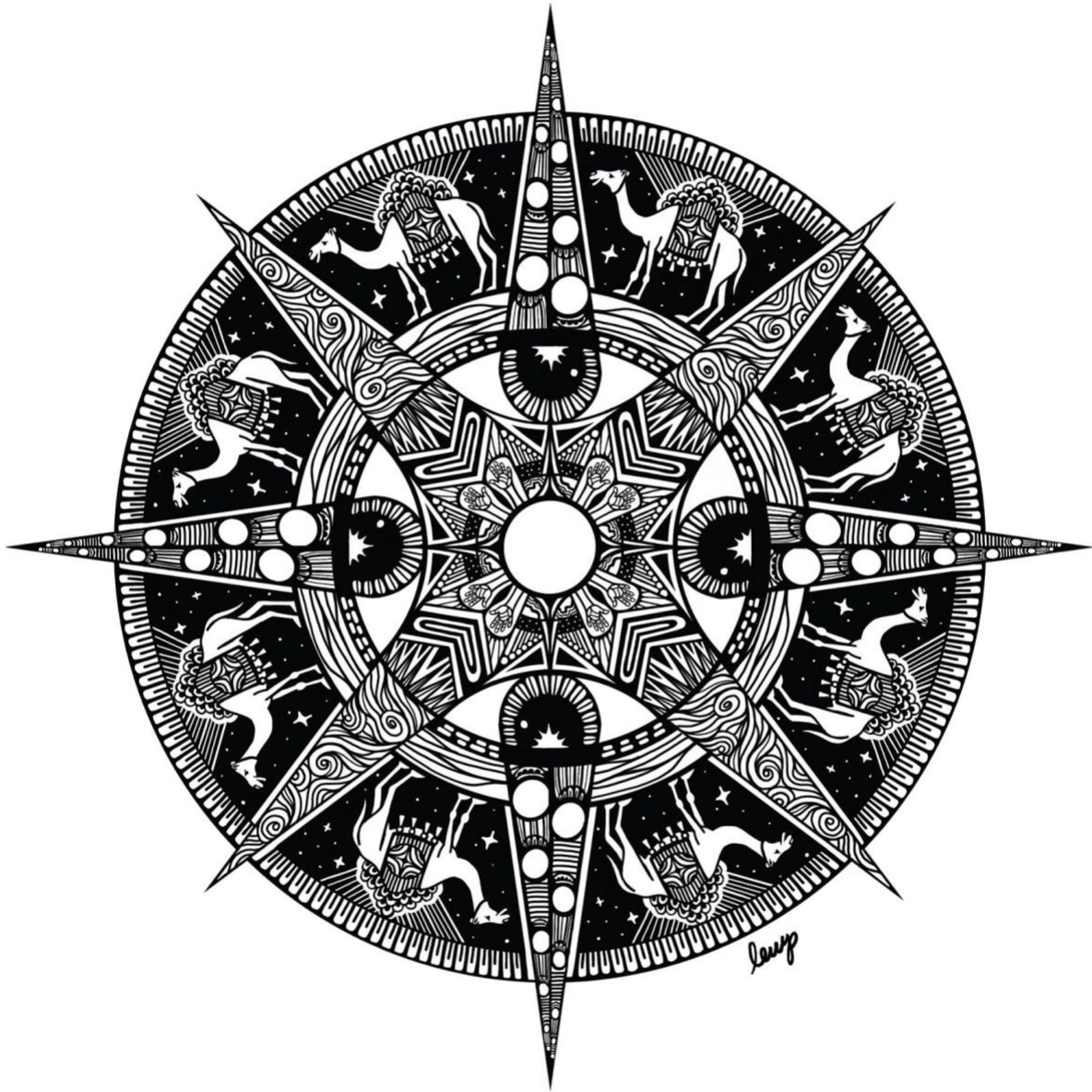


Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



Epiphany Sunday

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ
ZOOM LINK (click here)



Church of the Covenant

Epiphany Sunday

January 10, 2021 10:30 am

Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/91025989890?pwd=VTd0L3VMc3ErRDBRTlIpTTEvRGZUT09>

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you!

Many: **And also with you!**

Star Words Invitation

Prelude *Fantasy on How Beautiful the Morning Star Shines (vs. 1)* Dietrich Buxtehude

Call to Worship

One: We are searching for a star to guide us.

Many: **Arise, shine for our light has come!**

One: But in the light of insurrection,

Many: **We long for the glow of unity.**

One: In the shadow of sedition,

Many: **We search for glimmers of resilience.**

One: In the gloom of white supremacy's terror,

Many: **We come together to kindle Beloved Community power.**

One: Arise, shine for our light has come!

Many: **The glory of God has risen upon us. Let us press on and be radiant.**

Lighting the Christ Light

Opening Hymn

As with Gladness Those of Old

Tune: Dix

As with gladness those of old did their guiding star behold;
As with joy they hailed its light, leading onward, beaming bright;
So, true Morning Star, may we evermore your splendor see.

As with joyful steps they sped to that lowly manger bed,
There to bend the knee before One whom heaven and earth adore;
So may we with willing feet ever seek your mercy seat.

