

Church of the Covenant Boston, MA



Second Sunday in Epiphany
The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday

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



Church of the Covenant
Second Sunday in Epiphany
The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday
January 17, 2021 10:30 am
Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/91025989890?pwd=VTd0L3VMc3ErRDBRTllpTTEvRGNZUT09>

**WHERE DO WE
GO FROM HERE:
Chaos or Community?**



Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you!

Many: **And also with you!**

Prelude

Lift Every Voice and Sing

J. Rosamond Johnson

arr. Nalina Calamur and *Z* McClelland

perf. Stanford Talisman

Words of Rev. Dr. King

Call To Worship

from MLK's Nobel Peace Prize speech 12/10/67

One: I refuse to accept the idea that people are mere flotsam and jetsam in the river of life unable to influence the unfolding events which surround them.

Many: **I refuse to accept the view that humanity is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and unity can never become a reality.**

One: I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality.

Many: **This is why right temporarily defeated is stronger than evil triumphant.**

Lighting the Christ Light

Opening Hymn (NCH, 472)

Precious God, Take My Hand

Precious God, take my hand,
Lead me on, let me stand,
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
Through the storm, through the night,
Lead me on to the light
Take my hand precious God, lead me home.

When my way grows drear, precious God linger near,
When my life is almost gone,
Hear me cry, hear my call
Hold my hand lest I fall
Take my hand precious God, lead me home.

When the shadows appear and the night draws near,
And the day is past and gone,
At the river I stand,
Guide my feet, hold my hand,
Take my hand precious God, lead me home.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

One: As we turn to God for grace and healing, let us hear these words from Rev. King:

Many: **“We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the vitriolic words and actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence of the good people. In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.”**

One: And let us pray:

Many: **God of Grace, forgive our silences. Forgive our land for upholding white supremacy and privilege at the expense of the many. Shatter our broken systems that uphold racism, xenophobia, climate injustice and economic inequality. In your grace, rebuild our country and our hearts, so that justice and forgiveness may roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.**

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

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

One: Friends, God's faithfulness endures forever. God forgives, renews, and restores. Her mercies are new every morning. Therefore, let us listen for the Spirit's ever-flowing streams of grace, as we celebrate together:

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: 1 Samuel 3:1-20

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to God under Eli. The word of the Holy One was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of God, where the ark of God was.

Then the Holy One called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. The God called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." Now Samuel did not yet know God, and the word of God had not yet been revealed to him. The Holy One called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that God was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if God calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, God, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Now the God came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." Then God said to Samuel, "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle. On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. For I have told

him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering forever.”

Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the God. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. But Eli called Samuel and said, “Samuel, my son.” He said, “Here I am.” Eli said, “What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of all that he told you.” So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. Then he said, “It is God; let God do what seems good.”

As Samuel grew up, God was with him and let none of these words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of God.

Gospel Reading: John 1:43-51

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.” Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.” Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, “Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!” Nathanael asked him, “Where did you come to know me?” Jesus answered, “I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.” Nathanael replied, “Rabbi, you are the Child of God! You are the King of Israel!” Jesus answered, “Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.” And he said to him, “Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Child of Humanity.”

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

Many: **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Chaos or Community?

Call to Offering

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

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

Doxology

Though what we have in truth is small,
God's grace shall be enough for all.
So as we bless and break this bread,
Each heart be filled, each mouth be fed.

Prayer of Dedication

Celebrations and Concerns

One: God, in your grace,
Many: **Receive our prayer.**

Pastoral Prayer

Celebration of Holy Communion

Invitation to Communion

*** Communion Hymn**

I'm Gonna Eat at the Welcome Table

I'm gonna eat at the welcome table,
I'm gonna eat at the welcome table, some of these days.
I'm gonna eat at the welcome table,
I'm gonna eat at the welcome table, some of these days.

*** The Great Thanksgiving**

One: May God be with you!

Many: **And also with you.**

One: People of Epiphany, 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...

...And so, with your people here on earth, with all the ancestors,
with Martin, Fannie, Sojourner, Breonna, Ahmaud and all the
saints and the great company of heaven, we glorify your name,
praising you together:

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 *(from A New Zealand Prayer Book, said in unison)*
Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be, Parent 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 Bread and Cup

Post Communion Prayer

Closing Hymn (PH 563)

Lift Every Voice and Sing

1. Lift ev'ry voice and sing,
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith
that the dark past has taught us;
Sing a song full of the hope
that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun
Of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.

2. Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chast'ning rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our people sighed?
We have come over a way
that with tears has been watered;
We have come, treading our path
through the blood of the slaughtered;
Out from the gloomy past,
Till now we stand at last
Where the bright gleam of our bright star is cast.

3. God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
You who have brought us thus far on the way;
You who have by your might
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places,
our God, where we met you;
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine
of the world, we forget you;
Shadowed beneath your hand,
May we forever stand,
True to our God, true to our native land.

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 – Rev. Joshua Lazard

Lector – Denise Thornhill

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Cantor – Tom Reid

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.

