

Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



Christmas Eve

[Zoom link \(click here\)](#)

Presbyterian Church (USA) / United Church of Christ



Church of the Covenant

December 24, 2020, 6:00 pm

Candlelight Festive Lessons & Carols Service

Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81541439313?pwd=anZpT0luZDkxT2JRaGJKWXpmNmM1dz09>

Welcome to our Christmas Eve service!

During this service, you are welcome to use any figures you might have to build your own crèche.

There will be times during the service where you will be invited to place various figures at the crèche.

Also please find a candle you can use to hold in your hand for the vigil portion toward the end of the service.

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you!

Many: **And also with you!**

Prelude

The First Noel: English Carol

arr. by Gazda & Clark

Away in a Manger

James R. Murray, arr by Gazda & Clark

Joseph Jewett and Anita Gram - Violins

Call to Worship

One: As we gather on this sacred night,

Many: **May we find blessings in the planets converged above us,
the quiet earth below us, and the beloved community of
angels before us.**

One: As we seek peace and joy once again in sacred songs and stories,

Many: **May we be surprised by the mystical yet real love of God
that comes to us as a homeless refugee, newborn savior.**

One: And let us sing out together the “good news of great joy” for all,

Many: **God is with us! God is within us! O Come to us Emmanuel!**

Opening Hymn: PH (blue) 9, v. 1

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

And ransom captive Israel

That mourns in lonely exile here

Until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace (in unison)

Many: Loving Emmanuel, as we open ourselves to you on our pilgrimage to the crèche, we confess that *all is not calm, all is not bright*. Our pandemic-stricken world knows too much loss, isolation, division, racism, and fear. And in the midst of it all, our own efforts to love you and our neighbor sometimes fall short. So tonight, we ask that our hearts would be filled with the truth that your grace is enough, your forgiveness is all, and your love sets us free.

One: In the name of the child of Mary born to bring peace, let us now continue to open our hearts to God in silent prayer, in the wake of the longest night...

The Sacred Silence of Solstice

One: Friends, let the Good News resound deep within your soul: God comes to us as Emmanuel. And this God who is with us, and born among us, offers us total restoration and rebirth.

Therefore, let us celebrate together:

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

Sung Response: *Dona Nobis Pacem*

Traditional

Lighting the Advent Candles & Christ Light

Mark-Evans Clan

Time with Children

Rev. Kate Carlisle

*** Lesson 1**

Genesis 1:1-5

Let there be light!

*** Carol**

PH (blue): 41 *O Come, All Ye Faithful (verses 1, 3)*

1. O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold Him, born the King of angels! *Refrain*

Refrain:

O come, let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!

3. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation!
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest! *Refrain*

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**Lesson 2**

Isaiah 11:1-10

*They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain.*

**Carol**

PH (blue) 48: *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*

1. Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming  
From tender stem hath sprung!  
Of Jesse's lineage coming  
By faithful prophets sung.  
It came, a floweret bright,  
Amid the cold of winter,  
When half spent was the night.

2. Isaiah 'twas foretold it,  
The rose I have in mind:  
With Mary we behold it,  
The virgin mother kind.  
To show God's love aright  
She bore to us a Savior,  
When half spent was the night.

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Lesson 3

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

*The people have seen a great light...for a child has been born for us.***Carol**PH (blue) 38: *It Came Upon A Midnight Clear* (verses 1, 4)

1. It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay,
to hear the angels sing.

4. For lo! the days are hastening on,
by prophet bards foretold,
when with the ever-circling years
come round the age of gold;
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world send back the song
which now the angels sing.

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**Lesson 4**

Luke 1:26-33, 38

*Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.***Carol**PH (blue) 23: *Angels We Have Heard on High* (v 1-2)*(crèche figures of Mary, Joseph, and angels brought forward)*

1. Angels we have heard on high,  
sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
and the mountains in reply  
echoing their joyous strains. *Refrain*  
Refrain:  
Gloria in excelsis Deo,  
gloria in excelsis Deo.

2. Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be  
which inspire your heavenly song? *Refrain*  
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Lesson 5

Matthew 1:18-25

And they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, 'God is with us.'

Carol

PH (blue) 25: *Away in a Manger (1-3)*

(crèche figures of Baby Jesus and animals are brought forward)

1. Away in a manger, no crib for His bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

3. Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay
close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.
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**Lesson 6**

Luke 2:8-16

*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace...*

**Carol**

PH (blue) 29: *Go, Tell It on the Mountain (refrain only)*

*(crèche figures of shepherds and sheep are brought forward)*

*Refrain:*

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;  
go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!  
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Lesson 7

Matthew 2:1-11

When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.

Carol

PH (blue) 66: v. 1 & 3: *We Three Kings of Orient Are*
(*crèche figures of the wise ones are brought forward*)

1. We three kings of Orient are;
bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor and mountain,
following yonder star. *Refrain*

Refrain:

O star of wonder, star of light,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.

3. Frankincense to offer have I;
incense owns a Deity nigh;
prayer and praising, we are raising,
worshiping God on high. *Refrain*

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**\* Lesson 8**

John 1:5, 14

*And the Word became flesh and lived among us...full of grace and truth*

**\* Carol**

PH (blue) 31: *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (verses 1 and 3)*

1. Hark! the herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King:  
peace on earth, and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled!”  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,  
join the triumph of the skies;  
with the'angelic hosts proclaim,  
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

Refrain:

Hark! the herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King”

3. Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings,  
risen with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by,  
born that we no more may die,  
born to raise us from the earth,  
born to give us second birth. *Refrain*  
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Meditation

Rev. Rob Mark

Call to Christmas Offering

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

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

Offertory

In the Bleak Midwinter

arr. Harold Darke

Christmas Prayer

Sharing the Light of Christ

Carol: PH (blue) 60

Silent Night, Holy Night

1. Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child!
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.

2. Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight:
glories stream from heaven afar,
heav'nly hosts sing, "Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born!"

3. Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light,
radiant, beams from thy holy face
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth!

4. Silent night, holy night!
Wondrous star, lend thy light.
With the angels let us sing
"Alleluia" to our King,
"Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born."

Charge and Benediction

* **Response to the Benediction:** PH (blue) 40

Joy to the World!

(Bells or keys may be rung during the final verse) 1, 2, 4

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive its king;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

2. Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let us our songs employ
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

4. He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

Passing of the Peace

Please unmute and exchange greetings of Christ's peace on earth with one another.

Participating in Worship:

Preacher – Rev. Rob Mark

Liturgist – Rev. Joshua Lazard

Time with Children – Rev. Kate Carlisle

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Violin – Joseph Jewett, Anita Gram

Lectors – Jon Schwarz, Karen Henry, David McKinney, Nancy Hollomon, Kate Carlisle, Harry Forsdick, Selom Azuma, Elaine Sullivan

Advent Candle Lighters – The Mark-Evans Family (Rowen, Becky, Rob)

CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS AND WELCOME TO CHURCH OF THE COVENANT!

We are so glad to have you worshipping with us on this holiest of nights. If you are new to our community, we hope you will feel at home and welcomed during this service. It is always a challenge to extend a warm virtual welcoming in these Zoom-days, but if you'd like to be in touch with us, please feel free to send a direct "chat" with Rev. Rob, Rev. Joshua, or Rev. Kate during this service so we can extend a more direct word of welcome.

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.

Here are the Zoom details for Christmas Eve (*Note: different link than the weekly link for Sunday mornings*):

join by computer/ tablet/ smartphone:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81541439313?pwd=anZpT0luZDkxT2JRaGJKWXPmNmM1dz09>

one tap mobile: +13017158592,,81541439313#,,,,*445506#

join by phone: +1 646 558 8656, Meeting ID: 815 4143 9313, Password: 445506

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. Parts of the liturgy are important 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.

