

Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



Fourth Sunday in Advent: LOVE
All Ages Worship & Instant Pageant

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ

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



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Fourth Sunday in Advent: LOVE

All Ages Worship & Instant Pageant

December 18, 2022, 10:30 am

ZOOM LINK: 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

Adoration

Florence B. Price

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

***Call to Worship**

One: Today we're going to tell a story you might have heard before.

Many: **It's still Advent, and we're still waiting.**

One: While we prepare our hearts for Christmas, we tell and re-tell about the time God-with-us showed up in the world as a baby.

Many: **With Mary and Joseph, we say “yes” to God's invitation.**

One: With the innkeepers and animals, we make room for the ones who have no place to sleep.

Many: **With the shepherds, we're a little bit afraid.**

One: With the angels, we sing “Glory to God in the highest!”

Many: **With all creation, we wait in hope, peace, and joy.**

We wait for Love to arrive.

***Opening Hymn: PH 12**

People, Look East

People, look east. The time is near of the crowning of the year.

Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the table.

People, look east and sing today: Love the guest is on the way.

Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is planted there:

Give up your strength the seed to nourish, that in time the flower may flourish.

People, look east and sing today: Love the rose is on the way.

Birds, though you long have ceased to build, guard the nest that must be filled.
Even the hour when wings are frozen God for fledgling time has chosen.
People, look east and sing today: Love the bird is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the bowl shall brim,
Shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as moon and stars together.
People, look east and sing today: Love the star is on the way.

Angels, announce with shouts of mirth Christ who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming with the news, the Lord is coming.
People, look east and sing today: Love the Lord is on the way.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

Many: God of all time and space, we need you here and now. All creation cries out for justice and healing. Your children struggle in a world of brokenness and oppression. The grief of the world and the power of evil seem so big. Sometimes the magic of Christmas and the hope of the Christ Child seem really far away. Come into our world with comfort and reconciliation. Let us be reborn in Love.

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

One: Friends, when night is longest, a new light dawns. God will give us a sign. Look, the young woman is with child. She shall name her baby Emmanuel, God with us.

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

Lighting the Advent Candle: Stories of LOVE

***Sung Response**

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

Readings from Scripture

New Testament Reading – Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in God always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Holy One is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Gospel Lesson – Matthew 1:18-23

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.”

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

Many: Thanks be to God.

Call to Offering

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

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

Offertory

***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

An Instant Christmas Pageant

This pageant is adapted from “Andover Newton Christmas Pageant Extravaganza” by Prof. Adam Hearlson, lovingly ripped off by Rev. Adam Isbitsky, with permission.

Folks of all ages are invited to find a costume, prop, or accessory in the back of the Sanctuary, taking on any of the roles in the Christmas story. Please come forward when called by the narrators.

Sung Response during Pageant: PH 29

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

Refrain: Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

Verse 1: While shepherds kept their watching o’er silent flocks by night,
Behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light.

Verse 2: The shepherds feared and trembled when lo! above the earth,
Rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior’s birth.

Verse 3: Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.

Celebration of Holy Communion

***Invitation**

***The Great Thanksgiving**

One: May God be with you!

Many: **And also with you.**

One: People of Advent, 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

Post Communion Prayer

*** Closing Hymn: NCH 107**

Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

Awake! Awake, and greet the new morn, for angels herald its dawning,
Sing out your joy, for Jesus is born, behold! The Child of our longing.
Come as a baby weak and poor, to bring all hearts together,
To open wide the heavenly door, and lives now inside us forever.

To us, to all in sorrow and fear, Emmanuel comes a-singing,
Whose humble song is quiet and near, yet fills the earth with its ringing.
Music to heal the broken soul and hymns of loving kindness,
The thunder of the anthems roll to shatter all hate and injustice.

In deepest night Christ's coming shall be, when all the world is despairing,
As morning light so quiet and free, so warm and gentle and caring.

One without voice breaks forth in song, a lame one leaps in wonder,
The weak are raised above the strong, and weapons are broken asunder.

Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night, though cold the winter and cheerless,
The rising sun shall crown you with light, be strong and loving and fearless;
Love be our song and love our prayer and love, our endless story,
May God fill every day we share, and bring us at last into glory.

