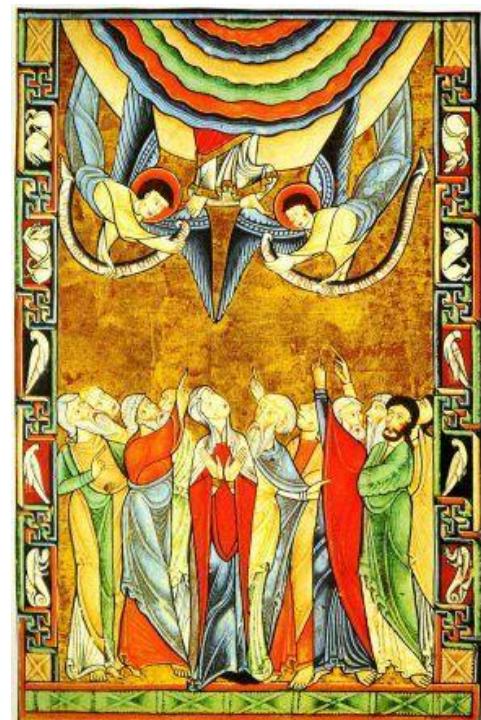


Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



The Feast of the Ascension

[ZOOM LINK](#)

Presbyterian Church (USA) /United Church of Christ



Church of the Covenant

May 24, 2020 10:30 am

The Feast of the Ascension

<https://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:

Be Thou My Vision

arr. David Hamilton

* Call To Worship

(from Psalm 66)

One: Bless the Ground of Being.

Many: Bless the Heart of our hearts,

One: Let the sound of our praises be heard:

Many: Praise the Living One who guides our feet on solid ground.

One: Praise the Accompanying One who is with us as we pass through the fire and water.

Many: Praise the Expansive One who brings us out into a spacious place.

*Opening Hymn: PH 288

I Sing the Mighty Power of God

Lighting of the Christ Light

I sing the mighty power of God that made the mountains rise;

That spread the flowing seas abroad and built the lofty skies.

I sing the wisdom that ordained the sun to rule the day;

The moon shines full at God's command, and all the stars obey.

I sing the goodness of the Lord that filled the earth with food;

God formed the creatures with a word and then pronounced them good.

Lord, how thy wonders are displayed, wher-e'er I turn my eyes;

If I survey the ground I tread, or gaze upon the skies!

There's not a plant or flower below but makes thy glories known;
And clouds arise, and tempests blow, by order from thy throne;
While all that borrows life from Thee is ever in Thy care,
And everywhere that we can be, Thou, God, art present there.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

Many: Mighty God, who made the mountains rise and who carefully crafts this world in beauty – today we *profess* that with the rest of creation, we borrow life from you. But today we also *confess* that sometimes we use that life in ways that fall short of love of for you, ourselves, and our neighbors. For these times, we are sorry. Especially in these unsettled days, help fill us with courage to rise up with Jesus and fill the lofty skies and ground we tread with more love, more compassion, more grace.

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

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

One: Friends, hear the age old story, made new once again in this sacred moment: God who leads us out into a spacious place, leads us out into love, and fills us with courage and strength. Therefore, let us celebrate together:

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

Sung Response:

Easter Celtic Alleluia



G G D C G C D
Al - le - lu - ia, a - le - lu - ia!
G G D C G C D G
Al - le - lu - ia, a - le - lu - ia!

Scripture Reading: Acts 1:6-14

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Adoni, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus replied, "It is not for

you to know the times or periods that Abba has set with authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two figures in white robes stood by them. They said, "People of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his siblings.

One: God is still speaking, the word of God,

Many: **Thanks be to God.**

Sung Response:

Easter Celtic Alleluia

Sermon

What Goes Up...

Moment for Mission: Pentecost/ Strengthen the Church Special Offering

Call to Offering

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

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

Offertory Music *Serene Alleluias for a Soul Longing for Heaven* Olivier Messiaen

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:

Arise O Church and Sing

Arise, O Church and sing! Come stand upon the height
and see the Everlasting One, in brilliant light.
Your Guide through darkest days will shine forevermore.
Lift up your voice and glorify: “God, we adore.”

Arise, all you who seek! Behold, the lost are found.
The valleys rise, the mountains bend to level ground.
Across the even way they run without distress.
See, every child is gathered here from east and west.

