

# Church of the Covenant

## Boston, MA



### *Breathe: First Sunday in Lent*

### **Holy Communion**

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



Church of the Covenant  
*Breathe: First Sunday in Lent*  
Holy Communion

February 21, 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!**

**Black History Month: *Educate***

**Call to Worship**

*Psalm 104:29-30*

One: When you hide your face O God, they are dismayed;  
when you take away their breath, they die  
and return to their dust.

Many: **When you send forth your spirit, they are created;  
and you renew the face of the ground.**

One: But if you turn away from them, they panic.  
When you take away their breath, they die and turn again to  
dust.

Many: **When you give them your breath, life is created, and you  
renew the face of the earth.**

One: As we worship this day, as we breathe this day,  
Many: **May we like the earth be renewed.**

**Kindling the Christ Light**

**Attending to the Breath**

*Lauren Star*

**Chiming of the Prayer Bowl**

**Hymn (PH, 316):**

*Breathe on Me, Breath of God*

1. Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
Fill me with life anew,  
That I may love what Thou dost love,  
And do what Thou wouldst do.

2. Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
Until my heart is pure,  
Until with Thee I will one will,  
To do and to endure.
3. Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
Till I am wholly Thine,  
Until this earthly part of me  
Glows with Thy fire divine.
4. Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
So shall I never die,  
But live with Thee the perfect life  
Of Thine eternity.

### **Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace**

**Many:** Creator, Spirit God, source of all that is, in the beginning as you blew over the waters, you breathed into us life. In this moment, we give you thanks for the sacred gift of every breath that we are given – every inhale – every exhale. Yet we lament that at times in the worries and rush of living, we forget the truth of this wild gift. We lament our complicity in unjust systems that keep some from breathing. We lament the ways we have neglected the earth's climate and polluted the air, making some inhales toxic. As we begin our Lenten journey in dust, we confess all this sin, and pray for wholeness. In your grace, may we learn to breathe more deeply together, in peace, justice, and love.

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

### **Listening to God in Silent Prayer** *(marked by chiming of prayer bowl)*

#### **Assurance of God's Grace**

**One:** Just as the Spirit hovered over the waters of the deep, so too She hovers over and within each of us. Nearer than our breath, surer than the dawn – God comes to us again and again with the refrain, “you are my beloved.” Therefore, let us celebrate together:

**Many:** **In Jesus Christ we are set free and made whole.**

## Scripture Readings

### Hebrew Bible Reading: From Genesis

1:1-2 In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a breath from God swept over the face of the waters.

1:29-31 God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every creature of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. God saw everything that was made, and indeed, it was very good.

2:4b-7 In the day that God made the earth and the heavens...then God formed humans from the dust of the ground, and breathed into their nostrils the breath of life; and humans became living beings.

9:12-13 God said: "This is the sign of the covenant that I am setting forth between me and you, and every living being that is with you, for endless generations—my bow I have set in the cloud, which will serve as a covenantal sign between me and the earth.

### New Testament Reading: Acts 17:24-25

The God who made the world and everything in it is the Holy One of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And God is not served by human hands, as if needing anything. Rather, God gives everyone life and breath and everything else.

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

Many: **Thanks be to God.**

Love, divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heaven, to earth come down,  
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling, All Thy faithful mercies crown!  
Jesus, Thou art all compassion, Pure, unbounded love Thou art;  
Visit us with Thy salvation, Enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit Into every troubled breast!  
Let us all in Thee inherit, Let us find the promised rest;  
Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be;  
End of faith, as its beginning, Set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty to deliver, Let us all Thy life receive;  
Suddenly return and never, Nevermore Thy temples leave.  
Thee we would be always blessing, Serve Thee as Thy hosts above;  
Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing, Glory to Thy perfect love.

Finish, then, Thy new creation; Pure and spotless let us be;  
Let us see Thy great salvation Perfectly restored in Thee;  
Changed from glory into glory, Till in heaven we take our place,  
Till we cast our crowns before Thee, Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

**Moment for Generosity:** *Bread*

**Call to Offering**

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

**Offertory**

*I Call to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ*

J.S. Bach

**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 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.**

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## Participating in Today's Worship

**Preacher** – Rev. Rob Mark

**Breathing Guide** – Lauren Star

**Liturgist** – Tim Groves

**Lector** – Betty Rots

**Minister of Music** – Tom Handel

**Cantors** – Rev. Tom Reid, Tim & Betsy Groves, Barbara Darling & Ted  
Goodfleisch

**Moment for Generosity** – Rev. 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.

## **ATTENDING TO THE BREATH – INTRODUCTION TO OUR**

**BREATHING GUIDE:** Lauren Star has been teaching hatha yoga for 18 years, and at the core of hatha yoga is conscious breathing exercises. She was originally trained in the Sivananda Lineage at Ananda Kutir Ashram in Cape Town, South Africa. More recently she completed her Master's Degree in Yoga Studies at Loyola Marymount University (2020), and is currently working on a post-graduate certificate in Yoga Therapy. She has taught yoga and conscious breathing to people of all ages, in a variety of settings, including Women's Lunch Place! Conscious breathing is a practice with physiological benefits, including stress management and pain reduction. Many believe it has spiritual benefits as well, and it has been used by monks and nuns in many traditions as a way of turning within and connecting with God. During the Lenten services this year, Lauren Star will lead us in some simple 'conscious breathing' practices. Some of these will include gentle movement. We look forward to hearing your experiences of 'attending to the breath' and where that leads you physically, mentally, and spiritually.

