

Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



Thirteenth Sunday of Pentecost

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ

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



Church of the Covenant
Thirteenth Sunday of Pentecost

August 15, 2021 10:30 am

[Zoom Link](#)

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you!

Many: **And also with you!**

Prelude

Adorn yourself, O Dear Soul

J. S. Bach

Call to Worship

One: Come into this household of God that we might all listen to God's Word and discern the wisdom that comes only from God.

Many: **How can we discover such wisdom?**

One: Reverence for God is the beginning of wisdom. When we choose to live according to God's will and plan, God will give to each of us a wise and discerning heart.

Many: **God fills us with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs! We have come praise with music from our hearts.**

One: Jesus is here in our midst as living bread. We want to be nourished and strengthened that we may remain with him. Jesus is so close to us that we can taste his presence.

Many: **Praise the Lord! Learn of God's compassion and mercy. Praise the Lord with our hearts! Praise the Lord!**

Kindling the Christ Light

Opening Hymn (NCH 469)

O Grant Us Light

O grant us light, that we may know
wisdom that you alone can give,
That truth may guide us as we go,
and virtue bless the lives we live.

O grant us light that we may find
where error lurks in human lore,
And turn to you our seeking minds,
and love your holy Word the more.

O grant us light, that we may learn
how dead is life from you apart,
How sure is joy for all who turn
to you an undivided heart.

O grant us light, when soon or late,
all earthly scenes shall pass away,
In you to find the open gate,
to deathless home and endless day.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

Many: **Eternal and Wise, Holy One, we confess before You that we have failed to live into Your Wisdom. We have failed to be in awe of You; instead, we have taken Your works for granted. We have sought the ways of this world that lead to our immediate, short-term satisfaction and worldly gain. We have neglected those in need around us. Instead of seeking our daily bread, we have sought our daily pleasures, confusing wants for needs, the short-term gain instead of the eternal reward in You. Forgive us. Call us away from the streets of foolishness to Your house of Wisdom, built upon the pillars of justice, righteousness, and mercy. Guide us to Your steps upon the firm foundation of trust in You. In the name of Christ, in the name of Wisdom, our Wise Eternal Creator, we pray all things.**

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

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

One: May Wisdom lead us back to God. May we turn with trembling hearts, quiet minds, and open hands. May we know the love and grace of Jesus Christ and be filled with overflowing compassion. May we know the forgiveness, love, and assurance that Christ has given us, and share it with the world. In wisdom, may we live all our days, trusting in God's word, and the assurance that new life has already begun. We are forgiven, loved, and restored.

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

Sung Response

Hallelujah, We Sing Your Praises

Scripture Reading from the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: Proverbs 8:12, 22-36, The Message translation

I am Lady Wisdom, and I live next to Sanity;
Knowledge and Discretion live just down the street
God sovereignly made me—the first, the basic—
before he did anything else.
I was brought into being a long time ago,
well before Earth got its start.
I arrived on the scene before Ocean,
yes, even before Springs and Rivers and Lakes.
Before Mountains were sculpted and Hills took shape,
I was already there, newborn;
Long before God stretched out Earth's Horizons,
and tended to the minute details of Soil and Weather,
And set Sky firmly in place,
I was there.
When he mapped and gave borders to wild Ocean,
built the vast vault of Heaven,
and installed the fountains that fed Ocean,
When he drew a boundary for Sea,
posted a sign that said no trespassing,
And then staked out Earth's Foundations,

I was right there with him, making sure everything fit.
Day after day I was there, with my joyful applause,
always enjoying his company,
Delighted with the world of things and creatures,
happily celebrating the human family.
So, my dear friends, listen carefully;
those who embrace these my ways are most blessed.
Mark a life of discipline and live wisely;
don't squander your precious life.
Blessed is the man, blessed is the woman, who listens to me,
awake and ready for me each morning,
alert and responsive as I start my day's work.
When you find me, you find life, real life,
to say nothing of God's good pleasure.
But if you wrong me, you damage your very soul;
when you reject me, you're flirting with death.

**Scripture Reading from the New Testament:
Ephesians 5:15-20, NIV**

Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise,
making the most of the time, because the days are evil.

So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit,
as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and
making melody to the Lord in your hearts.

Give thanks to God at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus
Christ.

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

Sermon

“Another (Bad) Creation”

Call to Offering

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

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

Offertory

Prayer Before Communion

Olivier Messiaen

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

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 Christ... We come to this table, to share one with all; ever mindful of how you taught us to pray...

The Prayer of Jesus

**Oh Thou, from whom the breath of life comes,
who fills all realms of sound, light and vibration.
May Your light be experienced in my utmost holiest.
Your Heavenly Domain approaches.
Let Your will come true - in the universe, just as on earth.
Give us wisdom, understanding and assistance for our daily need,
detach the fetters of faults that bind us, as we let go the guilt of others.
Let us not be lost in superficial things, but let us be freed from that
what keeps us from our true purpose.
From You comes the all-working will, the lively strength to act, the
song that beautifies all and renews itself from age to age.
Sealed in trust, faith and truth, I confirm with my entire being, Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread & Sharing of the Bread and Cup

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.

Participating in Today's Worship

Preacher – Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Liturgist – Tim Groves

Lector – Holly Humphreys

Cantor – Rev. Tom Reid

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!

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.

