

Church of the Covenant Boston, MA



Season of Creation
St. Clare & St. Francis Sunday
Blessing of the Animals
ZOOM LINK ([click here](#))



St. Clare & St. Francis Sunday / Blessing of the Animals
Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Season of Creation

October 11, 2020 10:30 am

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/91025989890?pwd=VTd0L3VMc3ErRDBRTllpTTEvRGZUT09>

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you!

Many: **And also with you!**

Prelude

The Cuckoo and the Nightingale

G. F. Handel

Call To Worship

Selected quotes by Saint Clare of Assisi

One: Praise God by your very life.

Many: **We become what we love and who we love shapes what we become.**

One: If we love things, we become a thing.

Many: **If we love nothing, we become nothing.**

One: Imitation is not a literal mimicking of Christ, rather it means becoming the image of the beloved, an image disclosed through transformation.

Many: **This means we are to become vessels of God's compassionate love for others.**

One: Blessed be you, our God,

Many: **Blessed be you for having created us.**

Lighting the Light of Christ

Opening Hymn: NCH 238

For the Beauty of the Earth

1. For the beauty of the earth, for the splendor of the skies,
for the love which from our birth over and around us lies,

Refrain: God of all, to you we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

2. For the wonder of each hour of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale and tree and flower, sun and moon, and stars of light, **R**

3. For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth, and friends above, for all gentle thoughts and mild, **R**
4. For the good that loves inspires, for a world where none exclude,
For a faith that never tires, and for every heart renewed. **R**

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

One: Knowing we are both called as stewards of God's creation and often, because of our lifestyles, complicit in its harm, let us pray together for grounding in God's grace.

Many: **Compassionate God, we too often ignore the cries and suffering of your creatures. Our lives are bound up with other species and we ask your forgiveness for the ways we mistreat your creation. Give us clean hearts and caring hands, O God. Remind us that we too are creatures, interdependent and vulnerable.**

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

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

One: God declares the creation good. We are among God's creatures, and humbled that God calls on us to till and keep the earth. With hope and inspiration to answer that call, we place our trust in God to show us the way. Together with all God's creatures let us celebrate...

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

Sung Response:

Song of Hope / Canto de esperanza

May the God of hope go with us everyday,
filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.
May the God of justice speed us on our way,
Bringing light and hope to every land and race.
Praying, let us work for peace;
Singing, share our joy with all;
Working, for a world that's new;
Faithful, when we hear Christ's call.

Poem*“What the Heart Cannot Forget”*

by Joyce Sutphen

Everything remembers something. The rock, its fiery bed, cooling and fissuring into cracked pieces, the rub of watery fingers along its edge.

The cloud remembers being elephant, camel, giraffe, remembers being a veil over the face of the sun, gathering itself together for the fall.

The turtle remembers the sea, sliding over and under its belly, remembers legs like wings, escaping down the sand under the beaks of savage birds.

The tree remembers the story of each ring, the years of drought, the floods, the way things came

walking slowly towards it long ago.

And the skin remembers its scars, and the bone aches where it was broken.

The feet remember the dance,

and the arms remember lifting up the child.

The heart remembers everything it loved and gave away, everything it lost and found again, and everyone

it loved, the heart cannot forget.

Excerpts from *Canticle of the Creatures*

by St. Francis of Assisi

Most High, all powerful, good God,
yours are the praises, the glory, the honor, and all blessing...

Be praised, my God, through all your creatures, especially through Brother Sun, who brings the day; through whom You give us light.

Praised be you, my God, through Sister Moon and the stars, in heaven you formed them clear and precious and beautiful.

Praised be you, my God, through Brother Wind, and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather through which you give sustenance to your creatures.

Praised be you, my God, through Sister Water,
which is very useful and humble and precious and pure.

Praised be you, my God, through Brother Fire, through whom you light the night and is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.

Praised be you, my God, through Sister Mother Earth, who sustains us and governs us and who produces varied fruits with colored flowers and herbs.

Blessed are those who endure in peace
for by you, Most High, they shall be honored.

Scripture Readings:

Psalm 148 (excerpts)

Praise God.

Praise God, sun and moon, all you shining stars!

Praise God from the earth, all you sea creatures and all deeps.

Praise God, mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!

Praise God all wild animals and cattle, creeping things and flying birds!

Praise God!

Hebrew Bible Reading: Hosea 2:18

I will make for you a covenant on that day with the wild animals, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground; and I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land; and I will make you lie down in safety.

New Testament Reading: Philippians 4:4-9

Rejoice in God always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. God is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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

Many: **Thanks be to God.**

Reflection

<http://franciscanseculars.com/earth-breathing/>

Call to Offering

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

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

Offertory

All God's Critters

Bill Staines

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

Blessing of the Animals

One: We gather here today in the beauty of creation and give thanks that we have been made partners in the caretaking of this world. We gather here today alongside the beloved creatures of the earth; those that fly overhead, those that creep below on the ground, those who bring joy to our homes, those that fill us with awe and delight.

