

Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



Fifth Sunday of Easter
Sacraments of Baptism & Communion

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ

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



Church of the Covenant

May 2, 2021 10:30 am

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Sacraments of Baptism and Communion

Zoom Link:

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

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you!

Many: **And also with you!**

One: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Many: **Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Prelude

A la nanita nana

Spanish Lullaby

Call To Worship

John O'Donohue

One: May we live this day,

Many: **Compassionate of heart,**

One: Gracious in awareness,

Many: **Courageous in thought,**

One: Generous in love.

Many: **For Christ is alive!**

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

Many: **God of empty tombs: when we hesitate to speak of your hope, forgive us, and give us voice. When we find it difficult to love another, forgive us, and give us new compassion. When we do not hear the witness of others, forgive us, and redirect our attention to those who are too often forgotten. When we forget your image deep within, remind us.**

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

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

When I Am Among The Trees by Mary Oliver

When I am among the trees,
especially the willows and the honey locust,
equally the beech, the oaks and the pines,
they give off such hints of gladness.
I would almost say that they save me, and
daily.
I am so distant from the hope of myself,
in which I have goodness, and discernment,
and never hurry through the world



but walk slowly, and bow often.

Around me the trees stir in their leaves and call out, "Stay awhile."

The light flows from their branches.

And they call again, "It's simple," they say,

"and you too have come

into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled with light, and to shine."

One: Fellow forgiven friends, let us shine as we celebrate:

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

Alleluia, Amen!

Sung Response:

Easter Celtic Alleluia

Al - le - lu - ia, a - le - lu - ia!

Al - le - lu - ia, a - le - lu - ia!

Scripture Readings

Hebrew Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 17:7-8

Blessed are those who trust in God,
whose trust is the Holy One.

They shall be like a tree planted by water,
sending out its roots by the stream.

It shall not fear when heat comes,
and its leaves shall stay green;
in the year of drought it is not anxious,
and it does not cease to bear fruit.

Gospel Readings: John 15:4-5

Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.

Mark 8:22-25 They came to Bethsaida. Some people brought a visually impaired person to Jesus and begged for a healing touch. Jesus took the blind person by the hand and led them out of the village; and when he had put saliva on the eyes and laid hands on them, he asked, ‘Can you see anything?’ And the person looked up and said, ‘I can see people, but they look like trees, walking.’ Then Jesus laid his hands on the eyes again; and looked intently and the sight was restored, and everything became clear.

New Testament Reading: Revelation 22:1-2

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Sermon

A Tree Planted by the Waters

Call to Offering

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

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

Offertory

At the River

arr. Aaron Copland

Rev. Tom Reid - Soloist

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

Celebrations and Concerns

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

Pastoral Prayer

The Sacrament of Baptism: Hannah Miller Waters

Invitation to the Font of Every Blessing

Baptism Gathering Song

Down in the River

Chorus: 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 children, let's go down, let's go down, come on down
O children, let's go down, down in the river to pray. Chorus.

Questions for the Congregation

Do we trust that Hannah will be held in God's grace wherever her journey in life and faith lead? Do we promise to provide education that will help her reveal the work and movement of God within her? Do we promise to incorporate her into the life and mission of this congregation through all stages of her childhood? Do we promise to share our faith and our questions with her, to answer her questions as we are able, and to encourage her inquiry? Will we share with her the wonder, love and joy of life connected to the Holy Spirit? Will we surround her with a church ready to hear and act upon God's word in this day and age? And finally, will we give thanks that Hannah is always held in the Spirit's loving care?

If so, please answer together: **"We do and we will."**

Welcoming the Newly Baptized

I'm gonna eat at the welcome table,
I'm gonna eat at the welcome table, some of these days.
I'm gonna eat at the welcome table,
I'm gonna eat at the welcome table, some of these days.

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

The Great Thanksgiving

One: May God be with you!

Many: **And also with you.**

One: People of Living Water, 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

(in unison)

Our Father and Mother, who is in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Breaking of the Bread & Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Post Communion 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.**

*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!

Participating in Today's Worship

Preaching – Rev. Rob Mark

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Liturgists/Lectors – Rev. Joshua Lazard, Rev. Kate Carlisle, Barbara Darling,
Diane Lauber

Cantors – Tim Groves and Rev. Tom Reid

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.

CLIMATE JUBILEE ADULT ED TODAY AFTER WORSHIP: On this Arbor Day weekend, please join us as the Climate Jubilee Team leads us in a second adult ed based on the theme of *trees*, with a discussion of how science is revealing all that trees and forests can teach us about resilience, community, affection and even jubilee. If you can, come to this session having reviewed some or all of the readings and videos linked [here](#). We look forward to sharing some time together on the same Zoom channel following worship.

FREE TREES!! & ARBOR DAY: Our Climate Jubilee Team is teaming up with Boston's Speak for the Trees and offering free tree seedlings to anyone who is interested: Persimmon, Fraiser Fir, Bur Oak, White Oak, and Sweetgum. Yesterday we were able to safely hand seedlings out from the steps of COTC, and hope to give remaining seedlings away to anyone. Drop offs may be available. Please [email Betty Southwick](#) if interested.

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.

