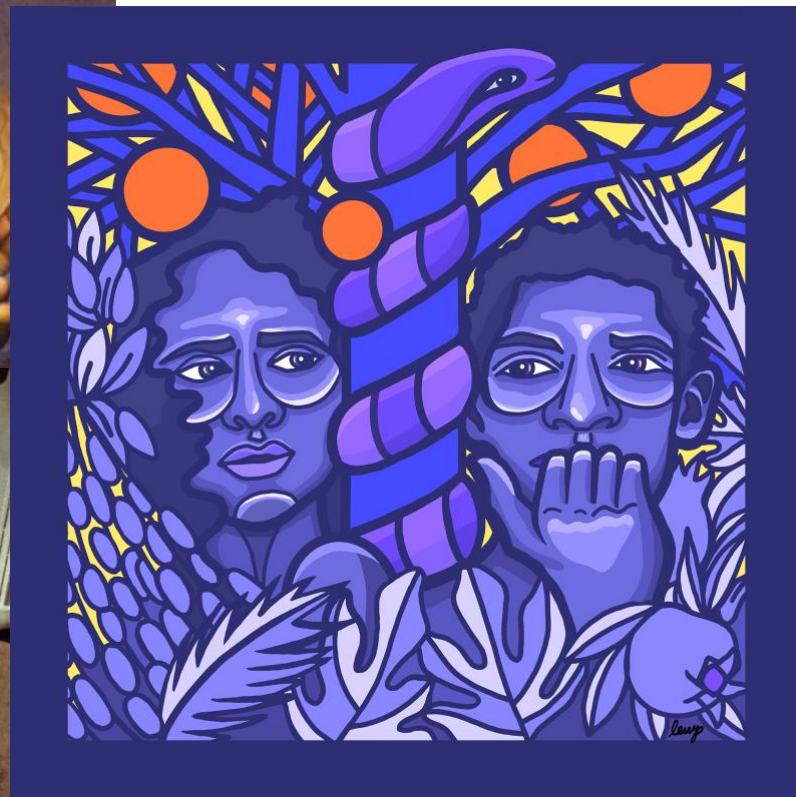


# Church of the Covenant

## Boston, MA



**The Second Sunday in Lent**  
**The Way of Curiosity: *Make Believe***  
*Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ*  
**ZOOM LINK ([click here](#))**



## Church of the Covenant

The Second Sunday of Lent: March 5, 2023, 10:30 am

The Way of Curiosity: *Make Believe*

Celebration of Holy 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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### Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

### Prelude

*Round Dance of the Princesses (Firebird)*

Igor Stravinsky

### \* 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, Amen.

**\* Opening Hymn:** NCH 567 v. 1-5

*Stars and Planets Flung in Orbit*

Stars and Planets flung in orbit,  
galaxies that swirl through space,  
powers hid within the atom,  
cells that form an infant's face:  
These, O God, in silence praise you;  
by your wisdom they are made.

Skies adorned with sunset splendor,  
silent peaks in calm repose,  
golden fields awaiting harvest,  
forming surf and fragrant rose:  
earth, it's bounty clothed with beauty,  
echoes all creation's praise.

Life in wondrous, wild profusion,  
seed and fruit, each flower and tree,  
beast and fish and swarming insect,  
soaring bird, rejoicing, free:  
these, your creatures, join in chorus,  
praising you in wordless song.

Humankind, earth's deepest mystery,  
born of dust but touched by grace,  
torn apart by tongue and color,  
yet a single, striving race:  
we, in whom you trace your image,  
add our words to nature's song.

Gracious God, we bring before you  
gifts of human life alone,  
truth that throbs through song and story,  
visions caught in paint and stone:  
these, O God, we gladly offer,  
gifts to praise the Giver's name.

## Kindling the Christ Light

### Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

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

**Many:** Holy & Curious God, too often we treat your Word like a radio station—something we can tune in and out of when it's convenient. Our minds are full of ads, emails, news updates, and notifications. In the midst of this clutter, we tend to gravitate toward the voices that think like us—easily ignoring the voices being silenced, easily ignoring your voice. Forgive us for failing to listen. Forgive us for getting caught in distractions. Forgive us for forgetting what your voice sounds like. Drain the distractions from our minds, fill us with curiosity anew, and help us turn once again toward you.

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

### Listening to God in Silent Prayer

#### Assurance of God's Grace

**One:** Friends, even when we tune God out, even when we prioritize other voices, even when we do all the talking and fail to listen, we are *still* held by God. Our shortcomings are forgiven. Nothing could ever separate us from God's love. So with joy in our hearts, please repeat after me:

**One:** I am loved!

**Many:** I am loved!

**One:** I am held in grace!

**Many:** I am held in grace!

**One:** I belong to God.

**Many:** I belong to God.

**One:** And all together, let us celebrate:

**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

### Apocryphal Reading – Bel and the Dragon 1:23-27, 31, 33-39

Now in that place there was a great dragon, which the Babylonians revered. The king said to Daniel, 'You cannot deny that this is a living god; so worship him.' Daniel said, 'I worship the Holy One my God, the living God. But give me permission, O king, and I will kill the dragon without sword or club.' The king said, 'I give you permission.' Then Daniel took pitch, fat, and hair, and boiled them together and made cakes, which he fed to the dragon. The dragon ate them, and burst open. Then Daniel said, 'See what you have been worshipping!'... They threw Daniel into the lions' den...