Arise, O captives freed, returned by God’s own hand!
Cast off your sorrow and your grief. Rejoice, be glad!
Captivity’s sharp sting will live long in your bones,
but deeper still dwell memories of coming home.

Arise, O Church and sing! Bear witness to the sight
of every promise now fulfilled by Love’s true might.
Join in the glad refrain, all creatures under heav’n.
Through tears and joyous shouts we sing, “Amen! Amen!”

Arise, O Church and Sing!

LEONI - 6.6.8.4 D

McKenna Lewellen
after Baruch 5:1-9

Hebrew Melody



1.A - rise, O Church and Sing! Come stand up - on the height and
2.A - rise, all you who seek! Be - hold, the lost are found. The
3.A - rise, O cap - tives freed, re - turned by God's own hand! Cast
4.A - rise, O Church and sing! Bear wit - ness to the sight of

5



see the Ev - er - last - ing One, in bril - liant light. Your
val - leys rise, the moun - tains bend to lev - el ground. A -
off your sor - row and your grief. Re - joice be glad! Cap -
ev - ery prom - ise now ful - filled by Love's true might. Join

9



Guide through dark - est days will shine for - ev - er more. Lift
cross the ev - en way they run_ with out dis - tress. See,
tiv - i - ty's sharp sting will_ live_ long in your bones, but
in the glad re - frain, all_ creat ures un - der heav'n. Through

13



up your voice and glo - ri - fy: "God, we a - dore."
ev - ery child is gath- ered here from east to west.
deep - er still dwell mem - o - ries of com - ing home.
tears and joy - ous shouts we sing, "A - men! A - men!"

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.**

Participating in Today's Worship

Preaching – Rev. Rob Mark

Liturgist – Nancy Ammerman

Lector – Debbie Howland

Moment for Mission – Anne Crane

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

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 we pray and work for the day the energy used to connect us becomes less dependent on dangerous, unjust, fossil fuels. And in faith and through God’s ceaseless, amazing grace—as we practice “physical 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.

TODAY'S CLOSING HYMN was written by McKenna Lewellen. Her notes for this hymn: The text for this hymn (Baruch 5:1-9) is an invitation from the prophet to exiles returned to rejoice, to bear witness to God's work in gathering them back again. When I started to write, it began as a hymn for Advent, but finished in this form as a hymn of witness in the voice of the prophet. It became a welcoming song from the prophet, an assurance that exile won't be forgotten even as we rejoice, and an invitation to bear witness to the slow and powerful work of Love.

UPCOMING WORSHIP ON SUNDAYS: To further adhere to our state's excellent social distancing policy to help flatten this curve, we have decided to suspend live-streaming from the sanctuary from Easter onwards, until further notice. In place of this, we will hold live-worship on Zoom at 10:30am.

If you are newer to using Zoom, please log in early so we can explain some technical questions in order to start our worship close to 10:30.

- Sunday, May 24, Rev. Rob preaching
- Sunday, May 31, Pentecost All-ages Worship: WEAR RED ☺
- Sunday, June 7, Rev. Rob preaching

Here are the Zoom details for Sundays:

join by computer/tablet/smartphone:

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

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.

CLIMATE JUBILEE UPDATE: Please join the Climate Jubilee Team at 12 noon on Sunday, June 7th, after our worship service, for a discussion of the connection between COVID-19 and the climate crisis. In advance of that gathering, we invite you to view and read two background informational pieces:

Councilor Wu and Bill McKibben discuss how COVID-19, injustice, and climate change are linked - and how this is the moment to advocate for a just and equitable recovery.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MggvdrlMA>

A Washington Post article on “Meat is not essential, Why are we killing for it?”

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/05/11/jonathan-safran-foer-meat-is-not-essential-why-are-we-killing-it/?arc404=true>

If you have any difficulty accessing these pieces, please contact Betty at southwickbetty@gmail.com or Barbara at barbarakdarling@yahoo.com. We look forward to an enriching conversation!

SUPPORTING BELOVED IMMIGRANT SIBLINGS DURING COVID-19:

During this pandemic, undocumented immigrants are among those being hardest hit, in a number of ways. One way is economically: many are without income because of jobs lost to the shutdown and because federal assistance, like stimulus checks and unemployment benefits, is not available. There are few places for them to turn. The Nicaragua Companions have compiled a list for those who may wish to donate, whether from a portion of your stimulus check or otherwise, to local organizations with initiatives that respond to this crisis. Because of Covenant's sister relationship with a church community in Nicaragua, two of the three organizations focus on immigrants from Latin America.

