

Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

[ZOOM LINK](#)

Presbyterian Church (USA) /United Church of Christ



Church of the Covenant

June 28, 2020 10:30 am

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

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

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you!

Many: And also with you!

Prelude:

Préambule

Louis Vierne

* Call To Worship

Psalm 13:1-6

One: How long, O GOD? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?

**Many: How long must I bear pain in my soul,
and have sorrow in my heart all day long?
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?**

One: Consider and answer me, O Eternal One, my God!
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,

**Many: and my enemy will say, “I have prevailed”;
my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.**

One: But I trusted in your steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.

**Many: I will sing to GOD,
who has dealt bountifully with me.**

*Opening Hymn: PH 488

The God of Abraham Praise

Lighting of the Christ Light

1. The God of Abraham praise, who reigns enthroned above;
The ancient of eternal days, the God of love!
The Lord, the great I Am, by earth and heaven confessed,
We bow before Your holy name, forever blest.

2. Your spirit still flows free, high surging where it will;
In prophet's word You spoke of old and you speak still.
Established in Your law, and changeless it shall stand,
Deep writ upon the human heart, on sea, or land.

3. You have eternal life implanted in the soul;
Your love shall be our strength and stay, while ages roll.
We praise you, living God! We praise Your holy name;
The first, the last, beyond all thought, and still the same!

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

One: As we come before you O God in truth, we lift as prayer the stories of our ancestors, the stories of our faith.
But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac, and said to Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac." (Genesis 21: 9-10)

Many: **We confess our complicity in systems, stories, songs, and statues where slavery is left unexamined, unexposed.**

One: *So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. (Genesis 21:14)*

Many: **We confess the times we have failed to stand up for what is right, and allow our silence to become violence.**

One: *When the water in the skin was gone, she cast the child under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot; for she said, "Do not let me look on the death of the child." And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. (Genesis 21:15-16)*

Many: **We confess our inability to hear the cries of those who have been cast out by the very structures so many of us benefit from.**

One: God of grace, hear us now as we cry out to you in solidarity with the beloved Hagar and Ishmael. Let us take some moments of shared silence now to pray...

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

One: Remember these truths from our sacred stories: Hagar and Ishmael were never alone in the wilderness but met by the very presence of God who led them to a well that saved them. They

became more than survivors, but ancestors in faith. The good news is that God works even in the face of human inadequacy and sin to bring redemption and lasting liberation. Therefore let us celebrate:

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

Sung Response:

Sweet, Sweet Spirit (refrain)

Sweet Holy Spirit, sweet heavenly Dove,
stay right here with us, filling us with your love;
And for these blessings we lift our hearts in praise,
Without a doubt we'll know that we have been revived
when we shall leave this place.

Scripture Readings

Hebrew Bible Reading: Genesis 22:1-14

After these things God tested Abraham, and said, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." God said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you." So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you." Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham said, "God will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together.

When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. But the angel of GOD called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." The angel said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and

took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place “GOD will provide”; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of GOD it shall be provided.”

Gospel Reading: Matthew 10:40-42

“Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple — truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

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

Sermon

What Needs to be Sacrificed?

Moment for Mission: Special Offering for Racial Justice

Call to Offering and Special Offering

Online Giving Option: <http://www.cotcbos.org/give.html>
Click on Give Now, then choose Pledges or Gifts-General.

Offertory

Appalachian Spring (excerpts)

Aaron Copland

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: PH 342**

By Gracious Powers

This hymn taken from a poem written by Dietrich Bonhoeffer while imprisoned by the Gestapo in Berlin, four months before his execution.

1. By gracious powers so wonderfully sheltered,
And confidently waiting, come what may,
We know that God is with us night and morning
And never fails to greet us each new day.

2. Yet is this heart by its old foe tormented
Still evil days bring burdens hard to bear;
O give out frightened souls the sure salvation
For which, O Lord, You taught us to prepare.

3. And when this cup You give is filled to brimming
With bitter suffering, hard to understand,
We take it thankfully and without trembling,
Out of so good and so beloved a hand.

4. Yet when again in this same world You give us
The joy we had, the brightness of Your sun,
We shall remember all the days we lived through,
And our whole life shall then be Yours alone.

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 – Tom Reid

Lectors – Elaine Sullivan and Ryan Surette

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Cantor – Tom Reid

Moment for Mission – Anne Crane

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.

