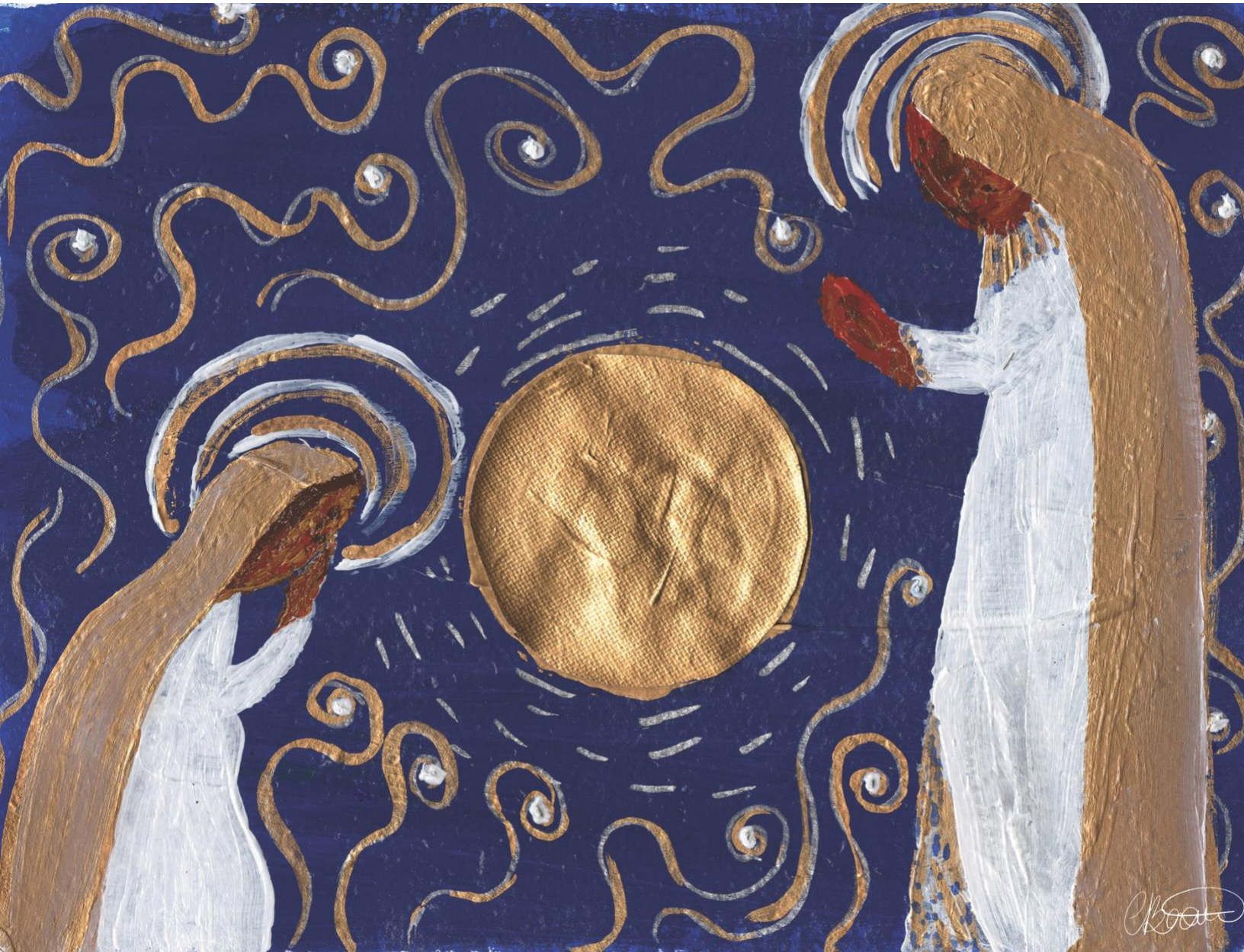


# Church of the Covenant

## Boston, MA



### Third Sunday in Advent: JOY

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

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



# Church of the Covenant

## Third Sunday in Advent: JOY

December 11, 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 “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**

*Skating*

Vince Guaraldi

### **Welcome & Announcements**

One: Peace be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

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

*Enfleshed*

Come! We shall co-create Good News  
and call forth the Spirit of the Living Christ:

For disabled people—**access!**

For those made poor by oppressive structures—**freedom!**

For those who are lonely—**connection!**

For those who are sick—**healthcare!**

For young people—**protection!**

For our elders—**dignity!**

For queer people—**delight!**

For communities targeted by white supremacy—**liberation!**

For flora and fauna—**thriving!**

For our decision-making—**wisdom!**

For the rough edges of our hearts—**healing!**

The Holy plots and plans with us.