***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

Violin – Anita Gram

Guitar – Joseph Jewett

Liturgists – Rev. Joshua Lazard, Rev. Kate Carlisle, Rev. Rob Mark

Lectors – Sam Jewett, Joseph Jewett

Pageant – Children & youth of COTC, CYCE teachers, COTCers of all ages

Ushers – Holly Humphreys, Anne Crane

Audio-Visual Tech – Abhishek John, Jon Schwarz

UPCOMING WORSHIP: Please join us for the following services as listed:

WINTER SOLSTICE EVENSONG (in-person): Wednesday, Dec. 21 4-5pm
(in-person only, devotional will be emailed to list for those who can't join in-person),
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 jubilee-ers, all. Invite a friend!

BLUE CHRISTMAS (in-person): 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 (hybrid): Join us Saturday, Dec. 24 at 6:00pm for our annual Lessons & Carols service.

CHRISTMAS DAY (on ZOOM only): 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).

CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING: Our Christmas Eve offering this year will go to support the vital ministry of solidarity, dignity and accompaniment with those experiencing homelessness and housing injustice of our siblings in faith at Boston's common cathedral (commoncathedral.org), who work tirelessly to build community, provide spiritual care, and build a culture of friendship and belonging for our unhoused siblings. This year has seen the joyous launching of [Rev. Carrington Moore's](#) ministry as common cathedral's new Executive Director. Please give generously to this offering as you are able and led. If you come in person to worship, you can leave your gift in the plate as you come in or leave. A more reliable way to give (in case you can't come in person), is to give online: cotcbos.org/give.html (click on DONATE button, then in drop down menu, choose "Christmas Eve"). You can give this way anytime between now and Christmas! Thank you.

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

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 (or fill out this simple pledge form: click [here](#) that will go directly to Nancy).

ANNUAL REPORT SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Our Annual Meeting will be Sunday, February 5, 2023 following worship, and the deadline for reports to be submitted to our Parish Administrator Kate is Thursday, January 5, 2023 – please email reports to kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org.

UPCOMING STAFF VACATION SCHEDULES: Sunday Dec. 25, Joshua will be off. All staff will take the week of Dec. 26-Dec.31 off, with Rob and Kate taking Jan. 1 off. Kate is off through January 7. If there are pastoral emergencies during that week, please be in touch with our Deacons, or Rob if needed, and building emergencies please be in touch with Bill.

NO PLACE AT THE INN? A CHALLENGING WINTER: For many reasons, this will be a challenging winter. One way we can help those experiencing homelessness in downtown Boston is to support our partners Women's Lunch Place, who have an ongoing wish list for items, found here: <https://womenslunchplace.org/in-kind-donations>.

LOOKING AHEAD: CLIMATE JUBILEE ALL CHURCH BOOK

DISCUSSION: Join us on Sunday February 19, 12pm following worship for a hybrid (in-person and online) book discussion on Robin Wall Kimmerer's book Braiding Sweetgrass (<https://www.indiebound.org/book/9781571313560>). This could make a great CHRISTMAS GIFT to someone you'd like to invite into this discussion, or for yourself! Please though, we ask you to avoid buying from Amazon.com and instead [use this link](#) to find a local bookstore if you feel safe going to in person, or a less eco-impactful company than Amazon to purchase from.

LIFE ALIVE MINISTRY. Our monthly brunch is this Sunday, December 18. Immediately after service join Rev. Joshua at the rear of the church to walk to Revival Café. For more updates or information email Rev. Joshua at joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org.

IMAGINE WHAT'S NEXT. Save the date: Sunday, January 29, 2023, newcomers to Life Alive are invited to pizza with the pastors session immediately following service. This will be an opportunity to discuss who we are as a church and for young adults to imagine what's next in their lives.

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.

WEDNESDAY EVENING PRAYERS 6-6:30pm: Please note we will not have evening prayers for the next two weeks, but regather again near Epiphany, Weds. January 4, 2023, [on Zoom](#).

