

Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



Christmas Eve 2022

[ZOOM LINK \(click here\)](#)

Presbyterian Church (USA) / United Church of Christ



Church of the Covenant

December 24, 2022, 6:00 pm

Candlelight Festive Lessons & Carols Service

[ZOOM LINK: tinyurl.com/cotcworship](https://tinyurl.com/cotcworship)

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 Zoom from wherever is your sacred present place on this sacred night.

If you are with us in-person, you are welcome to take a figurine or two from the baskets at the back of the sanctuary. There will be times during the service where you will be invited to bring these up to fill the empty crèche.

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

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**Prelude**      *Partita on Lo, How a Rose e'er Blooming*      James Woodman

### **Welcome & Announcements**

**One:**      Peace be with you!

**Many:**    **And also with you!**

### **\*Call to Worship**

**One:**      As we gather on this sacred night,

**Many:**    **May we find blessings in the shining stars 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!**

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 for us a Savior  
when half spent was the night.

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

**Many:**     **Loving God-With-Us, as we open ourselves to you on our pilgrimage to the crèche, we confess that *all is not calm, all is not bright.* Our world knows too much loss, division, racism, and fear. And sometimes our own efforts to love you and our neighbor 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 is born among us, offers us total restoration and illumines our paths. Therefore, let us celebrate together:

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

**Lighting the Advent Candles & Christ 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 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

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## 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 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 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 (verses 1-2)*

(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!

1. While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night
Behold throughout the heavens, there shone a holy light. *Refrain*

2. The shepherds feared and trembled when lo! above the earth,
Rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. *Refrain*
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### 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)*

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

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.  
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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 forward)

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.

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**\* 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”

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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

Meditation: *The Birth*, by Wendell Berry

Call to Christmas Offering for common cathedral

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

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

Offertory

Still, Still, Still

arr. Philip Ledger

Covenant Choir

Doxology Response

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

Christmas Prayer

Sharing the Light of Christ

As the light comes from the Christ Light, turn your candle sideways to light it from your neighbor's candle who will "keep the light upright." 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.

*** 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

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

Joy to the World!

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.



Through Him, All Things, by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman, A Sanctified Art, Inspired by John 1 | Digital painting

Passing of the Peace

While respecting each other's needs for physical distancing, please exchange greetings of Christ's peace on earth with one another. To extinguish candle, 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:

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Worship Leaders – Rev. Rob Mark, Rev. Joshua Lazard

Lectors – Maria Arruda, Ron Lacey, Dan Evans, Rev. Kate Carlisle

Guest Organist – Yeeun Hyun

Covenant Choir

Vocal Soloists – Betsy & Tim Groves

Ushers – Anne Crane, Holly Humphreys, Trudi Veldman

Sextons – Fred Lopes, Jesús Vargas

Digital Minister – Christine James

Audio-Visual Tech – Abhishek John

COVER ART: *Center Christ*, by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman, A Sanctified Art, Inspired by Luke 2 | Digital painting

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!

BUILD YOUR OWN CRECHE ON CHRISTMAS EVE. For those of you who plan to join this service online, 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 build at 67 Newbury.

CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING. Our Christmas Eve offering this year will go to support the vital ministry of solidarity, dignity and accompaniment with those experiencing homelessness and housing injustice of our siblings in faith at Boston's common cathedral (commoncathedral.org), who work tirelessly to build community, provide spiritual care, and build a culture of friendship and belonging for our unhoused siblings. This year has seen the joyous launching of [Rev. Carrington Moore's](#) ministry as common cathedral's new Executive Director. Please give generously to this offering as you are able and led. You can leave your gift in the plate as you come in or leave on give online: cotcbos.org/give.html (click on DONATE button, then in drop down menu, choose "Christmas Eve"). You can give now through Christmas – thank you!

CHRISTMAS DAY (on ZOOM only). Sunday, Dec. 25, 10:30-11:10am. Join us tomorrow on this holy feast of the nativity day for this shorter, festive carol and prayer based service on Zoom only (*there is no in-person service on Christmas*).

