

Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



November 19, 2023
Blessing of the Animals

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



Church of the Covenant
The 25th Sunday after Pentecost
Blessing of the Animals All-Ages Worship

November 19, 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.

If you would like a prayer of Celebration or Concern to be prayed aloud today, please take a moment at any time to write it into the Red Book at the back of the sanctuary. For those online, you will be invited to place a prayer in the chat. We will not be passing the mic during Celebrations and Concerns today.

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

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

*** Call to Worship**

*** Kindling the Christ Light**

One: The light of Christ,

Many: **Thanks be to God!**

*** Opening Hymn PH (blue) 554**

Let All Things Now Living

Let all things now living a song of thanksgiving
To God our Creator triumphantly raise;
Who fashioned and made us, protected and stayed us,
By guiding us on to the end of our days.
God’s banners are o’er us, pure light goes before us,
A pillar of fire shining forth in the night:
Till shadows have vanished, all fearfulness banished,
As forward we travel from light into Light.

By law God enforces. The stars in their courses,
The sun in its orbit obediently shine;
The hills and the mountains, the rivers and fountains,
The depths of the ocean proclaim God divine,
We, too, should be voicing our love and rejoicing
With glad adoration, a song let us raise:
Till all things now living unite in thanksgiving,
To God in the highest, hosanna and praise.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

Many: Loving Creator of all animals, when you made humans, you called us to be companions and caregivers to one another and to all your creatures. Too often we fail to love as you love us. On earth there is enough, yet we continue in injustice and scarcity. We are silent in the face of violence and cruelty. Our systems of domination and greed kill animals, plants, rivers, mountains, oceans, sky. We aren't living out the promise of the Beloved Community. Sometimes we even forget to imagine that it's possible. Holy One, forgive us, reconcile us, re-create us.

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

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

One: From the very beginning, God has created the whole universe in love. God created the sun and moon and stars, and made this living planet our home. God brings forth every plant and insect, every bird and fish, the tiniest protozoa, and the majestic whales. Even when we feel like strangers to God and one another, nature remembers us and sees the divine light in our hearts. Therefore, as critters ourselves, as children of God, called to stewardship, solidarity, and co-creating in love, 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.

Readings from Scripture

Hebrew Bible Reading – Genesis 1:24-2:3

And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind and the cattle of every kind and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, “Let Us make humans in Our image, according to Our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the wild animals of the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

So God created humans in Her image, in the image of God They created them; male and female He created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and increase and replenish the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the air and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. God saw everything that God

had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all their multitude. On the sixth day God finished the work that They had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all the work that She had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that God had done in creation.

Psalm Reading – Psalm 8:3-9

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have set in their courses,
what are mortals that you should be mindful of them,
human beings that you should care for them?

Yet you have made them just a little less than divine;
with glory and honor you crown them.

You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things at their feet:

all flocks and cattle, even the wild beasts of the field,
the birds of the air, the fish of the sea,
and whatever passes along the paths of the sea.

O God, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

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

Many: **Thanks be to God.**

Sung Response

Over My Head

Reflection

Moment for Generosity

Call to Offering

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

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

Offertory

All God's Critters

Bill Staines

(Congregation invited to sing Refrain)

Refrain:

All God's critters got a place in the choir
Some sing low, some sing higher
Some sing out loud on the telephone wire
And some just clap their hands, or paws or anything they got now

Verses (choir only):

Well, listen to the bass, it's the one on the bottom
Where the bullfrog croaks and the hippopotamus
Moans and groans with a big to do
And the old cow just goes, "Moo"

Well, the dogs and the cats they take up the middle
The honeybee hums and the crickets fiddle
The donkey brays and the pony neighs
The old coyote howls *Refrain*

Verses (choir only)

Well, listen to the top where the little bird sings
The melody with the high voice ringing
The hoot owl hollers over everything
And the jaybird disagrees

Singing in the nighttime, singing in the day
The little duck quacks and he's on his way
The 'possum don't have much to say
And the porcupine talks to herself *Refrain*

* Communion Doxology

Tune: Old Hundredth

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 & Dedication of Pledges

Blessing of the Animals

Pastoral Prayer

Celebration of Holy Communion

* Invitation

* 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.

* The Great Thanksgiving

One: May God be with you!

Many: And also with you.

One: People of Covenant, let us lift up our hearts!

Many: We open our hearts to God 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 the One who loves us.

One: It is right for us to thank and praise you God...

...And so, with your people here on earth, with all the ancestors, 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 Prayer of Jesus**

(from A New Zealand Prayer Book)

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven: The hallowing of your name echo through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings! Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and testing, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.

*** Breaking of the Bread and Sharing of the Cup**

You are invited to come forward to receive the bread and cup and then return to your seat where we will be invited to eat and drink together.

*** Post Communion 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 to 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.**

Worship Participants

Worship Leaders – CYCE families & teachers, Rev. Kate Carlisle, Rev. Rob Mark

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Guitar – Joseph Jewett

Lectors – Karen Henry, Sam Jewett

Covenant Choir

Moment for Generosity – Nancy Stockford

Usher – Denice Thornhill

Communion Servers – Karen Henry, Trudi Veldman

Digital Minister – Diane Lauber

Audio Visual Tech Team – Venkatesh Balasubramanian, Derek Holbrook

Sunday Sexton – Jesús Vargas

DEDICATION OF PLEDGES TODAY. In worship today, **November 19**, we will dedicate our pledges to the church's operating budget for 2024. Please place your pledge card in the offering plate or use the electronic pledge form available [here \(https://ti-nyurl.com/cotc2024pledge\)](https://ti-nyurl.com/cotc2024pledge) that will go directly to Financial Secretary Nancy Stockford. We hope to raise \$275,000 in pledges for 2024. May we give God and receive God in this season of celebrating the One who gives all good gifts!

CLIMATE JUBILEE ALL-CHURCH READ TODAY! Please join us for an All-Church Read book discussion after worship today, **Sunday, November 19**, in the sanctuary. We will be discussing *In Deep Waters: Spiritual Care for Young People in a Climate Crisis* by Rev. Talitha Aho. All are welcome even if you have not read the book.

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 welcome all children, youth, and families—those we know already and those who are here for the first time. We especially encourage kids and youth of all ages to remain in worship today for our all-ages worship, though the nursery remains open. We offer Christian education through Godly Play for ages 3-9 and youth classes for ages 10-13 and 14+. We meet downstairs in Bates Hall. 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 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 26, Reflection on the Word, Holding Sacred Space
- Sunday, December 3, First Sunday of Advent, Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard preaching, Advent Wreath Making Post Worship
- Sunday, December 10, Second Sunday of Advent, Rev. Rob Mark preaching

RETHINKING THANKSGIVING. Join a webinar today, **November 19**, at 4:30 pm on “Healing this Broken Land: Indigenous Leadership in the Face of Climate Crisis.” To register, visit tinyurl.com/rethinksgiving.

HOLDING SACRED SPACE. As a follow-up to our wonderful church retreat, we welcome you to join us in Bates Hall following worship on **November 26** and/or **December 10** to continue any conversations, insights, and visions you may have.

BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAY MORNINGS. Our weekly Bible Study meets on Wednesdays at 9:45 am 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).

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).

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 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*

Venkatesh Balasubramanian, *Digital Communications & Audio Visual Tech Manager*

CHURCH OFFICERS

Liz Vizza, *President of the Corporation*

Trudi Veldman, *Clerk of the Council*

Anita Gram, *Moderator of Board of Deacons*

Faith Perry, *Treasurer*