- May 2, Rev. Rob preaching, Baptism of Hannah Miller Waters & Communion / Climate Jubilee Adult Ed around Arbor Day
- May 9, Rev. Rob preaching
- May 16, Rev. Joshua preaching, Communion
- May 23, Pentecost

Zoom link for each Sunday: <https://zoom.us/j/91025989890?pwd=VTd0L3VMc3ErRDBRTlplTTEvRGZUT09>

IN CASE OF MAJOR TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES DURING WORSHIP: Should any major technical glitches arise during worship and Zoom become challenged / the meeting end before worship is over, please relocate to our YouTube livestream page where a new livestream will start up: [youtube.com/channel/UCUgqWdRTyqb0yeOpR3x6UYA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUgqWdRTyqb0yeOpR3x6UYA) In the case of minor technological glitches (your mic doesn't work, your video doesn't seem to work), feel free to reach out to any church staff member for assistance.

EASTER EVENING PRAYERS: Join us each Wednesdays during this Easter season from 6-6:30pm for our evening prayer service. As we did in Lent, if you'd like to help choose a reading for either of these services, please [email](#). Zoom link for each Wednesday: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88999202076?pwd=bU9XQ0JuR0F1bXhrTUV2eVBDcHIxdz09>

MOTHER'S DAY WALK FOR PEACE MAY 9, 9am: The annual **Louis D. Brown Peace Institute** of Dorchester, will be doing their annual **Mother's Day Walk for Peace again virtually**. But this year you can also commit to walking each day for 25 days starting the day after Easter, in solidarity. This Walk is the Institute's major public fundraiser of the year. Please consider supporting the important resurrection work they do all year: support and healing to those who have lost a family member to homicide and to those families on the other side, support to community trying to heal, and work to prevent any further violence. The Peace Institute stands in the dark places, and brings true light, through its stated principles: **Love, Unity, Faith, Hope, Courage, Justice, and Forgiveness**. Knowing that vulnerable populations are hit much harder by our current situation, and aware of the extra pain of those who normally found the community and solidarity of the Walk to be an escape from personal isolation and grief, **please give what you can here on the Church of the Covenant Team page**, or send a check to Louis D. Brown Peace Institute at the address [here](#). Contact Diane Lauber with any questions dianelauber@comcast.net or 978-376-6574. Thank you!!

A CHALLENGING SEASON & MOTHER'S DAY CARDS: One way we can help those experiencing homelessness in downtown Boston is to support our partners Women's Lunch Place, who have an ongoing wish list for items, found here: <https://womenslunchplace.org/in-kind-donations>. You can also support WLP by [purchasing beautiful Mother's Day cards](#) designed by WLP guest Darcy.

FACING OUR RACISM WORKSHOP: Our friends at Co-operative Metropolitan Ministry are organizing an excellent few hours long workshop, join Rev. Rob, \$45 (scholarships available – please ask Rob), “Facing Our Racism: Becoming Conscious Partners” on Sunday, May 16, noon-4:30pm – [register here](#).

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 or contact Rev. Kate at kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org.

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 – our next one is May 16 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

BIBLE STUDY - FRIDAYS 11AM: Our virtual Bible Study is meeting at 11:00 am on Fridays, studying the Gospel of Mark. 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

COVENANT BOOK DISCUSSION: Covenant’s book group will meet by Zoom on Sunday, May 23, at 5 PM to discuss the second half of the book [*Dear White Christians*](#) by Jennifer Harvey. As always, you are welcome whether or not you have read any of the book and whether or not you have ever attended a Covenant book discussion. For more information [email Barbara](#); Zoom link forthcoming.

REMINDER: COTCONNECTS & COTCBOS LISTSERVS: In December, Yahoo! Groups closed permanently and we moved the longstanding COTC community discussion group listservs over to a service called groups.io. While groups.io has been working very well for our purposes these last few months, we have noticed many folks either have not joined yet or have not been able to join. We know that, in particular, there was difficulty for some of you with gmail addresses due to the gmail outages in December. If you have not been receiving occasional emails marked [cotcbos] and [cotconnects], you are not enrolled for either or both of those listservs. This announcement is a reminder and encouragement to sign up for COTC Connects and COTCBOS, if you would like. COTC Connects is a moderated listserv for church-related matters such as prayer requests and event updates. COTCBOS is the unmoderated listserv for non-church-related matters, such as questions, requests, job postings, life updates, etc. Official announcements from the church, including This Week at Covenant, continue to be sent out from Constant Contact. To join COTC Connects, send an email to cotconnects+subscribe@groups.io. To join COTCBOS, send an email to cotcbos+subscribe@groups.io. Be sure to send those emails from the address with which you want to join. For assistance with joining or any other listserv issues, please email Kate at kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org. See more about signing up for COTC communications [here](#).

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 – yet the process can feel a bit daunting and frustrating, with real inequities unearthed. **There is a [Mass.gov](#) site by the Commonwealth where you can pre-register to be alerted when you are eligible and when there is availability.** 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>

WHAT CAN I DO ONCE VACCINATED? As we give thanks that increasing numbers of people are getting vaccinated, many are asking this question, here are a few guidelines:

[CDC Guidelines](#)

[Interactive Risk Assessment Tool](#)

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*

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*