

Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



Seventeenth Sunday of Pentecost

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ

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



Church of the Covenant
Seventeenth Sunday of Pentecost
September 12, 2021 10:30 am [Zoom Link](#)

Note: *Welcome and thank you for worshipping together! For this first ever “hybrid” service where some will be in the sanctuary of their homes, and some in the sanctuary at 67 Newbury Street, we will plan to remain on Zoom for the entire service. Clear directions will be given throughout the service on how to fully participate.*

Welcome & Announcements

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

Prelude *Rhosymedre (Welsh hymn tune) Ralph Vaughan Williams*

***Call to Worship**

One: Here we listen.	Many: Here we speak.
One: Here we question.	Many: Here we wonder.
One: Together we share Comfort.	Many: Together we share Pain.
One: Together we find community.	Many: Together we find God.

Kindling the Christ Light

Opening Hymn: PH 376 *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*

1. Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven to earth come down,
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,
All Thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.

2. Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit
Into every troubled breast!
Let us all in Thee inherit,
Let us find that second rest;
Take away the love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

3. Come, Almighty to deliver,
Let us all Thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Nevermore Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.

4. Finish, then, Thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

Iona Community

**Many: O God, bring new life, where we are worn and tired;
new love, where we have turned hard-hearted;
forgiveness, where we have wounded;
and the joy and freedom of your Holy Spirit, where we are
the prisoners of ourselves.**

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

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

One: As we become doers of the word and not merely hearers, we discover that it is "in pardoning that we are pardoned, in giving of ourselves that we receive." Therefore, as pardoned givers, let us say together:

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

Refrain

O-ver my head, I hear mu-sic in the air; o-ver my head, I hear mu-sic in the air; o-ver my head, I hear mu-sic in the air; there must be a God some - where.

Fine

Scripture Readings:

Responsive Reading of Psalm 19:1-4 (*The Message translation*)

One: God's glory is on tour in the skies, God-craft on exhibit across the horizon. Madame Day holds classes every morning, Professor Night lectures each evening.

Many: **Their words aren't heard, Their voices aren't recorded, But their silence fills the earth: unspoken truth is spoken everywhere.**

One: God makes a huge dome for the sun—a superdome! The morning sun's a new spouse leaping from the honeymoon bed, the daybreaking sun an athlete racing to the tape.

Many: **That's how God's Word vaults across the skies from sunrise to sunset, melting ice, scorching deserts, warming hearts to faith.**

New Testament Reading: James 3:1-12

Not many of you should become teachers, my siblings, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits. How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. For every species of animal and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless God, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My siblings, this ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? Can a fig tree, my siblings, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

Gospel Reading: Mark 8:27-38

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” And they answered him, “John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” He asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Messiah.” And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

Then he began to teach them that the Promised One must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, you Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?

Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Whoever in this faithless and corrupt generation is ashamed of me and my words will find, in turn, that the Promised One and the holy angels will be ashamed of that person, when all come before our God in glory.”

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

Sung Response

Over My Head

Sermon

The Expense of Speech

***Hymn:** NCH 476 (black)

My Life Flows On in Endless Song

My life flows on, in endless song, above earth's lamentation
I hear the sweet, though far-off hymns, that hails a new creation.
Through all the tumult and the strife, I hear the music ringing,
It finds an echo in my soul, how can I keep from singing?

What though my joys and comforts die? My Savior still is living.
What though the shadows gather round? A new song Christ is giving.
No storm can shake my inmost calm, while to that Rock I'm clinging,
Since love commands both heaven & earth, how can I keep from singing?

When tyrants tremble sick with fear, and hear their death knells ringing,
When friends rejoice both far and near, how can I keep from singing?
In prison cell and dungeon vile our thoughts to them are winging,
When friends by shame are undefiled, how can I keep from singing?

I lift my eyes, the clouds grow thin, I see the blue above it,
And day by day this pathway smooths, since first I learned to love it.
The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart, a fountain ever springing,
All things are mine since I am Christ's, how can I keep from singing?

Call to Offering

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

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

Offertory

Hornpipe (Water Music)

G. F. Handel

***Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God 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.**

Participating in Today's Worship

Preacher – Rev. Rob Mark

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Liturgist – Rev. Joshua Lazard

Lector – Faith Perry

Digital Minister – Rev. Kate Carlisle

Cantors – Betsy 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!

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.

- September 12, Rev. Rob preaching, First limited in-person "hybrid" worship from 67 Newbury Street since March 2020, and on Zoom.
- September 19, Outdoor Climate Jubilee Service
- September 26, Rev. Joshua preaching

[Zoom link for each Sunday](#)

REGISTER FOR IN PERSON OPTION FOR WORSHIP!! For the first time in over 500 days, we offering in-person options for worship on Sunday, September 12, 2021. Thanks be to God! [Click here to register.](#) In order to do this in a safe and compassionate way, keeping the most vulnerable in our community protected, and risks low, we will require pre-registration and proof of COVID vaccination. In order to maintain physical distancing, services will be available for the first 25 people who pre-register (look for registration to come out over [church e-listserv](#) each week). Each person who attends in person will be required to show a copy (photocopy or photo from your phone/ camera) of their vaccination card as per Council's decision. Masks will be required for the entire service. Singing hymns with masks on will be allowed. And those who do not come in person will be able to fully worship online via Zoom & YouTube live as per usual.