Many: We gather here today as a part of nature, as fellow animals filled with the breath of God and made of earth's dust.

One: May God bless the animals of the earth, sea and air with safe habitat, plentiful food and clean water. May God bless creatures that are endangered with protection. May God bless our efforts to ensure that no creature is exploited or forgotten.

Many: We ask God's blessings for all creatures of the earth, those known to us and those yet to be discovered.

One: May God bless the animals that provide vital accompanying services for so many. And may God bless all companion animals. We give thanks for the comfort, play, and joy they bring us.

Many: We ask God's blessing for the interdependent web of creation, and to make us mindful of all the ways we depend on our fellow animals.

One: May God bless the memories of beloved pets that have died, and bring lasting comfort to those who still deeply mourn. Let us now hold some shared moments of silence remembering those animals who are no longer with us, but are held in God's hand...

One: May God make us instruments of your peace;

Many: Where there is hatred, let us sow love; Where there is injury, pardon; Where there is doubt, faith; Where there is despair, hope; Where there is darkness, light; Where there is sadness, joy. Amen.

Introductions of Animals

(Animal's Name), you bless our world by your presence amongst us. You were created by God, and you are loved by God. May you and your human family experience joy and companionship together, and continue to be a source of love for one another. We bless you, _____!

Celebrations and Concerns

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

Pastoral Prayer

Closing Hymn *Prayer of Saint Francis – Lord Make Us Instruments of Your Peace*
Drakensburg Boys Choir, South Africa
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PMjdhSAr4SM>

Refrain: Lord, Make us instruments of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let your love increase
Lord, make us instruments of your peace,
Walls of pride and prejudice shall cease
When we are your instruments of peace.

1. Where there is hatred, we will show his love
Where there is injury, we will never judge
Where there is striving, we will speak his peace
To the millions crying for release,
We will be his instruments of peace. **R**

2. Where there is blindness, we will pray for sight
Where there is darkness, we will shine his light
Where there is sadness, we will bear their grief
To the millions crying for relief,
We will be your instruments of peace. **R**

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

Worship Leaders – Barbara Darling, Evelyn Kimber, Nancy Stockford,
Rev. Rob Mark

Lector – Harry Forsdick

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Vocals – Barbara Darling and Ted Goodfleisch

Choreography – Kaitlyn Martin Fox

Cantor – Tom Reid

Cover Image of Saint Clare of Assisi – icon by Br. Robert Lentz, OFM

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.

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS: This Sunday, as we continue on into the Season of Creation, we will engage in a our annual blessing of the animals. If you have a companion animal – from kitten to chicken – please invite them to church!! Since we are on Zoom, there is no fear of bringing allergies to others, or need to bring kitty litter into the pews! In addition to asking God's blessing on these beloved companions, we will also remember those animals who have died and we still hold tightly in our hearts. So please feel welcome to bring a picture to share – or a photo of a friend's pet, etc. We will each have a moment to share the name of an animal we are asking God's blessings upon. Also, as we honor St. Clare and St. Francis, consider bringing your Zoom device **outside** if possible so we can worship together in nature. The weather should be good! If this is not possible, perhaps find a favorite plant or photo that reminds you of nature into your view so others can see as we Zoom in together.

COLUMBARIUM AT COTC? ADULT ED TODAY SUNDAY

OCTOBER 11: Directly following worship on Zoom. Join us as we hear a report from our Building Committee on a specific proposal on installing a columbarium in the back vestibule of our sanctuary and how this can be funded and maintained. A second survey of the congregation will follow this important discussion – thank you for joining us.

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.

- Sundays, October 11-25 Season of Creation Special Series on Climate Jubilee:
 - October 11 Blessing of the Animals Service
 - October 18 Communion, Rev. Rob preaching on climate jubilee
 - October 25 Rev. Rob preaching on climate jubilee

Upcoming Sunday Adult Eds following worship:

- *Oct. 11 – presentation and congregational meeting on the columbarium proposal at COTC*
- *Oct. 18 – Question 2 on MA Ballot – Rank Choice Voting with Rev. Vernon Walker, followed by Informal Coffee Half-hour getting to know Rev. Joshua*

Here are the Zoom details for Sundays:

join by computer/ tablet/ smartphone:

<https://zoom.us/j/91025989890?pwd=VTd0L3VMc3ErRDBRTl1pTTEvRGNZUT09>

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.

WEDS EVENING PRAYERS (in person): Following three successful outdoor evening prayer sessions, we will begin moving inside and Zooming together for weekly evening prayers beginning this Weds. Oct. Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88999202076?pwd=bU9XQ0JuR0F1bXhrTUV2eVBDcHIxdz09> Please email Rev. Rob if you have questions: rob.mark@cotcbos.org

STAFF TRANSITION: We are sorry to share Hillary Gabbidon, our Parish Administrator for the past two years, has taken on another full time position with Gordon-Conwell, and so is finishing her work with us. We give thanks to God for Hillary's presence and service to our congregation over these years, and we pray her God's deepest blessings as she continues in the work of ministry. Stay tuned for a goodbye communication from Hillary to the congregation soon.

