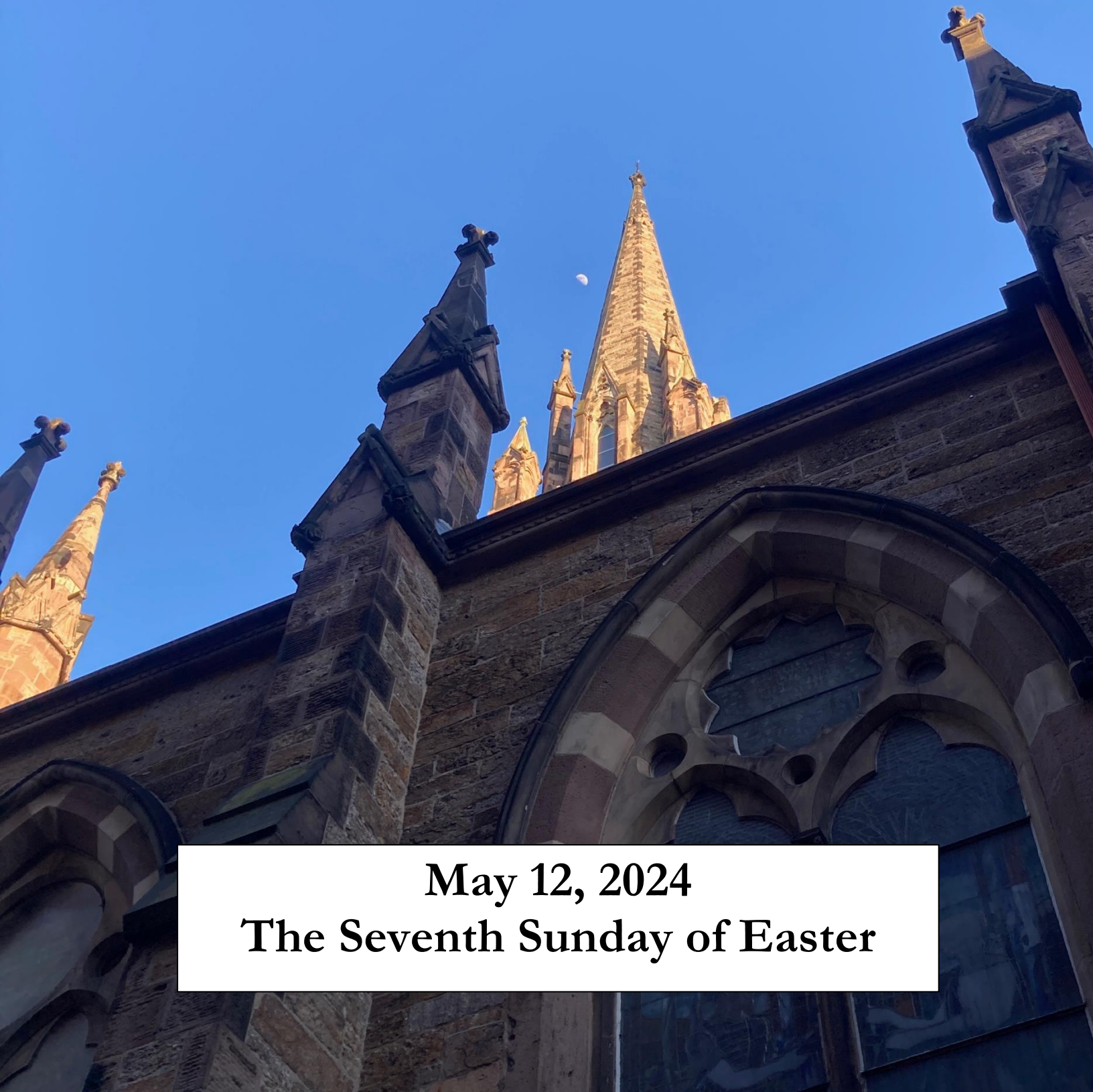


# Church of the Covenant

*Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ*



**May 12, 2024**  
**The Seventh Sunday of Easter**



**Church of the Covenant**  
**Seventh Sunday of Easter**  
May 12, 2024, 10:30 am [Zoom Link](#)

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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 link above. Please keep your mic muted during the service.

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

**Prelude**

*All Glory be to God on High*

J. S. Bach

**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**

One: Why do you look up toward heaven?

Many: **Christ has risen; Christ will come again.**

One: This Jesus—God raise up,

Many: **and of that we are all witnesses.**

One: Beloved, we are God’s children now;

Many: **when Christ is revealed, we will be like him.**

One: Beloved, let us love one another.

