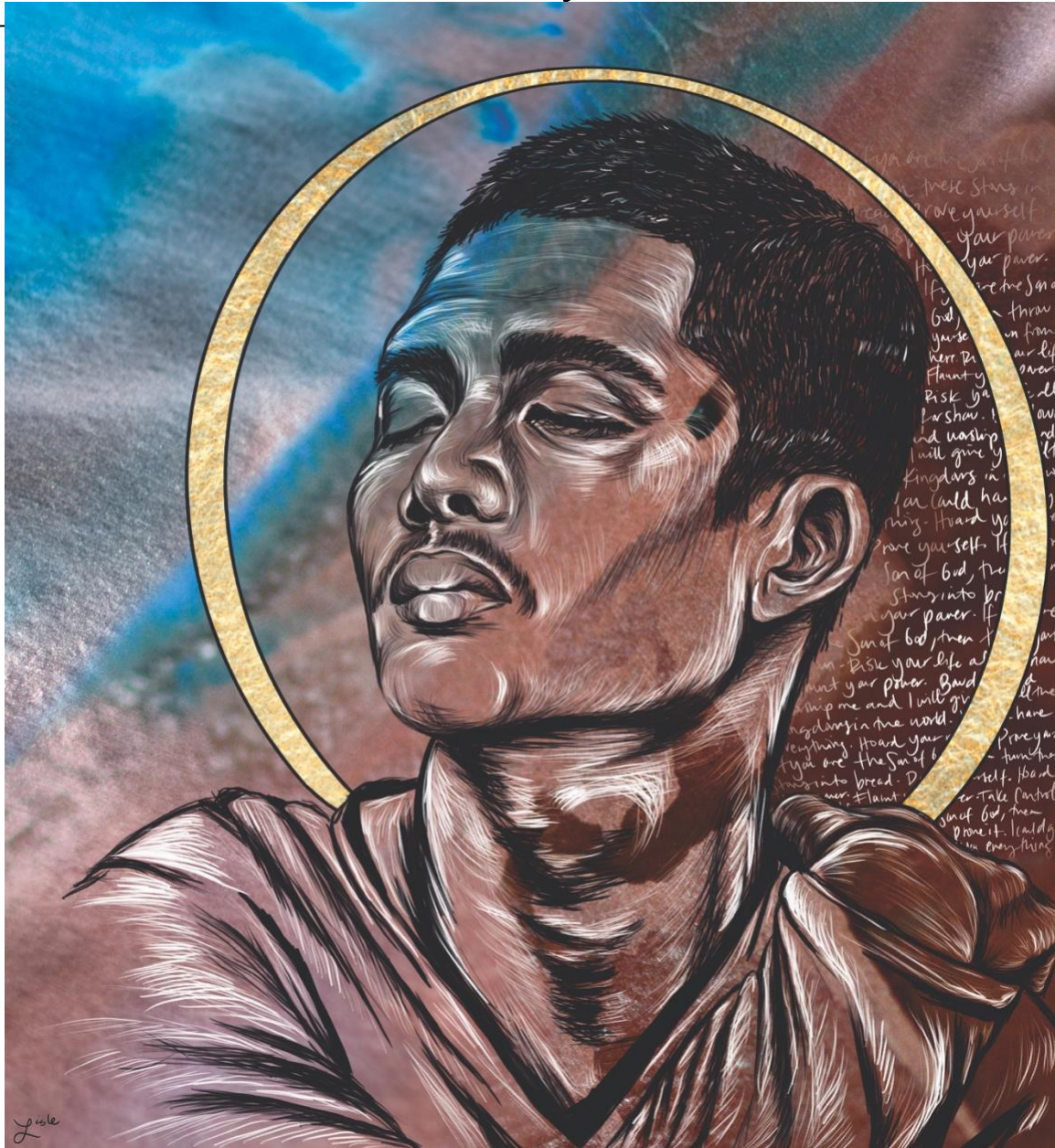


Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



First Sunday of Lent

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ

ZOOM LINK ([click here](#))



