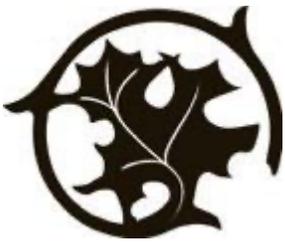


Church of the Covenant Boston, MA



Second Sunday in Advent: PEACE

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



Church of the Covenant
Second Sunday in Advent: **PEACE**
Celebration of Communion

December 6, 2020 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!**

Collect: *The Peace of Wild Things* by Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting with their light.
For a time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Prelude *Thula Baba* South African lullaby

Call To Worship *by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org*

One: John the Baptist said, "Prepare the way."
So family of faith, how do we prepare our minds for worship?

Many: **We silence the inner critic.**

We let go of busy thoughts.

We make space for God to speak.

One: How do we prepare our *hearts* for worship?

Many: **We bless all emotions.**

We feel what we feel.

We open ourselves up to be moved.

One: How do we prepare our *bodies* for worship?

Many: **We take in the scent, sight, and feel of this space.**

We breathe in God's mercy. We exhale God's love.

One: How do we prepare our *souls* for worship?

Many: **We bring our full selves into this space.**

We wear our hearts on our sleeves.

We trust that even now, God is here.

One: Family of faith, what we practice in worship, we must live out in our daily lives. So prepare the way. Let us worship Holy God.

Opening Hymn: PH 3

Comfort, Comfort You My People

1) Comfort, comfort you my people,
Tell of peace, thus says our God;
comfort those who sit in darkness
Bowed beneath oppression's load.
Speak you to Jerusalem
of the peace that waits for them;
tell them that their sins I cover,
and their warfare now is over.

2) For the herald's voice is crying
in the desert far and near,
bidding us to make repentance
since the kingdom now is here.
O that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way;
let the valleys rise in meeting
and the hills bow down in greeting.

3) Make you straight what long was crooked,
make the rougher places plain:
let your hearts be true and humble,
as befits God's holy reign,
For the glory of the Lord
now o'er earth is shed abroad;
and all flesh shall see the token
that God's word is never broken.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

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

One: Holy God,
We wish that peace was something we could buy.
We wish that peace could be ordered in a subscription service,
found on a map, downloaded in an app, or voted for in a ballot.
We wish that peace was as easy as a one-time choice when we
were feeling our best. However, what we have found is that
peace involves everyday decisions over and over,
whether or not we are feeling our best.

**Many: So today we confess, in front of this community of faith,
that we need your help in this Advent season.
Prepare the way for greater peace, and teach us how to be a
part of it.**

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 – comfort, comfort we God's
people. We belong to God. In this belonging, a way is prepared
for us. In this relationship of unconditional love, every
disenfranchised valley is lifted up, every mountain and hill of
adversity is made low, the uneven ground of inequality becomes
level, and the rough places of fear are made plain and peaceful.
Therefore, let us celebrate together...

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

Lighting the Advent Candle: Stories of PEACE *The Azuma-Aaronson Family*

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 Readings

Hebrew Bible Reading: Isaiah 40:1-11

Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from God's hand
double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

Then the glory of GOD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

A voice says, “Cry out!”

And I said, “What shall I cry?”

All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.

The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand forever.

Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength,

O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;
say to the cities of Judah,
“Here is your God!”
See, the Lord GOD comes with might,
and her arm rules;
her reward is with her,
with recompense before her.
She will feed her flock like a shepherd;
she will gather the lambs in her arms,
and carry them in her bosom,
and gently lead the mother sheep.

Gospel Reading: Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Child of God.
As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;
the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make the paths straight.’”

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

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

Sermon

Preparing for the ~~Worst~~ Best

Call to Offering & Special Offering Christmas Joy/ Fund

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

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

Offertory *Dona Nobis Pacem*

Traditional

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

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 Covenant, 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

(in unison)

Our Father and Mother, who is in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and do not let us fall into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

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

Preacher – Rev. Rob Mark

Advent Candle Lighters – Emily Aaronson, Selom Azuma w/ Evie & Shirley

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Liturgist – Jack Ammerman

Lector – Anne Covert

Cantor – Tom Reid

Special Offering – Barbara Darling

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.

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 over shared coffee – kindly brew and bring your own! Here’s the zoom link that we will use after a few minutes post passing of the peace at the end of our service:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87167530810?pwd=TjlrT0EvV2xpbnpqMHNheXh1U3VMZz09>

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.

- December 6, Advent 2, Rev. Rob preaching, Holy Communion
- December 13, Advent 3, all-ages Advent worship with Zoom pageant
- December 20, Advent 4, Rev. Joshua preaching, Holy Communion
- December 21, Monday, Blue Christmas Service (live-streamed), 7:30pm
- December 24, Christmas Eve, 6pm Candlelight Service Lessons & Carols
- December 27, Presbytery of Boston Shared Service

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.

