

# Church of the Covenant

## Boston, MA



## First Sunday in Advent: HOPE

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

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



**Church of the Covenant**  
**First Sunday in Advent: HOPE**

November 27, 2022, 10:30 am

**ZOOM LINK:** [tinyurl.com/cotcworship](https://tinyurl.com/cotcworship)

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Welcome and thank you for worshipping together for this Zoom service where we will be joining each other from many different sacred spaces. Please keep your mic muted during the service. The full service is recorded and later posted online. If you would like a prayer of Celebration or Concern you will be invited to place a prayer in the chat and we will share aloud.

**Welcome & Announcements & Presbytery Nominating Video**

One: Peace be with you.  
Many: **And also with you.**

**Prelude**      *Savior of the Nations, Come*      J. S. Bach

**Call to Worship**      *(from **Enfleshed**)*

One: Prepare for the Inbreaking of Divine Compassion  
Many: **for Revolutionary Love comes at an unexpected hour.**

One: Awaken to the Kindom of God Already at Hand  
Many: **for Holy Mischief and Good Trouble are already being made.**

One: Ready your hearts for the work of Solidarity  
Many: **for women & workers were the first to recognize Emmanuel.**

One: Come, let us gather expectantly—  
Many: **the Living Christ is wise and wild.**

**Opening Hymn: PH 2**      *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

- (1) Come, Thou long expected Jesus, born to set Thy people free:  
From our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in Thee.  
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth Thou art;  
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

- (2) Born Thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,  
Born to reign in us forever, now Thy gracious kingdom bring.  
By Thyne own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;  
By Thyne all sufficient merit, raise us to Thy glorious throne

## Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

*Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | sanctifiedart.org*

- One: God of today and God of tomorrow,  
you say, "Bring your full self. There's room for you here."
- Many: But we say, "Our lives are too messy."**
- One: You say, "Bring your hopes and your dreams. There's room for you here."
- Many: But we say, "It's too risky to hope."**
- One: You say, "Bring your grief and your prayers. There's room for you here."
- Many: But we say, "Some things are easier to forget."**
- One: God of today and God of tomorrow, we know in our hearts that there's room for us here.
- Many: Forgive us for withholding our full selves from you.  
Forgive us for giving only our Sunday best.**
- One: Help us remember, today and tomorrow,
- Many: There's room for every story. Amen.**
- One: Let us now open ourselves to God in silent prayer...

## Listening to God in Silent Prayer

### Assurance of God's Grace

*Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC*

- One: Family of faith, we who feel scattered are held together.  
We who have lost our way are forgiven and found.  
And we who are lonely are brought into the fold and are told,  
"There's room for you here."  
Therefore, let us celebrate together:
- Many: In Jesus Christ, we are set free & made whole. Alleluia, Amen!**

## Lighting the Advent Candle: Stories of HOPE

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

## Responsive Reading from Psalm 122

- One: I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of GOD!”
- Many: **Our feet are standing within your gates, O Boston.**
- One: Boston – built as a city that is bound firmly together.
- Many: **Pray for the peace of the Commonwealth: “May they prosper who love you.**
- One: Peace be within your walls, and safety within your towers.”
- Many: **For the sake of my relatives and friends I will say, “Peace be within you.”**
- One: For the sake of the house of our God, I will seek your good.

## Readings from Scripture

### Hebrew Bible Reading: Isaiah 2:1-5

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and *Boston*:

In days to come the mountain of God’s house  
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,  
and shall be raised above the hills;  
all the nations shall stream to it.

Many peoples shall come and say,  
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of GOD,  
to the house of the God of Jacob;  
that she may teach us her ways  
and that we may walk in her paths.”

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,  
and the word of GOD from *Boston*.

She shall judge between the nations,  
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;  
they shall beat their swords into plowshares,  
and their spears into pruning hooks;  
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
neither shall they learn war any more.

O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of GOD!

## **Gospel Lesson:** Matthew 24:36-44

Jesus said, “But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, or Christ, but only God. For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Child of Humanity. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Child of Humanity. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Savior is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Child of Humanity is coming at an unexpected hour.”

