

Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



The Third Sunday in Lent
The Way of Curiosity: *Simple Living*
Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ
[ZOOM LINK \(click here\)](#)



Church of the Covenant

The Third Sunday of Lent: March 12, 2023, 10:30 am

The Way of Curiosity: *Simple Living*

Celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS – *Spring Ahead!*

[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**

*Simple Gifts (Appalachian Spring)*

arr. Aaron Copland

### Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

### \* Call To Worship

*Adapted from a prayer by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art*

One: We gather together—

Many: **the seekers, the dreamers, the shooting-star wishers, in hopes of seeing God.**

One: We gather together—

Many: **the curious, the hungry, the loving, the lonely, in hopes of finding peace.**

One: We gather together—

Many: **those who are thirsty and those with water to spare, in hopes of finding justice.**

One: So come to the well, come to the fount.

Many: **Come, let us worship God.**

### Kindling the Christ Light

\* **Opening Hymn:** (see next page)

*'Tis the Gift to Be Simple*

## 'Tis the Gift to Be Simple 657



'Tis the gift to be sim-ple, 'tis the gift to be free, 'tis the  
gift to come down where we ought to be, and  
when we find our-selves in the place just right, 'twill  
be in the val - ley of love and de - light.  
When true sim - plic - i - ty is gained to bow and to bend we  
shan't be a-shamed, to turn, turn, will be our de-light till by  
turn - ing, turn - ing we come round right.

Text: Shaker Song, 18th. C.  
Tune: SIMPLE GIFTS; acc. Margaret W. Mealy, b.1922, © 1984

## Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace – 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 and now open ourselves further in silence...

## Listening to God in Silent Prayer

### Assurance of God's Grace

**One:** Friends, in our questions, in our seeking, in our doubting, in our striving, in our living, in our loving – we are completely enveloped in the restorative love that flows from our Creative God. Know this. Trust this. Take joy in this, as we all celebrate together:

**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!

## Green Congregation Celebration Litany

**Many:** Creator God, we give you thanks for the gifts of your creation that sustain our lives, for the air we breathe and the water we drink. Thank you for the mountains and valleys, rivers and seas that nourish our spirits.

Jesus, our teacher and friend, we give you thanks for your guiding example as we seek to love our neighbors as ourselves. Thank you for nurturing many gifts of discipleship within this church, that together we can more faithfully follow you.

**Holy Spirit, we give you thanks for your stirring among us. You have inspired us to take our Christian faith seriously in a world of climate crisis. Just as you have been with us in our difficult work so far, continue to inspire and sustain us for where you lead next. AMEN.**

## **Reading from Scripture**

**Gospel Reading** – Matthew 11:28-30

‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’

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

Many: **Thanks be to God.**

**Sung Response:** *Amen Bawo*

**Sermon**

“Take the Yoke”

## **The Sacrament of Baptism: Julian Kieran Vest-Burns**

**Invitation to the Font of Every Blessing**

**\*Baptism Gathering Song**

*Down in the River to Pray*

**Chorus:** 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

1. 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. Chorus.

## **\*Questions for the Congregation**

While we know currently Julian will be attending The Pilgrim United Church of Christ in New Bedford where Austin serves as Minister of Music, will you, members of Church of the Covenant, knowing the challenges of distance, pledge to do what you can to ensure that Julian is exposed to and educated in the work and movement of God within? Whenever possible based on where this family is living and working, do you promise to incorporate Julian into the life and mission of this congregation through all stages of childhood? Do you promise to share your faith and your questions with Julian, to answer questions as you are able, and to encourage inquiry? Will you share with Julian the wonder, love and joy of life connected to the Holy Spirit? Will you surround Julian with a church ready to hear and act upon God's word in this day and age?

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

## **Welcoming the Newly Baptized**

### **Call to Offering**

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

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

### **Offertory**

*He's Got the Whole World in His Hands*

arr. Margaret Bonds

Austin Burns – Soloist

### **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.

*Tune: Old Hundredth*

## **Prayer of Dedication**

### **Celebrations and Concerns**

One: God, in your grace,  
Many: **Receive our prayer.**

## **Pastoral Prayer**

**\* Closing Hymn: NCH 597**

*Shall We Gather at the River*

1. Shall we gather at the river,  
where bright angel feet have trod,  
with its crystal tide forever  
flowing by the throne of God?

