

Church of the Covenant and Newton Presbyterian Church



**Good Friday 2024
Tenebrae Service**

Presbyterian Church (USA) /United Church of Christ

Church of the Covenant & Newton Presbyterian Church

March 29, 2024, 7:00 pm

Good Friday Tenebrae Service

Bird Power Holy Week

[Zoom: tinyurl.com/cotcworship](https://tinyurl.com/cotcworship)

A Note About This Evening's Service:

This Good Friday Tenebrae service is centered on the seven last “words” or cries of Jesus from the cross. The scripture readings are followed by short meditations written by those who deliver them. Each meditation will be followed by a sequence of musical meditations, silence, and candles being extinguished. This Tenebrae service moves us from the glimmers of sunset to the gathering gloom and silence of Holy Saturday, as candles are extinguished, and we are invited to leave the service by holding silence into the night. The end of this bulletin has a broader explanation of the history and significance of this powerful service.

In-Person: Thank you for joining us. To help mark the poignancy of this holy day, please enter and leave the sanctuary in silence.

Online: Thank you for joining us. If you are safely able, you are invited to bring a candle to this Zoom service to extinguish in solidarity following the final meditation. You will be invited to share some time in the night of silence following the service on your own.

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

Prelude

O for the Wings of a Dove
Tom Reid – soloist

Felix Mendelssohn

Welcome. Breathe. Center.

One: Peace be with you!

Many: **And also with you!**

* Call To Worship

One: Who will come to worship when we focus on the crucifixion?

Many: We will come.

One: After the rooster crows, when the closest disciples have fled in terror, who will gather at the foot of the cross?

Many: We will gather.

One: Who will hear again the story of the death of God's Saving One?

Many: We will hear.

One: Who will witness to the love of God, poured out for the world, on that night, on this night, and always?

Many: We will witness.

* Opening Hymn PH (blue) 98

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

O sacred head, now wounded, with grief and shame weighed down;
Now scornfully surrounded with thorns, Thine only crown;
O sacred head, what glory, what bliss till now was Thine!
Yet, though despised and gory, I joy to call Thee mine.

What Thou, my Lord, hast suffered was all for sinners' gain:
Mine, mine was the transgression, but Thine the deadly pain.
Lo, here I fall, my Savior! 'Tis I deserve Thy place;
Look on me with Thy favor, vouchsafe to me Thy grace.

What language shall I borrow to thank Thee, dearest friend,
For this Thy dying sorrow, Thy pity without end?
O make me Thine forever; and should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never outlive my love to Thee.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

Assurance of Grace

One: The Gospel of John proclaims that God entered the world through Jesus Christ, not to condemn the world, but so that the world might be liberated. In Jesus, all may be forgiven, healed, and reconnected to God. Therefore, let us lay down our burdens, leave our brokenness behind, and journey on together with the Saving One of God, celebrating the good news:

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

The First Word: Luke 23:32-38

Abba, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.

Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, **“Abba, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”** And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!” The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, “If you are the Ruler of the People, save yourself!” There was also an inscription over him, “This is the Ruler of the People.”

Meditation

Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard

Invitation to Meditative Silence

Hymn PH (blue) 85

What Wondrous Love Is This

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul,
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss
To bear the heavy cross for my soul, for my soul,
To bear the heavy cross for my soul!

To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing,
To God and to the Lamb, I will sing;
To God and to the Lamb who is the great I Am,
While millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing;
While millions join the theme, I will sing!

And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on,
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on;
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be,
And through eternity I'll sing on, I'll sing on,
And through eternity I'll sing on!

The Second Word: Luke 23:39-43

Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this one has done nothing wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” He replied, “**Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.**”

Meditation

Mary Lou Smith

Invitation to Meditative Silence

Hymn PH (blue) 599

Jesus Remember Me

Je - sus, re - mem - ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.

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Je - sus re - mem - ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.

Words: Luke 23:42
Music: Taize Community, 1998

The Third Word: John 19:23–27

Woman, here is your son. Here is your mother.

And when the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.” This was to fulfill what the scripture says, “They divided my clothes among themselves, and

for my clothing they cast lots.” And that is what the soldiers did. Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, **“Woman, here is your son.”** Then he said to the disciple, **“Here is your mother.”** And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

Meditation

Rev. Tom Reid

Invitation to Meditative Silence

Musical Meditation

The Crucifixion
Tom Reid – soloist

Samuel Barber

The Fourth Word: Matthew 27:45-49

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o’clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, **“Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?”** that is, **“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”** When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, “This man is calling for Elijah.” At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.”

Meditation

Rev. Jan Gough

Invitation to Meditative Silence

Musical Meditation

Flee as a Bird
Covenant Choir

Mary S.B. Dana
arr. Joseph M Martin

The Fifth Word: John 19:28-29

I am thirsty.

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), **“I am thirsty.”** A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth.

Meditation

Gracie Paterson

Invitation to Meditative Silence

Hymn PH (blue) 102

Were You There?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree?
Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree?

Were you there when they pierced Him in the side?
Were you there when they pierced Him in the side?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they pierced Him in the side?

Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb?
Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb?

The Sixth Word: John 19:30

It is finished.

When Jesus had received the wine, he said, “**It is finished.**” Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Meditation

Rev. Dr. So Jung Kim

Invitation to Meditative Silence

Musical Meditation

Abyss of the Birds
Gary Gorczyca – clarinet

Olivier Messiaen

The Seventh Word: Luke 23:44-49

Abba, into your hands I commend my spirit.

