

# Church of the Covenant



**The Fourth Sunday in Lent**  
**The Way of Curiosity: *Active Art***  
*Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ*



# Church of the Covenant

The Fourth Sunday of Lent: March 19, 2023, 10:30 am

The Way of Curiosity: *Active Art*

Celebration of the Sacrament of Communion

[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.*

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**Prelude**

*Variations on Amazing Grace*

Gwyneth Walker

## **Welcome & Announcements**

One: Peace be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

## **Active Art Summoning Us to Worship**

Video Choreography by Brinae Ali

Celebrating Women’s History Month

## **Kindling the Christ Light**

### **Sacred Opening Text:** Lamentations 3:21-23 in honor of 3-21-23 Climate Action

But this I call to mind,  
and therefore I have hope:  
The steadfast love of God never ceases,  
God’s mercies never come to an end;  
they are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness.

**\* Opening Hymn:** PH (blue) 276

*Great is Thy Faithfulness*

*Verse 1*

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God, Creator,  
There is no shadow of shadow of turning with Thee;  
Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not;  
As Thou has been Thou forever wilt be.

*Refrain*

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;  
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

*Verse 2*

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,  
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above  
Join with all nature in manifold witness  
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love. *Refrain*

*Verse 3*

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,  
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside! *Refrain*

### **Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace – A Litany for Curiosity**

One: Ever Creative, Artist 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!

## Readings from Scripture

### Hebrew Bible Reading – Exodus 35:30-35

Then Moses said to the Israelites: See, God has called by name Bezalel child of Uri child of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; God has filled him with divine spirit, with skill, intelligence, and knowledge in every kind of craft, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, in every kind of craft. And God has inspired him to teach, both him and Oholiab child of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. God has filled them with skill to do every kind of work done by an artisan or by a designer or by an embroiderer in blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and in fine linen, or by a weaver—by any sort of artisan or skilled designer.

### Hebrew Bible Reading – Jeremiah 18:1-6

The word that came to Jeremiah from God: ‘Come, go down to the potter’s house, and there I will let you hear my words.’ So I went down to the potter’s house, and there s/he was working at her wheel. The vessel s/he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter’s hand, and she reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good.

Then the word of God came to me: Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done? says the Lord. Just like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.

### New Testament Reading – Philippians 4:8

Finally, siblings, whatever is true, whatever is honest, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.



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

**Sung Response:** *Amen Bawo*

## **Engaging Active Art**

“God’s Medium and Yours”

Where do notice art in the space(s) you are in?  
What do you see? / What don’t you see?  
What do experience beyond sight?  
What do you feel?  
What are you curious about in the space surrounding you?  
Where might you sense the Holy?

## **Call to Offering**

Online Giving Option: <http://www.cotcbos.org/give.html>  
*Click on Give Now, then choose Pledges or Gifts-General.*

## **Offertory**

*In Prayer I Find Solace*

Trad. Scottish

*About the Offertory: Christine James wrote the words for “In Prayer I Find Solace” in celebration of the restoration of Covenant’s “Cornelius Window” in November of 2021. The poetry traces the story from Acts, following Cornelius’ encounter with the Angel, as depicted in the window. The first verse is sung from Cornelius’ point of view (a Roman centurion) as he questions his worthiness for baptism. The second verse is sung from Peter’s point of view, following his strange vision of seemingly unclean animals followed by a voice instructing him that “what God has made clean, you must not call profane.” In the third verse, Cornelius and Peter are reconciled as Peter understands that “God shows no partiality” and that “everyone who believes in God receives forgiveness of sins.”*

*The melody was adapted by Tom Handel from the ancient Scottish song, The Roman Tree.*

### **Cornelius:**

In prayer I find solace, by alms I seek grace.  
Can one who serves empire, his sins be erased?  
Can a Roman be baptized, His soul then set free?  
Whate’er says the angel is as it shall be  
Is as it all shall be.

**Peter:**

I'm often befuddled by visions and dreams  
God's will is uncertain, and not what it seems.  
To end what since Moses my people have done,  
How through such transgression can new life be won?  
Can new life be won?

**Cornelius & Peter:**

What's brought us together, two men who were foes?  
Can God's mercy free us from hate's undertow?  
If we, by the Spirit, remember Christ's ways,  
Then peace, love and justice be ours all our days.  
Peace for all our days.

**Curiosity with Art**

Visio Divina, adapted from Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman, A Sanctified Art

**1. Engage Art that draws you.**

Center yourself by taking a deep breath and relaxing your body as best you can. Allow your shoulders to lower away from your ears. Let your arms rest in your lap if seated, or by your sides if standing, and let your feet be fully supported by the floor. Feel the weight of your body held. Spend this time in quiet. Open yourself up to God as Creative.

*(pause)*

Take a deep breath in and out. Continue breathing deeply as you read the image. In this moment, simply notice the visual qualities of what you see: medium, colors, line, shape, form, space, and texture.

*(pause)*

Now, take a deeper look. What parts of the image are your eyes most drawn to? What parts of the image did you quickly brush by or overlook? Is there motion, stillness, story, patterns, intention?

*(pause)*

**2. Reflect on what moves you.**

And now, use your imagination. Get curious.

As it relates, imagine yourself in this art. Where would you be and how would you interact with what surrounds you?

If any, look at the figure(s). What story do you assign to each of them? What emotions would you give to them? Do you notice relationships?

*(pause)*

### 3. Respond to the art with your spirit.

Finally, observe your own emotions. How does this art make you feel?

What prayers rise up in you led by this art?

What might it be calling to you do, be, think, feel, examine more deeply?

What are you still curious about?

Hold these things with God. Be grateful.

*(pause)*

### 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:** PH 369 *I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me (modified – see below)*

1) I'm gonna live so God can use me, anywhere Lord, anytime (x2)

2) I'm gonna sing so...

3) I'm gonna color so...

4) *(YOU CHOOSE A LINE!)* I'm gonna paint/ sculpt/ weave/ bead/ craft/  
knit/ dance/ play/ carve/ build/ draw/ \_\_\_\_\_ / so....

5) I'm gonna dream so...

### \* 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

**Worship Leaders** – Rev. Rob Mark, Barbara Darling

**Liturgists** – Charlene & Ed James

**Lector** – Layla Wilson

**Live Artist** – Maya Imani Watson: <http://www.mayaimaniwatson.com/>

**Ushers** – TBD

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

**Covenant Choir**

**Cover Art:** *Breathe Life*, by Rob Problak Gibbs, mural on Madison Park Technical Vocational High School, Roxbury, MA.

**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).



**TODAY AFTER WORSHIP: GBIO HOUSING JUSTICE TEACH-IN.** Plan to stay after church today, **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!



**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 26, Lent 5: Banned Subjects – Preaching Panel w/ Q&A
- Sunday, April 2, All Ages Palm Sunday Service, Communion
- Maundy Thursday, April 6, 7:30pm @ Emmanuel Church, 15 Newbury St.

**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](#). Please sign up here: [mobilize.us/s/Dos7wp](https://mobilize.us/s/Dos7wp)

**GET CURIOUS & SUBMIT YOUR QUESTIONS! DEADLINE TUESDAY March 21!** 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!

**ALL CHURCH POTLUCK!** Join us after worship on **Sunday, March 26**, for an all-church potluck! More details to come.

**NICA COMPANIONS ADULT ED.** Get a taste of the recent delegation to our sibling church in Nicaragua. Join the delegates, after church on **Sunday, April 2**, as they bring alive their experience - including some of the sights, tastes, and sounds.

**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 22, 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.

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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*