Second Sunday in Advent: PEACE

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ

ZOOM LINK (click here)
Welcome!!! Unless sharing, please keep your mic on “mute”, but your voice and heart liberated to fully join in with the songs and liturgies as we worship God while on Zoom. Please note this service is recorded and later posted on our church website.

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you!
Many: And also with you!

Prelude  
Toccata and Chorale on *Savior of the Nations, Come*  
Hugo Distler

Call To Worship  
by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

One: If life was a home, then we would pray—
Many: May love be the foundation. May God be the cornerstone. May the Spirit be the windows—ushering light in. And may hope be the walls—holding us together.
One: In this hour of worship, let us work toward building that home together. We may not know the path ahead, but God is here, even now. Let us give thanks for a foundation of love.
Many: Let us worship Holy God.

Lighting the Advent Candle: Stories of PEACE

Opening Hymn: NCH (black)120  
*There’s a Voice in the Wilderness*

There’s a voice in the wilderness crying,  
a call from the ways untrod:  
Prepare in the desert a highway,  
a highway for our God!  
The valleys shall be exalted,  
the lofty hills brought low;  
make straight all the crooked places  
where Emmanuel may go!
O Zion who offers good tidings; to the height of mountains dare! Lift your voice to cities of Judah: “Behold your God!” declare Flowers of the field we perish, Our human works decay, The pow'r and pomp of nations shall pass like a dream away.

But the Word of our God is eternal; our Defender’s will is strong. God stands in the midst of the nations, to render right the wrong. Then God shall be as a shepherd, the lambs gathered to God’s breast; and pastures of peace shall greet them, to give to weary rest.

Prayer for Grounding in God’s Grace

by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

Many: Holy God, When John was Born, Zechariah leaned down and whispered words of love into his ear. We know that you do the same for us, day in and day out, yet we fail to hear it. We forget that in the beginning we were made good. We doubt that we could possibly be enough. We hustle for our self-worth and wear ourselves out aiming for perfection. We deflect words of praise. We hide behind shiny first impressions. Forgive us. Trusting our worth is the hardest job. Open our ears as you open our hearts, so that we might rest on the foundation of goodness you have laid for us. Gratefully 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: Family of faith, No matter how old we get, God continues to say to us: “You are loved; you are forgiven.” That is the foundation of our lives. That is the truth upon which we build our home. So breathe deeply. There is grace and peace here. Join me in proclaiming this good news:

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

Sung Response: PH (blue) 576
Gloria, Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, Gloria, alleluia, alleluia!

From the Apocrypha, Baruch 5:1-2, 7-9
Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem, and put on forever the beauty of the glory from God. Put on the robe of the righteousness that comes from God; put on your head the diadem of the glory of the Everlasting.

For God has ordered that every high mountain and the everlasting hills be made low, and the valleys filled up, to make level ground, so that Israel may walk safely in the glory of God. The woods and every fragrant tree have shaded Israel at God's command. For God will lead Israel with joy, in the light of glory, with the mercy and righteousness that come from God.

From the Gospel according to Luke 3:1-6, 18-20
Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying:

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord;
Make God’s paths straight.
Every valley shall be filled
And every mountain and hill brought low;
The crooked places shall be made straight
And the rough ways smooth;
And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

And with many other exhortations he preached to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, being rebuked by him concerning Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, also added this, above all, that he shut John up in prison.

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

Sung Response: PH (blue) 576
Gloria, Gloria
Gloria, Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, Gloria, alleluia, alleluia!

Sermon
A Gospel Shut Up

Hymn: PH (blue) 9
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!