Church of the Covenant

First Sunday of Lent

February 26, 2023, 10:30 am

ZOOM LINK: tinyurl.com/cotcworship

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

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## Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

## Prelude

*Uncompaghre - A Colorado Peak*

Ernst Bacon

“...chaired in the adamant of Time” (Walt Whitman)

## \* Call To Worship – A Litany for Curiosity

One: Ever Creative God,

Many: **This Lent we ask for a spirit of sacred curiosity.**

One: As we journey with Jesus along paths less traveled,

Many: **May our hearts be filled with wonder.**

One: As we feed our intrigue with inquiry,

Many: **May we be surprised by truths yet to discover.**

One: As we delve deep into new terrain,

Many: **May our holy exploration be enchanted.**

One: As we lovingly turn over stones in the search,

Many: **May our fingernails get filled with divine dirt that directs us.**

One: As we cultivate questions that inspire or unsettle,

Many: **May we be filled with courage to dig deeper.**

One: As we center more on the asking than the answering,

Many: **May our wondering, marveling and daydreaming be graced.**

One: And in our seeking, knocking, and asking,

**Many:** May doors be opened and the winds of new insight blow in blessing.

**One:** In the embrace of our Great Seeking Spirit we pray.

**\* Opening Hymn:** NCH 455

*I Am Yours, O Lord*

*Verse 1*

I am yours, O Lord, I have heard your voice,  
and it told your love to me;  
But I long to rise in the arms of faith,  
drawn to you eternally.

*Refrain*

Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,  
to the cross where you have died;  
Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,  
to your precious, bleeding side.

*Verse 2*

O the pure delight of a single hour  
that before your throne I spend,  
When I kneel in prayer, and with you, my God,  
I commune as friend with friend! *Refrain*

*Verse 3*

Consecrate me now to your holy work  
by the power of grace divine;  
Let my soul look up with a steadfast hope;  
let your will be done, not mine. *Refrain*

*Verse 4*

There are depths of love that I cannot know  
till I cross the narrow sea;  
There are heights of joy that I may not reach  
till I rest eternally. *Refrain*

**Kindling the Christ Light**

## Prayer for Grounding in the Way of Curiosity

*Adapted from Peter Englert*

**Many:** Lord, we confess our rigidity.  
It requires work to ask questions.  
It requires effort to see a point of view from another.  
It requires humility to challenge our assumptions.  
It requires waiting to hear from You.  
Honestly, we lack the resources to change on our own.  
We pray for curiosity.  
Give us open minds and hearts.  
Release us from the cynicism that pervades our perspective.  
Move us from obstinance to pliability.  
Ultimately, we ask You to let us see what You see.  
May this become true for others and ourselves.  
The Good News of the Gospel motivates our curiosity.  
You are the God who makes all things new.  
Provide us the faith like children to ask more questions than  
making statements.

**One:** Let us open ourselves to God now in silent prayer...

## Listening to God in Silent Prayer

### Assurance of God's Grace

**One:** Friends, let us be made curious in the sight of God, reminded of the power that works within us.

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

**\*Sung Response:** *Amen Bawo*

Stephen Cuthbert Molefe, South Africa

Amen, we praise your name, O God!  
Amen, we praise your name, O God!  
Amen, bawo, Amen, bawo,  
Amen, we praise your name, O God!

## Readings from Scripture

### **New Testament Reading** – Hebrews 6:1-3

So come on, let's leave the preschool fingerpainting exercises on Christ and get on with the grand work of art. Grow up in Christ. The basic foundational truths are in place: turning your back on "salvation by self-help" and turning in trust toward God; baptismal instructions; laying on of hands; resurrection of the dead; eternal judgment. God helping us, we'll stay true to all that. But there's so much more. Let's get on with it!

### **Gospel Lesson** – Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'Worship your God, and serve only God.'"

Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

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

**Sung Response:** *Amen Bawo*

## Sermon

“Stay Curious, My Friends”

## Call to Offering

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

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

## Offertory

*Hang Gliding*

Maria Schneider

## Doxology

*Tune: Old Hundredth*

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

## \*Closing Hymn: NCH 403

*My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less*

### *Verse 1*

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' love and righteousness;

I dare not trust this earthly frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name.