FREE DAILY ADVENT DEVOTIONAL: This beautiful, challenging and inspiring daily devotional guide from A Sanctified Art is our gift to you:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/zxs2onvtdiyw4tp/SA_thosewhodream_devotional_chronospreads.pdf?dl=0

BLUE CHRISTMAS (LONGEST NIGHT SOLSTICE) SERVICE:

Monday, December 21, 7:30pm, live-streamed. This has been a hard year. Christmas sometimes holds a lot of pain for many. Join us for this important annual ecumenical service we share with our closest neighbors in faith, Emmanuel Church, as we pay attention to the blues many of us feel this year, and pray for God's illumination. The livestream is available at this [link](#).

DIY ADVENT WREATHS "CONTEST": This year, we contemplated sending you all blue and pink candles for your own wreaths. Then, as we pondered with *climate jubilee* in mind, we opted against this fairly high carbon-footprint task, and instead would like to invite you to get original and in the spirit of Do It Yourself (DIY) – build your own home advent wreath. There are no parameters (hints: we often use blue as our advent color, you can use purple, white or black – any color. Third advent is often pink) and lots of ways to do this like: <https://vimeo.com/136327740>. The contest part is an invitation for you to make one, take a photo, and send it along to Rob (rob.mark@cotcbos.org) or Kate (kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org). "Awards" will be presented in worship on Dec. 20, Advent 4.

CHRISTMAS JOY AND CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERINGS - TODAY!

During worship today, we will collect the Christmas Joy (PCUSA) and Christmas Fund (UCC) offerings for our two denominations. Both of these special offerings provide emergency assistance and other financial support for lower-income current and retired church workers - and, as you can imagine, this is needed especially during a time of pandemic and economic upheaval. The Christmas Joy offering also supports PCUSA-related schools and colleges which service communities of color and nurture racial and ethnic heritage. Your Mission and Advocacy Committee encourages you to give generously.

HOW CHURCH HAPPENS VIDEO COMPILATION: If you missed any of the Generosity Generators Season of Generosity 2020 videos "Ch_ _ch Happens" (how does it happen if UR missing?), watch here:

<https://youtu.be/Ywf-eAZQxR0>

PLEDGES IN PLEASE! Our community exists because of God's grace, and your generosity. It's as simple and beautiful as that. Please take a moment and email in your 2021 pledge amount to Nancy Stockford at: finsecy@cotcbos.org – THANK YOU GENEROUS CHURCH!

WEDNESDAY EVENING ADVENT PRAYERS 6-6:30pm: Our next Weds. Evening prayer will be Weds. Dec. 9, 6-6:30pm. Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88999202076?pwd=bU9XQ0JuR0F1bXhrTUV2eVBDcHIxdz09>

TODAY: STORIES OF KINDNESS: Celebrate the season by joining storytellers Diane Rooks, Elisa Pearmain, Karen Glass and Lani Peterson for an all-ages friendly and free “Stories of Kindness” this Sunday afternoon at 4:00. Lani has told stories for Women's Lunch Place and is a friend of Rob's aunt Daryl (former children's librarian for Cambridge Public Library). These four seasoned tellers will tell a tale and then invite listeners to share moments of kindness. ZOOM link: <https://zoom.us/j/95885426556?pwd=bUVES1ZOUUFLcTcrV25pdEJsMys4dz09>, Meeting ID: 958 8542 6556, Passcode: story

ADULT EDUCATION FOLLOWING WORSHIP - DECEMBER 13

Please join Trudi Veldman for an update on Villages in Partnership's work in Malawi. You'll learn about how COVID has affected the country and how VIP is continuing its work focused on agriculture, maternal health and education.

BIBLE STUDY - NEW TIME AND TOPIC, FRIDAYS 11AM:

As of December 4, the virtual Bible Study is meeting at 11:00 am on Fridays, and we will begin a study of the Gospel of Mark. If you have 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! <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: The 20s30s40s will be having a Winter Gathering Sunday, December 13 at 2pm at the Boston Gardens. We will meet at the Washington statue. For more information, please email Joshua at joshua.lazard@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: *The Beginning of the Good news* by Lisle Gwynn Garrity, A Sanctified Art, who writes in a note: "Recently, my husband and I volunteered to serve on the safety team for a Black Lives Matter march and vigil in our local city. While we've frequently participated in peaceful protests, this role was new to us. We joined hundreds of white allies and community organizers, showing up hours before the march began to prepare supplies and receive training. Our role was straightforward: we were to use our bodies to create critical

mass along the edges of the crowd in order to protect the leaders of the march from harm. We were to stay alert and look for agitators—white supremacists or others instigating violence—and either place our bodies as a barrier or, when possible, try to nonviolently de-escalate the situation. Our trainers directed us: “Today’s march is not about you. You won’t be able to participate in the chants and you might not be able to hear the speakers. Instead, you are here to use your privilege to protect our Black leaders so they can make their voices heard, so they can express their grief and cry out for change without fearing that harm will be done to them in return.” And so, all day we walked alongside the shouts crying out in the wilderness of downtown city streets. As a call for repentance for the sins of racism, police brutality, and systemic injustice were proclaimed, we did our best to keep the peace and prepare the way. As I’ve returned to this scripture, I’ve been struck by the fact that the story of the good news according to Mark begins with protest—with crowds swelling and shouting, with a movement of people hungry for change and willing to risk their lives for it. And so, I’m committing to preparing the way—for God’s message of liberation and love to truly be heard and made known.”

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*