***Refrain:***

Yes, we'll gather at the river,  
the beautiful, the beautiful river;  
gather with the saints at the river  
that flows by the throne of God.

2. On the margin of the river,  
washing up its silver spray,  
we will walk and worship ever,  
all the happy golden day. ***Refrain***
3. As we reach the shining river,  
lay we every burden down;  
grace our spirits will deliver,  
and provide a robe and crown. ***Refrain***
4. Soon we'll reach the shining river,  
soon our pilgrimage will cease;  
soon our happy hearts will quiver  
with the melody of peace. ***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.**

---

## Worship Participants

**Minister of Music** – Tom Handel

**Guest Preacher** – Rev. Emma Brewer-Wallin

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

**Digital Minister** – Christine James

**Ushers** – Anne Crane, Betty Rots

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

**Soloist** – Austin Burns

**Cover Image:** *The Simple Beauty of March Trees*, Rob Mark.

**TODAY WE WELCOME OUR GUEST PREACHER:** Rev. Emma Brewer-Wallin (they/them) is the Minister of Environmental & Economic Justice for the Southern New England Conference, United Church of Christ. Emma is passionate about the power of the church to answer God’s call to love our neighbors and organize for justice. They grew up in Salem, Oregon and came to Massachusetts to attend Wellesley College. They have a Master of Divinity from Harvard Divinity School.



**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](https://cotcbos.org).



**TODAY, CLIMATE JUBILEE GREEN CONGREGATION CHALLENGE ADULT ED (HYBRID).** Please join us today, Sunday, March 12, at the front of the sanctuary (and on same Zoom link) following worship for a Climate Jubilee sponsored session on our UCC’s Green Congregation Challenge, with special guest Rev. Emma Brewer-Wallin. We will also reflect together on the goals for the next two years of our missional call into Climate Jubilee and ways you can participate and add your ideas/questions.



**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, March 12, Lent 3: Simple Living, Sacrament of Baptism, Rev. Emma Brewer-Wallin preaching
- Sunday, March 19, Lent 4: Active Art, Rev. Rob preaching, Communion
- Sunday, March 26, Lent 5: Banned Subjects – Preaching Panel w/ Q&A
- Sunday, April 2, All Ages Palm Sunday Service, Communion

**GBIO HOUSING JUSTICE TEACH-IN.** Plan to stay after church on **Sunday March 19**, at approximately 12 noon, when Covenant's GBIO team will lead a session to learn about GBIO's Housing Justice Campaign. We will have a hybrid meeting: in the Sanctuary and on Zoom.

- Why is GBIO focused on Housing Justice?
- What are the strategies?
- How will these help?
- How you can get involved!

Join us on March 19th!

**SPRING EQUINOX EVENSONG.** On the Spring Equinox, we continue our outdoor worship services celebrating the equinoxes and solstices. Hope you'll join us **March 20 at 6:30pm** at the Arthur Fiedler Dock on the Quinobequin (settler-named Charles) River. If you need directions to the Arthur Fiedler Dock ([goo.gl/maps/3eb2MH3eJ8GF5ZobA](https://goo.gl/maps/3eb2MH3eJ8GF5ZobA)), contact Betty Southwick at 617-780-4731. Please sign up at [tinyurl.com/COTCSpring2023](https://tinyurl.com/COTCSpring2023) so we know to expect you and can communicate in advance if needed.

**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](https://www.boston.gov/locations/downtown-crossing). Please sign up here: [mobilize.us/s/Dos7wp](https://mobilize.us/s/Dos7wp)

**GET CURIOUS & SUBMIT YOUR QUESTIONS!** For Lent 5 Sunday March 26, in place of the sermon we will have a special “preaching panel” that will take YOUR QUESTIONS. In the spirit of curiosity, any questions about faith, life, Lent, God or any seemingly “banned subject” are invited! Whimsical or deep. We'd love to begin collating questions in advance – please click here: <https://forms.gle/em4DV5PPtHjWwTYn6> (you can also ask questions that day “from the floor”). Thanks!

**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.



**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.** Join our Bible Study group 9:15am Wednesdays to explore 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 15, 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:** Building Manager Bill Brown will be away March 14-22.

**HYMNS STREAMED** with permission under One License #A-741135

**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*