

Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA



Fourth Sunday in Lent

The Elements of Lent: Mud

Presbyterian Church (USA) /United Church of Christ



Church of the Covenant

March 22, 2020

10:30 am

Fourth Sunday in Lent: *Mud*

Prelude

2 Settings of Amazing Grace

Robert Powell and Gilbert Martin

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you!

Many: **And also with you!**

*** Call To Worship**

from Psalm 40

One: I waited patiently for God,

Many: **Who inclined to me and heard my cry.**

One: God drew me up from the desolate pit,

Many: **Out of the muddy bog, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.**

One: God put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise

Many: **Many will see and fear, and put their trust in God.**

*** Opening Hymn: PH (blue) 138**

Holy, Holy Holy!

Lighting of the Christ Light

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!

Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee

Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!

God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee,

Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;

Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,

Who wert, and art, and evermore shall be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide Thee,

Though the eye of sinfulness Thy glory may not see,

Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee

Perfect in power, in love and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!

All Thy works shall praise Thy name, in earth and sky and sea;

Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!

God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

Many: Loving God, this Lent we open ourselves to truth as we long to encounter your healing touch. To any pain, hurt, or "other"-ing we are complicit in or unaware of – educate us. From any fear, burden or anxiety that binds – liberate us. And then fill us with fierce love so that we may have the courage to be fully who you created us to be – your beloved children.

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

Elemental Lenten Listening to God *(marked by chiming of prayer bowl)*

Assurance of God's Grace

One: Just as the Spirit was present to Jesus in the sometimes dry, sometimes muddy wilderness, God's presence is with us in all times and in all places. There is nothing therefore that can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. Therefore, let us celebrate together:

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

* Exchange of the Peace

(Please exchange greetings of Christ's peace and reconciliation in your heart to each other)

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: And also with you.

* Sung Response

Kyrie Eleison

Ky-ri - e e - le - i - son. Chris - te e - le - i - son.

Ky-ri - e e - le - i - son, e - le - i - son, e - le - i - son.

Contemplative Scripture Reading: Visio Divina by A Sanctified Art

Gospel: John 9:1-17, 25

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of God who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am the one.” But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” He answered, “The one called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.” ...

The man answered... “One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”

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

Sung Response:

Spirit of God, Unseen as the Wind

Tune: Skye Boat Song



Refrain: Spir - it of God un - seen as the wind, gen - tle as is the dove,



Lead us a - long, fill us with song, show us the way to love. *Fine*



Verse: You spoke to us, long long a - go gave us the sa - cred Word;



You speak still now, through earth and sky, in all things God is heard. *D.C.*

Sermon

Gumboots

* Hymn: PH (blue) 339

Be Thou My Vision

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart
Nought be all else to me, save that Thou art –
Thou my best thought by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Riches I heed not, nor vain empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always;
Thou and Thou o-n-ly, first in my heart,
Great God of heaven, my treasure Thou art.

Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

Call to Offering

Online Giving Option: <http://www.cotcbos.org/give.html> (click on Give Now, then choose Pledges or Gifts General – thank you!)

Offertory

Amazing Grace How Sweet the Sound

George Shearing

*** Doxology**

Tune: Old Hundredth

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**

Moment for Mission: Generous Natures

Becky Evans

Celebrations and Concerns

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

Pastoral Prayer

*** Closing Hymn:**

Amazing Grace

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come;
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise, than when we'd first begun.

*** Charge and Benediction**

Postlude:

Variations on Amazing Grace

Gwyneth Walker

Participating in Today's Worship:

Meditation – Rev. Rob Mark

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Liturgists – Rev. Rob Mark & Rev. Adam Isbitsky

