

Church of the Covenant Boston, MA



Breathe: Third Sunday in Lent **Holy Communion**

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ
ZOOM LINK (click here)



Church of the Covenant
Breathe: Third Sunday in Lent
Holy Communion March 7, 2021 10:30 am
Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/91025989890?pwd=VTd0L3VMc3ErRDBRTlIpTTEvRGNZUT09>

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you!
Many: **And also with you!**

Call to Worship

One: Our lips sing your glory and our whole selves rejoice in the God who makes us free.

Many: **With our collective voices, we gather, recognizing that not all human beings have known this freedom.**

One: The divine was made known in Eden and in Egypt; in Judea and in Cape Town; in Jerusalem and Jamaica Plain,

Many: **With our collective voices we speak God's love and mercy that endures forever.**

One: The voice of wisdom teaches us.

Many: **The voice of justice inspires us.**

One: The voice of hope encourages us.

Many: **The voice of love redeems us and calls us back home.**

Kindling the Christ Light

Attending to the Breath

Lauren Star

Chiming of the Prayer Bowl

Hymn (PH, 316):

Breathe on Me, Breath of God

1. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Fill me with life anew,
That I may love what Thou dost love,
And do what Thou wouldst do.
2. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Until my heart is pure,
Until with Thee I will one will,
To do and to endure.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace:

One: We acknowledge you, O God, as creator and as liberator.
You are the One who brought the captives out of Egypt
and delivered them from the oppression of slavery.
You implored people to worship only you,
knowing that whatever was put in your place
would become the object of idolatry—
would become the priority of people's lives.

**Many: In this time of worship, we focus on you, O God,
as the priority of our lives.
Remind us of your steadfast love
revealed so clearly in the new commandment of love
which Jesus disclosed with his life with his death.
Speak to us anew as we offer this prayer and our worship.**

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

Listening to God in Silent Prayer *(marked by chiming of prayer bowl)*

Assurance of God's Grace

One: Friends, hear again the good news – God has liberated us to
breathe in anew the dawning of a new day, to speak words that
give life and to raise our voices for the sake of righteousness.

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

Scripture Readings

Hebrew Bible Reading Psalm 19

(The Message translation)

God's glory is on tour in the skies, God-craft on exhibit across the horizon.
Madame Day holds classes every morning, Professor Night lectures each
evening.

Their words aren't heard,
Their voices aren't recorded,
But their silence fills the earth:
unspoken truth is spoken everywhere.

God makes a huge dome
for the sun—a superdome!
The morning sun's a new husband
leaping from his honeymoon bed,
The daybreaking sun an athlete
racing to the tape.

That's how God's Word vaults across the skies
from sunrise to sunset,
Melting ice, scorching deserts,
warming hearts to faith.

The revelation of God is whole
and pulls our lives together.
The signposts of God are clear
and point out the right road.
The life-maps of God are right,
showing the way to joy.
The directions of God are plain
and easy on the eyes.
God's reputation is twenty-four-carat gold,
with a lifetime guarantee.

The decisions of God are accurate
down to the nth degree.
God's Word is better than a diamond,
better than a diamond set between emeralds.
You'll like it better than strawberries in spring,
better than red, ripe strawberries.
There's more: God's Word warns us of danger
and directs us to hidden treasure.

Otherwise how will we find our way?
Or know when we play the fool?
Clean the slate, God, so we can start the day fresh!

Keep me from stupid sins,
from thinking I can take over your work;
Then I can start this day sun-washed,
scrubbed clean of the grime of sin.

These are the words in my mouth;
these are what I chew on and pray.

Accept them when I place them
on the morning altar,
O God, my Altar-Rock,
God, Priest-of-My-Altar.

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

Sermon

Freedom of Speech

Hymn: NCH 16

Let Us With a Joyful Mind

1. Let us with a joyful mind,
praise our God forever kind
Rich mercies that endure, ever faithful, ever sure.
2. New-made earth was filled with light,
through God's all commanding might,
Rich mercies that endure, ever faithful, ever sure.
3. Dazzling bright the sun obeys God,
who shines with brighter rays
Rich mercies that endure, ever faithful, ever sure.
4. Stars and moon that spangle night,
all depend on heaven's light
Rich mercies that endure, ever faithful, ever sure.

Moment for Generosity: *Coins*

Call to Offering

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

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

Offertory

Fairest Lord Jesus

arr. Teresa Wilhelmi

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

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 Pilgrimage, 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 do not let us fall 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 & 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. Joshua Lawrence Lazard

Attending to the Breath Guide – Lauren Star

Liturgist – Rev. Rob Mark

Lector – Faith Perry

Cantor – Rev. Tom Reid

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Moment for Generosity – Nancy Stockford

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.

ATTENDING TO THE BREATH – INTRODUCTION TO OUR BREATHING GUIDE: Lauren Star has been teaching hatha yoga for 18 years, and at the core of hatha yoga is conscious breathing exercises. She was originally trained in the Sivananda Lineage at Ananda Kutir Ashram in Cape Town, South Africa. More recently she completed her Master's Degree in Yoga Studies at Loyola Marymount University (2020), and is currently working on a post-graduate certificate in Yoga Therapy. She has taught yoga and conscious breathing to people of all ages, in a variety of settings, including Women's Lunch Place! Conscious breathing is a practice with physiological benefits, including stress management and pain reduction. Many believe it has spiritual benefits as well, and it has been used by monks and nuns in many traditions as a way of turning within and connecting with God. During the Lenten services this year, Lauren Star will lead us in some simple 'conscious breathing' practices. Some of these will include gentle movement. We look forward to hearing your experiences of 'attending to the breath' and where that leads you physically, mentally, and spiritually.

