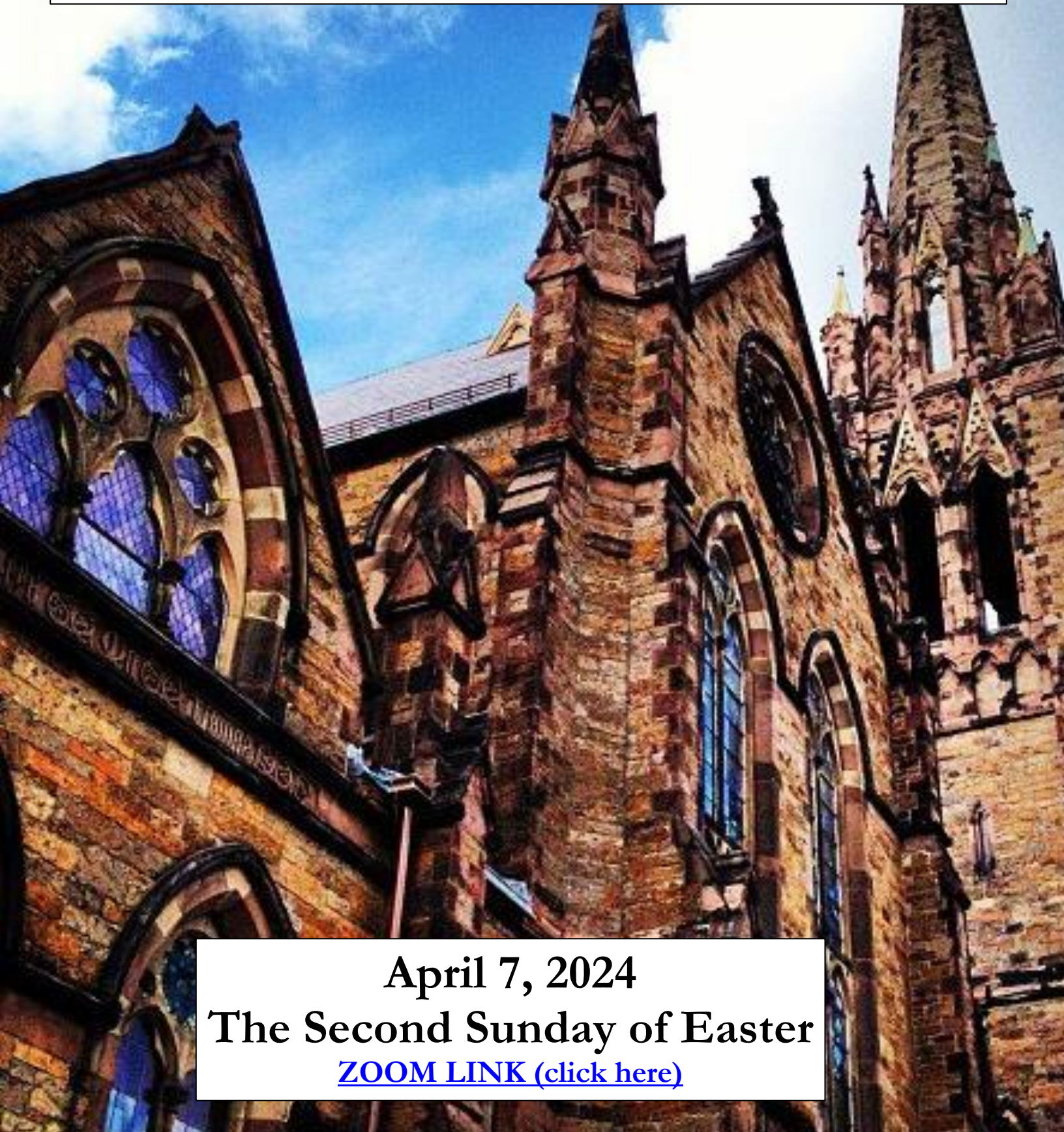


Church of the Covenant

Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ



April 7, 2024

The Second Sunday of Easter

[ZOOM LINK \(click here\)](#)



Church of the Covenant

Second Sunday of Easter

April 7, 2024, 10:30 am [Zoom Link](#)

Welcome and thank you for worshipping together for this “hybrid” service where some will be in the sanctuary at 67 Newbury Street, and some in the sanctuary of places far and near. For those joining online, we begin on Zoom at the above link. Please keep your mic muted during the service.