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "**Abba, into your hands I commend my spirit.**" Having said this, he breathed his last. When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "Certainly this one was innocent." And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts. But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

Meditation

Rev. Kate Carlisle

Invitation to Meditative Silence

Musical Meditation

The Lone, Wild Bird
Betsy Groves – soloist

arr. David N. Johnson

Prayer

Tolling of the Bell

Charge

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***In-Person:*** *Please leave the sanctuary in silence as some lights come on.*

***Online:*** *After you log off from Zoom (or recording), we invite you to remain in silence for a minute or two after and close your computer down. Consider turning off or down the lights in your room. Extinguish any candles. Spend some moments in silent vigil.*



## Participating in Worship

**Liturgists** – Rev. Rob Mark, Rev. Tom Reid

**Minister of Music** – Tom Handel

**Meditations Written and Offered By** – Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard, Mary Lou Smith, Rev. Tom Reid, Rev. Jan Gough, Gracie Paterson, Rev. Dr. So Jung Kim, Rev. Kate Carlisle

**Musicians** – Covenant Choir; Betsy Groves and Tom Reid – Vocal Soloists; Gary Gorczyca – Clarinet

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

**Usher** – Holly Humphreys

**Lights** – Mark Huston

**Sexton** – Jesús Vargas

**Cover Art, “Great Horned Owl”** – Brooks Mathewson

**LENTEN BIRD COVER PHOTOS.** Throughout Lent, our bulletin images are being provided to us by **Brooks Mathewson**. Brooks is an ecologist, educator, and photographer with a Master’s in Forest Science from Harvard University. He has published peer-reviewed papers, technical reports, and popular articles on his research on terrestrial salamander ecology, tree phenology, breeding bird biology, and bird migration. Brooks’ photography has been published in magazines, newspapers, textbooks, and conservation reports and has been displayed widely throughout New England. For Rev. Rob’s interview with Brooks, visit <https://youtu.be/T8SXBLIQGbo?>

### *Background for this Service*

This service commemorates the crucifixion and death of Jesus in a symbolic movement from light to darkness. The music, scriptures, and prayers reflect Jesus’ last words from the cross. The service is loosely based on an 8th century service called Tenebrae, meaning “shadows,” which was celebrated on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of Holy Week.

The candles symbolize Jesus Christ, the light of the entire world. As they are extinguished, they reflect the gloom that fell over the world because of Jesus’ death and the fear and apprehension experienced by his followers. The service will close with a stark charge without the benediction customary in worship services throughout the rest of the church year. Suspending the blessing (until Easter morning) evokes the disciples’ experience of abandonment and despair at the time of Jesus’ death.

As we remember the undeserved suffering of Christ, we bring before God the suffering in our own lives, the suffering of people we love, those who are persecuted for speaking the truth, and those who suffer from poverty, war, climatic chaos, violence, or other injustices around the globe. To bear witness to suffering—God’s suffering and the suffering of creation—is an act of hope in the light of God’s steadfast love which the gloom cannot ultimately extinguish.

We specifically remember and celebrate the late Rev. Jennifer Wegter-McNelly, pastor of Church of the Covenant from 2007 to 2012, who first introduced this special service to us. Rev. Jennifer left this life to join God’s eternal embrace in 2022. As we remember all the saints, we give thanks to God for all the life and love Rev. Jennifer brought into this world and our church.

**A Note on “Abyss of the Birds”:** Composed for solo clarinet, “Abyss of the Birds” is the third movement of Olivier Messiaen’s *Quartet for the End of Time*, a work premiered in a prisoner of war camp in 1941. Messiaen and the clarinetist, Henri Akoka, were deployed by the French army, captured by the Nazis and transported to Poland. Akoka read through an early version of the work in a field, en route to the POW camp. The music alternates between the devastation and loneliness of the abyss and the joy and freedom of birdsong.

### **Remaining Holy Week Services**

**Covenant (in-person or online):** [www.cotcbos.org/this-sunday-online.html](http://www.cotcbos.org/this-sunday-online.html)

Holy Saturday Easter Vigil, March 30, 7:00 pm

Easter Sunday, 10:30 am, Easter Egg hunt for kids

**Newton Presbyterian Church (in-person or online):**

Easter Sunday, 10:15am

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## **Newton Presbyterian Church, 75 Vernon Street Newton, Massachusetts**

Pastor: Rev. Tom Reid

Seminary Intern: Gracie Paterson

Website: [npc-ma.org](http://npc-ma.org)

Email: [newtonpres@npc-ma.org](mailto:newtonpres@npc-ma.org)

Rev. Reid can be reached at the following email or cell  
phone: [revtom@npc-ma.org](mailto:revtom@npc-ma.org) (617) 564-3314

### Church Leaders

The Session: Elders: David Penn | Esther Tambe | Gerald Tabi | Mary Lou Smith |  
Clerk of Session & Treasurer, Kathy Barnes  
Rev. Tom Reid, Moderator

The Deacons: Laura McTaggart | Hope Mugerwa | Allison Penn

Connect to NPC Wi-Fi NPC-Guest password: Welcome2NPC

Prayer Requests [newtonpresbyterian@gmail.com](mailto:newtonpresbyterian@gmail.com)

Deacon Contact Laura McTaggart

Youth Ministry David Penn

Newton Pres Community Group Email List [NewtonPres@groups.io](mailto:NewtonPres@groups.io)

NewtonPres is a moderated listserv for church-related matters for the Newton Presbyterian Church community. On this list, members and friends of the church can periodically send out prayer requests, announcements, or updates about church events. If you would like to subscribe, send an email to:

[NewtonPres+subscribe@groups.io](mailto:NewtonPres+subscribe@groups.io)

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Newton Presbyterian Church

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**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 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 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*

**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*