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

Many: **Thanks be to God.**

## **Sermon**

*Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go!*

## **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**

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**

## 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** – Holly Humphreys

**Lector** – Joan Hill

**Advent Candle Lighter** – Jennifer Hanlon Wigon

**Cantor** – Andrea Ehrenreich

**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, November 27, First Sunday of Advent, ZOOM ONLY, Rev. Rob preaching
- Sunday, December 4, Second Sunday of Advent, Rev. Joshua, Communion, Sacrament of Baptism for Eloise Spanier
- Sunday, December 11, Third Sunday of Advent, Rev. Rob preaching

**POTLUCK DECEMBER 4!** Please plan to join us as able following worship on December 4 for our first potluck back in Bates Hall since February 2020! All are invited to bring a dish to share – but please plan to join us whether or not you are able to share. Also, if you feel at all uncomfortable joining us to share in eating, you are fully welcome to remain masked and join in for fellowship as comfortable. Questions or would like to help out with set up/ clean up, please email [Trudi](#).

**WELCOME CHILDREN & YOUTH!!** We warmly welcome all young people and their families into our journey together. We have ongoing programming for our children and youth. To learn more, contact Rev. Kate Carlisle, CYCE Coordinator: [kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org](mailto:kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org)

**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).

**LIFE ALIVE HOLIDAY PARTY.** On December 10 at 4pm in Bates Hall, Life Alive will gather to bake cookies to give to the Deacons for holiday care packages. Come and help roll some dough and decorate some cookies in the spirit of Christmas. For more information, email Rev. Joshua at [joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org](mailto:joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org)

**2022 SEASON OF GENEROSITY – Giving God – it’s not too late!** This year’s *Season of Generosity* reminds us that all of the beauty and bounty of our world are gifts of our living, giving God. As those who have received much, each of us is invited to “give God” on to others, by striving to be the salt, light, compassion, generosity, and justice of Jesus for others in this world. Through annual pledges of treasure, time and talents to Church of the Covenant, we acknowledge in gratitude our congregation’s numerous good gifts to us all, and “pay it forward” to ensure Covenant can continue to “give God” to our congregation, our neighbors and our world into the future. **If you have not yet submitted your pledge for 2023 – it’s not too late,** our Generosity Generators would be deeply grateful for you to do so – please click [here](#) for a form that will go directly to Financial Secretary Nancy Stockford. We hope to raise \$275,000 in pledges this year to help us meet our overall budget. May we *give God* and *receive God* in this season of celebrating the One who gives *all good gifts!*

**COVENANT BOOK DISCUSSION.** Church of the Covenant's next book discussion is **Sunday, December 4, at 5 PM.** We will meet for a potluck at Faith and Lucy's in Roslindale and discuss Brian McLaren’s *Do I Stay Christian?* As always, you are invited whether or not you have read the book and whether or not you've ever come to a Covenant book discussion before. Questions? Ask Barbara: [barbarakdarling@yahoo.com](mailto:barbarakdarling@yahoo.com)

**SEND SOME LOVE TO PHYLLIS GALT.** We miss our wonderful former congregant and friend Phyllis Galt who moved to Connecticut this past year to be close to family and get more advanced care for her Parkinson's Disease and early onset dementia. Unfortunately, her health has continued to rapidly decline. So with our prayers, let's send her some cards and convey our love. Her address is Waterstone, 215 High Ridge Road, Room 457, Stamford, 06905. Please don't expect and response – but know your cards, love and prayers are well received. Thank you.

**VISITING MARY ROBINSON.** Our beloved Mary is enjoying in-person visits these days as she is recovering from her broken femur. Please consider dropping by her rehab place in Boston's South End if you can. Please contact Rev. Rob or Faith Perry for more details including free parking.

**BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS.** Our weekly morning Bible Study is each Wednesday morning on Zoom at 9:15am. We are studying the Gospel of John. 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).

