

Church of the Covenant

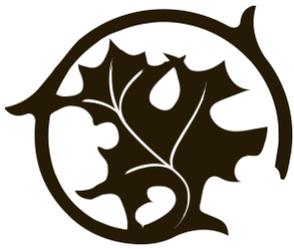
Boston, MA



Sixth Sunday of Easter

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ

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



Church of the Covenant

May 9, 2021 10:30 am

Sixth Sunday of Easter

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

Sheep May Safely Graze

J.S. Bach

Call to Worship

One : We are part of the Church universal—faithful people across the spectrums of gender and age-- gathered to love and serve God.

Many: **There is a place in God's heart, there is a place at Christ's table, there is a place here at this church for all expressions of creation.**

One: Christ who gathers us, bids us follow in the ways of love and justice.

Many: **May our hearts be open to Christ's leading in our worship and our living, this day and always.**

One: Together, let us worship God, rejoicing in the good news which we celebrate this day!

Kindling the Christ Light

Opening Hymn:

Impartial, Compassionate God of All Lives

Impartial, compassionate God of all lives,
In Christ you have shown us your love actualized,
Incarnate and weak in the arms of the poor,
Destroying all systems that keep closed the door.

Unholy, unjustified fear we incite,
When we shun our neighbors yet cling to our rights.
Your children still wander the streets left in pain,
We pass laws against them to prove our disdain.

Our hope is your freedom for both great and small,
To strive for perfection and know all means all.
We challenge and question each law without grace,
Affirming the image of Christ on each face.

All honor we give you, O help us to see,
Your children are worthy to claim victory.
And so let our actions flow out of our praise,
To seek transformation, your Kin-dom to raise.

Hymn by Adrienne Stricker, 2019, permission granted, ST. DENIO tune.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

Many: God of Peace, we confess we are sometimes at war. At war within our hearts – restless over who we are and who we are not. And we confess our complicity in a world that so quickly places labels that divide us, limit us, and harm us. Forgive us, loving God. May all swords within us and around us be remade into plowshares so that every hunger is satiated and every gender expression celebrated.

One: Let us now open our hearts to God in silent prayer together...

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

Remember by Joy Harjo

Remember the sky that you were born under,
know each of the star's stories.

Remember the moon, know who she is.

Remember the sun's birth at dawn, that is the
strongest point of time. Remember sundown
and the giving away to night.

Remember your birth, how your mother struggled
to give you form and breath. You are evidence of

her life, and her mother's, and hers...

Remember the earth whose skin you are:
red earth, black earth, yellow earth, white earth
brown earth, we are earth.

Remember the plants, trees, animal life who all have their
tribes, their families, their histories, too. Talk to them,
listen to them. They are alive poems.

Remember the wind. Remember her voice. She knows the
origin of this universe.

Remember you are all people and all people
are you.

Remember you are this universe and this
universe is you.

Remember all is in motion, is growing, is you.

Remember language comes from this.

Remember the dance language is, that life is.

Remember.

One: Fellow forgiven friends, let us remember, 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

New Testament Reading: Acts 8:26-40

Then an angel of God said to Philip, “Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over to this chariot and join it.” So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” He replied, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

“Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,
and like a lamb silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.

In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth.”

The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

Gospel Reading: John 15:9-12

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

Call to Offering

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

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

Offertory

23rd Psalm (Dedicated to my Mother)

Bobby McFerrin

Tim and Betsy Groves - Soloists

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.

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

Liturgist – Anne Crane

Lector – Sarah Perrault

Cantor – Rev. Tom Reid

Soloists – Tim and Betsy Groves

BULLETIN COVER: *Mothering Hen*, by A Sanctified Art Artist and Eco-Steward Lauren Wright Pittman.

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.

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!!

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 16, Rev. Joshua preaching, Communion
- May 23, Pentecost, Rev. Rob preaching
- May 30, Reflection on the Word
- June 6, Celebration of the Sacraments of Baptism & Communion

Zoom link for each Sunday: <https://zoom.us/j/91025989890?pwd=VTd0L3VMc3ErRDBRTlplTTEvRGNZUT09>

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.

THE CLIMATE JUBILEE TEAM invites you explore further! We are following on our momentum of the Vegan potluck, Sapling give-a-way, and the Arbor Day Adult Ed, Speak to the Trees. Now for Mothers' Day, we recommend a poem *Remember* by Joy Harjo, which we heard in today's worship and which you can access [here](#). Ms. Harjo, our U.S. poet laureate in 2019, is the Indigenous woman whose words Tim Groves shared with us last Sunday. For more poetry and music by Joy Harjo, see her website: <https://www.joyharjo.com/media>

EASTER EVENING PRAYERS: Join us each Wednesday 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>

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 [cotcconnects], 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 cotcconnects+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*