**You are invited to rise in body or spirit.*

Prelude

Adagio from Sonata I

Felix Mendelssohn

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you.

Many: And also with you.

One: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Many: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

* Call to Worship

(from Mechthild of Magdeburg)

One: Our Jesus is resurrected!

Many: Hallelujah!

One: O you beautiful rose in the thorns!

Many: O you fluttering bee in the honey!

One: O you pure dove in your nature!

Many: O you beautiful sun in your shining!

One: O you full moon in your standing!

Many: We cannot turn away from you.

One: Let us worship together.

* Kindling the Christ Light

One: The light of Christ

Many: Thanks be to God!

* Opening Hymn PH (blue) 108

Christ Is Alive!

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.

The cross stands empty to the sky.

Let streets and homes with praises ring.

Love, drowned in death, shall never die.

Christ is alive! No longer bound
To distant lands in Palestine,
But saving, healing, here and now,
And touching every place and time.

Not throned afar, remotely high,
Untouched, unmoved by human pains,
But daily, in the midst of life,
Our Savior in the God-head reigns.

In every insult, rift, and war,
Where color, scorn, or wealth divide,
Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,
And lives, where even hope has died.

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

Many: God of empty tombs: when we hesitate to speak of your hope, forgive us, and give us voice. When we find it difficult to love one another, forgive us, and give us new compassion. When we do not hear the witness of others, forgive us, and redirect our attention to those who are too often forgotten. When we stay locked behind our fears and doubts, forgive us, and send us out to share your grace.

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

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

One: Christ comes into every shadowed corner of our lives with the light of Easter. Christ comes into the locked rooms of our faults, and gifts us with grace and hope. Christ comes to fill us with peace, that we may proclaim the good news of mercy and forgiveness. Therefore, let us celebrate:

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

* Sung Response

Easter Celtic Alleluia

Al - le - lu - ia, a - le - lu - ia!

Al - le - lu - ia, a - le - lu - ia!

Readings from Scripture

Gospel Reading – John 20:19-31

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Authorities, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Sovereign. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As Abba has sent me, so I send you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Holy One.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” Thomas answered him, “My Sovereign and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.” Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Child of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

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

Reflection on the Word

Sung Response

Easter Celtic Alleluia

Moment for Generosity

Call to Offering

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

Offertory “Happy Am I, Who Have Jesus” from Cantata 147 J. S. Bach
arr. David N. Johnson

* Communion Doxology

Tune: Old Hundredth

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 & Concerns

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

Pastoral Prayer

Celebration of Holy Communion

Invitation to the Table

* Communion Summons

I'm Gonna Eat at the Welcome Table

I'm gonna eat at the welcome table,
I'm gonna eat at the welcome table, some of these days.
I'm gonna eat at the welcome table,
I'm gonna eat at the welcome table, some of these days.

* The Great Thanksgiving

One: May God be with you!

Many: **And also with you.**

One: People of the Empty Tomb, let us lift up our hearts!

Many: **We open our hearts to the Spirit 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 God.**

One: It is right for us to thank and praise you God...

...And so, with your people and birds here on earth, with all the ancestors, and all the 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

(from A New Zealand Prayer Book, said in unison)

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be, Parent of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven: The hallowing of your name echo through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings! Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and testing, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.

Breaking of the Bread

Sharing of the Bread & Cup

Post Communion Prayer

* Closing Hymn NCH (black) 237

I Come to the Garden Alone

1. I come to the garden alone,
While the dew is still on the roses;
And the voice I hear, falling on my ear,
The Son of God discloses.

