Welcome and thank you for worshipping together for this “hybrid” service where some will be in the sanctuary of their homes, and some in the sanctuary at 67 Newbury Street. For those joining online, we will plan to begin on Zoom. Service is recorded and later posted online.

**Prelude**

*God’s Eye is On the Sparrow*  
arr. Harvey Burgett

**Welcome & Announcements**

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

*Call to Worship*  
(adapted from Isaiah 55:1-9 and Rev. Sarah Speed)

One: Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price
Many: Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.
One: See, you shall call peoples that you do not know, and people that do not know you shall run to you, because of the Most High, the Holy One of Israel, has glorified you.
Many: Seek the Holy One while they may be found, call while Glorious One is near; let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Holy One, that they may have mercy on them, and to our God, for God will abundantly pardon.
One: Come.
Many: Come, all who dream dreams.
One: Come— whether you’re young or old, confident or curious, lonely or hopeful.
Many: This is God’s house. All are welcome here. Let us worship holy God.
People: Holy God, we treat our self-worth like something that can be bought at a store; but you know this even better than we do. Instead of trusting that we are made good, instead of trusting that we are loved exactly as we are, we stockpile our value in earthly things—in trophies and awards, in likes and follows, in wealth and power. Forgive us for creating our own measuring stick. Heal our open wounds and tell our hearts that we won’t be forgotten if we slow down. We won’t be forgotten if we rest.

One: In this moment of honesty, let us open ourselves to God now in silent prayer . . .

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God’s Grace

One: Friends, take a deep breath. Release the tension in your jaw. There is good news coming. For even when we stumble, even when we take the easy way out, even when we forget our own self-worth, even when we lose our way—we belong to God.

Many: We are loved. We are claimed. We are under God’s wing. We are worthy of grace. We belong to God. Amen.

*Sung Response

This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine (x3)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine
Everywhere I go, I’m gonna let it shine (x3)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine
Reading from the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament
Jeremiah 29:1-9
These are the words of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the remaining elders among the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. This was after King Jeconiah, and the queen mother, the court officials, the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the artisans, and the smiths had departed from Jerusalem. The letter was sent by the hand of Elasah son of Shaphan and Gemariah son of Hilkiah, whom King Zedekiah of Judah sent to Babylon to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

It said: Thus says the Almighty of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. For thus says the Almighty of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let the prophets and the diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, says the God of Israel.

For thus says the God of Israel: Only when Babylon’s seventy years are completed will I visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. For surely, I know the plans I have for you, says God, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope

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

Sung Response
This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine (x3)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

Sermon “The Problem with Temporary Housing”
Will You Come and Follow Me

1. Will you come and follow Me if I but call your name?
2. Will you leave your self behind if I but call your name?
3. Will you let the blind led see if I but call your name?
4. Will you love the "you" you hide if I but call your name?
5. Lord, your summons echoes true when You but call my name.

Will you go where you don’t know and never be the same?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
Let me turn and follow You and never be the same.

Will you let My love be shown, will you let My name be known,
Will you risk the hostile stars should your life attract or scare?
Will you use the faith you’ve found to reshape the world around,
In Your company I’ll go where Your love and footsteps show.

Call to Offering

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

Moment for Generosity – “O” – Holly Humphreys (www.mhsa.net)
Offertory  
*You Bring Such Light to Our Church*

Text - Christine James  
Music - Stephen Schwartz

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 to the Table

Communion Summons  
*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. x2

The Great Thanksgiving

One:  
May God be with you!  
Many:  
And also with you.  
One:  
People of the Grotto, let us lift up our hearts!  
Many:  
We open our hearts to the Spirit 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 God.  
One:  
It is right for us to thank and praise you God…
...And so, with your people here on earth, with all the ancestors, and all the 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  
(from A New Zealand Prayer Book, said in unison)

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be, Parent of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven: The hallowing of your name echo through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings! Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and testing, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.