Moment for Mission – Becky Evans

Lector – A Sanctified Art

Cantor – Rev. Adam Isbitsky

Moment for Mission – Becky Evans

Sexton – Fred Lopes

Cover Photo – beautiful feet of an Eco-Steward in the holy mud of Hawai'i's taro

WELCOME TO CHURCH OF THE COVENANT: We are delighted to welcome you to our community of faith! Due to the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, we are suspending in-person worship at this point through 4/7, but are grateful for the technology that allows the majority of us to gather together online. All potlucks, church meetings, and scheduled events linked to the building are currently suspended through at least 4/5, and more than likely beyond Holy Week and Easter. All meetings have been postponed or shifted to conference calls. The announcements that follow in this bulletin are the best we know at this point, keeping in mind things are shifting rapidly in these days, as more and more events are shifting as we all do our part to love our neighbor as ourselves and practice “social distancing” to help “flatten the curve” of this virus’s spread. And in faith and through God’s ceaseless, amazing grace – we also practice “spiritual nearing” to each other and the Sweet Holy Spirit.

LIVE-STREAMING DIRECTIONS: In solidarity with most faith communities, and following direction from our denominations, we have suspended in-person worship and are bringing them “online” at the same time of 10:30 am. We will live-stream on Facebook (anyone, with or without a FB account, can follow by [going to this link today at 10:30 am: https://www.facebook.com/COTCBOS](https://www.facebook.com/COTCBOS)). To join in fully, consider these options as you might be able:

1. Printing this bulletin out in advance so you have it while live-streaming
2. Pulling this bulletin up on a second device/ phone/ screen
3. Pulling both this bulletin up and your Facebook link up, and switch between them as directed/ needed. The liturgy, songs, and scripture are the important times to have this bulletin visible if possible.

And if none of these options work for you, no worries – following along the live-stream will also work fine!

UPCOMING SERVICES (Worship / After Worship): *Note, due to COVID-19 spread, we are in a state of flux, and we ask your patience as specific themes and plans are unfolding. At this point, in-person worship is suspended 3/22, 3/29, and 4/5, and is shifting to being online via live-streaming. But in general, these*

Sunday, March 22 at 10:30 AM ~ Fourth Sunday in Lent: MUD, Rev. Rob preaching/
CYCE & Deacons Meetings (zoom conference calls)

Thursday, March 26 at 6:30 PM ~ Mid-Week Lenten Service *online only*

Sunday, March 29 at 10:30 AM ~ Fifth Sunday in Lent: FIRE, Rev. Rob preaching /
Worship & Music Zoom meeting

Sunday, April 5, at 10:30 AM ~ All Ages Palm to Passion Sunday: Holy Week: TREE
/ Adult Ed Serpentino's Restoration Process of our Stained Glass Windows /
2pm Climate Justice From a 5-Fingered Perspective: Protecting a Good & Sacred
Earth with special guest Earl Tulley of the Diné (Navajo) Nation.

Holy Week – stay tuned for details still emerging...

ONLINE GIVING: During these days of altered worship where we may not be face-to-face and passing the offering plate, please keep in mind there are easy ways to give online. During these challenging times, we are extra grateful for tangible signs of generosity:

1. Download free app: GIVEPLUS+ <https://giveplushelp.vancopayments.com/>
Then, type in our zip code 02116 to find Church of the Covenant, [then follow this link](#), and you can set up regular payments or make them once at a time
2. Directly on our website: <http://www.cotcbos.org/give.html>

TODAY 10 am: CHILDREN'S CIRCLE TIME via zoom with Rev. Adam:

For those young families, children, youth and CYCE leaders, please join us:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/5010088802>

One tap mobile: +19292056099,,5010088802#

Dial by your location: +1 929 205 6099

Meeting ID 501 008 8802

DEACONS MEETING TODAY 12:15 pm: Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/664559704>

Meeting ID: 664 559 704

One tap mobile: +16465588656,,664559704#

Dial by your location: +1 646 558 8656

COTC CYCE MEETING TODAY at 12:00pm ZOOM:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/5010088802>

One tap mobile

+19292056099,,5010088802# US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 501 008 8802

CHURCH OF THE COVENANT BOOK GROUP: Covenant's book discussion group will meet by Zoom today, Sunday, March 22, at 5:00 pm, to discuss the second half of *Destiny Disrupted* by Tamim Ansary. See details below!