Refrain:

And he walks with me, and he talks with me,
And he tells me I am his own,
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known.

2. He speaks, and the sound of his voice
Is so sweet the birds hush their singing;
And the melody that he gave to me
Within my heart is ringing. *Refrain*

3. I'd stay in the garden with Him
Though the night around me be falling;
But he bids me go; through the voice of woe,
His voice to me is calling. *Refrain*

* 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.**

Worship Participants

Worship Leaders – Rev. Rob Mark, Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Lector – Nancy Ammerman

Moment for Generosity – Holly Humphreys

Ushers – Denice Thornhill, Trudi Veldman

Communion Servers – Sally Pomeroy, Trudi Veldman

Digital Minister – Diane Lauber

Audio Visual Tech Team – Venkatesh Balasubramanian, Abhishek John, Jon Schwarz

Sexton – Jesús Vargas

WELCOME TO CHURCH OF THE COVENANT! We are so glad to have you worshipping with us today! If you are new to our community, we hope you will feel at home and welcomed during this service. If you have any questions about who we are as a community of faith, please reach out to an usher in person or our Digital Minister in the chat.

SACRED RECKONINGS ADULT ED. CLASS TODAY! We hope you can join us today (**April 7**) after worship for the first of two hybrid (in-person and on Zoom) Adult Education classes, after church today and next Sunday, **April 14**, to learn about a justice-focused project designed for churches. Sacred Reckonings calls us to the deep spiritual work of reckoning with the histories of colonization and White supremacy, and beginning the work of repair. “It also calls us to the promise of liberation that is woven into the work of reckoning.” Last fall, Rev. Rob sent an open invitation to participate in a Sacred Reckonings remote training. Six people from Covenant attended. It was a powerful training and we haven’t stopped learning since. We hope you can come, whether to one or both classes.

NEW TO COTC? We are so glad you are here! Let us know a little bit about how we can welcome you by filling out the form at this QR code, and learn more on our website at cotcbos.org.



WANT TO JOIN COTC? We'd love to welcome you as our newest member. Did you know we have three forms of membership at Church of the Covenant? Speak to pastors Rob or Joshua at any point, or email our Parish Administrator Nancy if you'd like to know more: nancy.stockford@cotcbos.org.

UPCOMING WORSHIP. Please join us each Sunday at 10:30 am and during the special services listed below as we come together in community to pray, sing, share celebrations and concerns, and hear God's still-speaking Word proclaimed in these hybrid services (in-person and Zoom options). [Zoom Link for each service.](#)

- Sunday, April 14: Rev. Rob Mark preaching, All-Church Potluck & Sacred Reckonings Adult Ed. After Worship
- Sunday, April 21: Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard preaching, Holy Communion, Climate Jubilee All-Church Read After Worship
- Sunday, April 28: Rev. Rob Mark preaching, Deacons Meeting After Worship

PRO ARTE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA CONCERT THIS AFTERNOON.

Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra (including violinist Barbara Englesberg) is presenting "The Unbroken Circle" today, **April 7, at 3:00 pm**, at Second Church in Newton. Emmy-winning composer Jeff Beal will be the guest conductor. The varied program will include Strauss' French Horn Concerto, played by BSO hornist Michael Winter, and Ottorino Respighi's "Gli Uccelli" ("The Birds"). For more information:

<https://www.proarte.org/concerts/the-unbroken-circle>.

WELCOME CHILDREN & YOUTH!! We offer Christian education through Godly Play for ages 3-9, youth classes for ages 10-13 and 14+, and a nursery for the littlest ones. We welcome all children, youth, and families—those we know already and those who are here for the first time. If you need help finding us, please ask an usher. We share CYCE info regularly via email, so please email Rev. Kate at kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org if you want to receive updates!

BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS WILL RESUME IN MAY. Our weekly Bible Study typically meets on Wednesday mornings at 9:45 on Zoom. Due to travel schedules, Bible Study will be taking a break during the month of April. The next meeting will be on May 1. We are studying the Gospel of Mark. If you'd like more information or want to be on the list to get regular reminders and Zoom info, contact Jan Gough at revjangough@gmail.com.

WEDNESDAY EVENING PRAYERS 6:00-6:30 pm. Join us for our weekly Wednesday evening prayers with intentional liturgy, contemplative song, psalms, and sharing of prayers with our siblings from Newton Presbyterian [on Zoom](https://www.cotcbos.org) (link on <http://www.cotcbos.org>).

VIDEO CAMERAS/POSTING FULL SERVICE RECORDINGS. To best serve our diverse community and new worshippers, we livestream and record each service, including Celebrations and Concerns. If you would prefer not to be in occasional camera shots, you are welcome to sit on the outside aisles on either side of the sanctuary. Recordings of each service are available on our [Worship Recordings Page](https://www.cotcbos.org/worship-recordings) ([cotcbos.org/worship-recordings](https://www.cotcbos.org/worship-recordings)).

WEEKLY CALENDAR. Click [here](https://www.cotcbos.org/calendar-of-events) ([cotcbos.org/calendar-of-events](https://www.cotcbos.org/calendar-of-events)) to view the weekly calendar of events.

Church of the Covenant is focused on following Jesus in our world through accompaniment, compassion, peace, joy and creative beauty.

We are passionate about hospitality, committed to justice, and wild about faith.

We embrace an embodied spirituality that is not afraid of questions.

We advocate for a just climate for our earth, liberation in our world, and equality in our neighborhoods.

We are a community where ALL are welcome and celebrated as beautiful reflections of God –all genders, all faiths, all orientations, all backgrounds, all abilities, all ages, all struggles, and all hopes.

Come journey with us!

Visitor or Newcomer? Welcome to Church of the Covenant!

We are glad you are here. Please let us know if there are ways we can help you connect to the church community. Learn more about the church by visiting our website at www.cotcbos.org. To sign up for email updates about worship services and other events in our community, please fill out a visitor's card in your pew, or email us at info@cotcbos.org.

Parking Bargain – Worshippers may park at the Back Bay Garage [Clarendon Street, between Boylston and St. James] on Sundays between 6:00 am and 9:00 pm for the first three (3) hours for only \$5. To get this discounted rate, please ask an usher before or after the worship service for a parking discount voucher.

Prayers of Celebration or Concern May Be Shared in the Red Book – At the rear of the Sanctuary is a red book where prayers that you wish to have spoken aloud during the Pastoral Prayer time may be written. The book will be available until the time of the offering.

Time of Greeting – After worship this morning, we hope that you will take a few minutes after going outside the sanctuary to connect with others worshipping with you, especially people you may not know as well.

Hearing Assisted Devices – **Speak with an usher** if you would like to use these devices that work with or without a hearing aid. These devices are specifically designed to work only with our sound system. Please remember to return the device at the close of the service. Thank you!

Building Accessibility – Our building includes an exterior ramp on Newbury Street and an elevator (in the Parish House part of the building) which allows access to the fellowship hall, meeting rooms, offices, and other parts of the building. We also have accessible rest rooms. Please ask an usher to help you locate these resources.



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 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 Lawrence Lazard, *Associate Pastor*

Thomas Handel, *Minister of Music*

Bill Brown, *Building Manager*

Rev. Kate Carlisle, *CYCE Coordinator*

Nancy Stockford, *Parish Administrator/Financial Secretary*

Jesús Vargas, *Sexton*

Alan Lane, *Food Cupboard Coordinator*

Venkatesh Balasubramanian, *Digital Communications & Audio Visual Tech Manager*

CHURCH OFFICERS

Kathryn Barry, *President of the Corporation*

Trudi Veldman, *Clerk of the Council*

Jon Schwarz, *Moderator of the Board of Deacons*

Faith Perry, *Treasurer*