CHRISTMAS EVE BUILD YOUR OWN CRECHE: It is our tradition at COTC every year on Christmas Eve, to help “build the crèche” as we walk forward bringing the various characters of the nativity scene to the manger. Since we won’t be at 67 Newbury Street together this year in order to keep folks safe from COVID – we invite you all to build your own crèche as we go through the service. If you have a nativity scene, you are welcome to use that. If not, consider gathering various items that might stand in for Mary, shepherds, animals, angels, Joseph, and baby Jesus (teddies, pictures, toys – be creative!). Throughout the service, there will be times for you to place specific figures at the crèche – so that by the end, we each will have a scene to share on Zoom/ take a photo of. Or, if this isn’t something that you are up for – fear not – this is fully optional, and you can enjoy seeing other sets including perhaps the one we use at 67 Newbury.

TONIGHT’S CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING: Because of the particularly harsh impact of COVID19 on our unhoused neighbors, Covenant’s Council has taken the recommendation of the Mission & Advocacy Committee and named *common cathedral* and the Community Day Center of Waltham as recipients of this year’s Christmas Eve offering. 100% of our collection tonight will be split evenly between these wonderful organizations.

- *common cathedral* is a ministry of Ecclesia Ministries, Inc., that gathers every Sunday at 1 p.m. for outdoor worship by the Brewer Fountain on Boston Common, as well as for weekday programs and pastoral care throughout the week. *common cathedral*'s ministers are out on the streets nearly every day of the week offering prayer and companionship, and making referrals to social service agencies. The weekly outdoor worship service, and mid-week programs, *common art* and Spiritual Care at the Barbara McInnis House, continue to provide community, inspiration and healing to thousands of un-housed men and women each year—including during the COVID19 pandemic—and the spiritual care program in hospitals and jails allows *common cathedral*'s ministers to maintain and deepen their connection with vulnerable men and women in need.
- The Community Day Center of Waltham provides a core range of support and services to people facing homelessness in Metrowest. Everyone at the Community Day Center of Waltham believes that all people, no matter where they are on their life journey, deserve to be treated with dignity. Community Day Center holds true to the basic tenets of hospitality where the host welcomes the guest with goodwill and expect that guests to return the same level of respect. Under COVID-19, Community Day Center's help is needed more than ever because, "People who are homeless don't have a place to self-quarantine." The center is continuing to help the homeless, even while following CDC guidelines with regard to social distancing, indoor gatherings, masks, handwashing, etc. They are serving brown bag lunches at 12:30 pm, Monday through Friday, and providing remote and street outreach services.

Please prayerfully consider a giving generously to *common cathedral* and the Community Day Center of Waltham on Christmas Eve as a deeply meaningful way to commemorate the story of a frightened, faithful young woman and her worried husband who wandered a strange city over two millennia ago seeking shelter so she could birth the child whose life and teachings inspire us to this day. Thank you.

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY DEC. 27, 2020 10:30am: More details about this live-stream on YouTube: <https://www.cotcbos.org/online-worship.html>

WEDNESDAY EVENING EPIPHANY PRAYERS 6-6:30pm: Our next weekly evening Zoom prayers will be on Epiphany, Weds. January 6, 2021.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88999202076?pwd=bU9XQ0JuR0F1bXhrTUV2eVBDcHIxdz09>

BIBLE STUDY - FRIDAYS 11AM: Our virtual Bible Study is meeting at 11:00 am on Fridays, studying the Gospel of Mark. Questions? Please contact Nancy Ammerman at ntammerman@gmail.com. We gather on Zoom for about an hour for a “BYOB” (bring your own Bible) gathering. Drop in any week! No homework required!

<https://zoom.us/j/104478666?pwd=MHAWdEY5VVNvdVFkbVA1R2U3Z3NnUT09>

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

CHILDREN’S AND YOUTH PROGRAMMING: Each Sunday beginning at 9:45 we gather using Zoom for Godly Play and Youth Class. Our Godly Play class gathers to sing, share news with each other, pray together, and hear ancient and contemporary stories of our faith. Our Youth Class shares their weekly gathering rituals and explores topics of interest and curiosity in faith and identity. If you need a Zoom link, email children@cotcbos.org or contact Rev. Kate at kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org. On Sunday, December 27, there will be no CYCE activities.

