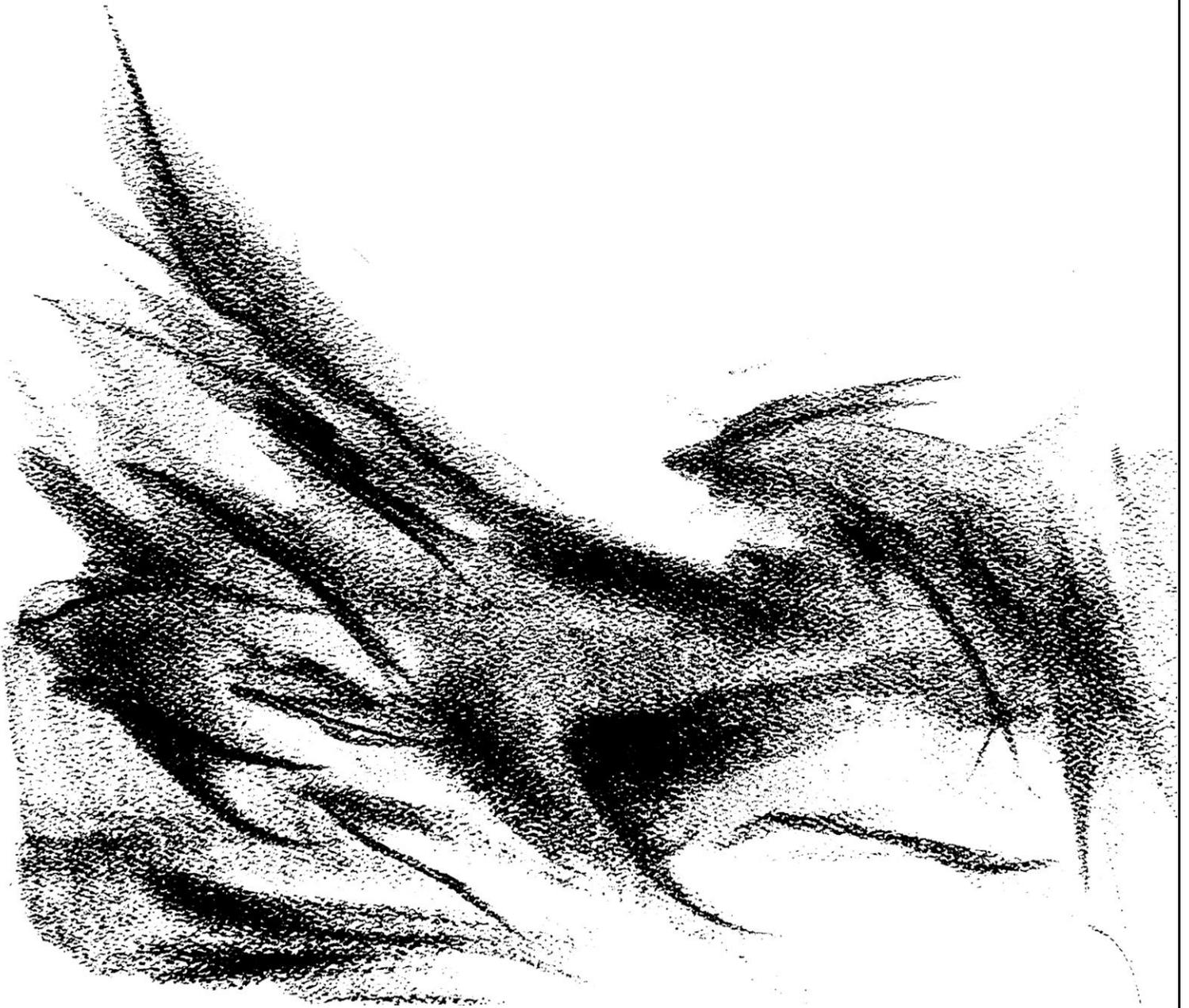


Church of the Covenant

Boston Massachusetts



Ash Wednesday
February 14, 2024, 6:30 pm
67 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”



Church of the Covenant

February 14, 2024

Ash Wednesday, 6:30 pm

ZOOM LINK: tinyurl.com/cotcworship

Welcome. Thank you for joining us on this sacred night. You are welcome to come in and sit in any chair, keeping in mind we will likely be a smaller group than on a Sunday. Please settle in as the contemplative music is playing, we will get started a few minutes after 6:30 pm.

Allow the music to guide you in meditative prayer and silent settling.

And remember to breathe.

In this hybrid service, we will celebrate communion. If you are joining us online, please locate something to put in a cup, and something to put on a plate. If you are worshipping with us via Zoom, mics will be automatically muted for the service. Also in our service, we will engage in an old ritual of the imposition of ashes. Here are some ideas of gathering some sacred dust/soil/ashes equivalent:

- Find a little soil (sacred dirt) from a house plant (if not immunocompromised/allergic) and mix it with a little water/cooking oil in a dish.
- Make some ash from matches or a candle wick and mix with a little olive/cooking oil in a dish.
- Carefully burn a small piece of paper in some aluminum foil, then when cool, add one drop of oil.
- Ground up black eye shadow...
- Rumor has it burnt wine corks leave a good smudge...
- Air—if none of the above feels doable, simply use your finger to trace the sign of the cross on your forehead when invited, remembering together.

