

Church of the Covenant

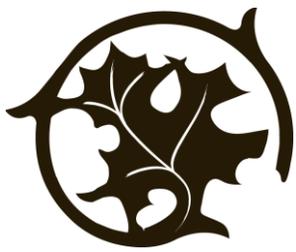
Boston, MA



Christmas Eve

[*YouTube Live Link here*](#)

Presbyterian Church (USA) / United Church of Christ



Church of the Covenant

December 24, 2021, 6:00 pm

Candlelight Festive Lessons & Carols Service

YouTube Live Link: <https://youtu.be/hlfDuu32ky0>

Welcome to our Christmas Eve service! We welcome you from wherever you are joining us in worship tonight – in person in our historic sanctuary at 67 Newbury Street, or online on YouTube from wherever is your sacred present place on this sacred night.

For those of you joining us online, during this service, you are welcome to use any nativity figures you might have to build your own crèche during the signing of carols. Please find a candle you can use to hold in your hand for the vigil portion toward the end of the service.

NOTE: *IF you are with us in person, and happen to test positive to COVID-19 at some point subsequent to this service, you agree to emailing Rev. Rob at pastor@cotcbos.org to inform him for our contact tracing protocols (which maintain anonymity). Thank you.*

~~~~~

### Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you!

Many: **And also with you!**

**Prelude**      *Silent Night*      arr. by Kate Salfelder  
Anita Gram and Barbara Englesberg – Violins

### \*Call to Worship

One: As we gather on this sacred night,

Many: **May we find blessings in the spinning sibling planets 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 still 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.

**Lighting the Advent Candles & Christ Light**

Dr. So Jung Kim

**\* 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*  
~~~

Lesson 1

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

The people have seen a great light...for a child has been born for us.

Anthem

In the Bleak Midwinter

arr. Harold Darke

Tim and Betsy Groves – Soloists

~~~

**Lesson 2**

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 out)*

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*

~~~

Lesson 3

Matthew 1:18-25

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

Carol

PH (blue) 29: *Go, Tell It on the Mountain (refrain only, x2)*

(crèche figures of shepherds and sheep are brought out)

Refrain:

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

~~~

**Lesson 4**

Luke 2:8-16

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

**Carol**

*What Child Is This? (verse 1 as printed)*

1. What Child is this, who laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch  
are keeping?

This, this is Christ we sing, whom shepherds guard and angels  
ring. Haste, haste to bring our laud, the babe, the child of Mary.

~~~

Lesson 5

Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11

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

(crèche figures of the wise ones are brought out)

Carol

What Child Is This? (verse 2 as printed)

2. Bring gifts of incense, gold and myrrh, come one and all bring
blessing.

The holy child though meek and mild, has come, our liberation.
This, this is Christ we sing, whom shepherds guard and angels
ring. Haste, haste to bring our laud, the babe, the child of Mary.

~~~

**\* Lesson 6**

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*  
~~~

Call to Christmas Offering

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

Click on Give Now, Donate, and then choose “Christmas Eve”.

Offertory

Maria Walks Amid the Thorn

Hugo Distler

Tim and Betsy Groves, Nancy Stockford, Kathryn Barry,
Anita Gram, Barbara Darling, Tom Handel – Vocalists

*** Doxology Response**

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

Processional Outside & Sharing the Light of Christ

*An usher will invite each row to process to the back Berkeley Street doors to finish the service outside for our candle lit closing. As you pass through the Berkeley vestibule, you will pass two candles on tables. Please carefully light your vigil candle from either of these lit candles and then proceed outside to stand on the sidewalk/ portico for the remainder of the service. If you do not wish to join in the candle light closing, you are welcome to stay for 5 minutes in silent prayer in your pew. **Masks must remain on inside and outside** during the closing vigil.*

Note: for those joining us online, please light your own candle to be in vigil as well. You may also choose to dim the lights around you. The livestream may cut out here as we proceed outside. If it does, you are invited to sign along using the videos as linked:

[Video for Silent Night \(click here\):](#)

*** 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

[Video for Joy to the World \(click here\):](#)

* 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

While maintaining safe physical distance, please exchange greetings of Christ's peace on earth with one another. Be sure to keep your candle lit until you are in a safe place away from others to gently pull the wind protection down and wave through the air to safely extinguish. Please do not lower your mask to blow out your candle.

