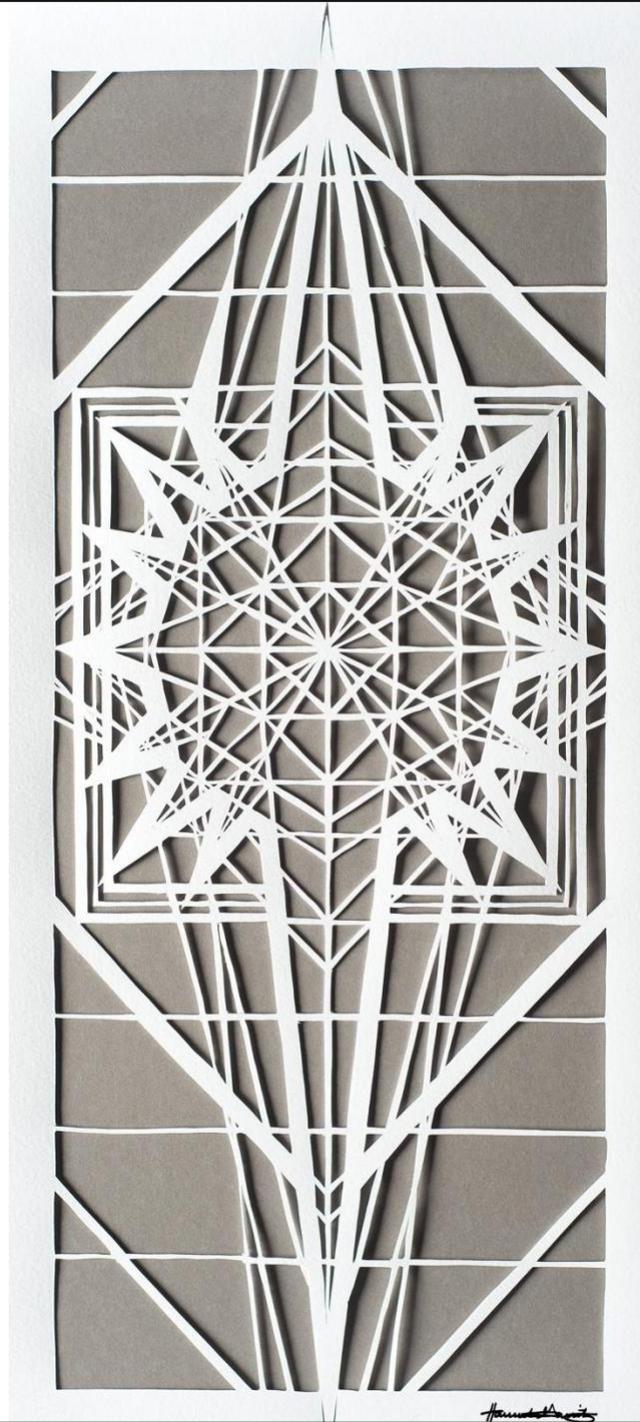


Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



Second Sunday in Christmas

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



Church of the Covenant
Second Sunday in Christmas
Celebration of Communion

January 3, 2021 10:30 am

Zoom Link:

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

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you!

Many: **And also with you!**

Prelude

Call To Worship

by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

One: On the heels of Christmas, in this new year,

Many: **We speak of love.**

One: We speak of joy.

Many: **We speak of candle light and fireside.**

One: We speak of dreams being fulfilled.

Many: **We speak of “glorias” and angel choruses.**

One: We speak the words, “Do not be afraid.”

Many: **On the heels of Christmas, in this new year,**

We are called to speak, for the world needs a light.

One: A light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it.

Many: **Let us worship and listen. Then, let us speak. Amen.**

Opening Hymn: *Once in Royal David's City*

Sung by Sufjan Stevens

1. Once in royal David's city,
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for His bed.
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

2. He came down to earth from heaven,
Who is God and Lord of all,
And His shelter was a stable,
And His cradle was a stall.
With the poor, oppressed, and lowly,
Lived on earth our Savior holy.