- [The Welcome Project's Immigrant Assistance Fund](#)
- [The MassUndocuFund](#)
- [Chelsea Collaborative](#)

A longer note with details about these organizations and additional organizations went out in a church-wide email on May 6. If you did not receive it, please email info@cotcbos.org and we will send you all the details. Thank you for your generosity and prayerful considerations.

BIBLE STUDY VIA ZOOM ON WEDNESDAY MORNINGS:

Have you always been curious, but that pre-worship Sunday morning time just hasn't worked for you? Are you eager for more ways to connect during this time of physical isolation? Then this "BYOB" (bring your own Bible) gathering is for you. If you aren't otherwise occupied and can take a break for an hour or so at 10:00 on Wednesday morning, join the gathering. We are midway through a look at Matthew's gospel, but we'll be glad to fill you in on what's come before.
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

WEEKLY WEDNESDAY EASTER EVENING PRAYERS: In an effort to both see each other more often as we continue our firm commitment to social distancing, and also pray together, we are beginning a weekly evening prayer service during the 50 days of Easter. We will gather on zoom from 6:00-6:30pm each Wednesday for a simple, contemplative service of celebrations and concerns.

join by computer/tablet/smartphone:

<https://zoom.us/j/179333716?pwd=S0E3Z2t4YzZNNDERbHJrRFUyN3BYdz09>

one tap mobile:

+16465588656,,179333716#,,#,460466#

join by phone:

(646) 558 8656, Meeting ID: 179 333 716, Password: 460466

CHILDREN'S CIRCLE TIME: Each Sunday from 9:45-10:00 am via Zoom, Rev. Adam, Kathy Bull, and Anita Goncalves lead a time where children, youth, their parents, and CYCE leaders gather to sing a song, share news with each other, and pray. If you need the Zoom link, email Rev. Adam. [Rev. Adam Isbitsky](#)

GODLY PLAY AND YOUTH CLASS: Each Sunday from 10:00-10:25 am via Zoom. CYCE leaders continue to offer programs for our children and youth, as we learn and grow alongside each other. If you need the Zoom link, email [Rev. Adam](#).

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@cotchos.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!

CHURCH ZOOM ACCOUNT: If you are a committee chair, email Rev. Rob or Rev. Adam if you would like us to help you set up a meeting via Zoom. As a reminder, all church meetings are either to be postponed, or brought online via Zoom.

BUILDING ACCESS: Our church building remains closed except for essential services connected with Women's Lunch Place, our Food Pantry, and a subset of our church staff (Rev. Rob, Rev. Adam, Tom Handel, Bill Brown, Faith Perry, Nancy Stockford and Chuck Ferrell), who only enter for specific and limited purposes. All other staff, church leaders, and key holders are required to keep away from the church building until further notice. The reason is to both keep you at home to keep you safe, but also to reduce any additional potential spreading of germs on doors, railings, surfaces that could endanger those who remain critical to our ministry at this point. Please contact Rev. Rob with any questions or concerns.

SCAM WARNING: Many churches across the country—including ours!—are reporting a scam where you will receive an email or a text message that appears to be from a pastor, church administrator, or another church official, often closely mimicking the sender's real email address or phone number, and using their name. One common approach is to ask the recipient to purchase gift cards and then reveal the codes. These are very sophisticated scams that take advantage of the generosity of churchgoers. Please know that we at COTC will not ask for you to give gifts in this way. One all-purpose step to combat this scam is this: when in doubt, check it out. If something appears even slightly odd about a request from a pastor or church staff person, DO NOT REPLY TO THE SCAMMER. Reach out in a different way to the real person you know to find out if the person truly made the request using an email address or phone number you know. If the request was a text, do not call the number. Email the person instead, or call the church office number. And never send personal or financial information by replying to a text or email from an unknown source.

WEEKLY CALENDAR Click [here](#) to view the weekly calendar of events.



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 prayers 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, 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. And 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 creation; that transcend the exclusive language of the church's past. We invite you to join us in the journey toward God's justice and peace for all people in this neighborhood, this city, and the world.

CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Rob Mark, *Lead Pastor*
Rev. Adam Isbitsky, *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*