As they offered gifts most rare at that manger plain and bare,
So may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to you from whom they spring.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

Many: God of light, God of dark – we have seen the glimmer of your star-light beckoning to us, but we have turned away and followed other paths. We confess that we have not loved you with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors or enemies as ourselves. **Forgive us, Holy One. Strengthen our steps and guide us in your holy way of peace.**

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

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

One: The God who promised never to leave us or forsake us has come to us in Jesus Christ who binds up the brokenhearted, heals all our infirmities, and relieves our burden of sin. So, even in the face of chaos, arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Beloved has risen upon you:

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

Sung Response:

Gloria

Gloria, Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Gloria, Gloria, alleluia, alleluia!

Scripture Readings:

Hebrew Bible Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6

Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the HOLY ONE will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.

Nations shall come to your light,
and rulers to the brightness of your dawn.

Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,

and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.
Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.
They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall proclaim the praise of the HOLY ONE.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise magi from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'

Then Herod secretly called for the wise magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

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

Sermon

Lies that Incite

Call to Offering

Online Giving Option: <http://www.cotcbos.org/give.html>
Click on Give Now, then choose Pledges or Gifts-General.

Offertory *Fantasy on How Beautiful the Morning Star Shines (vs. 2)* Dietrich Buxtehude

Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Christ 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:

God of Love, We've Known Division
BEACH SPRING 8.7.8.7 D ("God Whose Giving Knows No Ending")

God of love, we've known division and we've seen its awful cost.
We have struggled as a nation, and there's much that we have lost.
We have been a house divided — and, divided, we can't stand.
May our nation be united; give us peace throughout this land.

Turn us, Lord, from what divides us — fear that drives us far apart,
greed that leads to great injustice, racist ways that break your heart.
May we seek what brings together — hearts that bear each other's pain,
care and mercy toward our neighbors, love that welcomes strangers in.

May we all, in conversation, speak the truth and listen well.
May we hear, across this nation, stories others have to tell.
May we learn from other cultures and be blessed by their worldview;
May we serve with one another — loving others, loving you.

You have challenged us to goodness; you have shown a kinder way.
It's your love that now inspires us as we seek a better day.
May we end our harsh division; may we stop the hate and fear.
Make us one, Lord, as a nation; may we be united here.

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Charge & 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.**

Participating in Today's Worship

Preacher – Rev. Rob Mark

Liturgist – Nancy Ammerman

Lector – Joe Waters

Star Words Wizard – Rev. Kate Carlisle

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

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.

ADULT ED FOLLOWING WORSHIP on ZOOM: *Caring for Boston's First Public Parks: 50 Years of Stewardship and Advocacy.* By our own Liz Vizza, President of the Friends of the Public Garden, on her work, mission (and ministry!) in that sacred space just down the block from Covenant's sanctuary for the benefit of us, our city, Commonwealth, and world! This presentation will speak about the story of how these parks were almost beyond saving in the late 1960s, and how the Friends worked with the City to restore and care for them, including times of fighting the powers that be. Don't miss this one!

STAR WORDS: For several years now, we have received Star Words on Epiphany Sunday to serve as guides for prayer and discernment in the coming year. This year, we're distributing Star Words virtually. In worship today, you can private message Rev. Kate through the Zoom chat and they will randomly select a star word and send it to you in the chat. You can also email Rev. Kate (kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org) this week to request a star word. Whether you write your word on a post-it or cut out and decorate a star, put your star word somewhere you can see it and bring your thoughts back to it over the coming year.

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

- January 17, MLK Sunday, Rev. Rob preaching, Communion
- January 24, Rev. Joshua preaching

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.

20s-30s-40s GROUP AT COVENANT: We are currently planning our calendar of events through the Lenten season. Please be on the lookout for upcoming virtual events. If you would like to be added to our email list, contact Rev. Joshua at joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org

WEDNESDAY EVENING PRAYERS 6-6:30pm: Our next Weds. Evening prayer will be on Weds. Jan. 13, 6-6:30pm. Zoom link:

<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.

ANNUAL MEETING: Our Annual Meeting will be Sunday Feb. 7, 2021 following worship on Zoom.

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:

<https://www.greennewton.org/experiencing-financial-difficulty-you-may-be-eligible-for-electricity-and-fuel-discounts/>

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!

ART ON BULLETIN COVER: *Arise, Shine* by Lauren Wright Pittman, Inspired by Isaiah 60 | A note from the artist: “As exiles returned home to Israel from Babylon, the prophetic words of this text would have been a glittering, hopeful, light-filled dream. This is precisely the kind of vision Israel would need to have a renewed sense of empowerment and a redefined goal for restoring Jerusalem. This dream for Jerusalem is a complete overturning of what had become the norm in Israel’s troubled history. Instead of emptying their resources out in offering to overbearing empires, all nations would come to Jerusalem, bearing gifts, elevating Israel to a position of influence never before reached.¹⁰ This is the kind of overturning that fuels dreamers throughout the scriptures. For the oppressed, downtrodden, and cast-aside, God says, “Arise, shine; for your light has come.” These texts are filled to the brim with dreams to help us persevere on the path to realizing God’s dream for Creation.

I’ve been told that I’m naive because my hopes for the world are desperate and wildly unrealistic. I’ve been told that once I come of age, I’ll float back to earth and find footing in more grounded understandings of what is possible. To those people, I say: I will continue to set my vision on a horizon that feels impossible and will work toward justice, peace, and equity for all until my dying day. I pray that prophets continue to cast visions of glittering, hopeful, light-filled dreams which become our collective aim until heaven and earth meet.”

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

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*