**They unlock and trouble and set us free!**

### **\*Opening Hymn:**

*The Canticle of the Turning*



1 My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the  
 2 Though I am small, my God, my all, you  
 3 From the halls of power to the for - tress tower, not a  
 4 Though the na - tions rage from age to age, we re -



God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the  
 work great things in me, and your mer - cy will last from the  
 stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your  
 mem - ber who holds us fast: God's mer - cy must de -



won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.  
 depths of the past to the end of the age to be.  
 jus - tice tears ev - ery ty - rant from his throne.  
 liv - er us from the con - quer-or's crush - ing grasp.



You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my  
 Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to  
 The hun - gry poor shall weep no more, for the  
 This sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the



weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my  
 those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the  
 food they can nev - er earn; there are ta - bles spread; ev - ery  
 prom - ise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be

JESUS CHRIST: ADVENT



name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?  
strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.  
mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.  
crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.



My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the



fires of your jus - tice burn. Wipe a - way all tears, for the



dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)

Many: God of mercy,  
a million times a day we have the opportunity to be gracious,  
to assume the best in others, to give the benefit of the doubt.  
A million times a day we could choose the better way,  
but so often we don't. Fear and greed kick in.  
Assumptions and insecurities take the wheel.  
Comparison and critique lead the charge.  
Forgive us for forgetting that we are descendants of Mary.  
Forgive us for forgetting that grace and mercy are in our blood.  
Forgive us for forgetting that all belong to you.  
Give us the courage to love even bigger than before,  
and the wisdom to choose a better way.

## Listening to God in Silent Prayer

### Assurance of God's Grace

Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)

One: Family of faith, hear this good news:  
We who have chosen wrong, are given a second chance.  
We who have lost our way, are welcomed into community.  
We who feel alone, are seen, held, and known.  
This is the good news of the gospel.  
No matter how many times we choose wrong or lose our way,  
God continues to be a God of second chances, community, & love.  
Therefore, let us celebrate together:

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

### Lighting the Advent Candle: Stories of JOY

#### \*Sung Response

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

### Readings from Scripture

#### Hebrew Bible Reading: Isaiah 35:1-10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,  
and rejoice with joy and singing.  
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.  
They shall see the glory of GOD,  
the majesty of our God.  
Strengthen the weak hands,  
and make firm the feeble knees.  
Say to those who are of a fearful heart,  
“Be strong, do not fear!  
Here is your God.  
They will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense.  
They will come and save you.”