Now the prophet Habakkuk was in Judea; he had made a stew and had broken bread into a bowl, and was going into the field to take it to the reapers. But the angel of God said to Habakkuk, 'Take the food that you have to Babylon, to Daniel, in the lions' den.' Habakkuk said, 'I have never seen Babylon, and I know nothing about the den.' Then the angel of God took him by the crown of his head and carried him by his hair; with the speed of the wind he set him down in Babylon, right over the den. Then Habakkuk shouted, 'Daniel, Daniel! Take the food that God has sent you.' <sup>38</sup>Daniel said, 'You have remembered me, O God, and have not forsaken those who love you.' <sup>39</sup>So Daniel got up and ate. And the angel of God immediately returned Habakkuk to his own place.

### Hebrew Bible Reading – Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And God commanded the man, 'You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.' Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God say, "You shall not eat from any tree in the garden"?' The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die."' But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

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

**Sung Response:** *Amen Bawo*

**Sermon**

“The Gospel of Make Believe”

**Call to Offering**

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

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

**Offertory**

*Imagine*

John Lennon  
Kathryn Barry – Soloist

**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**

**Celebration of Holy Communion**

**Invitation to the Table**

**Communion Summons**

*I'm Gonna Eat at the Welcome Table*

I'm gonna eat at the welcome table,  
I'm gonna eat at the welcome table, some of these days.  
I'm gonna eat at the welcome table,  
I'm gonna eat at the welcome table, some of these days.

## The Great Thanksgiving

One: May God be with you!

Many: **And also with you.**

One: People of curiosity, let us lift up our hearts!

Many: **We open our hearts to the Spirit who fills us with hope.**

One: Let us give thanks to God our light.

Many: **It is right for us to offer our thanks and praise to God.**

One: It is right for us to thank and praise you God...

...And so, with your people here on earth, with all the ancestors, and all the saints and the great company of heaven, we glorify your name, praising you together:

Many: **Holy, holy, holy One, God of heaven and earth. All creation is full of your love and grace. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of peace. Hosanna in the highest!**

One: Holy are you, O God...

## The Prayer of Jesus

*(Casa Del Sol)*

**Ground of all being, Mother of life, Father of the universe, Your name is sacred, beyond speaking. May we know your presence, may your longings be our longings in heart and in action. May there be food for the human family today and for the whole earth community. Forgive us the falseness of what we have done as we forgive those who are untrue to us. Do not forsake us in our time of conflict but lead us into new beginnings. For the light of life, the vitality of life, and the glory of life are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

## Breaking of the Bread

## Sharing of the Bread and Cup

## Post Communion Prayer

## \* Closing Hymn

## *The Spirit Sends us Forth to Serve*



1. The Spir - it sends us forth to serve; we  
2. We go to com - fort those who mourn and  
3. We go to be the hands of Christ, to  
4. Then let us go to serve in peace, the



go in Je - sus' name to bring glad tid - ings  
set the bur - dened free; where hope is dim, to  
scat - ter joy like seed and, all our days, to  
gos - pel to pro - claim. God's Spir - it has em -



to the poor, God's fa - vor to pro - claim.  
share a dream and help the blind to see.  
cher - ish life, to do the lov - ing deed.  
pow - ered us; we go in Je - sus' name.

WORDS: Delores Dufner, OSB  
MUSIC: USA folk melody

LAND OF REST  
CM

Words © 1993 Delores Dufner, admin. by OCP Publications

## \* 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. Rob Mark

**Liturgist** – Barbara Darling

**Lector** – Liz Vizza

**Digital Minister** – Rev. Rob Mark

**Usher** – Faith Perry

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

**Soloist** – Kathryn Barry



**Cover Art:** *Who Will You Listen To?* by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman, A Sanctified Art. Inspired by Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7 *Digital painting*. A note from the artist: “I decided to create this piece in monochromatic cool tones, contrasting with the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (in orange) and God’s wisdom (in gold) surrounding them. In hindsight, I realize I was visualizing my emotional journey with the text. The cool tones represent the heaviness and confusion I felt with this familiar story, and the high contrast mimics the way this text has made me feel separate and isolated from God. The woman’s expression holds the weight and the pain caused by the ways this text has been used to subjugate women and to prop up destructive doctrines and a distorted gospel.” / **Cover Images** of Octavia Butler’s novel “Parable of the Sower” and Mr. Roger’s Neighborhood.

**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).



**COLUMBARIUM UPDATE ADULT ED (HYBRID).** Please join us today, Sunday, March 5, at the front of the sanctuary (and on same Zoom link) following worship for an update and conversation/ listening session around where the Building Committee senses we are at regarding the pause on the columbarium proposal. The overall sense is this project will remain on pause due to a number of other priorities for the congregation - but we really want to engage as a congregation once again around this topic and solicit discernments.

**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 5, Lent 2: Make Believe, Rev. Rob preaching, Communion
- 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

**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.



**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://mobilize.us/s/Dos7wp). Please sign up here: <https://mobilize.us/s/Dos7wp>

**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 8, 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*