**SEASON OF THE SPIRIT 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*.

**COVER ART.** Genealogy of Christ, by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman  
Inspired by Matthew 1:1-17 | Digital painting. Note from artist: While creating this image, I spent a lot of time with the women mentioned in Jesus' genealogy because I had a resounding echo of shame in my body that I had received from engaging with these narratives in my childhood. Their stories held a heaviness of judgment. In my experience, it seemed the primary function of recounting their lives was to show how broken and sinful they were, and how, despite their brokenness, God was merciful enough to use them. The shame I felt was also personal; along the way, I had internalized the message that as a woman, this was my potential for being a part of God's story too. I had been handed some harmful, one-dimensional labels that immediately surfaced when I read their names, such as "harlot," "prostitute," "seductress," and "adulterer," just to name a few. Their importance was not found in the context and particularity of their narratives; instead, they were viewed as rough, oddly-shaped pieces to the puzzle of Jesus' lineage. I had to do some work to unbind



myself from the limitations my church had placed on these stories, and I tried to visit these women with a fresh mind and an open heart. What I realized was that these women—despite the loathsome, corrupt systems they were in—found a way to claim their voice and found enough power to survive. In this image, I chose to represent Christ using a rose at the center of the composition. The women mentioned in the genealogy are imaged as foundational leaves building and upholding Christ. All of the women are looking at the viewer and holding objects to represent the fact that they took their life and survival into their own hands. They were catalysts who propelled the lineage forward. In the bottom left, Tamar holds her father-in-law's insignia, which represents how she assumes his role as the leader of the tribe of Judah and continues its lineage.<sup>1</sup> Moving counterclockwise, Rahab holds the red cord which she lowered to ensure the safety of her family after supplying Israelite spies enough information to achieve victory in Jericho. Next, Ruth holds the wheat that she gleaned from the field. She knows that she must marry again in order to be protected, and so she takes initiative with Boaz. Bathsheba's name isn't even mentioned in Christ's genealogy; she is referred to as the "wife of Uriah." She withstands abuse from King David, survives the murder of her husband, and ensures that her son Solomon takes the throne. She takes matters into her own hands, becoming, as scholar Dr. Wil Gafney writes, "the queen mother of the united monarchy of Israel."<sup>2</sup> Finally, there is Mary who looks adoringly at the rose which represents her son. Here she holds the love and pride of a beautiful lineage that leads to the birth of her son, the Messiah. These women only wanted to ensure safety for themselves and for their children; in the process they ensured the continuation of the lineage of Christ. Without their brilliance, passion, ingenuity, resourcefulness, creativity, and sacrifice, the lineage would have ended.

**WEEKLY CALENDAR** [Click here](#) to view the weekly calendar of events.

# Advent 2022 at COTC

*All services are in-person & online at [cotcbos.org](http://cotcbos.org), unless otherwise noted.*

*Please wear a mask if you are able.*

## First Sunday: Hope

Nov. 27, 10:30am

Rev. Rob Mark, preaching

Worship on Zoom only; no in-person gathering

## Second Sunday: Peace

Dec. 4, 10:30am

Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard, preaching

Sacraments of Baptism & Holy Communion

## Third Sunday: Joy

Dec. 11, 10:30am

Rev. Rob Mark, preaching

Christmas Joy/Christmas Fund Offering

## Fourth Sunday: Love

Dec. 18, 10:30am

All-ages Worship with Pageant

Holy Communion

## Solstice Evensong

Dec. 21, 4:00pm

Arthur Fiedler Dock along the Charles

## Longest Night

Dec. 21, 7:30pm

At Emmanuel Episcopal Church, 15 Newbury

## Christmas Eve

Dec. 24, 6:00pm

Lessons & Carols with Festive Music

Rev. Rob Mark, preaching

## Christmas Day

Dec. 25, 10:30am

Feast of the Nativity

Worship on Zoom only; no in-person gathering

All are Welcome!



**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 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*

**CHURCH OFFICERS**

Liz Vizza, *President of the Corporation*  
Trudi Veldman, *Clerk of the Council*  
Anita Gram, *Moderator of Board of Deacons*  
Faith Perry, *Treasurer*