From the fears that long have bound us—free our hearts for faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
For the living of these days, for the living of these days.

Cure your children's warring madness; bend our pride to your control.
Shame our reckless, selfish gladness, rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
Make our broken spirits whole, make our broken spirits whole.

Set our feet on lofty places; gird our lives that they may be
Armored with all Christ-like graces, in the fight to set us free.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
In the quest for liberty, in the quest for liberty.

Save us from weak resignation to the evils we deplore;
Let the search for your salvation be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
Serving you whom we adore, serving you whom we adore.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

One: Our country knows division, betrayal, injustice, exhaustion, and fear. As we see these painful realities in stark relief in wake of the election, we open ourselves to honesty, using this prayer attributed to Nels Ferré:

Many: Come, O Holy Spirit.

Come as Holy Fire and burn in us,

Come as Holy Wind and cleanse us within,

Come as Holy Light and lead us in the darkness,

Come as Holy Truth and dispel our ignorance,

Come as Holy Power and enable our weakness,

Come as Holy Life and dwell in us.

**Convict us, convert us, consecrate us, until we are set free from
the service of ourselves, to be your servants to the
world.**

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

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

One: As we emerge into the place of restoration, let us pray with the words of poet Christina Rossetti (1830-1894):

As the wind is your symbol,

Many: so forward our goings.

One: As the dove,

Many: so launch us heavenwards.

One: As water,

Many: so purify our spirits.

One: As a cloud,

Many: so abate our temptations.

One: As dew,

Many: so revive our languor.

One: As fire,

Many: so purge our dross.

One: And as a people liberated, let us celebrate together:

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

*** Sung Response**

Hallelujah! We Sing Your Praises

Hallelujah! We sing your praises, all our hearts are filled with gladness (x2)

Scripture Readings

Responsive Psalms (adapted from Psalms 46 & 42)

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

**Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.**

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.

**God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.**

The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;
God utters God's voice, the earth melts.

**The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Rachel, Leah, Bilhah, and Zilpah is our refuge.**

Deep calls to deep
at the thunder of your cataracts;
all your waves and your billows
have gone over me.

**By day God commands steadfast love,
and at night God's song is with me,
a prayer to the God of my life.**

I say to God, my rock,
"Why have you forgotten me?
Why must I walk about mournfully
because the enemy oppresses me?"

**As with a deadly wound in my body,
my adversaries taunt me,
while they say to me continually,
"Where is your God?"**

Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you disquieted within me?

**Hope in God; for I shall again praise God,
my help and my God.**

Hebrew Bible Reading – Esther 4:1-17

When Mordecai learned all that had been done, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went through the city, wailing with a loud and bitter cry; he went up to the entrance of the king's gate, for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. In every province, wherever the king's command and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and most of them lay in sackcloth and ashes. When Esther's maids and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed; she sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth; but he would not accept them. Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what was happening and why. Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate, and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther, explain it to her, and charge her to go to the king to make supplication to him and entreat him for her people.

Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. Then Esther spoke to Hathach and gave him a message for Mordecai, saying, "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any anyone goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—all alike are to be put to death. Only if the king holds out the golden scepter to someone, may that person live. I myself have not been called to come in to the king for thirty days." When they told Mordecai what Esther had said, Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not think that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this." Then Esther said in reply to Mordecai, "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do. After that I will go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish." Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

Gospel Reading – John 8:6

They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground.

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

Many: **Thanks be to God.**

Sung Response

Hallelujah! We Sing Your Praises

Sermon

“For Such a Time as This?”

*** Hymn NCH (black) 439**

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing,
Our present help amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe does seek to work us woe
With craft and power great, and armed with cruel hate,
on earth without an equal.

Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing,
But there is one who takes our side, the One of God's own choosing.
You ask who that may be? Christ Jesus sets us free!
With mighty power to save, victorious o'er the grave,
Christ will prevail triumphant.

And though this world with devils filled should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear for God has willed the truth to triumph through us.
The powers of evil grim, we tremble not for them;
Their rage we can endure, for lo, their doom is sure:
one little word shall fell them.

That word beyond all earthly powers forever is abiding;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours, for Christ is with us siding.
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
The body they may kill; God's truth shall triumph still;
God's reign endures forever.

Moment for Generosity

Call to Offering

Online Giving Option: www.cotcbos.org/give

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

Offertory

"Little" Prelude in C

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) 437

We Shall Not Give Up the Fight

We shall not give up the fight,
We have only started (x3)
We shall not give up the fight,
We have only started (x3)

Together we'll have victory,
Hand holding hand (x3)
Together we'll have victory,
Hand holding hand (x3)

Never ever put to flight,
We're bound to win (x3)
Never ever put to flight,
We're bound to win (x3)

* Charge & 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. Rob Mark

Guest Organist – Yangfan Xu

Liturgist – Nancy Ammerman

Lector – Liz Vizza

Moment for Generosity – Anita Gram & Holly Humphreys

Covenant Choir

Ushers – Denice Thornhill, Trudi Veldman

Digital Minister – Diane Lauber

Audio Visual Tech Team – Venkatesh Balasubramanian, Jon Schwarz

Sunday Sexton – Syd Smith

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!! Welcome to all children, youth, and families—those we know already and those who are here for the first time. We offer Christian education through Godly Play for ages 3-9, youth classes for ages 10-13 and 14+, and a nursery for the littlest ones. 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.

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, November 17: Blessing of the Animals, All-Ages, Holy Communion, Life Alive Brunch After Worship
- Sunday, November 24: Rev. Rob Mark preaching, Gratitude/Reign of Christ Sunday, All-Church Book Discussion After Worship

NEXT ALL-CHURCH READ ON NOVEMBER 24. The Climate Jubilee Team invites you to join a discussion of the book *Jesus for Farmers and Fishers: Justice for All Those Marginalized by Our Food System* by Gary Paul Nabhan, after worship on **Sunday, November 24.** The author offers an imaginative look at the parables of Jesus to bring us into a heart of compassion for those in the food economy hit by the climate crisis. “Jesus used the fields and lakes as a stage to encourage acts of kindness and restorative justice, and inspire resilience and hope in the face of hardship.” Look for the book at the library or order it online.

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 Jack Ammerman at jwacooks@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 <http://www.cotcbos.org>).

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](#) (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.

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 restrooms. 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 marginalized, 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 as integral to our community. We maintain vital 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 our Commonwealth and both denominations to join couples of any sexual orientation in fully legal and holy marriage.

Covenant's sanctuary resides on the ancestral and unceded lands and waterways of the Massachusetts people. We lament the pain of displacement, honor the ongoing work of repair, and give thanks for all past, present and future stewards of this sacred place.

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, *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*