

Church of the Covenant Boston, MA



Jubilee
Branches to Blessing



Jubilee Series (3 of 3)
Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost
[ZOOM LINK \(click here\)](#)



Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Jubilee Series 3rd of 3

September 27, 2020 10:30 am

[Zoom link:](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/91025989890?pwd=VTd0L3VMc3ErRDBRTllpTTEvRGNZUT09)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/91025989890?pwd=VTd0L3VMc3ErRDBRTllpTTEvRGNZUT09>

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you!

Many: **And also with you!**

Prelude

Morning Has Broken

arr. Teresa Wilhelmi

Call To Worship

One: We come to church this morning O God,

Many: **Craving truth, thirsting for hope.**

One: But when police once again get away with breaking the law,

Many: **We come to worship angry.**

One: When leaders lie, deceive and denigrate,

Many: **We come to worship frustrated.**

One: When we see people suffering and the earth hurting,

Many: **We come to worship worn out.**

One: So we come together once again this day O God,

Many: **To be renewed by your transformative love.**

One: When it feels as if the forces of evil are getting stronger,

Many: **Remind us of your power, fill us with your strength.**

One: When we feel the clouds of anxiety circling,

Many: **Help us see that your angels hover even closer.**

One: And as we listen once again for the soundings of jubilee,

Many: **May we rise up together as your beloved community.**

Lighting the Light of Christ

Opening Hymn: PH 434

Today We are all called to be Disciples

1. Today we are all called to be
Disciples of the Lord,
To help to set the captives free,
Make plow-share out of sword,
To feed the hungry, quench their thirst,
Make love and peace our fast,
To serve the poor and homeless first,
Our ease and comfort last.
2. God made the world and at its birth
Ordained our human race
To live as stewards of the earth,
Responding to God's grace.
But we are vain and sadly proud,
We sow not peace but strife,
Our discord spreads a deadly cloud
That threatens all of life.
3. Pray justice may come rolling down
As in a mighty stream,
With righteousness in field and town
To cleanse us and redeem.
For God is longing to restore
An earth where conflicts cease,
A world that was created for
A harmony of peace.
4. May we in service to our God
Act out the living word,
And walk the road the saints have trod
Till all have seen and heard.
As stewards of the earth may we
Give thanks in one accord
To God who calls us all to be
Disciples of the Lord.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace:

One: Too often O God, "our discord spreads a deadly cloud that threatens all of life." So in solidarity with our Jewish siblings about to enter into Yom Kippur's way of atonement:

Many: We long for the air to be freed of this cloud, and so we turn to you in truth.

One: As we examine our own hearts and notice our judgments of others, our insecurities with ourselves, and our unexamined prejudices –

Many: We say "sorry."

One: For the times we avoid your call to justice in preference of our own comfort or fear of confrontation –

Many: We say "sorry."

One: For the times we rest on our "progressive" laurels or grow complacent with privileges unearned –

Many: We say "sorry."

One: As we listen now for jubilee's sounding,

Many: We ask that you forgive us, unbind us, unify us, and set us free in your loving grace.

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

One: In the midst of the chaotic or the traumatic; in the midst of the exciting or the mundane – God's voice resounds like the trumpets of jubilee with the good news of liberation:

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

Sung Response:

Song of Hope / Canto de esperanza

May the God of hope go with us everyday,
filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.
May the God of justice speed us on our way,
Bringing light and hope to every land and race.
Praying, let us work for peace;
Singing, share our joy with all;
Working, for a world that's new;
Faithful, when we hear Christ's call.

Scripture Readings:

Hebrew Bible Reading: Isaiah 61

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because God has anointed me;
she has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the broken-hearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
to proclaim the year of Jubilee,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of God, to display her glory.
They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks,
foreigners shall till your land and dress your vines;
but you shall be called priests of the Lord,
you shall be named ministers of our God;
you shall enjoy the wealth of the nations,
and in their riches you shall glory.
Because their shame was double,
and dishonor was proclaimed as their lot,
therefore they shall possess a double portion;
everlasting joy shall be theirs.

For I the Lord love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;

all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.
I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for she has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
she has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom is decked with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so God will cause justice and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

Gospel Reading: Luke 4:14-21

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’

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

Sermon

Jubilee: Branches to Blessing

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 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**Closing Hymn**

The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve

1. The Spirit Sends us forth to serve we go in Jesus name,
to bring glad tidings to the poor, God's favor to proclaim.
2. We go to comfort those who mourn and set the burdened free,
Where hope is dim, to share a dream and help the world to see.
3. We go to be the hands of Christ, to scatter joy like seed,
And all our days to cherish life, to do the loving deed.
4. Then let us go to serve in peace, the gospel to proclaim.
God's spirit has empowered us; we go in Jesus' name.

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.**

Participating in Today's Worship

Preacher – Rev. Rob Mark

Liturgist – Rev. Joshua Lazard

Lector – Lucy Williams

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Cantors – Betsy & Tim Groves, Tom Reid

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.

The announcements that follow reflect the ongoing abundant life that is Church of the Covenant:

VOTING: ADULT ED NEXT SUNDAY OCTOBER 4: Directly following worship on Zoom. Voting. How do we each vote this year? And how might we honor our Missional commitment to climate justice specifically in the way we vote and the ways we help reduce the barriers to others to vote. Join us for this important discussion put on by our Climate Jubilee Team.

