

# Church of the Covenant

## Boston, MA



maybe it's possible



on earth.



to the world.



for all

## December 24, 2024

### Christmas Eve

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

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



# Church of the Covenant

## Christmas Eve

December 24, 2024, 6:00 pm

[Zoom Link](#)

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*Welcome to our Christmas Eve service! We welcome you from wherever you are joining us in worship tonight – in person in our historic sanctuary at 67 Newbury Street, or online on Zoom from wherever is your sacred place on this sacred night.*

*If you are with us in person, you are welcome to take a crèche figure or two from the baskets at the back of the sanctuary or use ones you brought from home. There will be times during the service where you will be invited to bring these up to fill the empty crèche.*

*Don't forget to take yours home!*

*For those of you joining us online, you are welcome to use any nativity figures you might have to build your own crèche during the singing of carols. Please find a candle you can use to hold in your hand for the vigil portion toward the end of the service. Please keep your mic muted.*

*\*You are invited to rise in body or spirit.*

**Prelude**      *Prelude: Paraphrase on It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*      Carlos Salzedo  
Maria Rindenello Spraker – Harp

### Welcome & Announcements

**One:**      Peace be with you.

**Many:**      **And also with you.**

### Sacred Solstice Stillness

#### \* Call to Worship

**One:**      As we gather on this sacred night,

**Many:**      **May we find blessings in the night sky above us, the quiet earth below us, and the beloved community around us.**

**One:**      As we seek peace and joy once again in sacred songs and stories,

**Many:**      **May we be met by the mystical yet real love of God that comes to us as unhoused, undocumented, infant savior.**

**One:**      And let us sing out together the “good news of great joy” for all,

**Many:**      **God is with us! God is within us! O Come to us Emmanuel!**

\* **Carol** PH (blue) 48

*Lo How a Rose E'er Blooming*

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.

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.

### **Lighting the Advent Candles & Christ Light**

\* **Carol** PH (blue) 41

*O Come, All Ye Faithful* (verses 1 & 3)

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!  
Come, and behold Him, born the King of angels!

*Refrain:*

O come, let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation!  
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!  
Glory to God, all Glory in the highest! *Refrain*

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**Lesson 1**      Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

*The people have seen a great light.*

**Carol** PH (blue) 49

*Once in Royal David's City*

Once in royal David's city Stood a lowly cattle shed,  
Where a mother laid her baby In a manger for His bed.  
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven Who is God and Lord of all,  
And His shelter was a stable, And His cradle was a stall.  
With the poor, oppressed, and lowly, Lived on earth our Savior holy.

Jesus is our childhood's pattern; Day by day, like us He grew;  
He was little, weak and helpless, Tears and smiles like us He knew;  
And He feels for all our sadness, And He shares in all our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see Him, Through His own redeeming love,  
For that Child so dear and gentle Is our Lord in heav'n above;  
And He leads His children on To the place where He is gone.

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**Lesson 2**

Luke 1:26-33, 38

*Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.*

**\* Carol PH (blue) 23**

*Angels We Have Heard on High* (verses 1-2)

*(crèche figures of Mary, Joseph, and shepherds are brought forward)*

Angels we have heard on high,  
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply  
Echoing their joyous strains.

*Refrain:*

Gloria in excelsis Deo;

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be  
Which inspire your heav'nly song? *Refrain*

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**Anthem**

*See Amid the Winter's Snow*

arr. Paul Ayres  
Covenant Choir

**Lesson 3**

Matthew 1:18-25

*And they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, "God is with us."*

It came upon the midnight clear, That glorious song of old,  
From angels bending near the earth, To touch their harps of gold;  
“Peace on the earth, good will to all, Great news of joy we bring.”  
The world in solemn stillness lay, To hear the angels sing.

And ye, beneath life’s crushing load, Whose forms are bending low,  
Who toil along the climbing way With painful steps and slow,  
Look now! for glad and golden hours Come swiftly on the wing;  
O rest beside the weary road, And hear the angels sing.

For lo, the days are hastening on, By prophet bards foretold,  
When with the ever-circling years Comes round the age of gold;  
When peace shall over all the earth Its ancient splendors fling,  
And the whole world give back the song Which now the angels sing.

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**Lesson 4**

Luke 2:1-16

*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace...*

Away in a manger, no crib for His bed,  
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.  
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,  
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the poor Baby wakes,  
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.  
I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,  
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay  
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,  
And fit us for heaven to live with Thee there.

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Come, let's sing a little lullaby.  
 Come, let's sing a little.  
 My Jesus is sleepy.  
 Blessed be, blessed be.  
 Little spring running clear and loud,  
 Nightingale that in the forest  
 Sings and weeps,  
 Hush while the cradle rocks.