COVENANT BOOK DISCUSSION TODAY: The next Church of the Covenant book discussion will be **today, August 15, at 5 PM**, and the book to be discussed is the Ta Nehisi Coates novel *The Water Dancer*. Here's the Zoom link: us02web.zoom.us/j/84016135876?pwd=YXFpS3FtVjllaHBiTHhuSWdlalNDQT09

NEW! JUBILEE JAUNT, AUGUST 29: Join Diane Lauber and Syd Smith on Sunday, August 29, at 1 PM to delve into the wonder of [Middlesex Fells](#), just north of Boston off Rt. 93. Meet at Flynn Ice Rink, 300 Elm Street, Medford, MA 02155. Enjoy the biodiversity of the Fells and learn to identify some plants! Those who sign up can determine which trail to take. [Contact Diane](#) with questions. [Sign up here.](#)

NEW! RETREAT REGISTRATION NOW OPEN: Save the date for the COTC All Church Retreat, Thursday Sept. 30 – Saturday Oct. 2, at Miramar Retreat Center in Duxbury, MA. Come. Share the blessings of community and spirit. Play. Pray. Relax. Contemplate. Share. Get to know one another better. Our theme is “Rooting down while we open up”: How do we open up to the world but feed from deep spiritual roots? This year we have a chance to go deeper together, and individually, with a longer retreat. Come for whatever time you are able to. Find more registration info in *This Week at Covenant!*

SUMMER EVENING PRAYERS THIS WEEK ON ZOOM: This Wednesday evening, August 18, we will gather on Zoom from 6-6:30pm for a simple prayer time together with our siblings in Christ at Newton Presbyterian Church. Rev. Tom Reid will be leading the prayer service and all are welcome to join. Use the following link to connect on Zoom: <https://bit.ly/WedEvePrayer>

SUMMER EVENING PRAYERS IN PERSON: Join us on August 24, when we will gather in Cambridge for an in-person prayer and fellowship from 6-7pm. More details to come.

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.

- August 15, Rev. Joshua preaching, Communion
- August 22, Rev. Rob preaching

[Zoom link for each Sunday](#)

NEW! GREEN TEAM VIRTUAL SUMMIT 2021: We encourage you to consider joining Faith in Place and Interfaith Power & Light on September 12-14 for a 3-night immersive and interactive virtual journey into healing. During this summit, we will explore ways to heal our connection with our land, body, mind, spirit, and community. From walking through vividly green wetlands in Shawnee National Forest, to touring a farm, and gathering in a racial healing circle, this virtual Summit will honor our interconnectedness and inspire our environmental work through healing. More information, and the link to free registration, [can be found at this link.](#)

CLIMATE JUBILEE TEAM “LINK OF THE MONTH”!: When this Ezra Klein column from the New York Times was shared with Climate Jubilee Committee, one committee member responded, "Wow, that article is SO good. Articulate, true, right to the point of where we are. I find it just feels like healthy food to have such honesty. There's something powerful about someone speaking truth. I love where he goes. It's like the biggest picture, yet grounded in the here and now." Here is the article on the NY Times site: [Let's Launch a Moonshot for Meatless Meat](#). If you are not a subscriber, here is the [article as a PDF](#).

SUMMER SABBATH: Rev. Rob is on his annual Summer Sabbath (2 weeks unpaid furlough, 2 weeks vacation) from July 20-August 17. Please contact Rev. Joshua or chair of Deacons, Anita Gram, with pastoral needs during this time.

EMERGING & GETTING TOGETHER: These past 16 months have been long and hard, and it has been extra hard being separated from in-person gatherings. This summer, we'd like to begin re-emerging well and safely together by providing some chances to gather together in-person, even before we can do so safely together in the sanctuary on a Sunday morning. Here are the opportunities that are emerging:

- **Porches for 8:** Just as in the past we called these “Suppers for 8”, this summer we are offering the chance to gather together with a small group of fellow COTCers at someone's back yard or porch so share a simple meal. This will be for those who have been fully vaccinated and who feel comfortable (and obviously without any covid-like symptoms). If you'd like your name to be added to the list of those who will be invited to these gatherings (dates and locations yet TBD), please email [Trudi Veldman](#).
- **Outdoor Evening Prayers:** Our next outdoor Evening Prayer will be in Cambridge on Weds. Aug. 24, 6-7pm (see above). Other evening prayers on Wednesday can easily be hosted at your place! If you have room for up to 10 people to sit in a circle outside, please let Rob know and we'll find a date.
- **Climate Jubilee Jaunts:** Once a month, our Climate Jubilee Team will be hosting some outdoor walks/ hikes in and around Boston. Our next jaunt is August 29 (see above); stay tuned for news about future jaunts.

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. 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

20s-30s-40s GROUP AT COVENANT: We have a vital group for young adults, young professionals and students – and we’d love you to join us! We currently hold brunches (virtual for the time-being) on the third Sunday of each month. If you would like to be added to our email list, or connect one-to-one, please contact Rev. Joshua at joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org

CHILDREN’S AND YOUTH PROGRAMMING: Our Godly Play and Youth Class will not be meeting for the summer. If you would like to learn more about or connect with our ministries with children and youth, email Rev. Kate at kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org.

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 recently opened up to kids 12-15. Check here: [Mass.gov](https://www.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*

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*