O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by Thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death’s dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife, and discord cease;
fill the whole world with heaven’s peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!
Moment for Generosity

Dedication of Pledges

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

Offertory Two variations on Savior of the Nations, Come

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
For those worshiping online:
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 Advent, 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, 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

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting One, Prince of Peace—hallowed be your name.
Prince of Peace, make your kin-dom complete; on earth as it is in heaven.
Bread of life, feed us with your truth.
Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us;
    Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.
    Protect us from the constant dangers and enticing temptations we face each day.
For the kin-dom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.
Word who became flesh and lived among us,
Through Jesus Christ, 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  
**Advent Candle Lighting** – Claudine Ellyin  
**Liturgist** – Rev. Rob Mark  
**Lector** – Betsy Groves  
**Cantors** – Covenant Choir  
**Moment for Generosity** – Rev. Jan Gough  
**Communion Servers** – Harry Forsdick and Barbara Darling


My depiction of John the Baptist is inspired by Abuna (meaning “Father”) Elias Chacour, who was the Archbishop of Akko, Haifa, Nazareth and All Galilee of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church (2006-2014). A Palestinian Arab-Israeli, Abuna Chacour is a well-respected activist and educator who established the Mar Elias Educational Institutions in Ibillin, which educate students of multiple religious backgrounds—Arab and Israeli—from kindergarten through high school. His life’s work embodies the courageous and prophetic pointing to a better way that I also see in John the Baptist.

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**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. If you have any questions about who we are as a community of faith, please reach out to an usher or pastor in person, or Zoom chat with a member of staff online. Be most welcome!

**UPCOMING WORSHIP ON SUNDAYS:** Please join us each Sunday at 10:30am as we come together in community to pray, sing, share celebrations and concerns, and hear God’s still-speaking Word proclaimed. [Zoom Link for each Sunday](#).

- December 5, ADVENT 2, Hybrid Service, Rev. Joshua preaching
- December 12, ADVENT 3, Hybrid Service, Rev. Rob preaching
- December 19, ADVENT 4, All-ages Christmas Pageant
- December 21, 7:30 pm, Blue Christmas/Longest Night Ecumenical Service at Emmanuel Church
- December 24, Christmas Eve Service, 6 pm
“NEW WINESKINS” DEDICATION OF PLEDGES TODAY!: Join as we conclude our Short & Sweet Season of Generosity with Dedication of Pledges in worship today.

CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL POINSETTIAS: This holiday season you can honor your loved ones through beautiful flowers in our sanctuary. To learn more and order, fill out the order form online.

CHRISTMAS JOY/CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING NEXT SUNDAY 12/12/21!: Church of the Covenant will join our two denominations in collecting the Christmas Joy (PCUSA) and Christmas Fund (UCC) offering next Sunday. This special offering provides support and assistance—in both denominations—to current and retired church workers in financial difficulty. The Christmas Joy offering also contributes to developing future church leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. This offering will be collected during worship next week. You may also send in a check to Financial Secretary, Church of the Covenant, 67 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116; with “Christmas Joy” in the memo line, or donate online: cotcbos.org/give.html, click on "Give Now", and choose "Christmas Joy/Fund" line. Thank you!

POSTING FULL SERVICE RECORDINGS/ PRAYERS ONLINE: Due to techno-challenges we have decided we will be posting the entire service that is livestreamed online on our Worship Recordings Page. Please let us know if you have any questions. Thanks.

WEDNESDAY EVENING PRAYERS ON ZOOM: Join us this Wednesday 6:00-6:30pm for our weekly evening prayers, on Zoom.

BIBLE STUDY - FRIDAYS 11AM ZOOM: You are invited to join the Friday morning Bible Study group on a new adventure as we dive into new ideas about the apostle Paul. Zoom Link Here.
join by phone: (646) 558 8656, Meeting ID: 104 478 666, Password: 581626

CHILDREN’S AND YOUTH PROGRAMMING: Stay tuned for news about upcoming Advent activities! If you would like to learn more about or connect with our vital ministries with children and youth, email Rev. Kate.
20s-30s-40s GROUP AT COVENANT BRUNCHES: Join us after worship December 19th, and email Rev. Joshua if you can come or want to find more about our young adult ministry.

WEEKLY CALENDAR Click here to view the weekly calendar of events.
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*