**Lesson 5** Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11

*When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.*

**Carol**

*What Child Is This* (verses 1 & 3)  
*(crèche figures of the wise ones are brought forward)*

What Child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
 Whom angels greet with anthems sweet While shepherds watch are keeping?  
 This, this is Christ we sing, whom shepherds guard and angels sing.  
 Haste, haste to bring our laud, the babe, the child of Mary!

Bring gifts of incense, gold, and myrrh; come, one and all, bring blessing.  
 The holy child though meek and mild, has come, our liberation.  
 This, this is Christ we sing, whom shepherds guard and angels sing.  
 Haste, haste to bring our laud, the babe, the child of Mary!

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**Lesson 6** John 1:5, 14

*And the Word became flesh and lived among us...full of grace and truth.*

**\* Carol PH** (blue) 31

*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* (verses 1 & 3)

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King.  
 Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"  
 Joyful, all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies;  
 With the'angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

*Refrain:*

Hark! the herald angels sing,  
 "Glory to the newborn King"

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all He brings, Risen with healing in His wings.  
Mild He lays His glory by, Born that we no more may die,  
Born to raise us from the earth, Born to give us second birth. *Refrain*

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## **Meditation**

### **Call to Christmas Eve Offering for Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Coalition (MIRA)**

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

*Click on Give Now, Donate, and then choose "Christmas Eve."*

## **Offertory**

*Still, Still, Still*

arr. Yolanda Kondonassis  
Maria Rindenello Spraker – Harp

## **Doxology Response**

O, star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,  
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.

## **Christmas Prayer**

### **Sharing the Light of Christ**

*As the light comes from the Christ Light, turn your candle sideways to light it from your neighbor's candle who will "keep the light upright." For those joining us online, please light your own candle to be in vigil as well. You may also choose to dim the lights around you.*

**\* Carol PH (blue) 60**

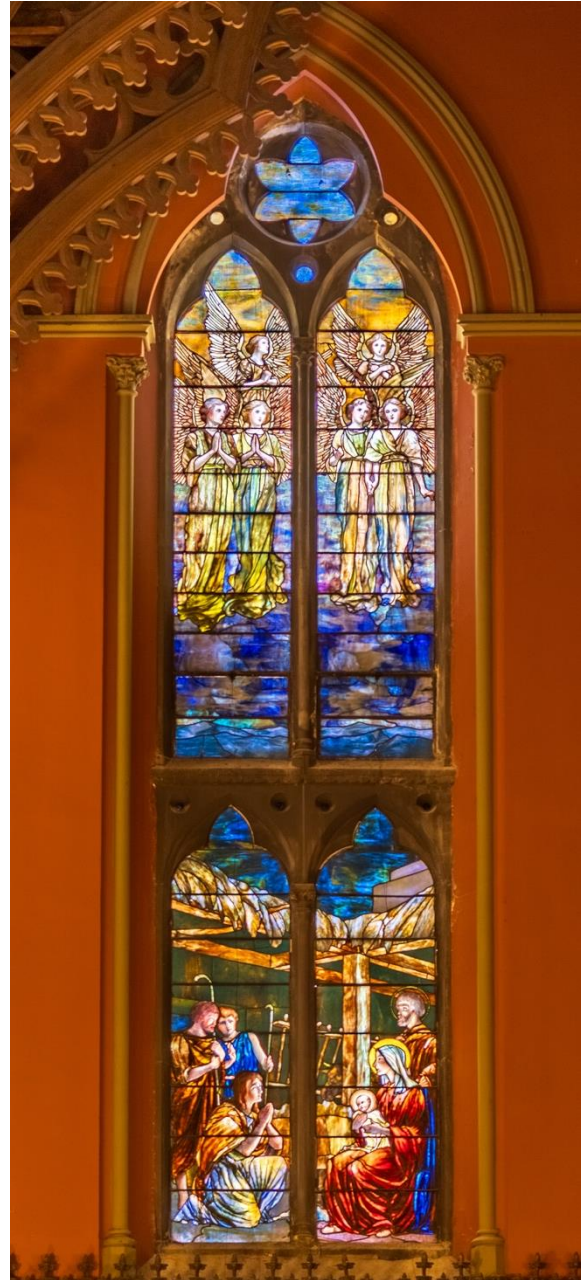
*Silent Night, Holy Night*

Silent night, holy night!  
All is calm, all is bright,  
Round yon virgin mother and child!  
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight,  
Glories stream from heaven afar,  
Heav'nly hosts sing "Alleluia;  
Christ the Savior is born,  
Christ the Savior is born!"

Silent night, holy night!  
Son of God, love's pure light;  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,  
With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

Silent night, holy night!  
Wondrous star, lend thy light;  
With the angels let us sing,  
Alleluia to our King;  
Christ the Savior is born,  
Christ the Savior is born.



