

Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



Seventh Sunday of Easter

Holy Communion

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ

[ZOOM LINK \(click here\)](#)



Church of the Covenant

May 16, 2021 10:30 am
Seventh Sunday of Easter
Holy Communion
Zoom Link:

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

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you!

Many: **And also with you!**

One: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Many: **Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Prelude *Serene Alleluias for a Soul Longing for Heaven* Olivier Messiaen

Call To Worship

One: Clap your hands, all you peoples;
shout to God with loud songs of joy!
For God has ascended with shouts of triumph,
and trumpet fanfare!

Many: **Come, let's sing praise to God together,**

One: For our God—the Most High—is seated on his holy throne

Many: **Let us worship our God together.**

One: For Christ is alive!

Kindling the Christ Light

Opening Hymn: NCH 261

Let Every Christian Pray

Let every Christian pray,
this day and every day,
come, Holy Spirit, come!
Was not the church we love
commissioned from above?
Come, Holy Spirit, come!

The Spirit brought to birth
the Church of Christ on earth
to seek and save the lost:
God never has withdrawn,
since that tremendous dawn,
the gifts at Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit's power
can fit us for this hour:
come, Holy Spirit, come!
Instruct, inspire, unite
and help us see the light:
come, Holy Spirit, come!

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

One: Gracious God, we confess our doubts that stifle our joy.
Forgive us when we lack faith in you,
and comfort us when our fears outweigh our praise.
God, forgive us when we fail to trust you,
and help us when we do not live as your faithful witnesses.
Guiding God, forgive us when we are self-consumed
and lack the time needed to serve our neighbors.

Many: **In these times, have mercy on us, O God,
and encourage us to be your love-lived,
by renewing us daily in your strength.
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: O God, hear our prayers of confession and forgiveness,
and guide us from disbelief and distress
by leading us into your hope-filled joy.

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

Scripture Readings

Hebrew Scripture Reading – Psalm 47

Clap your hands, all you peoples; shout to God with loud songs of joy.
For the LORD, the Most High, is awesome,
the great One over all the earth.

He subdued peoples under us, and nations under our feet.
She chose our heritage for us, the pride of Jacob whom she loves.

Selah.

God has gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.
Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our God, sing praises.
For God is over all the earth; sing praises with a psalm.
God reigns over the nations; God sits on her holy throne.
The princes of the peoples gather as the people of the God of Abraham.
For the shields of the earth belong to God; he is highly exalted.

New Testament Reading – Acts 1:2-12

Until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. “This,” he said, “is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?”

He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day’s journey away.

Sermon

Let Go

Call to Offering

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

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

Offertory

Be Thou My Vision

arr. David Hamilton

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

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.

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

The Great Thanksgiving

One: May God be with you!

Many: **And also with you.**

One: People of Living Water, 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 lead us not 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 and 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.**

*Church of the Covenant is focused on following Jesus in our world through accompaniment,
compassion, peace, joy and creative beauty.*

We are passionate about hospitality, committed to justice, and wild about faith.

We embrace an embodied spirituality that is not afraid of questions.

*We advocate for a just climate for our earth, liberation in our world, and equality in our
neighborhoods.*

*We are a community where ALL are welcome and celebrated as beautiful reflections of God—all
genders, all faiths, all orientations, all backgrounds, all abilities, all ages, all struggles, and all hopes.*

Come journey with us!

Participating in Today's Worship

Preaching – Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Liturgist – Rev. Rob Mark

Lector – Linda Pursley

Cantor – Rev. Tom Reid

WELCOME & PEACE BE WITH YOU IN THESE DAYS! We are delighted to welcome you to our community of faith here at Church of the Covenant! Thank you for joining us in worship. While we lament that we can't greet you in person we are so glad you are with us today. We still feel deeply connected in the Spirit's blessing. As we all continue to do our part to love our neighbor as ourselves to help counter 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.

20s-30s-40s SUNDAY BRUNCH TODAY: Today, May 16 at 12:30pm, the 20s30s40s group will be hosting its monthly Sunday brunch on Zoom. This will be a time to share a meal and fellowship with each other. Meal reimbursements are available. The Zoom link has been sent by email, *but it's not too late to join us* – for more information, contact Rev. Joshua at joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org

GBIO LISTENING SESSIONS TODAY FOLLOWING WORSHIP: The Greater Boston Interfaith Organization has a long history of working on social justice issues that are of deep concern to its member organizations. Now that GBIO been “refounded” with about 20 new member organizations, it is sponsoring “Listening Sessions,” to hear about what most concerns you and why. Here at Covenant, we are off to a strong start with 5 sessions in April. We will continue by offering 2 to 3 sessions this Sunday, a few minutes after church. We will be invited to share, in confidence, our worries, our hopes and fears. If you would like to join us simply stay on the zoom. The 20s, 30s & 40s group will be in one session and the rest of you will be randomly assigned to a small group led by Covenant’s GBIO Team members. The GBIO Listening Campaign Team will soon begin the process of pulling all our stories together and working to shape an agenda for 2022 and beyond. GBIO will hold a Delegates Assembly on Monday, June 7th to share common themes from the sessions and learn what is most widely and deeply felt across the entire organization.

FACING OUR RACISM WORKSHOP TODAY: Our friends at Co-operative Metropolitan Ministry are organizing an excellent few hours long workshop, join Rev. Rob, \$45 (scholarships available – please ask Rob), “Facing Our Racism: Becoming Conscious Partners” TODAY Sunday, May 16, noon-4:30pm – [register here](#).