Breaking of the Bread

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Post Communion Prayer

CALL TO RESIST: Housing Justice

Housing justice is a basic human right too often only ascribed to some. Here in Boston, many groups, congregations and legislators are working hard to ensure housing becomes a right experienced by all, and to put an end to homelessness. Take some time to learn about some of the incredible groups working for such justice, and take action in solidarity as indicated.

- Homes for All MA: Take action here to declare Housing is a Human Right and demand foreclosure and eviction moratoriums: https://www.homesforallmass.org/act/  Take action regarding ending the ban on Rent Control in MA
• **Mass Coalition for the Homeless:** This incredible group works to chart, follow and help others advocate for legislative priorities around housing justice here in MA. Here is their detailed list of bill priorities for 2022. Here is a smaller PDF summary. Here is their detailed list of FY23 Budget priorities. Please scroll through and choose 1-2 or more of these to advocate for by contacting one of your local legislators. To find your state senator and rep, please click here. Also, learn about the push to create a The Homeless Bill of Rights.

• **Boston Displacement Mapping Project:** Learn more.

• **common cathedral** offers weekday programming concerning the needs of the unhoused in downtown Boston. Pray for this sibling congregation.

• COTC participates annually with the **WinterWalk** that has resources, podcasts, videos, etc. all about ending homelessness in Boston in this lifetime. (www.winterwalkboston.org)

• **Action4Equity** (https://www.action4equity.org/housing-justice.html) is an online resource for awareness of local coalitions that advocate for housing justice in the greater Boston area.

• **Affordable Boston** (https://www.affordableboston.org/)

• **Mass Housing and Shelter Alliance** www.mhsa.net.

• **Boston Faith Leaders for Housing Justice:** (Rev. Rob active in its leadership) Leaders for Housing Justice is a coalition of Boston area faith leaders collecting and sharing information about issues facing Boston’s unhoused individuals as demonstrated by the failure of systems that resulted in untenable conditions at Mass and Cass in 2021. We equip congregations to ignite a ministry of presence to those suffering through housing crisis. Collaborating with organizations, institutions, and public agencies, we seek to share a prophetic voice and engage congregations in the work of creating housing justice. **Advocate for Senate Bill 2612 “Everybody Needs ID”, Read & Act.**

*Charge and Benediction*

*Exchange of the Peace*

*(Please exchange greetings of Christ’s peace and reconciliation while respecting personal space preferences and public health safe distancing)*

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: And also with you.
Participating in Worship:

Preacher – Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard
Communion Co-Celebrant – Rev. Rob Mark
Minister of Music – Tom Handel
Liturgist – Trudi Veldman
Lector – Betsy Groves
Cantor – Austin Burns
Video Techs – Derek Holbrook, Jon Schwarz
Digital Minister – Diane Lauber, Christine James
Door Steward – Jesus Vargas
Usher – Faith Perry
Bulletin Cover – Alberto Loyo, location unknown

WELCOME TO CHURCH OF THE COVENANT! We are so glad to have you worshipping with us today! If you are new to our community, we hope you will feel at home and welcomed during this service. If you have any questions about who we are as a community of faith, please reach out to a member of staff in the chat. Be most welcome!

LENT 2022: GROTTO – RESIDE & RESIST: MARCH 2 – APRIL 17
Discovering spiritual power from entering the inner life and emerging for action. Grotto (noun: from Italian grotta, via Latin from Greek kruptē (see crypt)): a small, subterranean cavern or human-made cave-like shrine often linked to gardened landscapes connoting a place of rebirth and renewal. Join us this Lent as together, inspired by sacred stories from our scriptures, we will build our own at-home grottos and decorate them each week with images, ideas, words, beliefs, mentors, callings, & passions. From these places of residing in God’s nurture, potential & new beginnings, we will emerge in solidarity through weekly calls to action & advocacy as we resist the powers of empire & fear.