TODAY CLIMATE JUBILEE ADULT ED, BREATHING WITH TREES: Join us after worship today on the same zoom channel as we are led in an adult education session by our Climate Jubilee Team who will help us focus in on the incredible, miraculous, everyday blessings that come to us from TREES. Together we will get to share stories, hear some poetry and centering verses, get updates on local climate justice issues and be invited to take local action steps.

MOMENT FOR GENEROSITY: This Lenten season we are focusing on breath and breathing. *Breathe in*, *breathe out*. Breathing is relational, there is a give and there is a take. So, as we are giving together as a church this coming Sunday, Covenant’s Generosity Generators will invite you to join them in thinking about coins. We will consider a passage in Luke and ask you to consider gathering your loose change to support Spare Change News (<http://sparechangenews.net/about-us/organization/>).

FACING OUR RACISM WORKSHOP: Our friends at Co-operative Metropolitan Ministry are organizing an excellent few hours long workshop, \$45, “Facing Our Racism: Becoming Conscious Partners” on Sunday, March 14, noon-4:30pm – [click here to register](#).

COTC 101, NEW MEMBERS CLASS MARCH 14: Are you new-ish to Church of the Covenant and want to find out more about who we are, our history, our two denominations, our 5-point missional plan we feel called by God to live out through 2025, and what it means to join in membership? Then please join us after worship on Sunday, March 14 for an hour or so on Zoom while we cover some of these topics together. Bring some coffee, lunch, snacks perhaps to your comfy-iest chair/ couch as we zoom in together. Register [here](#).

GBIO REFOUNDING: The Greater Boston Interfaith Organization is GROWING! GBIO will celebrate the addition of 15 new, very diverse, member congregations and organizations, to build our power to create change. All are invited to GBIO's Re-Founding Assembly on Tuesday, March 16, 2021, 7 to 9 PM, on Zoom. Please mark your calendar and plan to be there. Register at bit.ly/gbiorefounding. For more information please contact any of Covenant's GBIO team members: Kathryn Barry, Anne Crane, Tim Groves, Holly Humphreys, Rich Jackson, Faith Perry, Tom Reid, Elaine Sullivan.

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.

- Sunday March 7, Lent 3, Rev. Joshua preaching, Communion / Climate Jubilee Adult Education
- Sunday March 14, Lent 4, Celebration of the Word with Nicaragua Companions / COTC 101
- Sunday March 21, Lent 5, Rev. Rob preaching, Communion / MDC Breakout room coffee half-hour
- Palm Sunday All Ages Service March 28

Here are the Zoom details for Sundays:

join by computer/ tablet/ smartphone:

<https://zoom.us/j/91025989890?pwd=VTd0L3VMc3ErRDBRTllpTTEvRGZUT09>

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

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

Season of Lent

Special Announcements

A Note from the Pastor

Our theme this year for the season of Lent is “Breathe.” In this world where too many still cannot find a breath, we all need to strive together to breathe more deeply, more regularly, more generously. We need to do so physically, spiritually, and with the justice of Jesus in our lungs and actions. Join us from now through Easter for this important and timely spiritual journey. At the beginning of each worship service Sunday morning, we will spend a little sacred time learning how to breathe better.

LENTEN EVENING PRAYERS: Beginning this Wednesday, 2/24, join us each Wednesday during the Lenten season from 6-6:30pm for our evening prayer service. And we are looking for volunteers to help lead these services. We have a simple powerpoint with the basic service elements that you would just customize with the given text for each week. Or you are welcome to let your imagination run wild. Just sign up in this [Google Doc](#) and let us know if you have any questions over *email*. Zoom link for each Wednesday:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88999202076?pwd=bU9XQ0JuR0F1bXhrTUV2eVBDcHIxdz09>

LENT DEVOTIONALS: Lent began Feb. 17 with our Ash Wednesday service. In preparation for this season, our Worship and Music committee is providing you all with a free PDF copy of A Sanctified Art daily Lenten devotional: download [here](#). In addition, for those who prefer booklets to hold, here are some we recommend (please let Rob know if you have any financial limitations and we will purchase a copy for you):

- *Were You There*
 - *Wild Hope - Stories for Lent from the Vanishing*
 - *Lent in Plain Sight*
 - *Lent of Liberation: Confronting the legacy of American slavery*
-

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. As we give thanks for the miraculous reality of these vaccines, we lament the unequal access still in our state, and the confusing roll out. 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 in making sense of this and making a plan to get vaccinated. We also recommend everyone be in touch with their PCP as a first step. 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> in addition to <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-covid-19-vaccination-data-and-updates>

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

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 SUNDAY BRUNCH: Starting on March 21 at 12:30pm, the 20s30s40s group will be hosting a Sunday brunch on Zoom. This will be a time to share a meal and fellowship with each other. Meal reimbursements are available. Please be on the lookout for the Zoom link via email. For more information, contact Rev. Joshua at joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org

A CHALLENGING WINTER: For many reasons, this will be a challenging winter. 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>.

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!

COVER ART: *Overturn*, by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity | Inspired by John 2:13-22
A note from the artist: “In this image, I wanted to freeze-frame the destruction Jesus ignites, forcing us as viewers to focus on the process of dismantling and destroying an oppressive system. For those who willingly or unwillingly benefit from systems of oppression, it may feel threatening and terrifying to see them all come tumbling down. But for those held within the unrelenting grip of injustice, it must be completely and utterly liberating. Again and again, Jesus shows us that his movement is about overturning systems of oppression to bring forth God’s beloved community on earth. Again and again, liberation movements throughout history pursue this same goal. Will we join Jesus in the overturning, or like the disciples, question his methods?”

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*