

# Church of the Covenant Boston, MA



## *Breathe: Fifth Sunday in Lent* **Holy Communion**

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



Church of the Covenant  
*Breathe: Fifth Sunday in Lent*  
Holy Communion March 21, 2021 10:30 am  
Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/91025989890?pwd=VTd0L3VMc3ErRDBRTlIpTTEvRGZUT09>

**Welcome & Announcements**

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

**Call to Worship**

One: Come, siblings in the struggle,  
Many: **Let us seek justice.**  
One: Come seekers in faith,  
Many: **Let us restore our streets.**  
One: Come, friends and foe,  
Many: **Let us love mercy.**  
One: Come, ancestors and descendants,  
Many: **Let us repair the breach.**  
One: Come, courage and doubt, together in power,  
Many: **Let us conspire to create God's commonwealth of love.**

**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,  
Till I am wholly Thine,  
Until this earthly part of me  
Glows with Thy fire divine.
2. 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:** Most Loving God, in this moment, we cherish your grace. We cherish your presence, closer than breath, because all too often we forget to seek it. We cherish your peace, for all too often we harbor judgment for “the other” in our hearts. We cherish your forgiveness, for all too often we find ourselves unable to let go of wrongs done, unable to let go of regret. In your grace, help us to overcome. Help us overcome the dry-boned-sin that clings, and the structural evils by which many of us find privilege. It is not in our pride that we trust, but in your power to topple and reorder all that oppresses. **Reordering, Reconfiguring, Refounding and Reconciling God, change us, we pray.**

**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:** Hear the good news: when we are lost, all is not lost. God is seeking us, ready to turn our lives around, gathering us in to become the Beloved Community. Therefore, let us celebrate:

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

### Scripture Readings

#### **Hebrew Bible Reading** Ezekiel 37:1-14

The hand of God came upon me, and brought me out by the spirit and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. God led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. God said to me, “Mortal, can these bones live?” I answered, “O Holy One, you know.” Then God said to me, “Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of God. Thus says the Holy One to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am God.”

So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then God said to me, “Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Holy One: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” I prophesied as commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then God said to me, “Mortal, these bones are the whole house of the People of God. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.’ Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Holy One: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am God, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Holy One, have spoken and will act, says God.”

**Gospel Reading:** John 20: 21-22

Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As God has sent me, even so I am sending you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

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

**Sermon**

*Conspire*

**Hymn:**

*Come Let Us Join Our Cheerful Songs*

1. Come, let us join our cheerful songs  
with angels round the throne;  
ten thousand thousand are their tongues,  
but all their joys are one.

2. Jesus is worthy to receive  
honor and power divine;  
and blessings, more than we can give,  
be, Lord, for ever thine.
  
3. Let all that dwell above the sky,  
and air, and earth, and seas,  
conspire to lift thy glories high,  
and speak thine endless praise.
  
4. The whole creation joins in one  
to bless the sacred name,  
of God who dwells among us here,  
With Spirit, Christ the same.

**Moment for Generosity:** *Oil*

**Call to Offering**

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

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

**Offertory**

*Schmücke dich, o Liebe Seele*

Johannes Brahms

**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 Pilgrimage, 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

*interpreted by Mark Berry*

**O Breathing Life, your Name shines everywhere! Release a space to plant your Presence here. Imagine your possibilities now. Embody your desire in every light and form. Grow through us this moment's bread and wisdom. Untie the knots of failure binding us, as we release the strands we hold of others' faults. Help us not forget our Source, yet free us from not being in the Present. From you arises every Vision, Power and Song from gathering to gathering. Amen - May our future actions grow from here!**

### 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

**Minister of Music** – Tom Handel

**Attending to the Breath Guide** – Lauren Star

**Liturgist** – Joshua Lazard

**Lector** – Nancy Stockford

**Co-Celebrant for Communion** – Rev. Joshua Lazard

**Moment for Generosity** – Rob Mark

**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.

**COFFEE HALF-HOUR BREAK OUT ROOMS TODAY!** Back by popular demand, today following worship we will randomly assign folks to break-out rooms of 4-5 to share some coffee together and informally catch up/ check in/ get to know each other in a slightly more intimate and yet still mask-free-socially-distanced way! Simply stay on Zoom and we will begin groups a few minutes after worship ends. If you wish not to join, simply sign off at the end of the service.

**20s-30s-40s SUNDAY BRUNCH TODAY:** Starting on March 21 at 12:30pm, the 20s30s40s group will be hosting a 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](mailto:joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org)

**MOMENT FOR GENEROSITY “OIL”:** This Lenten season we are focusing on breath and breathing. \*Breathe in\*, \*breathe out\*. Breathing is relational, there is a give and there is a take. This week, Generosity Generators are inviting us to consider this passage from Numbers 4:16: “Eleazar son of Aaron the priest shall have charge of the oil for the light, the fragrant incense, the regular grain offering, and the anointing oil...” In our scriptures, oil is used for many things – bringing light, anointing for healing and being reminded of God’s love. Too often in today’s world, the word oil reminds us of the climate changing fossil fuel empire’s harmful grip on our earth and her increasingly displaced people. Therefore, our Generosity Generators urge you to consider reclaiming the biblical understanding as oil for healing, and invite you to support the bold life and death organizing work of the those opposing the Line 3 (and the Dakota Access Pipeline) dirty pipeline project on Indigenous land in the north-central USA. Learn more and take action [here](#) and [here](#) or consider donating to [350.org](http://350.org) [Minnesota](#).

### **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 CapeTown, 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.

### **COVENANT BOOK GROUP MEETS 3/21 TO DISCUSS *CASTE* BY ISABEL WILKERSON (second half of book):**

The next meeting of Covenant's book group will be today Sunday, March 21, at 5 PM. We will meet by Zoom--see link below--to discuss the second 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/91082840018>

**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 March 21, Lent 5, Rev. Rob preaching, Communion / MDC Breakout room coffee half-hour
- **HOLY WEEK:**
  - Palm Sunday, All Ages Service, March 28, 10:30am
  - Maundy Thursday, April 1, 7:30pm Ecumenical Service with common cathedral, Emmanuel Episcopal Church and Old West UMC Church ([click here for Zoom link](#))
  - Good Friday, April 2, 7:00pm Tenebrae Service in solidarity with Bedford (NH), Clinton, Burlington and Eliot (Lowell) Presbyterian Churches ([Click here for Zoom link](#))
  - Holy Saturday, April 3, Noon-1pm Sacred Vigil on your own (devotional ideas to be emailed out) – *Breathe*
  - Easter Sunday, April 4, 10:30am Rev. Rob preaching, Communion, Redline Brass

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

*join by computer/ tablet/ smartphone:*

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

**CLIMATE JUBILEE, BREATHING WITH TREES:** Following a well attended adult education session recently, our Jubilee-ers call your attention to [this link](#).

**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

**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).

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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:** 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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**CREW INTERFAITH CLIMATE SUMMIT: Healing, Helping and Building Resilience:** Sunday, April 11, 2pm: [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 and frustrating. 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. **There is a new Mass.gov site by the Commonwealth where you can pre-register to be alerted when you are eligible and when there is availability:** <https://vaccinesignup.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 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>

**FACING OUR RACISM WORKSHOP NEW DATE:** 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” on Sunday, May 16, noon-4:30pm – [click here to register.](#)

**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](#).

**COVER ART:** “I Delight in You”, by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity, A Sanctified Art, Inspired by Mark 1:9-15 | *Digital Painting with collage*

**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*