PRE-REGISTER FOR HYBRID WORSHIP: While we give thanks that the cases continue to drop from the Omicron variant of COVID-19, we continue to ask that those worshiping in person at 67 Newbury pre-register, be up to date on vaccinations, and still wear a mask at all times in the building. Worship will continue to be accessible to all on Zoom. Thanks for your continued commitment to the wellness of the collective! Pre-register for all services at rsvp.church/r/L77K1Tal.
SUPPORTING UKRAINE: As we continue to hold the people of Ukraine & Russia in our prayers in light of Putin’s horrifying “war of choice,” places to support:
- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance: https://pda.pcusa.org/situation/ukraine/
- United Church of Christ ACT Alliance: https://www.ucc.org/global-h-o-p-e/ukraine-emergency-appeal/
- World Central Kitchen: https://wck.org

BUILDING YOUR OWN GROTTO: This Lent, we invite you to put on your creativity hat, and join us in making your own home-grotto. Inspired by sacred stories from our scriptures, we will build our own at-home grottos and decorate them each week with images, ideas, words, beliefs, mentors, influencers, callings, and passions. You can start with a shoebox, any cardboard box bound for the recycling bin, a matchbox, a little wooden box, a special corner of your room, or a sacred spot in your back yard. Any “place” is fine – we just invite you to think of a place that will remain intact over the 6 weeks journey through Lent. Each week, following worship, we invite you to spend the week adding things to your grotto. Perhaps a word or a phrase from the scripture or hymns or liturgy in worship. Perhaps a photo from a bulletin cover, or an image you take and print out, or find on the internet. Perhaps something you make. Perhaps an item from nature. The sky is the limit. Think creativity and build a grotto that will become a sacred place for you to “go” and further reside in the expansive and wild love of God during your Lenten journey. A journey that is both yours individually, and ours collectively in community. For those who wish to share photos of their grottos along the way or around Holy Week, we welcome the sharing and mutual inspiration. Questions? Ask away.

UPCOMING WORSHIP: 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 in these Hybrid services (in-person and Zoom options). [Zoom Link for each service.]
  o Sunday, March 27, Lent 4, Rev. Rob preaching
  o Sunday, April 3, Lent 5, Rev. Julie Avis Rogers, Director of Religious and Spiritual Life & Campus Chaplain at Emerson College guest preaching

SUNDAY PRELUDES – COME EARLY: As we begin to re-emerge into hybrid worship again, we will for the first time in 2 years begin to place the prelude back to its original place at the head of our worship services. Therefore, please come to worship by 10:25 in-person or on Zoom in order to take in the prelude.
LENTEN EVENING PRAYERS 6-6:30pm: Our weekly Wednesday evening prayers w/ intentional liturgy, contemplative song, psalms & sharing of prayers will meet this Wednesday, 3/23 with our siblings from Newton Presbyterian on Zoom.

BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS: Our weekly morning Bible Study is each Wednesday morning on Zoom at 9:15am. We’ve bid farewell to the Apostle Paul and his early church friends and will say hello to Hosea and the other ‘minor prophets.’ If you’d like more information or want to be on the list to get regular reminders and Zoom info, contact Nancy Ammerman, ntamerman@gmail.com.

20s-30s-40s UPCOMING BRUNCHES WITH ANIMATE VIDEO SERIES: This Sunday, March 20, the young adults will be meeting at Life Alive (at the corner of Berkeley & Boylston Sts.) immediately following service for our monthly brunch gathering. For more questions, email Rev. Joshua at joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org.

CHILDREN’S AND YOUTH PROGRAMMING: At long last, we are resuming in-person CYCE activities downstairs for ages 5 and up during this Lenten season, beginning this Sunday, March 20. We’re also looking forward to our next all-ages service on Palm Sunday, April 10. Parents of younger kids, we’re also able to open the nursery for one household at a time – let us know if you’re interested. We’ll continue to send updates and more details via email. If you’re interested in getting involved with CYCE, please email Rev. Kate.


CREW INTERFAITH CLIMATE SUMMIT: Sunday May 1, 4-6pm, join us in person at the North American Indian Center of Boston or online. Register here.

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.

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