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.

- Sundays, September 13-27 Special Sermon Series on the scriptural roots of Jubilee, Rev. Rob preaching:
 - September 13 **Jubilee: Roots in Rest:** Genesis, Exodus and Isaiah
 - September 20 **Jubilee: Soil of Solidarity:** Leviticus 25 / Communion
 - September 27 **Jubilee: Branches to Blessing:** Luke 4
- Sundays, October 4-18 Special Sermon Series on Climate Jubilee:
 - October 4 World Communion Sunday & Special Offering, Rev. Joshua preaching
 - October 11 Blessing of the Animals Service
 - October 18 Communion

Upcoming Sunday Adult Eds following worship:

- Oct. 4 – *Climate Jubilee Team helps us focus on voting with creation in mind this fall*
- Oct. 11 – *presentation and congregational meeting on the columbarium proposal at COTC*

Here are the Zoom details for Sundays:

join by computer/ tablet/ smartphone:

<https://zoom.us/j/91025989890?pwd=VTd0L3VMc3ErRDBRTlplTTEvRGNZUT09>

one tap mobile: +16465588656,,91025989890#,,#,892502#

join by phone: +1 646 558 8656, Meeting ID: 910 2598 9890, Password: 892502

Some suggestions to aid in your worship for you to consider:

1. Printing the bulletin out in advance so you have it during worship
2. Pulling the bulletin up on a second device/phone/screen
3. Pulling both the bulletin up and Zoom, and switch between them as needed.
The liturgy, songs, and scripture are the important times to have this bulletin visible if possible.
4. And if none of these options work for you, no worries—just following the link will be fine – you will be able to worship fully.

NEIGHBORS IN NEED AND PEACE AND GLOBAL WITNESS

SPECIAL OFFERINGS – October 4th. On World Communion Sunday, October 4th, we celebrate the unity of Christians worldwide. We celebrate our connections to Nicaragua, Malawi and the Congo as well as our connections with congregations in every neighborhood of Boston and the suburbs. On World Communion Sunday we also give to support both our denominations' efforts to bring about peace and reconciliation. Both the UCC Neighbors in Need offering and the PCUSA Peace and Global Witness fund programs help to bring people together in countries and communities experiencing racism, conflict and deprivation. Part of the total collected will support the Boston Area Gleaners, a local group which collects food that would otherwise be wasted from local farms to provide fresh produce to local food pantries and feeding programs, all of which are experiencing higher than usual demand. For more information visit the following websites and give generously:

<https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/offering/peace-global-witness/>

<https://www.ucc.org/nin>

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

Covenant's giving site has a "Peacemaking Offering" category for your gifts, or you can send a check to COTC at 67 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

WEDS EVENING PRAYERS (in person): Sept 30 – for those who have signed up, we look forward to gathering in person – you will hear from Rob via email this week with more details. Starting in October, we will resume Zoom weekly prayers.

CONGREGATION CLIMATE JUSTICE VOTER

CHALLENGE: Covenant's Council voted unanimously on August 18 to join the Congregation Climate Justice Voter Challenge initiated by the Southern New England Conference of the UCC. Needless to say, our country is at an important crossroads this year and our ability to address and deal with climate change and climate justice issues, as well as other important social justice issues which are important to us, will be affected by our elections this Fall. This is true at all levels – local, state and Federal. So voter engagement is crucial! And Council accepted the recommendation of the Climate Jubilee Team to join this Challenge for at least 75% of our members to sign. So please sign!--at this link: (<https://sneucc-reg.brtapp.com/CreationCareVoterPledge>)

By signing the Pledge, one simply says that they "pledge to be a consistent voter" and "always to prioritize caring for God's creation in how I vote." The Challenge has two levels: First, individual congregations are asked to challenge themselves to have a least 75% of their members commit to being faithful and regular voters. Second, the Southern New England Conference's Environmental Ministries Team hopes that many churches in MA, CT and RI will join in accepting the Challenge for their congregations.

More information on the Congregation Climate Justice Voter Challenge is on the SNEUCC.org website (<https://www.sneucc.org/congregation-climate-justice-voter-challenge>).

BIBLE STUDY ON WEDNESDAY MORNINGS: We gather on Zoom at 10:00am for about an hour for a "BYOB" (bring your own Bible) gathering. Currently, we are taking a look at the Book of Psalms, which runs the gamut of human emotion. Drop in any week!

join by computer/ tablet/ smartphone:

<https://zoom.us/j/104478666?pwd=MHAwdEY5VVNvdVFkbVA1R2U3Z3NnUT09>

one tap mobile: +16465588656,,104478666#,,#581626#

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.

20s-30s-40s GROUP AT COVENANT: We have an active young adult group that meets regularly to create community, even while we can’t be together physically. Join us on Monday evenings at 7:30 PM for a weekly time to pray and connect via conference call at (712) 432-0220, access code 2667480#. If you’d like to be added to our email list, contact one of our group leaders: Kathryn Barry, Melissa Morgan, Tom Reid, or Rev. Adam at youngadults@cotcbos.org.

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*

Hillary Gabbidon, *Parish Administrator*

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*

Nancy Stockford, *Financial Secretary*