

Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



Sixteenth Sunday of Pentecost

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ

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



Church of the Covenant
Sixteenth Sunday of Pentecost

September 5, 2021 10:30 am

[Zoom Link](#)

Note: *We will begin on Zoom as usual, and then to facilitate live quality sound from organ over the internet, we will be invited to switch over to YouTube Live link from the prelude until communion. All will be invited to keep their Zoom link open throughout the service, as we will return to Zoom for the Celebrations and Concerns.*

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you!

Many: **And also with you!**

YouTube Live Streaming Link:

youtube.com/channel/UCUgqWdRTyqb0yeOpR3x6UYA

Prelude

Pastoral

Josef Rheinberger

Call to Worship

One: Come to hear the Word.

Many: Come to do the Word.

One: Come to share Comfort.

Many: Come to share Pain.

One: Come to be Challenged.

Many: Come to be Joyful.

One: Come to find community.

Many: Come to find God.

Kindling the Christ Light

Opening Hymn: PH 339

Be Thou My Vision

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Nought be all else to me, save that Thou art –
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
Great God of heaven, my treasure Thou art.

Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

Many: Heart of our own heart, we come before you today knowing that we often fall short of your call to love one another. We allow ourselves to be distracted by many things, including stuff, screens, worries and power. We are not always tuned in to those around us who suffer injustice, poverty, and rejection. Help us, O Ruler of all, to hear your words of reconciling mercy, and feel your great love for all who need your redemptive grace, whatever befall.

One: Spend time in silence now with the Heart of your heart...

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!

Sung Response

Over My Head

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 Reading from the New Testament: James 2:1-17

My siblings, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, “Have a seat here, please,” while to the one who is poor you say, “Stand there,” or, “Sit at my feet,” have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved siblings. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that has been promised to those who love God? But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?

You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever

keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. For the one who said, ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ also said, ‘You shall not murder.’ Now if you do not commit adultery but if you murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment. What good is it, my siblings, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a sibling is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,’ and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

Gospel Reading: Mark 7:31-37

Then Jesus returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, ‘Ephphatha,’ that is, ‘Be opened.’ And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. They were astounded beyond measure, saying, ‘He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.’

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

Sung Response

Over My Head

Reflection

Siblings Out of Power

Call to Offering

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

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

Offertory

Intermezzo

Rheinberger

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

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

Communion Hymn: PH 514

Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ

Let us talents and tongues employ, reaching out with a shout of joy
Bread is broken the wine is poured, Christ is spoken and seen and heard.

Refrain: Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the Word around, loaves abound!

Christ is able to make us one, at his table he set the tone,
Teaching people to live and bless, love in word and in deed express

Refrain: Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the Word around, loaves abound!

Jesus calls us in, sends us out bearing fruit in a world of doubt,
Gives us love to tell, bread to share, God (Im-man-u-el) everywhere!

Refrain: Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the Word around, loaves abound!

The Great Thanksgiving

One: May God be with you!

Many: And also with you.

One: People of Covenant, 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

(Casa Del Sol)

Ground of all being, Mother of life, Father of the universe, Your name is sacred, beyond speaking. May we know your presence, may your longings be our longings in heart and in action. May there be food for the human family today and for the whole earth community. Forgive us the falseness of what we have done as we forgive those who are untrue to us. Do not forsake us in our time of conflict but lead us into new beginnings. For the light of life, the vitality of life, and the glory of life are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Sharing of the Bread and Cup & Post Communion Prayer

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

Reflection – Rev. Rob Mark

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Liturgists – Anne Crane and Rev. Joshua Lazard

Lector – Jack Ammerman

Cantor – David McKinney

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. 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.

UPCOMING WORSHIP ON SUNDAYS: Please join us each Sunday at 10:30am as we come together in community through Zoom to pray, sing, share celebrations and concerns, and hear God's still-speaking Word proclaimed.

- September 5, Communion
- September 12, Rev. Rob preaching, First limited in-person worship from 67 Newbury Street since March 2020!!! More info below...
- September 19, Outdoor Climate Rogation Liturgy Service
- September 26, Rev. Joshua preaching

[Zoom link for each Sunday](#)

“COFFEE 15-20 MINUTE” BREAK OUT ROOMS: Today following the passing of peace time, we will break out into Zoom groups for some informal sharing/ fellowship. If you'd like not to be randomly assigned into a group, please just log off when invited to do so following the passing of the peace – thanks!

NEXT SUNDAY IN PERSON OPTION FOR WORSHIP!! For the first time in over 500 days, we are planning to have in-person options for worship on Sunday, September 12, 2021. Thanks be to God! 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, this initial hybrid service will be available for the first 25 people who pre-register (look for registration to come out early next 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 for those who do not come in person will be able to fully worship online via Zoom & YouTube live as per usual. More details to come next week.

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

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! WEDNESDAY SUMMER EVENING PRAYERS IN PERSON:

Join us this Wednesday, September 8 for our weekly evening prayers, this time we will be in person outside with our siblings in faith at Newton Presbyterian Church, 75 Vernon St. Please RSVP with Rob in advance.

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](#).

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. 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. 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

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](#). 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

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*