

Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



Fifteenth Sunday of Pentecost

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ

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



Church of the Covenant
Fifteenth Sunday of Pentecost

August 29, 2021 10:30 am

[Zoom Link](#)

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you!

Many: **And also with you!**

Prelude

Praeludium in C

Dietrich Buxtehude

Call to Worship

One: Stop.

Many: **Stop worrying.**

One: Stop.

Many: **Stop judging.**

One: Start.

Many: **Start wondering.**

One: Start.

Many: **Start loving.**

One: Life is short, and we have too little time to gladden the hearts of those who journey the way with us.

Many: **So, be swift to love and make haste to be kind. For God who travels with us, is within us. Let us worship.**

Kindling the Christ Light

Opening Hymn: PH 356

Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Come Thou fount of every blessing
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
Mount of God's unchanging love.

Here I raise my Ebenezer;
Hither by Thy help I'm come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood.

O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

One: **Maker of lights, today we confess with clarity that you have crafted each of us to live in solidarity with you and our neighbors including the soil and water beneath us, the climate that fills our lungs around us, and the flora and fauna kin before us. But too often the way we live our lives, the way we uncritically participate in economic & societal systems, violates that sacred solidarity. We miss the core of undefiled religion that the orphans and widows in Afghanistan & Haiti are our very own kin. Help us change as we seek your reconciliation and grace.**

One: Let us now spend time in silence with our Creator...

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

One: No short-coming, no forgetfulness, no distraction, no distance can keep us from the love of God in Christ. That love reconciles us and sets us back on track to live in deep solidarity with all.
Therefore, liberated ones, let us celebrate together:

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

Sung Response

Hallelujah, We Sing Your Praises

Scripture Reading from the New Testament: James 1:17-27

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Maker of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. In fulfillment of God's own purpose birth was given by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of our Creator. You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; for your anger does not produce God's justice.

Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of injustice, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls.

But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.

If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Creator, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

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

Reflection on the Word

Call to Offering

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

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

Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Christ all creatures here below,
Praise God for all that love has done,
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One.

Prayer of Dedication

Celebrations and Concerns

One: God, in your grace,
Many: **Receive our prayer.**

Pastoral 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.**

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**Participating in Today's Worship**

**Worship Leaders** – Rev. Rob Mark, Rev. Joshua Lazard

**Cantor & Music Recordings** – Tom Handel, Rev. Tom Reid and Tim Groves

*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!*

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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. 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.

**JUBILEE JAUNT TODAY:** Join Diane Lauber and Syd Smith today, 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](#), questions. [Sign up 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.

- August 29, Reflection on the Word
- September 5, Communion
- September 12, Rev. Rob preaching, First limited in-person worship from 67 Newbury Street since March 2020!!! More info TBA...

[Zoom link for each Sunday](#)

**RETREAT REGISTRATION 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 here: [forms.gle/zhed13cUGavQda3A7!](https://forms.gle/zhed13cUGavQda3A7)

**NEW! STAFF VACATIONS:** Tom Handel is taking this week off. Please be in touch with Rev. Rob if you need anything in his absence.

**NEW! WEDNESDAY SUMMER EVENING PRAYERS ON ZOOM:** Join us this Wednesday, September 1 for our weekly evening prayers, this time back on [Zoom](#).

**NEW! CLIMATE JUBILEE TEAM “LINK OF THE MONTH”!:** A recent article our team recommends: Some good news: [Citing climate, court blocks vast Alaskan drilling project](#) and the PCUSA’s Hunger Program [provides this very helpful set of links](#) on how we can collectively and individually respond to the recent IPCC report.

**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](#).

**GBIO MAYORAL FORUM:** GBIO will host a zoom action with ALL FIVE candidates for Mayor of Boston on Tuesday, August 31<sup>st</sup> at 7:00PM. If you are a Boston voter, or if you have an interest in this election, please register to attend. The link to register is [bit.ly/gbiomayor](https://bit.ly/gbiomayor). GBIO estimates that we can bring 1000 people to this action and we hope you will plan to join us.

**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:** 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](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

**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](mailto: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](#).

**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>

**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](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*

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*