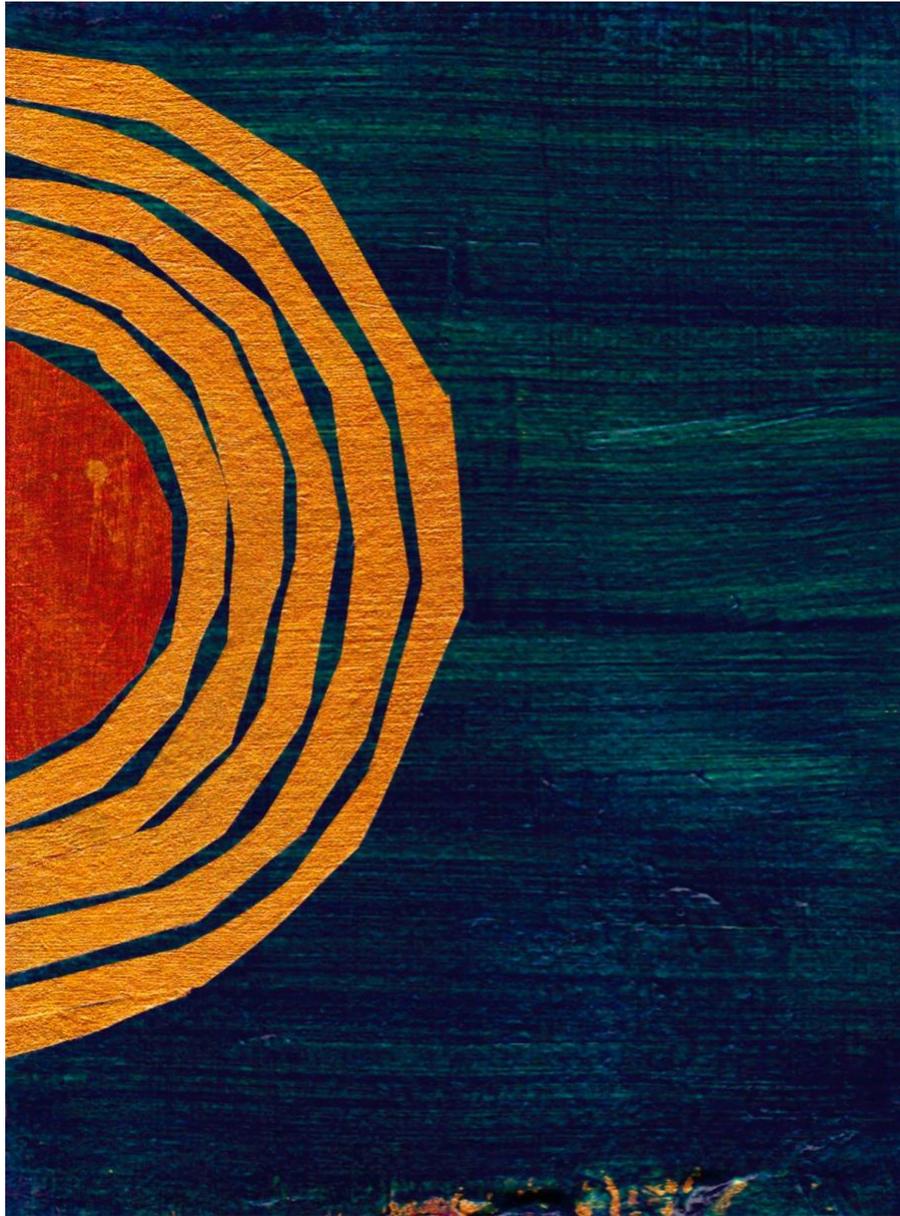


Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



Summer Solstice (Litha) Evensong
Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ



Church of the Covenant
Summer Solstice Evensong
The Sacred Shores of the Quinobequin
June 21, 2022, 7:30 pm

Welcome

One: Peace be with you.
Many: And also with you.

Finding & Naming Our Place

Grounding Intention

Many: Awash us anew this
solstice.
In mystery beyond.
In splendor within.
In love that shines.

We seek not answers in
the light of this stretched
long day.
But presence.
Strength.
Openness.
Awe.



Centering Song

Opening Prayer

One: At this solstice beginning of summer, and at the ending of this day,
in the long light that stretches into the shortness of the night,

Many: **we seek an inner assurance of your presence, O God.**

One: Our bodies are still, our souls are silent, as we listen for the renewing
springs of your Spirit deep in the ground of our being and in the
earth's quietness all around us.

Many: **Guide us to the wellsprings of health in the landscapes of our
souls and to the hidden reservoirs of strength in the people and
places of our lives, that we may be made well this solstice, that
all may be made well this solstice. Amen.**

Kindling the Light

Directional Intentions

Sacred Readings

Genesis 1

from Celtic Treasure by John Philip Newell

On the fourth day God said, 'Let there be lights in the heavens.' So, the wind carried fire on its wings and scattered light through the skies. There was a great light to rule the day and a gentler light to rule the night. And there were glittering galaxies beyond number. The sun, the moon and the stars moved in harmony. They guided the seasons. They marked the days and the years. They shone on earth as signs of heaven. God saw that it was good. And there was evening and morning, creation's fourth day.