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. Last Sunday, we distributed Star Words virtually. If you didn’t get a Star Word last week, email Rev. Kate (kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org) to request one. 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 24, Rev. Joshua preaching
- January 31, Rev. Kate preaching
- February 7, Rev. Rob preaching, Communion / Annual Meeting

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.

SPECIAL CALLED COUNCIL MEETING: Sunday, January 17, 2021 following worship on Zoom, to finalize the 2021 budget.

PRAYERS ON THE EVE OF THE INAUGURATION WITH ECO-STEWARDS: The recent siege on the U.S. Capitol was a heartbreaking moment, leaving damage, hurt, and the loss of life. As people of faith, we are called to take part in the works of mercy, not the works of destruction and despair. We are called to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly (Micah 6:8). The Capitol siege leaves us with the glaring question: Where do we go from here? It's the same question posed by Martin Luther King, Jr. more than 50 years ago in his final book of the same title. In light of back-to-back celebrations of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life and service and the inauguration of President-Elect Joe Biden and Vice-President Elect Kamala Harris, The Eco-Stewards Program would like to extend yet another invitation to gather as a community to continue praying for peace, reconciliation, and a path forward that values both climate justice and racial justice. We hope you will consider joining us for another Connect & Reflect gathering on **Tuesday, January 19, at 8pm EST** as we pray for a hope-filled, peaceful future that upholds equality and justice as well as equity and kindness for all. Event Page: <https://www.facebook.com/events/203955508103566/>
Zoom: <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/91618434171?pwd=Wi81bXdIY2R0S25jbmo3NXh6eEJQZz09>

BLACK CHURCH + WHITE DOMESTIC TERRORISM: On Dec. 28, Martin Luther King Jr. Community Presbyterian Church experienced yet another arson attack. This is the second Black church in Springfield in recent history to be targeted in an act of white domestic terrorism. So, Mass Council of Churches staff held a special Facebook Live talk with Rev. Dr. Terrlynn Curry Avery, pastor of the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Presbyterian Church. [You can view the archived video here.](#) You can still donate to the church's recovery at [this link](#).

WEDNESDAY EVENING PRAYERS ON INAGURATION DAY 6-6:30pm: Our next Weds. Evening prayer will be on Weds. Jan. 20, 6-6:30pm, where we will continue to pray for our community, world, and especially nation at this fractured and uncertain time. 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.

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

TOM REID’S ORDINATION! Please join us on Zoom on Sunday, January 31, 2021 at 3pm as we celebrate together in a service of the Presbytery of Boston, the ordination of our beloved Tom Reid to become a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA). [Registering is required, click here.](#)

ANNUAL MEETING & ANNUAL DENOMINATIONAL MEETINGS: Our Annual Meeting will be Sunday, Feb. 7, 2021 following worship on Zoom. Our annual meetings of each denomination will be on Sunday, January 31, 2021 following worship on Zoom.

THE DENOMINATIONAL MEETINGS of the Central Congregational Society (Barbara Darling, chair) and the First Presbyterian Society (Nancy Hollomon, chair) will be held on 31 January 2021 at 11:50 AM for the purpose of electing the nominees – - _____ (UCC) and Joe Waters (PCUSA) – to serve on the Nominating Committee for 2 years in the class of 2022.

THE ANNUAL MEETINGS OF THE CORPORATION AND CONGREGATION will be held on Sunday February 7, 2021 at 11:45 AM on Zoom for the purpose of adopting the 2021 budget, electing 3 members to the Covenant Council for a 3-year term, 4 members to the Board of Deacons for a 3-year term, 1 member to the Board of Deacons for a 2-year term, and accepting 2 members to the nominating committee as elected at the denominational meetings.

LENT IS COMING (DEVOTIONALS): Lent begins Feb. 17 with our Ash Wednesday service on Zoom at 6:30pm. In preparation for this season, our Worship and Music committee would like to let you know you will all be provided with a free PDF copy of A Sanctified Art daily Lenten devotional. In addition, for those who prefer booklets to hold, here are some we recommend (please let Rob know if you have any financial limitations and we will purchase a copy for you):

- *Were You There*
- *Wild Hope - Stories for Lent from the Vanishing*
- *Lent in Plain Sight*
- *Lent of Liberation: Confronting the legacy of American slavery*
- NOTE: special sale from Westminster John Knox Press through Friday on some of these: <http://bit.ly/38mqmqc>

FOOD+FAITH - THIS SUNDAY, JAN 17, at 3 PM ONLINE: Join some members of Covenant's Climate Jubilee team for a free live, online interfaith panel and discussion to explore how we can align our diets with our personal beliefs in justice and compassion for all. [Details and signup.](#) Live streamed on YouTube and Facebook (you do not need a Facebook account to participate.)

EVERSOURCE SCAM: Just so everyone is aware, there are scammers calling claiming to be from Eversource saying your power will be shut off in 30-40 minutes due to a pending balance. The automated call then gives a 866 number to call to make a payment. I called the Eversource customer service line, who said they always call 24 hours before power is shut off. They say there have been several of these scam calls recently. ~ *Kathryn*

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!

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*