HOW TO BE AN ANTIRACIST: At this important time as our nation and church face the realities of racial justice, police brutality and white supremacy with renewed intention, please consider joining us for this next church book discussion. For our Covenant book group discussion in October we have agreed to read and discuss Ibram X. Kendi's *How to Be an Anti-Racist*. We'll meet via Zoom to discuss that book on **Sunday, Oct 25, at 5 pm.**

40 DAYS OF PRAYER FOR THIS COUNTRY: Our siblings in faith at the Sudbury Presbyterian Church invite us to join them in praying each day in advance of the election:

<http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?m=1110322783198&ca=63f9a378-df7d-485d-95d4-45cc613bce3a>

VOTE: Questions about if you are registered, where or how to vote?

<https://www.environmentalvoter.org/>

BALLOT QUESTION #2 – Adult Ed following worship on Sunday, October 18, we welcome Rev. Vernon Walker who will speak to us about the importance of voting Yes on 2 to help bring Rank Choice Voting to our Commonwealth.

GET TRAINED TO BE AN INTERFAITH DIGITAL DEFENDER: Auburn Seminary is teaming up with Women's March for a webinar with Auburn Senior Fellow, Brian McLaren. Join us on October 7th at 7 pm EST for a 45 minute discussion; we'll learn about identifying election disinformation online and pushing back against common voter suppression tactics. After the webinar, you'll be invited to join a deeper election disinformation training track to protect the results and count every vote in the upcoming 2020 election.

https://womensmarch.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_pRwXOIiQRluwIY5rE73iaQ?_x_zm_rtaid=jOH3HjxiQ0K29gXJuS5QFw.1601492254252.03a57789078f33f9161df02c1d23556d&_x_zm_rhtaid=220

CONGREGATION CLIMATE JUSTICE VOTER CHALLENGE: Our Council voted unanimously on August 18 to join the Congregation Climate Justice Voter Challenge initiated by the Southern New England Conference of the UCC. Needless to say, our country is at an important crossroads this year and our ability to address and deal with climate change and climate justice issues, as well as other important social justice issues which are important to us, will be affected by our elections this Fall. This is true at all levels – local, state and Federal. So voter engagement is crucial! And Council accepted the recommendation of the Climate Jubilee Team to join this Challenge for at least 75% of our members to sign. So please sign!--at this link: (<https://sneucc-reg.brtapp.com/CreationCareVoterPledge>) By signing the Pledge, one simply says that they “pledge to be a consistent voter” and “always to prioritize caring for God’s creation in how I vote.” The Challenge has two levels: First, individual congregations are asked to challenge themselves to have a least 75% of their members commit to being faithful and regular voters. Second, the Southern New England Conference's Environmental Ministries Team hopes that many churches in MA, CT and RI will join in accepting the Challenge for their congregations.

More information (<https://www.sneucc.org/congregation-climate-justice-voter-challenge>).

VIRTUAL SUPER SATURDAY (UCC): Saturdays October 24, 2020 and October 31, 2020, 9am-3pm, \$10 <https://www.sneucc.org/planning-event-detail/12871453?month=10&year=2020&day=1&display=m>

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!

<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.

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, Rev. Joshua at youngadults@cotcbos.org.

A SAINT FOR ALL SAINTS: A Conversation about the Life and Legacy of The Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray – Sunday November 1, 2020, 4 pm on ZOOM - Emmanuel Church, Boston. Register:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_v3ryu-dxRCegmHvnFVyXtg

Panelist include:

- Melissa Wood Bartholomew, Associate Dean for Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging at Harvard Divinity School and racial justice and healing practitioner;
- The Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas, Canon Theologian at the National Cathedral, Dean of Episcopal Divinity School, and leader in womanist theology and racial reconciliation;
- The Rev. Dr. Cameron Partridge, openly transgender theologian and Rector of St. Aidan's San Francisco.

Moderated by The Rev. Dr. Yolanda Rolle, Episcopal-Anglican Chaplain at Howard University.

MOURNING ALL THE SAINTS (UCC): It has been a year of abundant grief. On top of the pain and loss we experience collectively in what we used to call "normal" times, this year has added 205,000 (and counting) Saints to the numbers of those who have gone before. This year has added trauma and pain and loss in ways that continue to hold our hearts captive. This year has called a reckoning of systems towards Justice, and the slow pains of growth and awareness and the impact of struggle on people trying to hold it together. And this year has called us to cling fast to faith with clarity and strength and prayer. So in calling on our faith that all those who have gone before are in community with All Saints, you are invited to join us in honoring those who have passed, especially to COVID-19, for a service of All Saints with music, prayer, and lifting of names. We will gather via Zoom on November 1st at 6pm ET. To contribute a name to the visual list of people in memoriam, simply fill out this [form](#) and the name will be included. To register:

https://ucc.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_bd5OnOMhSdWmn5OefEi_ZQ

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*
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*