OUTDOOR JUBILEE WORSHIP SUNDAY 9/19 10:30am: Next week, our Climate Jubilee Team will invite us to take part in an outdoor service that will be part pilgrimage, part processional, part prayer walk, part rally, part protest march, part blessing as we walk from the corner of the Public Garden over the newly opened Arthur Fielder bridge to the Esplanade. We will begin at 10:30am at the George Robert White Memorial Angel ("Cast Thy Bread Upon the Waters") near the corner of Arlington & Beacon, and finish near the Hatch Shell on the Esplanade. Masks & pre-registration required. Look for email from COTC next week.

NEW! BOSTON VOTES SEPT 14! If you are a Boston Voter and will vote at your polling place on September 14th, you have the chance to help rectify a significant inequity! Some precincts in Boston have thousands of registered voters and some have just a few hundred. Precincts serving people of color tend to be the more crowded, which means longer wait times and more inconvenience for people of color who want to vote. When you arrive at your polling place on primary day, September 14th, you can help by recording how long it takes you to vote. A Northeastern University research team working with GBIO will gather the data and make the case for changing the precinct boundaries. All you need to do is use your smartphone to log in to www.Time2VoteBoston.org when you arrive at your polling place. On the website, simply enter your phone number and then start the timer. Turn it off when you have finished voting. Those who participate will have a chance to win a \$50 gift card. For more information contact Faith Perry at flejpw@aol.com.

NEW! WEDNESDAY SUMMER EVENING PRAYERS ON ZOOM: Join us this Wednesday, September 15, 6:00-6:30pm for our weekly evening prayers in solidarity with our siblings in faith at Newton Presbyterian Church: [ZOOM](#).

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

NEW! 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! 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 Also, see below:

- **Save-The-Date: The 20s30s40s Retreat** is scheduled for Saturday, October 16, 2021. There will be more details forthcoming. However, if you wish to reserve your spot, please [email Rev. Joshua](#) at by September 30th.
- **20s30s40s Sunday Brunches have returned!** Following the worship service, the 20s30s40s group will resume having out once-a-month after-church shared meal on the following dates: September 26, October 17, November 21 and December 19th. More details about in-person or virtual meetings will be forthcoming via the listserv. For further questions, please don’t hesitate to reach out via email to [Rev. Joshua](#).

CHILDREN’S AND YOUTH PROGRAMMING: If you would like to learn more about or connect with our vital ministries with children and youth, [email Rev. Kate](#).

RETREAT DEADLINE THIS WEEK: With a deadline of September 15, this is the final week to register for the COTC All Church Retreat, Friday Oct. 1 – 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.” How do we open up to the world in an uncertain time while feeding from deep spiritual roots? Registration and more info here: [forms.gle/zhed13cUGavQda3A7!](https://forms.gle/zhed13cUGavQda3A7)

NEW! IDA: WANT TO HELP? Here are ways to help around Hurricane Ida, with BIPOC and food justice in focus: <https://anothergulf.com/ida/>

1. [Market Umbrella](#), and [Crescent Fund](#) will go directly support farmers, fishers, ranchers, and food producers.
2. [Sprout and VEGGI](#) and [Local Food Purchasing Fund](#), are supporting farmers and food producers through value chain coordination.
3. [Culture Aid](#) is bringing freshly prepared meals to distribution points around the city of New Orleans.

NEW! AFGHAN REFUGEES: WANT TO HELP? The [PCUSA](#) and [September 11 Webinar from UCC](#).

CREW Climate Preparedness Week: Sept 24-30, [stay tuned](#).

NEW! SAVE THE DATE: Former Student Minister with us, Megan Berkowitz is getting ordained! Sunday Oct. 3, 3pm on Zoom.

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. <https://www.greenteamsummit.org/>

EMERGING & GETTING TOGETHER: These past 18 months have been long and hard, and it has been extra hard being separated from in-person gatherings. This fall, we'd like to continue to provide chances to safely gather together. 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](mailto:Trudi.Veldman).
- **Outdoor Evening Prayers:** Each week we alternate between in-person and on Zoom prayers.
- **Climate Jubilee Jaunts:** Once a month, our Climate Jubilee Team will be hosting some outdoor walks/ hikes in and around Boston. Stay tuned for news about future jaunts.

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR: GET VACCINATED! At this church we believe fully in the efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccine and ask that everyone eligible get vaccinated. Check here for details: <https://vaxfinder.mass.gov/> If you have any concerns or questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to Rob, Joshua, Kate or our Deacons.

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*