Participating in Worship:

Worship Leader – Rev. Rob Mark

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Violin – Anita Gram, Barbara Englesberg

Soloists – Betsy & Tim Groves

Lectors – Liz Vizza, Harry Forsdick, Holly Humphreys, Abhishek John,
Tory & Ryan Surette

Advent Candle Lighter – Dr. So Jung Kim

Door Stewards – Mark Huston, Jesus Vargas

Sexton – Fred Lopes

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. If you have any questions about who we are as a community of faith, please reach out to an usher or pastor in person, or chat with a member of staff online. Be most welcome!

This Hybrid Service will be in-person for those who pre-register, and also online via YouTube Live. Here is the link (note this is different than Sunday morning Zoom links):

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 YouTube Live, 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 ON CHRISTMAS EVE: One of the beloved traditions at COTC every Christmas year that we sorely miss is “building of the crèche” as we walk forward bringing the various characters of the nativity scene to the manger. Sadly, in order to keep physically distant (yet spiritually near!) we need to forgo this for a second year in a row. However, for those of you who plan to join this service online following the YouTube livestream, 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, etc.). Or, if this isn’t something that are up for – fear not – this is fully optional, and you can enjoy seeing the one we will use at 67 Newbury.

CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING “Refugees Welcome”: Every year we celebrate Christmas by lovingly telling the story of the baby Jesus and his parents—who were refugees. As a sign of solidarity with Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, and in light of the dire Afghan refugee crisis, our Christmas Eve offering this year will go to support an Afghan family of six who had to flee their home and have relocated to the Boston area this month. Friends of Covenant, including former General Presbyter of the Boston Presbytery, Rev. Wayne Parrish, & Rob's beloved Aunt Daryl Mark & Uncle David Nelson, are part of a group working called “Crossroads Connection: Facilitating Afghan Resettlement” to provide housing, clothes, food, etc. for this family, and it is our privilege in this Christmas season to contribute to this effort. Please give generously. If you come in person to worship, you can leave your gift in the plate as you come in or leave. A more reliable way to give (in case you can't come in person, or we end up having to further limit worshippers in the sanctuary due to COVID), is to give online: <https://www.cotcbos.org/give.html> (click on DONATE button, then in drop down menu, choose “Christmas Eve”). You can give this way anytime between now and Christmas! Thank you.

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. [Zoom Link for each Sunday.](#)

- Sunday, December 26, First Sunday of Christmas, ZOOM
- Sunday, January 2, Second Sunday of Christmas, ZOOM
- Sunday, January 9, Epiphany Sunday, ZOOM (with CYCE in person outside)

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>.

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY DEC. 26, 2020 10:30am: More details about this service: <https://www.cotcbos.org/this-sunday-online.html>

WEDNESDAY EVENING EPIPHANY PRAYERS 6-6:30pm: Our next weekly evening prayers will be near Epiphany, Weds. January 5, 2022, [on Zoom](#).

OUR TIFFANY WINDOWS WEBINAR: Jan. 13, 6pm: Our Building Committee regularly reaches out to the Boston larger historic preservation community. Historic New England is sponsoring a webinar on **Thursday, January 13, 2022, from 6-7 PM**, where Roberto Rosa will be presenting his preservation work on Covenant's priceless Tiffany windows. We expect that this will not only be informative to a much larger preservation audience, but will generate interest in supporting the ongoing Renew the Light Campaign. Please attend this online event as it promises to be fascinating. [Register here for the webinar.](#)

CLIMATE JUBILEE BOOK DISCUSSION: Join us on Sunday January 30, 5pm on Zoom for a book discussion on Katherine Hayhoe's new book *Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World*. This could make a great CHRISTMAS GIFT to someone you'd like to invite into this discussion, or for yourself! Please though, we ask you to avoid buying from Amazon.com and instead [use this link](#) to find a local bookstore if you feel safe going to in person, or a less eco-impactful company than Amazon to purchase from.

BIBLE STUDY TIME CHANGE: The weekly Friday morning Bible Study will begin the New Year as the Wednesday Morning Bible Study, gathering on Zoom at 9:15 each week, beginning January 5. We've bid farewell to the Apostle Paul and his early church friends and will say hello to Hosea and the other 'minor prophets.' If you'd like more information or want to be on the list to get regular reminders and Zoom info, contact Nancy Ammerman, ntammerman@gmail.com.

CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH PROGRAMMING: Thanks to everyone who helped put together Sunday's pageant and all-ages service! Our next CYCE gathering will be on Epiphany Sunday, January 9. If you're interested in getting involved with CYCE, please [email Rev. Kate](#).

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, including weekly prayer calls, brunches (sometimes online!), fellowship and support. If you would like to be added to our email list, contact Rev. Joshua at joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org

ANNUAL REPORT SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Our Annual Meeting will be Sunday, February 6, 2022 following worship, and the deadline for reports to be submitted to our Parish Administrator Kate is Tuesday, January 4, 2022 – please email reports to kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org.

POSTING FULL SERVICE RECORDINGS/ PRAYERS ONLINE: Due to techno-challenges we have decided we will be posting the entire service that is livestreamed online on our [Worship Recordings Page](#). Please let us know if you have any questions. Thanks.

UPCOMING STAFF VACATION SCHEDULES: Sunday Dec. 26, Tom and Joshua will be off. All staff will take the week of Dec. 27-Jan 1 off, with Rob and Kate taking Jan. 2 off. If there are pastoral emergencies during that week, please be in touch with our Deacons, or Rob if needed, and building emergencies please be in touch with Bill.

CONTINUED GENEROUS GIVING: In these uncertain times, as we continue to press on in our gospel calling to follow in the justice and love of Jesus, we continue to rely on and give great thanks for your 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!

BULLETIN COVER ART: *Ordinary Glory*, by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman, A Sanctified Art, Inspired by Luke 2:1-20 | Digital painting. Statement from the artist: In this familiar narrative, what stuck out for me in this reading was the juxtaposition of human and divine, the mundane and extraordinary, the humbleness of a manger and the glory of a multitude of heavenly hosts. I wanted to image this dichotomy with the everyday, intimate, tender scene of new parents and their yawning baby, enveloped by the glittering, awe- striking magnificence of God. The holy family is framed by an almond shape called a mandorla. Mandorlas have been used in Christian art to signify the glory of God, and can also represent the

intersection and fullness of two things, like heaven and earth or spirit and body. Likely, the most familiar instance of this concept is the shape made between the overlapping circles in a Venn diagram. I wanted to use this shape because this is the moment when human and divine intersect in the person of Jesus, and when the glory of God is birthed into the world. The golden field surrounding the mandorla is filled with my interpretation of the six-winged seraphim from early Christian art, representing the heavenly hosts filling the air with tidings of peace (imaged by olive branches). A seven pointed star hangs over the heads of the family, surrounded by seven other stars, a number that represents completeness.

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

~~~~~

**CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL POINSETTIAS:** The following congregants have generously donated our sanctuary poinsettias in memory and honor of chosen loved ones identified below:

- **In Memory of Reine & Elsa Abele** by Anne Crane & Sarah Perrault
- **In Memory of Reine Abele** by Rev. Rob Mark
- **In Memory of Frank Backbone** by Rev. Rob Mark & Becky Evans
- **In Memory of Robert Esposito** by Stanley G. Dingwell
- **In Memory of our parents: Harry & Stella Forsdick, and Anne Baker/Gold, Abraham Baker, & Herman Gold** by Harry Forsdick & Marsha Baker
- **In Memory of Ted Goodfleisch** by Barbara Darling
- **In Memory of Ted Goodfleisch** by COTC Staff
- **In Memory of parents Stanley & Emma Kimber and sister Karen Kimber** by Evelyn Kimber
- **In Honor of Grammys Jean, Jane and Margery** by the Evans & Mark families
- **In Honor of Rev. Rob Mark** by Mom and Dad
- **In Memory of Louis & Elizabeth Pursley** by Linda & Nathan Pursley
- **In Memory of Brian Reardon** by COTC Staff
- **In Memory of Christine Lucas Roddy** by Anita & Holly
- **In Memory of Richard Schmidt** by Faith Perry & Lucy Williams
- **In Memory of Richard Sipe and recently lost members** by Byron Sipe
- **In Memory of Keith Stokes Snyder II** by Kathryn Barry
- **In Honor of Lea C. Winterburg** by Sonya & Yury Winterberg
- **In Honor of the Wright Family** by Sharon Wright
- **In Memory of our parents** by Jack & Nancy Ammerman
- **In Memory of loved ones** by Sally Pomeroy
- **In Memory of my parents** by Trudi Veldman



Center Christ, by Lauren Wright Pittman, A Sanctified Art,  
Inspired by Luke 2:22-40 | Digital painting



**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 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*

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*