

# Church of the Covenant

## Boston, MA



**Eighth Sunday after Pentecost**

[ZOOM LINK](#)

**Presbyterian Church (USA) / United Church of Christ**



Church of the Covenant  
July 26, 2020 10:30 am  
Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

<https://zoom.us/j/91025989890?pwd=VTd0L3VMc3ErRDBRTllpTTEvRGZUT09>

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**Welcome & Announcements**

One: Peace be with you!  
Many: **And also with you!**

**Prelude** *Largo from New World Symphony* Antonin Dvorak

**Call to Worship: NCH 825** Congregation Beth El, Sudbury, MA

One: Blessed is the One who spoke and the world came into being.

Many: **Blessed is the One who creates the world.**

One: Blessed is the One who speaks and does.

Many: **Blessed is the One who decrees and fulfills.**

One: Blessed is the One who has compassion for the earth.

Many: **Blessed is the One who has compassion for all creatures.**

One: Blessed is the One who rewards those who fear God.

Many: **Blessed is the One who lives eternally and exists forever.**

One: Blessed is the One who redeems and saves.

Many: **Blessed is the Holy One.**

**Lighting the Light of Christ**

**Opening Hymn: PH 327, vv. 1 & 3**

*O Word of God Incarnate*

1. O Word of God incarnate,  
O Wisdom from on high,  
O Truth unchanged, unchanging,  
O Light of our dark sky:  
We praise You for the radiance  
That from the hallowed page,  
A lantern to our footsteps,  
Shines on from age to age.

3. O make Your church, dear Savior,  
A lamp of purest gold  
To bear before the nations  
Your true light, as of old;  
O teach Your wandering pilgrims  
By this our path to trace,  
Till, clouds and darkness ended,  
We see You face to face.

### **Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace: NCH 836**

Ruth Duck

**Many:** God of love and justice, we long for peace within and peace without. We long for harmony in our families, for serenity in the midst of struggle, and for commitment to each other's growth. We long for the day when our homes will be a dwelling place for your love. Yet we confess that we are often anxious; we do not trust each other, and we harbor violence. We are not willing to take the risks and make the hard choices that love requires. Look upon us with kindness and grace. Rule in our homes and in all the world; show us how to walk in your paths, through the mercy of our Savior. Amen.

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

### **Listening to God in Silent Prayer**

#### **Assurance of God's Grace**

**One:** Hear this good news: in Christ we are a new creation altogether. The past is over and gone, and we are made new. God's Spirit pervades the world with grace and forgiveness, opening us up to new and abundant life. Therefore, let us celebrate:

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

## Sung Response:

*Hallelujah! We Sing Your Praises*

*Refrain*

Hal - le - lu - jah! We sing your prais - es, all our hearts are filled with glad - ness. Hal - le - lu - jah! We sing your prais - es, all our hearts are filled with glad - ness.

The image shows a musical score for a song. It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 7/8. The lyrics are: 'Hal - le - lu - jah! We sing your prais - es, all our hearts are filled with glad - ness. Hal - le - lu - jah! We sing your prais - es, all our hearts are filled with glad - ness.' The word 'Refrain' is written above the first system. The piano accompaniment features chords and moving lines in the bass clef.

## Scripture Readings:

### **Hebrew Wisdom: Psalm 119:129-136**

Your decrees are wonderful;

therefore my soul keeps them.

The unfolding of your words gives light;

it imparts understanding to the simple.

With open mouth I pant,

because I long for your commandments.

Turn to me and be gracious to me,

as is your custom toward those who love your name.

Keep my steps steady according to your promise,  
and never let iniquity have dominion over me.  
Redeem me from human oppression,  
that I may keep your precepts.  
Make your face shine upon your servant,  
and teach me your statutes.  
My eyes shed streams of tears  
because your law is not kept.

### **Gospel Reading: Matthew 13:31-33,44-52**

Jesus presented another parable to the crowds: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in a field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is the biggest shrub of all—it becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come to perch in its branches.”

Jesus offered them still another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a baker took and mixed in with three measures of flour until it was leavened all through. ...

“Or the kingdom of heaven is like a buried treasure found in a field. The ones who discovered it hid it again, and, rejoicing at the discovery, went and sold all their possessions and bought that field.

“Or again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant’s search for fine pearls. When one pearl of great value was found, the merchant went back and sold everything else and bought it.

“Or again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea, which collected all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishers hauled it ashore. Then, sitting down, they collected the good ones in a basket and threw away those that were of no use. This is how it will be at the end of time. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the just and throw the wicked into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

“Have you understood all this?”

“Yes,” they answered.

To this Jesus replied, “Every religious scholar who has become a student of the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who can bring from the storeroom both the new and the old.”

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

## Sermon

*The Pearl of Great Price: A Meditation on Kindom*

## Call to Offering

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

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

## Offertory

*Sheep May Safely Graze*

J. S. Bach

## 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.

## Prayer of Dedication

## Celebrations and Concerns

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

## Pastoral Prayer

## \*Closing Hymn: NCH 608

*Christ Will Come Again*

1. Christ will come again,  
God's justice to complete,  
to reap the fields of time and sift the weeds from wheat:  
then let us passionately care  
for peace and justice here on earth,  
and evil's rage restrain with love,  
till Christ shall come again.
2. Christ will come again  
and life shall be complete.  
The waters from the throne shall wash the nations' feet:

then let us passionately care  
for health and wholeness here on earth,  
and ease our neighbors' pain with love,  
till Christ shall come again.

3. Christ will come again,  
and joy shall be complete  
as flames of lightning love bedeck the judgment seat:  
then let us passionately share  
the whole great gospel here on earth,  
until all things attain their end,  
when Christ shall come again.