**COVER ART:** *In Our Hands*, by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman. Inspired by Genesis 9:8-17, *Hand-carved block printed with oil-based ink on paper.*

A note from the artist: “In the beginning God filled the formless void with color, texture, light, flavor, time, and life. God scooped the clay and carefully molded it, breathing life into the nostrils of humanity. These are the images of a tender, imaginative God who loves Creation limitlessly. Following the Creation narrative, humanity quickly spirals into violence, corruption, and power-hunger toward the total destruction of Creation. God becomes deeply aggrieved and even regrets creating humanity (Gen 6:6). God decides it best to return all of Creation to the chaotic void, though God finds hope in Noah’s family. I’ve struggled with this narrative, but I find myself feeling a tremendous amount of compassion. I can only imagine how painful it is to watch the work of your hands devolve into brutality. God offers Noah, his descendants, and every living creature an all-encompassing promise, vowing never to flood the earth again. Despite humanity’s destructive role, God limits God’s self and alone is held accountable in this covenant. God requires nothing of humanity or the entirety of Creation in return. God gives humanity a chance to start fresh, and the opportunity to choose a different path. If we model our actions after God’s, then we would humble and limit ourselves in order to better love God and care for Creation. Sacrifice and selflessness pave the new way. In this image, God’s hands hold various animals and plant life, and are surrounded by the bands of the rainbow, shielding Creation from the swirling waters of chaotic destruction. I chose not to image humanity because the hands are at once God’s and ours. We must respond to God’s

covenant by protecting and keeping the earth. It is our responsibility; it is our calling. God meets us where we are—utterly dependent and bound toward self-destruction—with a promise sealed with a bow bursting with the endless spectrum of colors light holds.”

**COVENANT BOOK GROUP MEETS TODAY TO DISCUSS *CASTE* BY ISABEL WILKERSON:** The next meeting of Covenant's book group will be today, February 21, at 5 PM. We will meet by Zoom –see link below – to discuss the first half of the book *Caste* by Isabel Wilkerson. As always, you are welcome to join whether or not you have read the book and whether or not you've ever come to a Covenant book discussion before. Email Barbara if you have questions, [barbarakdarling@yahoo.com](mailto:barbarakdarling@yahoo.com). Join Zoom Meeting: <https://wheatoncollege-edu.zoom.us/j/91347027130>

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## Season of Lent

Special Announcements

### *A Note from the Pastor*

Our theme this year for the season of Lent is “Breathe.” In this world where too many still cannot find a breath, we all need to strive together to breathe more deeply, more regularly, more generously. We need to do so physically, spiritually, and with the justice of Jesus in our lungs and actions. Join us from now through Easter for this important and timely spiritual journey. At the beginning of each worship service Sunday morning, we will spend a little sacred time learning how to breathe better.

**LENTEN EVENING PRAYERS:** Beginning the this Wednesday, 2/24, join us each Wednesday during the Lenten season from 6-6:30pm for our evening prayer service. And we are looking for volunteers to help lead these services. We have a simple powerpoint with the basic service elements that you would just customize with the given text for each week. Or you are welcome to let your imagination run wild. Just sign up in this [Google Doc](#) and let us know if you have any questions over *email*. Zoom link for each Wednesday: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88999202076?pwd=bU9XQ0JuR0F1bXhrTUV2eVBDcHIxdz09>

**LENT DEVOTIONALS:** Lent began Feb. 17 with our Ash Wednesday service. In preparation for this season, our Worship and Music committee is providing you all with a free PDF copy of A Sanctified Art daily Lenten devotional: download [here](#). 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*
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**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.

- Sunday February 28, Lent 2, Rev. Rob preaching, Installations of New Officers
- Sunday March 7, Lent 3, Rev. Joshua preaching, Communion / Climate Jubilee Adult Education
- Sunday March 14, Lent 4, Celebration of the Word with Nicaragua Companions / COTC 101

**Here are the Zoom details for Sundays:**

*join by computer/ tablet/ smartphone:*

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

*one tap mobile:* +16465588656,,91025989890#,,#,892502#

*join by phone:* +1 646 558 8656, Meeting ID: 910 2598 9890, Password: 892502

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.

**FACING OUR RACISM WORKSHOP:** Our friends at Co-operative Metropolitan Ministry are organizing an excellent few hours long workshop, \$45, “Facing Our Racism: Becoming Conscious Partners” on Sunday, February 28, noon-4:30pm – [click here to register](#).

**VACCINATIONS:** As we all know, our Commonwealth is in the process of ensuring everyone gets a COVID-19 vaccine according to MA/CDC guidelines/phasing – yet the process can feel a bit daunting. As we give thanks for the miraculous reality of these vaccines, we lament the unequal access still in our state, and the confusing roll out. If you are feeling confused, you are not alone, and we are here to help. Please don't hesitate to reach out to Rob, Joshua, Kate or our Deacons if you could use some help in making sense of this and making a plan to get vaccinated. We also recommend everyone be in touch with their PCP as a first step. And remember, even in the face of a long history of unequal health care access, we at COTC deeply believe in the importance and efficacy of this vaccine as a necessary next step in reaching public health. Here are some helpful websites: <https://www.macovidvaccines.com/> and <https://www.cic-health.com/vaccines-location#fenway> in addition to <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-covid-19-vaccination-data-and-updates>

**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](mailto: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

**COTC 101, MARCH 14:** Are you new-ish to Church of the Covenant and want to find out more about who we are, our history, our two denominations, and our 5-point missional plan we feel called by God to live out through 2025? Then please join us after worship on Sunday, March 14 for an hour or so on Zoom while we cover some of these topics together. Bring some coffee, lunch, snacks perhaps to your comfy-iest chair/ couch as we zoom in together. Register [here](#).

**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](mailto:children@cotcbos.org) or contact Rev. Kate at [kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org](mailto: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](mailto:joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org)

**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](http://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*