

Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



Second Sunday in Advent: PEACE
Sacraments of Baptism & Communion

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ

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



Church of the Covenant
Second Sunday in Advent: PEACE
Sacraments of Baptism and Communion
December 4, 2022, 10:30 am
[ZOOM LINK: tinyurl.com/cotcworship](https://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.*

Prelude

Prelude in a minor

J. S. Bach

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

***Call to Worship**

One: Get ready, people of God! The time of hope and peace is at hand.

Many: **We are called to action rather than reaction.**

One: Open your hearts to God’s word and God’s will.

Many: **Help us to be workers for God rather than observers.**

One: Come, draw near to God in faith.

Many: **Let us prepare our hearts to receive the wondrous gifts of God.**

***Opening Hymn: NCH 120**

There’s a Voice in the Wilderness

There’s a voice in the wilderness crying, a call from the ways untrod;

Prepare in the desert a highway, a highway for our God!

The valleys shall be exalted, the lofty hills brought low:

Make straight all the crooked places where Emmanuel may go!

O Zion, who offers good tidings, to the height of the mountains dare!

Lift your voice to the cities of Judah: “Behold your God!” declare.

Like the flowers of the field we perish, our human works decay,

The power and pomp of nations to give to the weary rest.

But the word of our God is forever, our Defender's will is strong;
God stands in the midst of nations, to render right the wrong.
Then God shall be as shepherd, the lambs gathered to God's breast;
And pastures of peace shall greet them, to give to the weary rest.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | sanctifiedart.org

Many: Patient God, you know just how often we make decisions from a place of fear rather than love. You know just how often we allow fear to take the place of logic, fanning unhealthy fires in our lives. You know just how often we tuck your words, "Do not be afraid" on dusty shelves and in the back of closets, stubbornly holding onto our own point of view. Forgive us for giving fear the microphone. Silence the voices of scarcity, shame, and rejection, which spark and feed so much of our fear, to recenter us in love.

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | sanctifiedart.org

One: Family of faith, even when we forget God's words, God does not forget us. Even when we lose our way, God does not lose us. Even when we fall short or make mistakes, God forgives and holds onto us. We are known, forgiven, and loved.

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

Lighting the Advent Candle: Stories of PEACE

***Sung Response**

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

Readings from Scripture

Hebrew Bible Reading – Isaiah 11:1-10 (NIV)

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Most High shall rest upon the Child, the spirit of

wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Almighty. This Child's delight shall be in the respect of the God of Hosts. This Child shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what they hear; but with righteousness the Child shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; the Child shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

Gospel Lesson – Matthew 3:1-12 (NIV)

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'"

Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to

raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

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

Many: **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

“A Message from the Wilderness”

Call to Offering

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

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

Offertory

Dona Nobis Pacem

arr. Hal Hobson

***Doxology**

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

Celebrations and Concerns

One: God, in your grace,

Many: **Receive our prayer.**

Pastoral Prayer

The Sacrament of Baptism: Eloise Katharine Spanier

Invitation to the Font of Every Blessing

***Baptism Gathering Song**

Down in the River

Refrain: As I went down in the river to pray,
Studying about that good old way
And who shall wear the starry crown,
Good Lord, show me the way

O children, let's go down, let's go down, come on down
O children, let's go down, down in the river to pray. *Refrain*

***Questions for the Congregation**

Do we trust that Eloise will be held in God's grace wherever her journey in life and faith lead? Do we promise to provide education that will help her reveal the work and movement of God within her? Do we promise to incorporate her into the life and mission of this congregation through all stages of her childhood? Do we promise to share our faith and our questions with her, to answer her questions as we are able, and to encourage her inquiry? Will we share with her the wonder, love and joy of life connected to the Holy Spirit? Will we surround her with a church ready to hear and act upon God's word in this day and age? And finally, will we give thanks that Eloise is always held in the Spirit's loving care?

