

Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



Fourth Sunday in Epiphany

Presentation of Christ in the Temple

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ

ZOOM LINK (click here)



Church of the Covenant
Fourth Sunday in Epiphany

January 31, 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!**

Prelude

He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

arr. Margaret Bonds

Tom Reid, soloist

Call to Worship

One: I look to the hills, and scan the horizon for help –
where will help come from, and when will we be saved?

Many: **Our help is in the name of God,
who created the heavens and the earth.**

One: Happy are the people whose strength is in God,
whose hearts are set on the pilgrims' way.

Many: **Those who go through the wooded valley
will find it a place of springs,
for the early rains have covered it with pools of water.**

One: This is the day our God has made.

Many: **We will rejoice and be glad in it!**

Lighting the Christ Light

Opening Hymn (PH 339)

Be Thou My Vision

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Nought be all else to me, save that Thou art –
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Riches I heed not, nor vain empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
Great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.

Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

One: Forty days after his birth, Mary and Joseph brought the baby Jesus to the Temple to dedicate him to God. Forty days, more or less, after Christmas, we come again to this online sanctuary to ground ourselves in God's grace. This week, like every week, we bring our hearts to God, hoping for an Epiphany, yearning for freedom, praying for the dawn of a new world.

Let us pray together:

**Many: Holy and merciful God,
In your presence we confess our failure to be what you
created us to be. You alone know how often we have sinned
in wandering from your ways, in wasting your gifts, in
forgetting your love. By your loving mercy, help us to live in
your light and abide in your ways, for the sake of Jesus
Christ our Savior.**

One: Let us open ourselves to silent prayer.

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

One: Arise, shine, for our light has come, and the glory of God has risen upon us! Our Redeemer casts out the gloom, offering us forgiveness, liberation, and grace.

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

Sung Response

Gloria, Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, Gloria, alleluia, alleluia!

Gloria

Scripture Reading

Gospel Reading: Luke 2:22-24, 36-40

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

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

Sermon

Contingency Plans

Call to Offering

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

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

Offertory

I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light
Covenant Choir

Kathleen Thomerson

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

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. Kate Carlisle

Liturgist – Rev. Rob Mark

Lector – Rev. Joshua Lazard

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Cantor – Tom Reid

Cover image – Latimore, Kelly. La presentación de Cristo en el templo, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=57113> [retrieved January 28, 2021].

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.

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.

- February 7, Rev. Rob preaching, Communion / Annual Meeting
- February 14, Rev. Joshua preaching
- Wednesday, February 17, Ash Wednesday service, time TBD

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.

TODAY FOLLOWING WORSHIP NEW COMERS COFFEE HALF-HOUR WITH REV. JOSHUA AND REV. ROB: If you are at all new or new-ish to our community (perhaps newly worshiping with us since we began on Zoom) – we'd love the chance to gather informally with you next week over shared coffee – kindly brew and bring your own! Simply remain on Zoom after the denominational meetings are sent into break out rooms.

TODAY DENOMINATIONAL MEETINGS of the Central Congregational Society (Barbara Darling, chair) and the First Presbyterian Society (Nancy Hollomon, chair) will be held today on Sunday, 31 January 2021 at 11:50 AM for the purpose of electing the nominees – Ken Bitner (UCC) and Joe Waters (PCUSA) – to serve on the Nominating Committee for 2 years in the class of 2022. You will be broken out into Zoom break out rooms according to your denominational affiliation.

TOM REID'S ORDINATION! Please join us on Zoom today, 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.](#)

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.

COTC “COMMUNITY AS MISSION” MISSION FAIR: On Sunday, February 14 (Saint Valentine's day!), following worship on Zoom, our Mission & Advocacy Committee invites you to a mission fair to learn about and celebrate the many tendrils of mission and advocacy that make up our life together as a congregation. Come find out how all ages, all places in life, all passions and vocational callings make up the community that is Covenant, and hear how we see all of this as essential to the missional call of our loving God. Join us if you are new to our congregation, join us if you have been here since before you can remember – either way, we are sure you will leave this fair inspired by the breadth and depth of what the Spirit is doing through and among us! A day to give thanks for LOVE, indeed.

WEDNESDAY EVENING PRAYERS: Our next Weds. Evening prayer will be on Weds. Feb.3, 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.

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

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*

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 available [here](#).

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*