### *Refrain*

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;

All other ground is sinking sand,

All other ground is sinking sand.

### *Verse 2*

When shadows veil my Savior's face,

I rest upon unchanging grace;



In every high and stormy gale,  
my anchor holds within the veil. *Refrain*

*Verse 3*

Christ's oath and covenant and blood  
support me in the rising flood;  
When all around my soul gives way,  
Christ then is all my hope and stay. *Refrain*

*Verse 4*

When Christ shall come with trumpet sound,  
oh may I then in Love be found,  
Dressed in God's righteousness alone,  
faultless to stand before the throne. *Refrain*

## **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. Joshua Lawrence Lazard

**Digital Minister** – Evelyn Kimber

**WELCOME TO CHURCH OF THE COVENANT!** We are so glad to have you worshipping with us today! 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 in person or in the chat.

**NEW TO COTC?** We're so glad you're here! 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).



**OPEN SANCTUARY ADULT EDUCATION.** Today following worship, join us in the sanctuary for an adult education session on our Open Sanctuary ministry. Come learn about what we do to open wide our doors throughout the week to the wider public community, and what it might look like to volunteer to help this vital ministry that is the “hands and feet” of COTC to visitors.

**LIFE ALIVE MINISTRY.** Our young adults (aka “Life Alive”) enjoy a robust fellowship and community that gathers monthly for brunches and weekly for prayers. **Our next brunch is after church today.** Want to join us or have questions? Email Rev. Joshua at [joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org](mailto:joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org).

**LENT 2023: The Way of Curiosity:** *Creatively opening ourselves to deeper truths through bolder questions.* Join us this Lent (Feb. 22-April 9) as we journey through the wilderness with Jesus, cultivating more joyful curiosity around topics related to our daily living in search of deeper truths. Together we will consider: Embodied Practices, Make Believe, Simple Living, Active Art & Banned Subjects. Let’s get inquisitive & imagine a world where *more (beauty, joy, vision, love, God)* is possible.



Church of the Covenant

Lent 2023

## The Way of Curiosity

Creatively opening ourselves  
to deeper truths through  
bolder questions.

*Curiosity (noun): a desire to know;  
a desire to learn about things that do not  
properly concern one; inquisitiveness.*



**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, February 26, Lent 1: Embodied Practices, Rev. Joshua preaching
- Sunday, March 5, Lent 2: Make Believe, Rev. Rob preaching, Communion
- Sunday, March 12, Lent 3: Simple Living, Sacrament of Baptism, Rev. Emma Brewer-Wallin preaching

**TAKE ACTION FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE!** Join our Climate Jubilee Team on 3-21-23 – Tuesday, March 21, 12-:1:30pm as we join Third Act & 350 Mass to tell some big banks to stop funding the fossil fuel chaos that is violating our climate. Location: Downtown Crossing, 425 Washington St, Intersection with Winter St. [Boston, MA 02108](#). Please sign up here: <https://mobilize.us/s/Dos7wp>

**BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS.** The Wednesday morning Bible Study group will not meet this week – March 1 – but will resume on the 8th with our journey through the Gospel of Matthew. You are welcome to join this group of comics and scholars, cynics and believers, in a warm online embrace, having fun debating the meaning and relevance of the Bible, then and now. If you'd like more information, contact Jan Gough at [revjangough@gmail.com](mailto:revjangough@gmail.com).

**LENT EVENING PRAYERS 6-6:30pm.** Join us this Wednesday, March 1, and Wednesdays through Lent, for our weekly evening prayers with intentional liturgy, contemplative song, psalms & sharing of prayers with our siblings from Newton Presbyterian *on Zoom*.

**STAFF AWAY:** Rev. Rob is on school vacation through February 27.

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

*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 New Visitor's Card and place it in the offering plate, or email us at [churchofthecovenant@cotcbos.org](mailto: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](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 marginalized, to enjoy seats at God's table. This congregation seeks to demonstrate that vision by welcoming individuals and families of all races, gender identities, ages, physical/mental abilities, and 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 and gender identities 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*