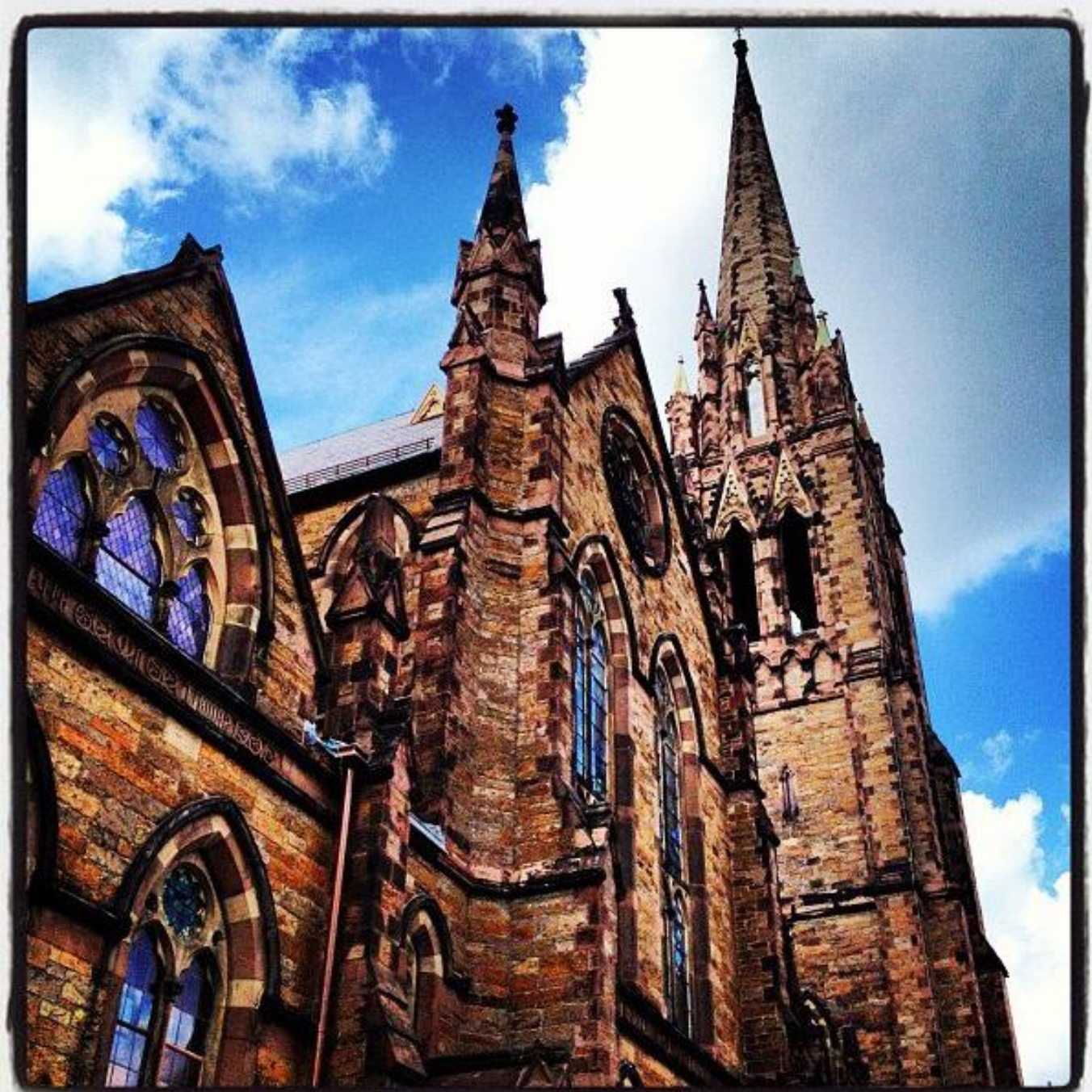


# Church of the Covenant

## Boston, MA



**November 26, 2023**  
**Gratitude & Reign of Christ Sunday**

*Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ*

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



# Church of the Covenant

## Gratitude & Reign of Christ Sunday

November 26, 2023, 10:30 am

[Zoom Link](#)

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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**

Prelude from *Le Tombeau de Couperin*

Maurice Ravel

### **Welcome & Announcements**

**One:** Peace be with you.

**Many:** And also with you.

### **\* Call to Worship**

**One:** For everything that emerges from the earth, thanks be to you, O God. Holy Root of being, Sacred Sap that rises, Full-bodied Fragrance of earth’s unfolding form.