Time: Mar 22, 2020 05:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/792374158?pwd=VmtZWDFscUliQVJqTHliVmdmTUdOZz09>

Meeting ID: 792 374 158

Password: 462623

One tap mobile: +16465588656,,792374158#

Dial by your location: +1 646 558 8656

GREATER BOSTON INTERFAITH ORGANIZATION (GBIO UPDATE):

As in much of our life now days, GBIO's Healthcare plans are requiring a reset. We will not have an action at the State House on April 1, but we still need letters sent to your Representative, Senator Cindy Friedman, Chair of Senate Ways and Means. GBIO organizers say that personal stories of healthcare obstacles, complete with detail, would be very helpful in the Senate's negotiation with the House. Please continue to complete the pdf letters to your House Representative. If you need that link again let Holly know at hollyhumphreys@verizon.net, or call. We plan to have an after church Zoom House Meeting to bring everyone up to date and share stories.

CHURCH ZOOM ACCOUNT: If you are a committee chair, for now please email Rev. Rob if you would like information on how to use the zoom account to set up meetings. Soon our Parish Administrator Hillary (who is now back from medical leave!) will be in charge of this account. As a reminder, all church meetings are either to be postponed, or brought online via zoom.

40 ACTS OF GENEROSITY THIS LENT: Sign up for this simple but profound daily discipline in practicing generosity brought to you by your Generosity Generators: <https://40acts.org.uk/>

OUR OPEN SANCTUARY MINISTRY is recruiting volunteers for the 2020 season! While we are unsure as to when we will open due to COVID-19, we are still hoping we will be able to open our doors at some point. For those unfamiliar with OS, we open our sanctuary to the public on select days from May to November. Last year we received 17,500 visitors. Volunteers have rated this experience highly, with the unique opportunity to share our beautiful sanctuary with visitors from around the world. 2, 2.5-, or 5-hour shifts on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, or Mondays are available. We will host an online training for new volunteers on the evening of March 31. For more information, contact Simone DeVito, Karen Henry, or Betsy Groves.

THE FOOD PANTRY NEEDS VOLUNTEERS: The Food Pantry is in need of volunteers. Volunteers greet our clients, do some basic recordkeeping, and help the clients choose from the food options available that day. The time commitment is only 2 hours, 10 am to noon, once per month. We currently have openings on the first Saturday, the second Sunday, and the third Sunday of the month. If you are interested in volunteering less frequently, we also need volunteers on the fifth Saturday or fifth Sunday of the month. If you have any interest in helping out, please speak to Faith Perry. Thank you!

20s-30s-40s GROUP AT COVENANT: We have an active young adult group that meets regularly to share meals, visit sites around New England, and discuss how our faith motivates and guides us to live through this unique life stage. If you'd like to join us, or be added to the e-listserv, contact one of our group leaders: Kathryn Barry, Melissa Morgan, Tom Reid, or Rev. Adam at youngadults@cotcbos.org.

FAREWELL CELEBRATION FOR REV. WENDY VANDER HART

ONLINE: After serving for a dozen years as the Associate Conference Minister for the Metropolitan Boston Association of the UCC, former Covenanter Rev. Wendy Vander Hart is moving on to a new position as Interim Senior Minister at First United Church of Christ in Northfield, MN. From Wendy: "This is a BIG change, since I have served the entire 33 years of my ministry in the Metropolitan Boston Association!" An event to say farewell and celebrate her ministry event will take place on Sunday, March 22nd at 5:30 pm <https://zoom.us/j/593729677>

CREW INTERFAITH CLIMATE SUMMIT MOVING ONLINE: Sunday March 29, 2:00-4:00 pm, this is moving to zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/795374789>
Meeting ID: 795 374 789

One tap mobile: +16468769923,,795374789#

The Elements of Lent:

Stone, Wind, Water, Mud, Fire, Tree



Journey with us over these 40 days of Lent as we engage sacred gospel texts to uncover core, elemental themes that speak of God's earthy and mystical love. Together, let us find spiritual renewal so we can live more fully and creatively on earth, here and now.



Church of the Covenant, Boston

February 26 – April 12, 2020



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 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*