**\* Charge & Benediction**

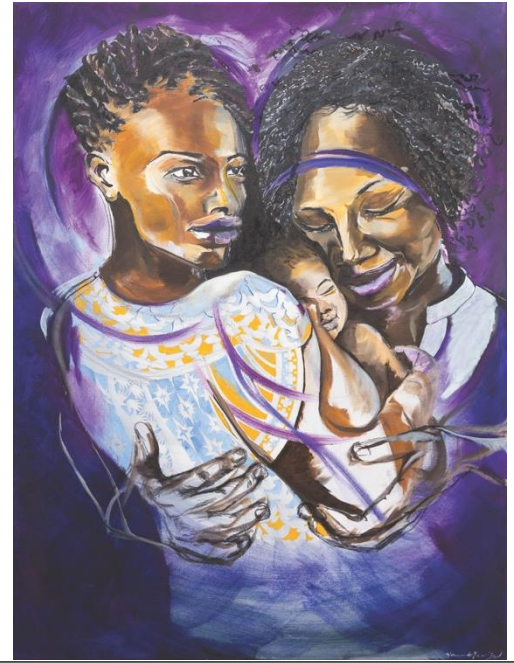


**\* Response to the Benediction PH (blue) 40**      *Joy to the World!* (verses 1, 2, & 4)  
*(bells or keys may be rung during the final verse)*

Joy to the world, the Lord is come:  
Let earth receive its king;  
Let every heart prepare Him room,  
And heav'n and nature sing,  
And heav'n and nature sing,  
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let us our songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders, wonders of His love.



*Surrogacy*  
by Hannah Garrity | A Sanctified Art  
Inspired by Luke 2:1-20  
*Oil paint, charcoal, and copper leaf on canvas*

**\* Passing of the Peace**

*Please exchange greetings of Christ's peace on earth with one another.*

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## Worship Participants

**Worship Leaders** – Rev. Rob Mark, Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard

**Minister of Music** – Tom Handel

**Advent Candle Lighters** – Becky Evans, Rowen Mark

**Lectors** – Jack Ammerman, Nancy Ammerman, Becky Evans, Tim Groves, Rowen Mark, Thiago Santos

**Special Offering** – Anne Crane

**Harpist** – Maria Rindenello Spraker

**Covenant Choir**

**Digital Minister** – Rev. Kate Carlisle

**Ushers** – Holly Humphreys, Trudi Veldman

**Audio Visual Tech Team** – Venkatesh Balasubramanian, Jon Schwarz

**Sexton** – Jesús Vargas

**Cover Art** – EJ Huston

### **CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS AND WELCOME TO CHURCH OF THE**

**COVENANT!** We are so glad to have you worshipping with us on this holiest of nights. 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 or pastor in person, or chat with a member of staff or digital minister online. Be most welcome! You are also invited to 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).



**BUILD YOUR OWN CRÈCHE.** For those of you who plan to join this service online, we invite you all to build your own crèche as we go through the service. If you have a nativity scene, you are welcome to use that. If not, consider gathering various items that might stand in for Mary, shepherds, animals, angels, Joseph, and baby Jesus (teddies, pictures, toys, etc.). Or, if this isn't something that you are up for – fear not – this is fully optional, and you can enjoy seeing the one we will build at 67 Newbury.

**CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING.** Our Christmas Eve Offering this year will support the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA). Since its founding in 1987, MIRA has worked with partners across the country to advocate for the rights and integration of immigrants at the state and national levels. In Massachusetts one in five workers is foreign born. Recognizing that immigrants and refugees come to the United States with a wide range of skills and ambitions and that they enrich our culture, MIRA connects new arrivals with service providers and allies to provide resources and training so that they can become active participants in a more just and inclusive society.

**COVER ART.** EJ Huston (she/they) is a Seattle-based artist and licensed mental health counselor. Their collage and digital work addresses themes of love, liberation, queerness, decolonization, and disability justice. Instagram: @ejheart. Website: [ejheart.com](http://ejheart.com).

**WELCOME CHILDREN & YOUTH!!** We welcome all children, youth, and families—those we know already and those who are here for the first time. On regular Sundays, we offer Christian education through Godly Play for ages 3-9 and youth classes for ages 10-13 and 14+, and a nursery for the littlest ones. We share CYCE info regularly via email, so please 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 and during the special services listed below 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 29: ZOOM ONLY, Christmas Carol Sing
- Sunday, January 5: Epiphany, All-Ages Service
- Sunday, January 12: Rev. Rob Mark preaching
- Sunday, January 19: Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard preaching

**WORSHIP IN BATES HALL IN 2025!** Due to repair of the chandelier in the sanctuary, we will hold in-person worship downstairs in Bates Hall starting the first Sunday in January until early February.