The announcements that follow reflect the ongoing abundant life that is Church of the Covenant:

RACIAL JUSTICE SPECIAL OFFERING TODAY: During worship, we will take a special offering to split evenly between two incredible organizations working for justice locally here in Boston to counter the sins of systemic racism: [Violence in Boston](#) and [The Food Project](#). As many have become newly sensitized to the ongoing injustices and violence being perpetrated upon communities of color here in our country and city in the wake of the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Armaud Arbery, Rayshard Brooks, Tony McDade, Nina Pop, and a list that tragically goes on too long – our church recognizes the deep need to act and speak out for racial justice especially at this time. This special offering called for by our Mission & Advocacy Committee and with our Council’s deep solidarity, is one small step in this ongoing work. Please prayerfully discern how you might be called to participate and [give online](#) on the 28th.

Violence in Boston, is a nonprofit endorsed recently by Rev. Liz Walker in her comments at the Boston Black Memorial, with a mission of “creating safer, healthier, and empowered black and brown communities.” [violenceinboston.org](#)

The Food Project – a group recently endorsed by our Climate Jubilee Team – is focused on food justice primarily in Boston’s Nubian Square, and the city of Lynn, and “believes that everyone has the right to fresh, healthy, affordable food – with a goal to transform the food system into a more just, community-engaged model that supports food security for all while connecting diverse communities to each other and to the land.” [thefoodproject.org](#)

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, June 28, Rev. Rob preaching, Special Offering for Racial Justice
- Sunday, July 5, Presbytery of Boston Unified Service, Holy Communion
- Sunday, July 12, Rev. Rob preaching / Climate Jubilee Adult Ed (Noon)

Upcoming Staff Schedules:

Rev. Adam will be on vacation from June 22-July 5.

Tom Handel will be off July 2-July 5.

Parish Administrator Hillary will be on vacation June 28-July 5.

Anita Goncalves off Sunday July 5.

Rev. Rob's annual Summer Sabbath (2 weeks unpaid furlough, 2 weeks vacation) will be July 17-August 13.

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.

SUNDAY JULY 5, UNIFIED WORSHIP WITH COMMUNION: Next Sunday, in the spirit of unity, we will join in the wider Presbytery of Boston for worship. Our service will be live premiered on YouTube at the regular 10:30am time slot, and also made available for those who would prefer to worship later in the day. Link will be sent out and posted to our COTC website Live-Stream page. **Please note there will be no CYCE, Youth or Godly Play classes on July 5,** as our teachers and staff take a much needed Sunday off. Please note that Communion will also be a part of this service, so please come prepared as we usually do: *Before the time of the service you will want to prepare some bread (gluten or gluten-free), a slice or a small loaf of any kind of bread. In some parts of the world tortilla, rice cake, or cassava are used as this element which is defined not as a wheat product but as the most common food of the people. Let it be something you alone or you with others in your house may break and share. Prepare a cup or cups of juice—perhaps grape or cranberry—or wine, with or without alcohol. Water is also fine. Set these elements in the place where you experience worship electronically with your siblings in faith online. Perhaps you want to put them on a cloth or fabric that reminds you of a special time or a person deeply connected with you in the communion of saints. Perhaps you will light a candle or place a flower or plant or the photograph of someone you wish to bring into the circle of faith beside the bread and the cup.*

PRESBYTERY'S 21-DAY RACIAL JUSTICE CHALLENGE, JULY 5-26:

In 2017, COTC's Race & Identity Team challenged us to take part in a [21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge](#) led by Food Solutions of New England, as we looked a food justice and racial justice together. This year, our Presbytery of Boston is challenging us to take part in a similar 21-Day Racial Justice Challenge as part of our commitment to dismantling racism. The challenge will begin on Monday, July 5 and conclude on Sunday, July 26. Each day, an opportunity for education, self-reflection, and discussion is offered through the challenge put together specifically for the PC(USA). For info and to register: [21-Day Racial Justice Challenge](#).

BIBLE STUDY ON WEDNESDAY MORNINGS: We gather on Zoom at 10:00am for about an hour for a “BYOB” (bring your own Bible) gathering. Currently, we are taking a look at the Book of Psalms, which runs the gamut of human emotion. Drop in any week!

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

MIDWEEK PRAYER SERVICE: We gather on Zoom from 6:00-6:30pm each Wednesday for a simple, contemplative service of prayers, singing, scripture, 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 AND YOUTH PROGRAMMING: Each Sunday beginning at 9:45 our children and youth gather to sing, share news with each other, and pray together. At 10:00 we split into our Godly Play and Youth classes. 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@cotcbos.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://giveplus.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!

BUILDING ACCESS: Our church building remains closed except for services connected with Women's Lunch Place, our Food Pantry, and a subset of our church staff (Rev. Rob, Tom Handel, Bill Brown, Alan Lane, 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. While we are not opening for our normal Open Sanctuary program this year, we have protocols in place to allow for safe group tours by appointment through Bill Brown.

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*