## **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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### **Participating in Today's Worship**

**Preaching** – Dr. K. Healan Gaston

**Liturgist & Cantor** – Rev. Adam Isbitsky

**Lector** – Holly Humphreys

**Minister of Music** – Tom Handel

**Zoom Coordinator** – Tom Reid

**PEACE BE WITH YOU IN THESE DAYS:** We are delighted to welcome you to our community of faith! As we all do our part to love our neighbor as ourselves to help “flatten the curve” of the coronavirus/COVID-19, our building remains closed; all meetings and events that are offered, including worship, have shifted to an online or conference call format. We are grateful for the technology that allows the majority of us to gather together online. And in faith and through God's ceaseless, amazing grace—as we practice “social distancing” we also practice “spiritual nearing” to each other and the Sweet Holy Spirit.

The announcements that follow reflect the ongoing abundant life that is Church of the Covenant.

**UPCOMING WORSHIP ON SUNDAYS:** Please join us each Sunday at 10:30am as we come together in community through Zoom to pray, sing, share celebrations and concerns, and hear God’s still-speaking Word proclaimed. We will hold live-worship on Zoom at 10:30am.

- Sunday, August 2, Tom Reid preaching, Holy Communion
- Sunday, August 9, McKenna Lewellen preaching
- Sunday, August 16, Rev. Adam Isbitsky preaching, Holy Communion

**Here are the Zoom details for Sundays:**

*join by computer/ tablet/ smartphone:*

<https://zoom.us/j/91025989890?pwd=VTd0L3VMc3ErRDBRTllpTTEvRGNZUT09>

*one tap mobile:*

+16465588656,,91025989890#,,#892502#

*join by phone:*

+1 646 558 8656, Meeting ID: 910 2598 9890, Password: 892502

Some suggestions to aid in your worship for you to consider:

1. Printing the bulletin out in advance so you have it during worship
2. Pulling the bulletin up on a second device/phone/screen
3. Pulling both the bulletin up and Zoom, and switch between them as needed.  
The liturgy, songs, and scripture are the important times to have this bulletin visible if possible.
4. And if none of these options work for you, no worries—just following the link will be fine – you will be able to worship fully.

**SUPPORTING BOSTON’s common cathedral:** During these challenging days, the ministry of accompaniment with those experiencing homelessness in our neighborhood continues. One way to support this work is to supportive the work of common cathedral through donating sandwiches ([click here](#)), or donating items on their wish list ([click here](#)).

**BIBLE STUDY ON WEDNESDAY MORNINGS:** We gather on Zoom at 10:00am for about an hour for a “BYOB” (bring your own Bible) gathering. Currently, we are taking a look at the Book of Psalms, which runs the gamut of human emotion. Drop in any week!

*join by computer/ tablet/ smartphone:*

<https://zoom.us/j/104478666?pwd=MHAwdEY5VVNvdVEkbVA1R2U3Z3NnUT09>

*one tap mobile:* +16465588656,,104478666#,,#581626#

*join by phone:* (646) 558 8656, Meeting ID: 104 478 666, Password: 581626

**CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH PROGRAMMING:** Each Sunday beginning at 9:45 our children and youth gather to sing, share news with each other, and pray together. At 10:00 we split into our Godly Play and Youth classes. If you need the Zoom link, email Rev. Adam.

**20s-30s-40s GROUP AT COVENANT:** We have an active young adult group that meets regularly to create community, even while we can't be together physically. Join us on Monday evenings at 7:30 PM for a weekly time to pray and connect via conference call at (712) 432-0220, access code 2667480#. If you'd like to be added to our email list, contact one of our group leaders: Kathryn Barry, Melissa Morgan, Tom Reid, or Rev. Adam at [youngadults@cotcbos.org](mailto:youngadults@cotcbos.org).

**CONTINUED GIVING:** Even in face of important, life-giving changes, our COTC ministry remains moving full steam ahead. Our staff and pastors continue to be hard at work. Our building continues to be faithfully stewarded. Our deacons and pastors continue to carry out vital pastoral care in these days. Therefore, your continued generosity and giving to help support the work of our church community is even more valued in these challenging days. And we are deeply grateful for your tangible signs of generosity. Here are a few ways you can continue to financially support the church and its ministries:

1. Directly on our website: <http://www.cotcbos.org/give.html>
2. Download free app: GivePlus (GIVE+ by Vanco Services, LLC) in the App Store, Google Play, or at <https://giveplushelp.vancopayments.com>, then type in our zip code 02116 to find Church of the Covenant  
*Both online options allow you to make a one-time or a recurring gift*
3. If you are uncomfortable with online giving, yes, you can still mail checks!

**SUMMER SABBATH:** Rev. Rob's annual Summer Sabbath (2 weeks unpaid furlough, 2 weeks vacation) will be July 17-August 13. Please contact Rev. Adam or chair of Deacons, Anita Gram, with pastoral needs during this time.

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



**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 prayers 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, 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. And 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 creation; that transcend the exclusive language of the church's past. We invite you to join us in the journey toward God's justice and peace for all people in this neighborhood, this city, and the world.

#### **CHURCH STAFF**

Rev. Rob Mark, *Lead Pastor*  
Rev. Adam Isbitsky, *Associate Pastor*  
Thomas Handel, *Minister of Music*  
Bill Brown, *Building Manager*  
Hillary Gabbidon, *Parish Administrator*  
Fred Lopes, *Sunday Sexton*  
Anita Goncalves, *Child Care Provider*  
Alan Lane, *Food Cupboard Coordinator*

#### **CHURCH OFFICERS**

Liz Vizza, *President of the Corporation*  
Trudi Veldman, *Clerk of the Council*  
Anita Gram, *Moderator of Board of Deacons*  
Faith Perry, *Treasurer*  
Nancy Stockford, *Financial Secretary*