*When you hide your face, they are dismayed;
when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.*

*When you send forth your spirit, they are created;
and you renew the face of the ground.*

But if you turn away from them, they panic. When you take away their breath, they die and turn again to dust. When you give them your breath, life is created, and you renew the face of the earth.

– Psalm 104:29-30

Gathering Contemplative Music

Opening Welcome

One: Peace be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

Kindling the Christ Light

Call to Worship

One: God of Grace, you called us forth from the dust of the earth;
you claimed us for Christ in the waters of baptism.

Many: **Look upon us as we enter these 40 days bearing the mark of
ashes, and bless our journey through the valley of Lent to the
font of rebirth. May our fasting be hunger for justice; our alms,
a making of peace; our prayer, the chant of humble and
grateful hearts.**

One: All that we do and pray is in the name of Jesus,

Many: **Through whom you proclaim your fierce love forever and ever.
Amen.**

Hymn

Sunday's Palms are Wednesday's Ashes

Tune: Beach Spring

Sunday's palms are Wednesday's ashes as another Lent begins;
thus we kneel before our Maker in contrition for our sins.

We have marred baptismal pledges, in rebellion gone astray;
now returning seek forgiveness; grant us pardon God this day.

We have failed to love our neighbors their offences to forgive,
have not listened to their troubles, nor have cared just how they live.
we are jealous, proud, impatient, loving over-much our things;
may the yielding of our failings be our Lenten offerings.

We are hasty to judge others, blind to proof of human need;
and our lack of understanding demonstrates our inner greed;
we have wasted earth's resources; want and suffering we've ignored;
come and cleanse us, then restore us; make new hearts within us God.

~Rae B. Whitney (1991)

A Litany for Bird Power

O Loving God, Our Mothering Hen,

This Lent we long to become free and unfettered.

As we engage this sacred season,

Help us to shatter the chains of all that holds us from your love.

As we journey with Jesus through the wilderness,

May we find blessing in the power of birds.

As we seek through faith to do more than we thought we could,

May we imagine our wings and rise up.

As we long to catch new vistas of what is possible,

May our vision become clear and long like the eagle's eye.

As we strive to do justice and love mercy,

May we build nests that are wide enough for all.

As we migrate back and forth in search of You,

May our movements for love and peace know no boundary.

As we call out to each other in accompaniment and prayer,

May our collective solidarity be beautiful like the song of the chickadee.

And as we remember we are as precious as the sparrow,

May we continue to flock together as your beloved community.

In the shadow of your wings O God, we pray, **Amen.**

“Aimless Love”

Billy Collins

This morning as I walked along the lakeshore,
I fell in love with a wren
and later in the day with a mouse
the cat had dropped under the dining room table.
In the shadows of an autumn evening,
I fell for a seamstress
still at their machine in the tailor's window,
and later for a bowl of broth,
steam rising like smoke from a naval battle.
This is the best kind of love, I thought,
without recompense, without gifts,
or unkind words, without suspicion,
or silence on the telephone.
The love of the chestnut,
the jazz cap and one hand on the wheel.



No lust, no slam of the door—
the love of the miniature orange tree,
the clean white shirt, the hot evening shower,
the highway that cuts across it all.
No waiting, no huffiness, or rancor—
just a twinge every now and then
for the wren who had built her nest
on a low branch overhanging the water
and for the dead mouse,
still dressed in its light brown suit.
But my heart is always propped up in a field on its tripod,
ready for the next arrow.
After I carried the mouse by the tail
to a pile of leaves in the woods,
I found myself standing at the bathroom sink
gazing down affectionately at the soap,
so patient and soluble,
so at home in its pale green soap dish.
I could feel myself falling again
as I felt its turning in my wet hands
and caught the scent of lavender and stone.

Readings from Scripture:

A Fast for Justice: A Sanctified Art Video: Joel 2 and Isaiah 58

Responsive Reading of Psalm 51

(The Voice translation)

One: Create in me a clean heart, O God;

Many: **Restore within me a sense of being brand new.**

Gospel Reading – Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 *(Reading from the Roots translation)*

“Careful: do not display righteousness in front of people, to be seen! If you do, you have no compensation from your Creator who is in heaven. When you give charity, do not trumpet your generosity, as the pretentious do in the congregations and in the streets, to be glorified by people. Trust me, I tell you: they already *have* their compensation! You, though, when you give charity, your left hand should not even know what your right hand does, so the charity you do is in secret, and your Creator who sees in

secret will make it up to you. And whenever you pray, you shall not be as the pretentious, because they delight to stand up in prayer in congregations and on street corners, to flaunt themselves. Trust me, I tell you: they already *have* their compensation! But when you pray, enter into your most private room, shut your door, and pray to your Creator who is in secret, and your Creator who sees in secret will treasure you.