MCKENNA LEWELLEN’S ORDINATION TODAY 4pm on ZOOM!
Register [here](#).

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.

- May 16, Rev. Joshua preaching, Communion
- May 23, Pentecost, Rev. Rob preaching
- May 30, Reflection on the Word
- June 6, Celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism of William Toles

o June 13, Rev. Rob preaching, Thanking & Commissioning our Teachers
Zoom link for each Sunday: <https://zoom.us/j/91025989890?pwd=VTd0L3VMc3ErRDBRTltpTTEvRGZUT09>

IN CASE OF MAJOR TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES DURING

WORSHIP: Should any major technical glitches arise during worship and Zoom become challenged / the meeting end before worship is over, please relocate to our YouTube livestream page where a new livestream will start up:

[youtube.com/channel/UCUgqWdRTyqb0yeOpR3x6UYA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUgqWdRTyqb0yeOpR3x6UYA) In the case of minor technological glitches (your mic doesn't work, your video doesn't seem to work), feel free to reach out to any church staff member for assistance.

CLIMATE JUBILEE TEAM “LINKS OF THE WEEK”!: Following up on our Arbor Day Adult Ed. Session a couple weeks ago, the Climate Jubilee Team encourages you to watch a charming, 58-minute program which was a part of the Arbor Week celebration of Speak for the Trees Boston. Rev. Mariama White-Hammond, Rabbi Shoshana Meira Friedman, and Professor Christopher Ives were part of a roundtable discussion about the role of trees in faith and justice. COTC's own Liz Vizza made a profound contribution to the Q&A portion of the conversation. Watch on YouTube [here](#).

The Climate Jubilee Team also commends a Harvard Book Store virtual event with Jane Goodall and Peter Wohlleben on *The Heartbeat of Trees*, this Sunday at 1:00pm. You can sign up [here](#) with a pay-what-you-can \$5 donation option.

PENTECOST SPECIAL OFFERING: On Pentecost Sunday we celebrate God's gift of the Holy Spirit. COTC is collecting a special offering on behalf of our two denominations to demonstrate the Holy Spirit's power to transform the world and each of us. The UCC's Strengthen the Church offering supports new and innovative ministries in UCC churches. This support has been especially valuable and necessary during the pandemic! The PCUSA Pentecost offering is used to invest in young people through programs like Young Adult Volunteers and providing aid to at-risk children. As our congregation grieves and condemns the recent upsurge in anti-Asian hate crimes, the Mission and Advocacy Committee has decided to contribute a portion of this year's offering to the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center, which empowers Asians and new immigrants by providing programming, family support, workforce development, and education. Please consider investing in the future of our two denominations by giving to the Pentecost-Strengthen the Church offerings.

EASTER EVENING PRAYERS: Join us each Wednesday during this Easter season from 6-6:30pm for our evening prayer service. As we did in Lent, if you'd like to help choose a reading for either of these services, please [email](#). Zoom link for each Wednesday:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88999202076?pwd=bU9XQ0JuR0F1bXhrTUV2eVBDcHIxdz09>

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.

BIBLE STUDY - FRIDAYS 11AM: Our virtual Bible Study is meeting at 11:00 am on Fridays, studying the Book of Acts. 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. Let us know if you'd like to be sent the Zoom link, and drop in any week! No homework required!

COVENANT BOOK DISCUSSION SUNDAY, MAY 23!: On Sunday, May 23, at 5pm, there will be a discussion of the second half of the book [Dear White Christians](#) by Jennifer Harvey. As always, you are welcome whether or not you've ever attended a Covenant book discussion before and whether or not you've read the book. Here's the Zoom link, and we look forward to seeing you!

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://wheatoncollege-edu.zoom.us/j/98807950488>

Questions? Email barbarakdarling@yahoo.com

REMINDER: COTCCONNECTS & COTCBOS LISTSERVS: In December, Yahoo! Groups closed permanently and we moved the longstanding COTC community discussion group listservs over to a service called groups.io. While groups.io has been working very well for our purposes these last few months, we have noticed many folks either have not joined yet or have not been able to join. We know that, in particular, there was difficulty for some of you with gmail addresses due to the gmail outages in December. If you have not been receiving occasional emails marked [cotcbos] and [cotcconnects], you are not enrolled for either or both of those listservs. This announcement is a reminder and encouragement to sign up for COTC Connects and COTCBOS, if you would like. COTC Connects is a moderated listserv for church-related matters such as

prayer requests and event updates. COTCBOS is the unmoderated listserv for non-church-related matters, such as questions, requests, job postings, life updates, etc. Official announcements from the church, including This Week at Covenant, continue to be sent out from Constant Contact. To join COTC Connects, send an email to cotcconnects+subscribe@groups.io. To join COTCBOS, send an email to cotcbos+subscribe@groups.io. Be sure to send those emails from the address with which you want to join. For assistance with joining or any other listserv issues, please email Kate at kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org. See more about signing up for COTC communications [here](#).

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 – and just this week has opened it up to kids 12-15. Check here: [Mass.gov](#). 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. 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> and <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-covid-19-vaccination-data-and-updates>

WHAT CAN I DO ONCE VACCINATED? As we give thanks that increasing numbers of people are getting vaccinated, many are asking this question, here are a few guidelines:

[CDC Guidelines](#)

[Interactive Risk Assessment Tool](#)

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*