3. And our eyes
At last shall see Him,
Through His own redeeming love,
For that child, so dear and gentle,
Is our Lord in heaven above;
And He leads His children on
To the place where He is gone.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

Prayer by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

**Many: God of this new year, God of today and God of tomorrow,
We know
That your fingerprints are all over this world. And we know
That those who dream cannot keep silent.
So today we pray,
Give us eyes to see you.
Give us courage to trust you.
And give us lips to speak of you in our midst. Gratefully we
pray,
Amen.**

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

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

**One: Friends – hear this good news. Jesus is born! The promise of
God-with-us Emmanuel is once again realized. With God and
with the earth, we are reconciled, forgiven, and restored.
Therefore, let us celebrate together...**

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

Lighting the Christmas Candles

Sung Response:

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.

Scripture Reading:

Gospel Reading: Matthew 2:13-23

Now after they had left, an angel of God appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by God through the prophet, "Out of Africa I have called my child."

When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the Magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the Magi. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

"A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

When Herod died, an angel of God suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazorean."

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

Reflection on the Word

Call to Offering

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

Offertory

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

In preparation for this sacrament, please gather a bread product (bread, tortilla, gluten-free cracker, etc.), and a liquid (grape juice, wine, water, etc.) to take in when invited.

Invitation

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 Christmas, let us lift up our hearts!
Many: **We open our hearts to God 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 the One who loves us.

One: It is right for us to thank and praise you God...

...And so, with your people here on earth, with all the ancestors, 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

interpreted by Mark Berry

O Breathing Life, your Name shines everywhere! Release a space to plant your Presence here. Imagine your possibilities now. Embody your desire in every light and form. Grow through us this moment's bread and wisdom. Untie the knots of failure binding us, as we release the strands we hold of others' faults. Help us not forget our Source, yet free us from not being in the Present. From you arises every Vision, Power and Song from gathering to gathering. Amen - May our future actions grow from here!

Breaking of the Bread

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Post Communion Prayer

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

Liturgists – Rev. Joshua Lazard and Rev. Rob Mark

Lector – Kay Carleton

Cantor – Tom Reid

MERRY CHRISTMAS SEASON AND 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.

NEXT WEEK ADULT ED FOLLOWING WORSHIP: *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!

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 10, Epiphany Sunday
- 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.

STAFF VACATION SCHEDULES: Tom & Kate are off today and will return for worship Jan. 10.

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. We are in the midst of settling on a weekly night for zoom check-in and prayers. If you would like to be added to our email list, contact Rev. Joshua at joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org

WEDNESDAY EVENING EPIPHANY PRAYERS 6-6:30pm: Our next Weds. Evening prayer will be on Epiphany, Weds. Jan. 6, 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 REPORT DEADLINE: Our Annual Meeting will be Sunday Feb. 7, 2021 following worship, and the deadline for reports to be submitted to our Parish Administrator Kate is Monday January 4, 2021 – please email reports to kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org

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: *Another Road*, by Hannah Garrity, Inspired by Matthew 2:1-12 | Paper lace, A Sanctified Art, who writes in a note: “This image is a meditation on the gift boxes spiraling out from the center of the Star of Bethlehem. The top of the central square opens as Mary receives the gifts of the three Wise Men. Multiple paths surround the star, portraying the wise decision of the Magi to return home a different way to resist the fear-ridden power of King Herod. *“When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him.”*” The power of fear is palpable; it is easy for a leader to share and to use to his advantage. In this story we are reminded of the wisdom that has been gifted to us by God through Jesus’ ministry—the wisdom to avoid imbibing and stoking fear. Knowing this wisdom to be true, and knowing Herod to be a leader who leads fearfully and by fearmongering, I wonder how often we humans can fall into this pattern. We know the story well. The Magi’s decision buys time for Mary and Joseph to make a move that will eventually save the life of God incarnate. They choose to leave the country as refugees, to escape the oppression that Herod’s fear imposes on their child.

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*