Psalm 84

Nan C. Merrill

How glorious is your dwelling place,
O Blessed Architect
of the universe!
My soul longs, yes, aches for
the abode of the Beloved;
All that is within me sings for joy
to the living Heart of Love!

Even as the sparrow finds a home,
and the swallow a nesting place,
where its young are raised within
your majestic creation,
You invite us to dwell within
your Heart.

Blessed are they who put their strength
in You,
who choose to share the joy and
sorrows of the world.

They do not give way to fear or doubt;
they are quickened by Divine
Light and Power;
they dwell within the peace of
the Most High.

They go from strength to strength and
live with integrity.

O Eternal Lover, hear my prayer;
give ear, O Divine Comforter!
Forgive what is unholy within me;
free me from my illusions!

For a day within the Heart of Love
is more to be desired than
a thousand elsewhere.

I would rather be a servant in your
dwelling place,
than live in riches among
those who know not Love.

For the Beloved is as radiant as the sun,
as strong as a steel shield,
and invites each one to come,
to partake of the Banquet.

Litha Song

Lisa Thiel, Circle of The Seasons

I am the fire that burns within your soul
I am the Holy light that fills and makes you whole
I am the Flame within, that never dies
I am the sun that will ever arise
Power of the Sun, we honor you this night
We leap across the fire to keep our spirits bright
Power of the Sun, fire in the night
We leave behind, that which blinds, to restore our sight

I cannot tell you
how the light comes.

What I know
is that it is more ancient
than imagining.

That it travels
across an astounding expanse
to reach us.

That it loves
searching out
what is hidden,
what is lost,
what is forgotten
or in peril
or in pain.

That it has a fondness
for the body,
for finding its way
toward flesh,
for tracing the edges
of form,
for shining forth
through the eye,
the hand,
the heart.

I cannot tell you
how the light comes,
but that it does.
That it will.
That it works its way
into the deepest dark
that enfolds you,
though it may seem
long ages in coming
or arrive in a shape
you did not foresee.

And so
may we this day
turn ourselves toward it.
May we lift our faces
to let it find us.
May we bend our bodies
to follow the arc it makes.
May we open
and open more
and open still
to the blessed light
that comes.

*from Circle of Grace: A Book of
Blessings for the Seasons*

“I have only to break into the tightness of a strawberry, and I see summer—its dust and lowering skies.” — Toni Morrison

“Early summer days are a jubilee time for birds. In the fields, around the house, in the barn, in the woods, in the swamp—everywhere love and songs and nests and eggs.” — E.B. White

Solstice as Emancipation *Henry Louis Gates, Jr.*

Of all Emancipation Day observances, Juneteenth falls closest to the summer solstice, the longest day of the year, when the sun, at its zenith, defies the darkness in every state, including those once shadowed by slavery. By choosing to celebrate the *last* place in the South that freedom touched — reflecting the mystical glow of history and lore, memory and myth, as Ralph Ellison evoked in his posthumous novel, *Juneteenth* — we remember the shining promise of emancipation, along with the bloody path America took by delaying it and deferring fulfillment of those simple, unanticipating words in Gen. Granger’s original order No. 3: that “This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves.”

Sharing Intentions

Thanking the Light

Shoreline Sensory Prayer Walk: Touch, Feel, Breathe, Listen

Praying with the Earth Evening Prayers

Additional Sharing of Intentions and Inspirational Readings

Shared Silence as the Sun Moves On

Closing Blessing

One: May the long time sun
 Shine upon you
 All love surround you
 May all love surround you
 And the pure light within you
 Guide your way on.

One: For the day now done,
Many: Thanks be to God.
One: For the summer that stretches before us,
Many: Thanks be to God.
One: Because God never sleeps, so we can,
Many: Thanks be to God.
One: Guide our waking, O Lord.
Many: And guard our sleeping.
One: That awake we may watch with Christ,
Many: And asleep we may rest in peace.

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.



Church of the Covenant
Boston Massachusetts

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Song

This Little Light of Mine

- 1) This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine (x3)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine
- 2) Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine (x3)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

Song

Down By the Riverside

- 1) I'm gonna lay down my burdens, down by the riverside (x3)
I'm gonna lay down my burdens, down by the riverside, Study war no more.
Refrain: I ain't gonna study war no more (x6)
- 2) I'm gonna lay down my fear and shame, down by the riverside (x3)...

Song

As I went down in the river to pray

*As I went down in the river to pray...
Studying about that good old way
And who shall wear the starry crown,
good Lord, show me the way*

- 1) O Siblings, let's go down, let's go down, c'mon down
O siblings, let's go down, down in the river to pray.
- 2) O Children...

Song

Spirit of God Unseen as the Wind

Refrain: Spir - it of God un - seen as the wind, gen - tle as is the dove,

Lead us a - long, fill us with song, show us the way to love. **Fine**

Verse: You spoke to us, long long a - go gave us the sa - cred Word;

You speak still now, through earth and sky, in all things God is heard. **D.C.**