UPCOMING WORSHIP. Please join us each Sunday at 10:30am as we come together in community to pray, sing, share celebrations & concerns, and engage God's still-speaking Word. www.cotcbos.org/this-sunday-online.html

- Sunday, Christmas 12/ 25, Holy Feast of the Nativity, ZOOM ONLY
- Sunday, January 1, 2023, Rev. Joshua preaching, Communion
- Sunday, January 8, 2023, Epiphany
- Sunday, January 15, MLK Sunday, Rev. Rob preaching / Post worship Pilgrimage to King's Embrace on the Common

ANNUAL REPORT SUBMISSION DEADLINE. Our Annual Meeting will be Sunday, 2/5/23 following worship. The deadline for reports to be submitted to our Parish Administrator Kate is Thurs., 1/5/23 – email reports to kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org.

UPCOMING STAFF VACATION SCHEDULES. Sunday Dec. 25, Joshua will be off. All staff will take the week of Dec. 26-Dec.31 off, with Rob and Kate taking Jan. 1 off. Kate is off through January 7. 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.

NO PLACE AT THE INN? 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>.

LOOKING AHEAD: CLIMATE JUBILEE ALL CHURCH BOOK DISCUSSION. Join us on Sunday 2/19/23, following worship for a hybrid (in-person & online) book discussion on Robin Wall Kimmerer's book *Braiding Sweetgrass* (<https://www.indiebound.org/book/9781571313560>). This could make a great CHRISTMAS GIFT to someone you'd like to invite into this discussion. Please [use this link](#) to find a local bookstore (better than Amazon.com!) to purchase from.

IMAGINE WHAT'S NEXT. Sunday, January 29, 2023, newcomers to Life Alive, join a pizza-with-the-pastors session following worship. Together, we'll discuss who we are as a church and for young adults imagine what's next in your lives.

CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH PROGRAMMING: We have a vibrant ministry with children and youth, including our upcoming Epiphany Sunday, January 8 where we will gather post worship to "Follow the Light" and enjoy some 3 Kings Cake. If you're interested in getting involved with CYCE, please [email Rev. Kate](#).

BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS. Our weekly morning Bible Study is each Wednesday morning on Zoom at 9:15am. Contact Jan: revjangough@gmail.com.

WEDNESDAY EVENING PRAYERS 6-6:30pm: Our next prayers will be near Epiphany, Weds. January 4, 2023, [on Zoom](#).

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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 Martin Mullvain and Lana Hornfeldt by Marsha Baker and Harry Forsdick

In Memory of Christina Motte Barry and Patricia Motte Seglau by Kathryn Barry

In Memory of Keith Stokes Snyder II by Kathryn Barry

In Memory of Martin Gibson by Brian Bigler

In Memory of Keith Bull by Alicia Bull

In Memory of Zakwani Isaac Gibbs by Kay L. Carleton

In Memory of Bill Crane by Anne Crane & Sarah Perreault

In Memory of Ted Goodfleisch by Barbara Darling

In Memory of Mom and Dad by Stanley G. Dingwell

In Memory of Grammys Jean, Jane, and Margery by the Evans and Mark Families

In Memory of Roberta Pollard by Rev. Rob Mark

In Honor of Rev. Rob and Becky and Rowen by Roger and Dottie Mark

In Memory of Newell Hendricks by Clara Hendricks and Jake Carman

In Memory of Marjorie & Bernard Gram by Anita Gram & Holly Humphreys

In Memory of Neva, John R., John W., and Carolyn Humphreys by Anita Gram & Holly Humphreys

In Memory of Anthony and Margaret Gratto by Sandra Gratto May

In Memory of my parents, Jeannette Hays Gratto & Anthony J. Gratto by Christine Gratto

In Memory of my parents Stanley & Emma Kimber, and sister Karen Kimber by Evelyn Kimber

In Memory of Conceição Alves Monteiro by Thiago Monteiro Araújo dos Santos

In Memory of Marjorie Wyman Dollard by Jon Schwarz

In Memory of Kay Olm by Faith Perry & Lucy Williams

In Memory of Harriet Laing by Sally Pomeroy

In Memory of Louis and Elizabeth Pursley by Linda and Nathan Pursley

In Memory of Richard Sipe and Recently Lost Members by Byron Sipe

In Memory of Gail and LaDonna Southwick & Leland and Ella Jordening by Betty and Merlin Southwick

In Memory of Abe and Mies Veldman by Trudi Veldman

In Honor of My Family by Liz Vizza



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*

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*