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. We are in the midst of settling on a weekly night for zoom check-in and prayers. If you would like to be added to our email list, contact Rev. Joshua at joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org

ANNUAL MEETING REPORT DEADLINE: Our Annual Meeting will be Sunday Feb. 7, 2021 following worship, and the deadline for reports to be submitted to our Parish Administrator Kate is Monday January 4, 2021 – please email reports to kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org

NO PLACE AT THE INN? A CHALLENGING WINTER: For many reasons, this will be a challenging winter. One way we can help those experiencing homelessness in downtown Boston is to support our partners Women’s Lunch Place, who have an ongoing wish list for items, found here: <https://womenslunchplace.org/in-kind-donations>.

ARE YOU OR ANYONE YOU KNOW FACING FINANCIAL CHALLENGES? [Info on fuel and electricity discounts in MA.](#)

UPCOMING STAFF VACATION SCHEDULES: Please note that all staff will be taking Dec. 27 off thanks to the Presbytery providing a worship service for us. Rob and Joshua will return on Jan 3. If there are pastoral emergencies during that week, please be in touch with our Deacons, or Rob if needed. Tom & Kate will return for worship Jan. 10.

BULLETIN COVER ART: Center Christ, by Lauren Wright Pittman, A Sanctified Art, Inspired by Luke 2:22-40 | Digital painting,
A statement by the artist: “This passage highlights postures of faithfulness. After intense interactions with angels and seemingly impossible directives from God, Mary and Joseph remain faithful to the Mosaic law. Despite a long life of anticipation, Simeon remains faithfully diligent, awaiting the coming Messiah. After losing her husband and living a long, solitary life, Anna faithfully worships, fasts, and prays at the temple. Their faithful journeys converge at the temple where Jesus is to be designated holy before the Lord. I wanted the composition of this image to emphasize the focus of the actions and words of Simeon and Anna. Instead of centering themselves, they center Christ. In the patterning of their clothes, I created icons to visually express the particularity of each person. Jesus is held high while swaddled in cloth patterned in imagery of radiant starlight and olive branches of peace. Simeon’s sleeves are covered with imagery of doves, referencing the Holy Spirit who rested upon him, and eyes representing his witnessing of “a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” The prophet Anna needed no explanation of who the child was; she immediately praised God and shared the Good News with everyone who would listen. Her clothing is patterned with sound waves echoing the light of Christ.

Silence was not an option for either Simeon or Anna, and in the midst of such desperate need for peace and justice in this world, silence is not an option for us either. Faithfulness moves us to action, calls on us to speak of God’s dream for this weary world. May we not be silent, and may our faithful journeys lead us to miraculous encounters with God. —*Lauren Wright Pittman*

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

CHRISTMAS CARD MEMORIALS

The following congregants have generously donated to the Women's Lunch Place in memory of chosen loved ones identified below:

- **In Memory of Ronald J. McDougald** by COTC
- **In Memory of Nathaniel P. Carleton** by COTC
- **In Memory of Jeannie and Joe Waters** by Sandra Miller
- **In Memory of Louis D. Pursley** by Linda Pursley
- **In Honor of Rafael Valdez** by Tim Groves
- **In Memory of Harold and Ollie Darling** by Barbara Darling and Ted Goodfleisch
- **In Memory of Theodore and Jean Goodfleisch** by Barbara Darling and Ted Goodfleisch
- **In Memory of Shirley Logan Goodfleisch** by Barbara Darling and Ted Goodfleisch
- **In Memory of Janice Louise Goodfleisch Sommerer** by Barbara Darling and Ted Goodfleisch
- **In Memory of Laurel Ann Goodfleisch** by Barbara Darling and Ted Goodfleisch
- **In Memory of Eugene William (Bud) Goodfleisch** by Barbara Darling and Ted Goodfleisch



Church of the Covenant
Boston Massachusetts

67 Newbury St., Boston MA 02116 | (617) 266-7480 | 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 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 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, *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*