**ANNUAL REPORTS ARE DUE JANUARY 13, 2025!** Please submit your 2024 annual reports for committees and staff members to our Parish Administrator, Nancy Stockford, at [nancy.stockford@cotcbos.org](mailto:nancy.stockford@cotcbos.org). Please create each report in a Word document using Garamond 11-point font with the title (committee or staff member name) centered at the top. Each report's author(s) should be provided at the bottom. Deadline: no later than noon on Monday, January 13, 2025. Thank you!

**BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAY MORNINGS.** Note that Bible Study will not meet during the holiday week and will reconvene on January 8. Our weekly Bible Study meets on Wednesday mornings at 9:45 on Zoom. We are studying the book of Acts, exploring the movement of the Christian community throughout the Jewish, Greek, and Roman worlds. If you would like more information or want to be on the list to get regular reminders and Zoom details, contact Jack Ammerman at [jmacooks@gmail.com](mailto:jmacooks@gmail.com).

**WEDNESDAY EVENING PRAYERS 6:00-6:30 pm.** Note that there will be no Evening Prayers on December 25 or January 1. We will meet next on January 8. 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 <http://www.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 & 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](http://cotcbos.org/worship-recordings) ([cotcbos.org/worship-recordings](http://cotcbos.org/worship-recordings)).

**UPCOMING STAFF VACATION SCHEDULES.** Rev. Rob Mark and Rev. Kate Carlisle will be off until early January. If there are pastoral emergencies during that time, please be in touch with our Deacons or Rev. Joshua. For building emergencies, please be in touch with Bill.

**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.

## CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA MEMORIALS



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

- In Memory of Ted Goodfleisch by Barbara Darling
- In Memory of Conceição Alves Monteiro by The Santos Schwarz Family
- In Memory of Marjorie Wyman Dollard by The Santos Schwarz Family
- In Memory of my parents Frank & Marjorie Vizza by Liz Vizza
- In Honor of Rev. Dr. So Jung Kim by Abhishek P. John
- In Memory of Doug Kenney (1943-1996) by Steve Laskin
- In Memory of Newell Hendricks by Barbara Englesberg, Anna & Clara Hendricks
- In Memory of Helen "Pickel" Englesberg by Barbara Englesberg, Anna & Clara Hendricks
- In Honor of Rev. Rob & Ms. Becky Evans Mark by Mom & Dad Mark
- In Memory of Martin Gibson by Brian Bigler
- In Memory of my parents Jeannette & Anthony Gratto by Christine Gratto
- In Memory of Rev. Chaplain Keith Stokes Snyder II by Kathryn Barry
- In Memory of Phil Mink, Barbara Mink, & Sonjia Mink by Sierra Mink-Maynard
- In Memory of Anthony & Margaret Gratto by Sandra Gratto May
- In Memory of Mies & Abe Veldman by Trudi Veldman
- In Memory of The Wright Family by Sharon Wright
- In Memory of our parents Leland & Ella Jordening and Gail & LaDonna Southwick by Betty & Merlin Southwick
- In Memory of Richard Sipe & Recently Lost Members by Byron Sipe
- In memory of our parents by Marsha Baker & Harry Forsdick
- In Memory of Neva, John R., John W., & Carolyn Humphreys by Anita Gram & Holly Humphreys
- In Memory of Marge & Bernard Gram by Anita Gram & Holly Humphreys
- In Honor of Lea Clarice Winterberg by Sonya Winterberg
- In Honor of Lucy Williams by Sonya Winterberg
- In Memory of R. Cheryl Donaldson-Davis by Sonya Winterberg
- In Memory of Norman & Mary-Louise Shadman Meyer by Wendy Woodfield
- In Memory of Chris Robison by Wendy Woodfield
- In Memory of Family & Friends Lost This Year by Nancy & Jack Ammerman
- In Memory of Betty & Wally Huston and Joan & Chip Stockford by Mark Huston & Nancy Stockford

*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 am and 9:00 pm for the first three (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. A weekend discount is also available for longer periods: \$10 for up to eleven (11) hours. Parking voucher available at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/cotcsundayparking>

**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 restrooms. 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 marginalized, 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 as integral to our community. We maintain vital 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 our Commonwealth and both denominations to join couples of any sexual orientation in fully legal and holy marriage.

Covenant's sanctuary resides on the ancestral and unceded lands and waterways of the Massachusetts people. We lament the pain of displacement, honor the ongoing work of repair, and give thanks for all past, present and future stewards of this sacred place.

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, *Sexton*

Alan Lane, *Food Cupboard Coordinator*

Venkatesh Balasubramanian, *Digital Communications & Audio Visual Tech Manager*

Soyoung Cho, *Childcare Provider*

**CHURCH OFFICERS**

Kathryn Barry, *President of the Corporation*

Trudi Veldman, *Clerk of the Council*

Jon Schwarz, *Moderator of the Board of Deacons*

Faith Perry, *Treasurer*