**Many:** **May we know that we are of You.**  
**May we know that we are in You.**  
**May we know that we are one with You, and together, one.**  
**Guide us as nations to what is truest**  
**Open us as peoples to what is deepest**  
**Lead us as a world to what is dearest**  
**That we may know the holiness of wholeness**  
**That we may learn the strength of humility**  
**That together we may live close to the earth**  
**And grow in grounded glory.**

### **\* Kindling the Christ Light**

**One:** The light of Christ,

**Many:** **Thanks be to God!**

**\* Opening Hymn PH (blue) 555**

*Now Thank We All Our God*

Now thank we all our God  
With heart and hands and voices,  
Who wondrous things hath done,  
In whom this world rejoices;  
Who, from our mothers' arms,  
Hath blessed us on our way  
With countless gifts of love,  
And still is ours today.

O may this bounteous God  
Through all our life be near us,  
With ever joyful hearts  
And blessed peace to cheer us;  
And keep us in God's grace,  
And guide us when perplexed,  
And free us from all ills  
In this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God,  
Who reigns in highest heaven,  
To Father and to Son  
And Spirit now be given.  
The one eternal God,  
Whom heav'n and earth adore,  
The God who was, and is,  
And shall be evermore.

**Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace**

**Many:**      Merciful God, we confess that we have wandered from your way of truth and life. You call us to share all that we have and work together for the common good, but we hoard up treasures for ourselves and deny others their daily bread. You call us to set the captives free and seek justice for the oppressed, but we live in fear of our neighbors and hide ourselves from our own kin. You call us to walk in newness of life and to be witnesses to the resurrection, but we dwell in the

valley of dry bones and keep silent about your saving love.  
Forgive us, God of grace. Set us free from sin, death and fear  
so that we may serve you with gladness; through Jesus Christ  
our Sovereign.

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

## Listening to God in Silent Prayer

### Assurance of God's Grace

One: Feel the powerful warmth of God's love for you! God is with you,  
healing and restoring your lives and bringing you peace. This is the  
good news from our persistent and patient God. Therefore let us  
rejoice 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.



## Reading from Scripture

### Gospel Reading – Matthew 25:31-46

“When the Human One comes in glory, with the angels, they will sit on the throne in glory. All the nations will be gathered before, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the ruler will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Creator, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the ruler will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’ Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

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

Many: **Thanks be to God.**

## Reflection on the Word

## Call to Offering

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

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

## Offertory

*Wake Up! A Voice is Calling*

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 PH (black) 538

*Lord, Dismiss Us with Thy Blessing*

Lord, dismiss us with Thy blessing;  
Fill our hearts with joy and peace;  
Let us each, Thy love possessing,  
Triumph in redeeming grace.  
O refresh us, O refresh us,  
Traveling through this wilderness.

Thanks we give and adoration  
For Thy gospel's joyful sound;  
May the fruits of Thy salvation  
In our hearts and lives abound.  
Ever faithful, Ever faithful  
To the truth may we be found.

So that when Thy love shall call us,  
Savior, from the world away,  
Let no fear of death appall us,  
Glad Thy summons to obey.  
May we ever, May we ever  
Reign with Thee in endless day.

**\* 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**

**Worship Leader** – Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard

**Guest Organist/Pianist** – Nan Ni

**Liturgist** – Trudi Veldman

**Lector** – Barbara Darling

**Ushers** – Nancy Stockford, Denice Thornhill

**Digital Minister** – Diane Lauber

**Audio Visual Tech Team** – Venkatesh Balasubramanian, Abhishek John

**Sunday Sexton** – Jesús Vargas

**HOLDING SACRED SPACE.** As a follow-up to our wonderful church retreat, we welcome you to join us today, **November 26**, following worship in Bates Hall (in the room just past the piano) to continue any conversations, insights, and visions you may have. We have **December 10** reserved for an additional conversation.

**ALL-CHURCH POTLUCK.** Join us after worship on **Sunday, December 3**, to share a meal in Bates Hall. If you can, please bring a plant-based dish and your appetite. And if you can't bring anything, please come anyway!

**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](http://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. We meet downstairs in Bates Hall. If you need help finding us, please ask an usher. We share CYCE info regularly via email, so email Rev. Kate at [kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org](mailto: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, December 3, First Sunday of Advent, Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard preaching, Advent Wreath Making & All-Church Potluck Post Worship
- Sunday, December 10, Second Sunday of Advent, Rev. Rob Mark preaching, Holding Sacred Space After Worship
- Sunday, December 17, Third Sunday of Advent, Instant Christmas Pageant
- Sunday, December 24, Fourth Sunday of Advent:  
10:30 am: Worship on Zoom Only, 5:00 pm: Service of Lessons & Carols



**BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAY MORNINGS.** Our weekly Bible Study meets on Wednesdays at 9:45 am on Zoom. We are studying the Isaiah. 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](mailto: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](http://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](http://cotcbos.org/worship-recordings)).

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

*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!*



*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 visitor's card in your pew or email us at [info@cotcbos.org](mailto: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](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 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*