If so, please answer together: **We do and we will.**

Welcoming the Newly Baptized

Sacramental Sung Response

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.

Celebration of Holy Communion

***Invitation**

***The Great Thanksgiving**

One: May God be with you!

Many: **And also with you.**

One: People of Living Water, 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**

(in unison)

Our Father and Mother, who is in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and do not let us fall into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Breaking of the Bread & Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Variations on *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* arranged by James Woodman

Post Communion Prayer

Closing Hymn: PH 3

Comfort, Comfort You My People

Comfort, comfort you my people, Tell of peace, thus says our God.
Comfort those who sit in darkness, Bowed beneath oppression's load.
Speak you to Jerusalem, of peace that waits for them;
Tell them that their sins I cover, And their warfare now is over.

For the herald's voice is calling, In the desert far and near,
Bidding us to make repentance, Since the kingdom now is here.
O that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God away;
Let the valleys rise in meeting, And the hills bow down in greeting.

Make you straight what long was crooked, Make the rougher places plain;
Let your hearts be true and humble, As befits God's holy reign.
For the glory of the Lord, Now o'er earth is shed abroad;
And all flesh shall see the token, That God's word is never broken.

***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

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Preacher – Rev. Joshua Lazard

Liturgists – Rev. Rob Mark, Rev. Kate Carlisle

Lector – Linda Pursley

Advent Candle Lighters – Kim & Eloise Spanier

Ushers – Holly Humphreys, Thiago Santos

Audio-Visual Tech – Abhishek John, Jon Schwarz

Cantors – Kathryn Barry, Anita Gram, Nancy Stockford, Mocky Day, Barbara Darling, Theodor Langenbruch

Godparents to Eloise – Kara and Greg Lowen, and Devon Warren

POTLUCK TODAY DECEMBER 4! Please plan to join us as able following worship today following worship 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. CYCE invite kids, youth, and all who are young at heart to make your own Advent wreath during the potluck.

COVENANT BOOK DISCUSSION. Church of the Covenant's next book discussion is **today 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

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, December 11, Third Sunday of Advent, Rev. Rob preaching
- Sunday, December 18, Fourth Sunday of Advent, All Ages Worship with Instant Christmas Pageant

CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL POINSETTIAS. This holiday season you can honor your loved ones through beautiful flowers in our sanctuary. To learn more and order, fill out the order form online at tinyurl.com/2022cotcpoinsettias. Deadline 12/14.

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

WELCOME CHILDREN & YOUTH!! We warmly welcome all young people and their families into our journey together. Children and youth are especially welcome to remain in worship to experience the sacraments today. Our nursery is open every week we have in-person worship. Families can find our nursery and classrooms by going to the back of the sanctuary and then down the stairs into our lower fellowship hall called Bates Hall (also accessible by elevator – please ask an usher for directions). To learn more, contact Rev. Kate Carlisle, CYCE Coordinator: 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.

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. Please don't expect a response, but know your cards, love and prayers are well received. Her address is Waterstone, 215 High Ridge Road, Room 457, Stamford, CT 06905. 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.

ADVENT 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. "Ancestral" by Hannah Garrity, Inspired by Isaiah 11:1-10 | Paper lace with watercolor. *Excerpt of artist statement:* This illustration explores the idea that perhaps the oppressor is not so far away. The lion and the calf, the cheetah and the goat, the wolf and the lamb, the ox and the bear—each predator shares a face with its prey. Each pair of animal faces is connected to the root line of the stump of Jesse. Each generation has been challenged to forward the radical call for peace in this Isaiah text. Perhaps the asp and the adder not injuring the child and the infant are a metaphor for this. In this image, the child and the infant are represented by the roots. The viper represents the asp and the adder. The threat looms, yet the roots thrive and the sprout emerges from the stump. The prey and the predator are on equal terms; no longer is one superior to another. We must humanize one another. We must honor each other's ancestry.

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. 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

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

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*