COVER ART. "Ponder" by Hannah Garrity. Inspired by Luke 2:15-21 | Paper lace with watercolor. A portion of the artist's statement: "The hope that Mary was pondering inspired the concept and flow in this watercolored paper lace work. Are you, as I am, most taken by the sense that Mary has given birth to the hopes and dreams of a people who are hurting? During the pandemic, as I watched the news, I saw so much creativity bubbling up. I saw people imagining a world that could be, a world that should be. The hope that was emerging was palpable. Then, as a teacher, I went back to the classroom this year. Hope seemed absent among my students, among the faculty, among the parents. I began to research the science of hope. Perhaps it's teachable, I wondered. It turns out, there is a whole department at the University of Oklahoma dedicated to the study of hope. I watched a TED talk by their lead professor, Chan Hellman, entitled, "The Science And Power Of Hope." The next TED talk I watched was, "Hope is the Most Powerful Force in the World," by Somnieng Houern, who runs a school for girls, putting concepts of the science of hope into action. He says that he focuses on one person. There is no other way. One person focusing on one person at a time, creating space for hope. One person in a family was given a scholarship to a girl's school. She reached back and pulled her siblings forward into higher education as well. The ripple effect of hope was the power of which he spoke. I was already putting this one-person-at-a-time focus into action before I saw these TED talks, however, understanding more about the science of hope has helped me realize that my work is making a difference. I am beginning to believe that the one-on-one moments I am making time for every few minutes all day long are having a ripple effect on my students. Relationships are improving, students are reconnecting with their studies, students are speaking up about their needs. It is hard to see the benefits of this last one because there is so much need, so much pain among them now. It feels like constant failure, but there is hope in hope. I want to be able to teach hope. The students need to know how to generate it, how to create it, how to expand hope into their daily lives—one person at a time.

In the midst of a difficult life, “Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart” (Luke 2:19). One of these treasures was the hope that her womb had brought forth for the world to return to again and again—and to pass on, like a ripple, one person at a time.

HYMNS STREAMED with permission under One License #A-741135

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 participate in the pageant 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

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

CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL POINSETTIAS: The following congregants have generously donated our sanctuary poinsettias in memory and honor of chosen loved ones identified below:

In Memory of Martin Mullvain and Lana Hornfeldt by Marsha Baker and Harry Forsdick
In Memory of Christina Motte Barry and Patricia Motte Seglau by Kathryn Barry
In Memory of Keith Stokes Snyder II by Kathryn Barry
In Memory of Martin Gibson by Brian Bigler
In Memory of Keith Bull by Alicia Bull
In Memory of Zakwani Isaac Gibbs by Kay L. Carleton
In Memory of Bill Crane by Anne Crane & Sarah Perreault
In Memory of Ted Goodfleisch by Barbara Darling
In Memory of Mom and Dad by Stanley G. Dingwell
In Memory of Grammys Jean, Jane, and Margery by the Evans and Mark Families
In Memory of Roberta Pollard by Rev. Rob Mark
In Honor of Rev. Rob and Becky and Rowen by Roger and Dottie Mark
In Memory of Newell Hendricks by Clara Hendricks and Jake Carman
In Memory of Marjorie & Bernard Gram by Anita Gram & Holly Humphreys
In Memory of Neva, John R., John W., and Carolyn Humphreys by Anita Gram & Holly Humphreys
In Memory of Anthony and Margaret Gratto by Sandra Gratto May
In Memory of my parents, Jeannette Hays Gratto & Anthony J. Gratto by Christine Gratto
In Memory of my parents Stanley & Emma Kimber, and sister Karen Kimber by Evelyn Kimber
In Memory of Conceição Alves Monteiro by Thiago Monteiro Araújo dos Santos
In Memory of Marjorie Wyman Dollard by Jon Schwarz
In Memory of Kay Olm by Faith Perry & Lucy Williams
In Memory of Harriet Laing by Sally Pomeroy
In Memory of Louis and Elizabeth Pursley by Linda and Nathan Pursley
In Memory of Richard Sipe and Recently Lost Members by Byron Sipe
In Memory of Gail and LaDonna Southwick & Leland and Ella Jordening by Betty and Merlin Southwick
In Memory of Abe and Mies Veldman by Trudi Veldman
In Honor of My Family by Liz Vizza

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*