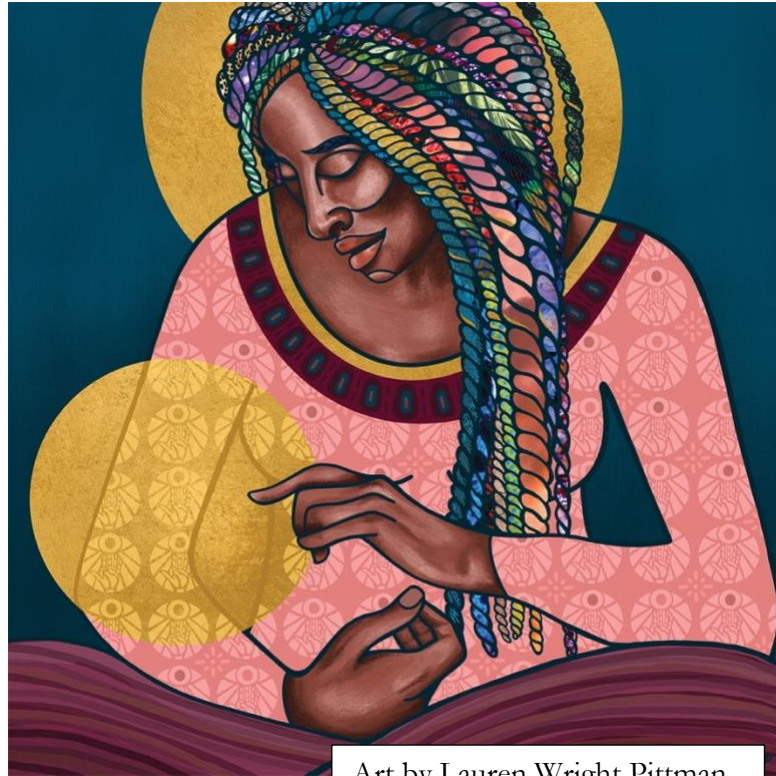
Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;  
then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.  
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,  
and streams in the desert;  
the burning sand shall become a pool,  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;  
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.  
A highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Holy Way;  
the unclean shall not pass it by,  
but it shall be for God's people;  
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.  
No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;  
they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there.  
And the ransomed of GOD shall return,  
and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain joy and gladness,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 1:39-55      (*interpretation from verse 46 by J. Phillip Newell*)

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my God comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by God."

And Mary said,

“My soul sings of you, O God.  
 My spirit delights in your Presence.  
 You have cherished my womanhood.  
 You have honored earth’s body.  
 All will know the sacredness of birth.  
 All will know the gift of life.  
 Your grace is to those who are open.  
 Your mercy to the humble in heart.  
 The dreams of the proud crumble.  
 The plans of the powerful fail.  
 You feed the hungry with goodness.  
 You deny the rich their greed.  
 The hopes of the poor are precious.  
 The birth pangs of creation are heard.  
 You have been faithful to the human family.  
 You are the seed of new beginnings.  
 My soul sings of you, O God.  
 My spirit delights in your presence.”



Art by Lauren Wright Pittman

One: God is still speaking, the word of God,  
 Many: **Thanks be to God.**

**Sung Response:** PH (blue) 576  
 Gloria, Gloria, in excelsis Deo!  
 Gloria, Gloria, alleluia, alleluia!

*Gloria, Gloria*

### The Angelus

One: The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.  
 And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.  
 Many: **Hail Mary, full of grace,  
 The Lord is with you;  
 Blessed are you among women,  
 And blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.  
 Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
 Pray for us sinners,  
 Now and at the hour of our death. Amen.**

One: Behold the servant of the Lord.  
**Many: Be it done unto me according to your word.**  
One: And the Word was made Flesh.  
**Many: And dwelt among us.**  
One: Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.  
**Many: That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.**

## Sermon

“Lions, Tigers and Joy, O My!”

### \* Hymn: PH (blue) 48

1) Lo, how a rose e'er blooming  
from tender stem hath sprung;  
of Jesse's lineage coming,  
by faithful prophets sung.  
It came, a floweret bright,  
amid the cold of winter  
when half spent was the night.

*Lo How a Rose E'er Blooming*

2) Isaiah 'twas foretold it,  
the rose I have in mind;  
with Mary we behold it,  
the virgin mother kind.  
To show God's love aright  
she bore for us a Savior  
when half spent was the night.

## Moment for Mission on Special Offering & Call to Offering

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

*Click on Give Now, then choose Pledges or Gifts-General or Christmas Fund/ Joy.*

## Offertory

*Christmastime is Here*

Vince Guaraldi

### \* 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

**Liturgists** – Jon Schwarz, Rev. Dr. So Jung Kim

**Lector** – Nancy Stockford

**Advent Candle Lighter** – Evans Naquin

**Covenant Choir**

**Ushers** – Thiago Santos, Anne Crane

**Digital Minister** – Trudi Veldman

**Audio-Visual Tech** – Abhishek John, Jon Schwarz

**Cantor** – Tim Groves

## **CHRISTMAS JOY/CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING TODAY 12/11:**

Church of the Covenant will join our two denominations in collecting the Christmas Joy (PCUSA) and Christmas Fund (UCC) offering today. This special offering provides support and assistance—in both denominations—to current and retired church workers in financial difficulty. The Christmas Joy offering also contributes to developing future church leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. This offering will be collected during worship today. You may also send in a check to Financial Secretary, Church of the Covenant, 67 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116; with “Christmas Joy” in the memo line, or donate online: [cotcbos.org/give.html](https://cotcbos.org/give.html), click on "Give Now", and choose "Christmas Joy/Fund" line. Thank you!