“When you fast, do not be morose like the pretentious, who put on an expression to parade their fasting. Trust me, I tell you: they already *have* their compensation! But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that your fasting is not apparent to people, but only to your Creator who is in secret, and your Creator who sees in secret will treasure you. Do not store up valuables on earth, where moth and decay ruin them, and where thieves break in and steal. Instead, store up valuables in heaven, where neither moth nor decay ruin, and where thieves do not break in and steal. Where your treasure is, there will be your heart.”

One: God is still speaking, the word of God,

Many: **Thanks be to God.**

Collective Silence

Meditation

Prayer and Invitation to a Holy Lent

Let us contemplate more deeply, seek reconciliation more intentionally, and pursue justice more passionately.

*The Imposition of Ashes

At this time, you are invited to engage in a sacred ritual to remind yourself of your mortality, and your beloved nature. For those in-person who wish to receive the imposition of ashes, while singing the chant, please come forward at this time. After receiving, please return via the outer aisle. For those joining online, while singing the Taizé chant, you are invited to impose whatever ash-like reminder you have on yourself and/or someone you are with. If you don't have any ash-like substance, you are invited to use your finger and trace the sign of the cross on your forehead or hand.



Remember
that you are
dust and into
dust you shall
return.

Chant

Jesus Remember Me

The image shows a musical score for the chant 'Jesus Remember Me'. It consists of two systems of music. Each system has a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are written below the treble clef staff. The first system ends with a double bar line and repeat dots. The second system begins with a '5' above the treble clef staff, indicating a fifth measure rest, and also ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Words: Luke 23:42
Music: Taizé Community, 1998

Holy Communion of the People

The Great Thanksgiving

One: May God be with you!

Many: **And also with you.**

One: Beloved Dust, 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...

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 (New Zealand Prayer Book)

(in unison)

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be, Mother and Father of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven: The hallowing of your name echo through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings! Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb

from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and testing, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.

Breaking of the Bread & Sharing of the Cup

Post Communion Prayer

Sending Hymn

Day Is Done

James Quinn (b. 1919)

Day is done, but love unfailing dwells ever here;
Shadows fall, but hope, prevailing, calms every fear.
God our Maker, none forsaking,
Take our hearts, of Love's own making,
Watch our sleeping, guard our waking, be always near.

Dark descends, but light unending, shines through our night;
You are with us, ever lending new strength to sight:
One in love, your truth confessing,
One in hope of heaven's blessing,
May we see, in love's possessing, Love's endless light!

Eyes will close, but you unsleeping, watch by our side;
Death may come, in love's safekeeping, still we abide.
God of love, all evil quelling,
Sin forgiving, fear dispelling,
Stay with us, our hearts indwelling, this eventide.

Closing Litany

The End is God's. The Beginning is God's.

The Storm is God's. The Peace is God's.

The Depths are God's. The Heights are God's

The Shadow is God's. The Light is God's.

For all times, all things and all, all belong to God.

Travel with God to the end from the beginning.

Walk slowly with the God of your salvation.

Continue with God during the storm as well as the peace.

Walk surely with the God of your liberation.

Journey with God through the depths and the heights.
Walk fully with the God of your restoration.
Wait with God in the dark and the light.
Walk always with the God of your assurance;
For all times, all things and all, all belong to God. **Amen.**

***Benediction & Passing of the Peace**

Worship Participants

Worship Leaders – Rev. Rob Mark, Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard, Rev. Kate Carlisle

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Audio Visual Tech Team – Venkatesh Balasubramanian, Abhishek John, Jon Schwarz

Sexton – Jesús Vargas

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JOIN US FOR LENT 2024

Bird Power: *The spiritual practice of becoming free and unfettered.*

February 14-March 31



Lent is for the Birds!

Join us this season as try something new and different. As we journey through the wilderness with Jesus to grow closer to God in community, we will pause—to notice, listen to, and learn from the birds. Winged aviators are filled with wisdom and frequently make appearances in our Scriptures. Join us weekly as we engage our texts and lives to see how the Spirit might be inviting us to become a bit more bird-powerful as we focus on: Flight, Sight, Nest, Migrate, Call, and Flock.

Join us in-person or online via Zoom Sunday mornings, on Ash Wednesday, and for Holy Week. Our Spring Equinox Evensong will be in-person only.

Our weekly Wednesday evening prayers will feature a “Word from A Bird” shared by a beloved birder congregant or neighbor, followed by the sharing of celebrations and concerns.

For info & updates: www.cotcbos.org or www.cotcbos.org/this-sunday-online.html





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 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 Lawrence Lazard, *Associate Pastor*

Thomas Handel, *Minister of Music*

Bill Brown, *Building Manager*

Rev. Kate Carlisle, *CYCE Coordinator*

Nancy Stockford, *Parish Administrator/Financial Secretary*

Jesús Vargas, *Sexton*

Alan Lane, *Food Cupboard Coordinator*

Kelsie Lawhorn, *Child Care Provider*

Venkatesh Balasubramanian, *Digital Communications & Audio Visual Tech Manager*

CHURCH OFFICERS

Liz Vizza, *President of the Corporation*

Trudi Veldman, *Clerk of the Council*

Anita Gram, *Moderator of Board of Deacons*

Faith Perry, *Treasurer*