**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](https://tinyurl.com/2022cotcpoinsettias). Deadline 12/14.

**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 18, Fourth Sunday of Advent, All Ages Worship with Instant Christmas Pageant

**WINTER SOLSTICE EVENSONG:** Wednesday, Dec. 21 4-5pm, Arthur Fiedler Dock, Esplanade. Join us, snow, rain, sleet or shine! We will gather outside in the blessed cold of nature and the warmth of community to observe together with holy words and silence the sacred setting of the sun as earth keepers and climate jubileers, all. Invite a friend!

**BLUE CHRISTMAS:** Wednesday, Dec. 21, 7:30pm, Emmanuel Church, 15 Newbury Street. For many, this time of year is hard. Join us to face and lift the loneliness, longing, and roughness of this season to God in community and worship.

**CHRISTMAS EVE:** Join us Saturday, Dec. 24 at 6:00pm for our annual Lessons & Carols service. **WANT TO READ SCRIPTURE?** Email Rob: [pastor@cotcbos.org](mailto:pastor@cotcbos.org)

**CHRISTMAS DAY on ZOOM:** Sunday, Dec. 25, 10:30-11:00am Join us on this holy feast of the nativity day for this shorter and festive carol and prayer based service on Zoom only (note there is no in-person service on Christmas).

**PLEDGE FOR 2023 IN?** Thank you if you have submitted your financial pledge already. And don't fret if you haven't yet. Simply email our Financial Secretary Guru Nancy Stockford with your pledge amount for 2023: [nstockford333@hotmail.com](mailto:nstockford333@hotmail.com) (or fill out this simple pledge form: click [here](#) that will go directly to Nancy).

**WELCOME CHILDREN & YOUTH!!** We warmly welcome all young people and their families into our journey together. Children and youth are always welcome to remain in worship or to take part in our classes and activities. 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](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).

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

**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.** “Mary’s Golden Annunciation” by Carmelle Beaugelin  
Inspired by Luke 1:26-38 | Acrylic, gilding paint, canvas collage on handmade reclaimed paper. Mary’s Golden Annunciation explores the moment of encounter between Mary and the angelic messenger. This unusual encounter may have been startling to young Mary—a soon-to-be teen bride turned, possibly, unwed mother. Yet, with holy bravery in the face of communal isolation, she accepts the call to be a surrogate mother to a son who is to be the savior of her people and the son of God. There is not much commentary regarding Mary’s consent to motherhood. She is often portrayed as a humble, yet passive, “accepter” of a fate predestined for her. But I wonder, what if the angel had appeared to Mary and she had declined? Would her name be erased from historic and religious memory in favor of another willing young virgin? Mary’s Golden Annunciation depicts not only a remarkable encounter, but also the moment that divinity in human form was conceived. It is my speculation that the divinity of God entered Mary’s body no sooner than Mary’s “yes” went out from her mouth. In a time when women had few options other than marriage, Mary’s consent to a potentially unwed motherhood is a brave act of subversive agency. In Mary’s “yes,” uttered in her Magnificat, we see the transformation of a young teenage girl from fearful to determined, from simply accepting to deciding, from passivity to agency, from betrothed to surrogate mother of God—an honor rarer than gold. Perhaps the most remarkable annunciation in this passage is not the messenger’s revelation to Mary, but Mary’s “yes” to the call.

**WEEKLY CALENDAR** Click here to view the weekly calendar of events.



**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*

Kelsie Lawhorn, *Childcare Provider*

**CHURCH OFFICERS**

Liz Vizza, *President of the Corporation*

Trudi Veldman, *Clerk of the Council*

Anita Gram, *Moderator of Board of Deacons*

Faith Perry, *Treasurer*