Many: **We love because God first loved us.**

**\* Kindling the Christ Light**

One: The light of Christ

Many: **Thanks be to God!**

**\* Opening Hymn PH (blue)**

*Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*

Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heav'n to earth come down,  
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling, all Thy faithful mercies crown!  
Jesus, Thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love Thou art;  
Visit us with Thy salvation, enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit into every troubled breast!  
Let us all in Thee inherit, let us find the promised rest;  
Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be;  
End of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty to deliver, let us all Thy life receive;  
Suddenly return and never, nevermore Thy temples leave.  
Thee we would be always blessing, serve Thee as Thy hosts above;  
Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing, glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish then, Thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be;  
Let us see Thy great salvation perfectly restored in Thee.  
Changed from glory into glory, till in heav'n we take our place,  
Till we cast our crowns before Thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.

**Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace**

*Vida en la tierra*, Latin American Alliance of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, 2006

**Many: O Lord, God of life, as you care for all creation, give us your peace! May our security come not from weapons, but from respect; may our strength come not from violence, but from love; may our wealth come not from money, but from sharing; may our path be one not of ambition, but of justice; may our victory not be one of revenge, but of forgiveness. Unarmed and confident, help us to defend the dignity of all creation, sharing, today and always, the bread of solidarity and peace. Through Jesus Christ, your divine Son, our brother, who, made victim from our violence, from high on the cross, offered forgiveness to all.**

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

**Listening to God in Silent Prayer**

## Assurance of God's Grace

One: Friends, Jesus has risen: death does not have last word. Jesus has gone up: we are the Body of Christ now, his hands and feet for this time and place. In broken bread, in acts of justice and care, Christ's love abides with us even now. Easter people, beloved community, let us celebrate our liberation together:

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

**New Testament Reading** – Acts 2:41-47

So those who welcomed Peter's message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

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

Many: **Thanks be to God.**

### Sung Response

*Easter Celtic Alleluia*

## Sermon

“Christian Family Values”

### \* Hymn PH (blue) 413

*All Who Love and Serve Your City*

All who love and serve your city, all who bear its daily stress,  
All who cry for peace and justice, all who curse and all who bless:

In your day of wealth and plenty, wasted work and wasted play,  
Call to mind the word of Jesus, “You must work while it is day.”

For all days are days of judgment, and the Lord is waiting still,  
Drawing near a world that spurns Him, offering peace from Calvary’s hill.

Risen Lord, shall yet the city be the city of despair?  
Come today, our judge, our glory. Be its name “The Lord is there!”

### Call to Offering

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

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

### Offertory

*Soar Away*

Shape Note Hymn

### \* 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

### Celebrations & Concerns

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

### Pastoral Prayer

### \* 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.**

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## Worship Participants

**Preacher** – Rev. Kate Carlisle

**Minister of Music** – Tom Handel

**Liturgist** – Barbara Darling

**Lector** – Ben Champney

**Covenant Choir**

**Usher** – Trudi Veldman

**Digital Minister** – Christine James

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

**Sexton** – Jesús Vargas

*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!*

**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.

**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](http://cotcbos.org).



**READERS NEEDED FOR PENTECOST!** We are planning a multilingual reading for our Pentecost All-Ages Worship next **Sunday, May 19**. If you read or speak a language other than English, and would like to read a line of Scripture (in-person or on Zoom), please let Rev. Kate know by **Wednesday, May 15**, at noon. Let us know if you want to use your own Bible or if you would like us to provide the translation for you.

**ALL-CHURCH READ: *TRANSFORMING*.** Join us after worship today, **Sunday, May 12**, for an Adult Ed. and the second discussion of our all-church read, *Transforming: The Bible & the Lives of Transgender Christians* by Austen Hartke. As Covenant continues living into and growing our Open and Affirming and More Light commitments, we have already held one discussion around topics raised in this important book, sharing the stories of several trans Christians and inviting readers into trans theology. After our Adult Ed. during Lent, we heard interest in continuing the conversation, especially after more folks are able to finish reading. Rev. Kate will lead the discussion, and we hope you will come ready to participate! Whether or not you came to the first session and whether or not you have read the whole book, we hope that you'll join us!

**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, May 19: Pentecost, All-Ages Worship, Holy Communion
- Sunday, May 26: Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard preaching
- Sunday, June 2: Reflection on the Word, Holy Communion
- Sunday, June 9: Pride Weekend, Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard preaching
- Sunday, June 16: Rev. Joshua Lawrence Lazard preaching, Holy Communion, All-Church Picnic After Worship

**TOM REID CONCERT ON MAY 18.** Pastor of Newton Presbyterian Church and former Covenant member Tom Reid will be singing in “Beyond the Sea: A Musical Journey” at NPC (75 Vernon Street, Newton) on **Saturday, May 18, at 6:00 pm.** He will be accompanied by Anran Qian on piano. Admission is free.

**COVENANT CABARET! Saturday, June 1, 7:00 pm.** Come join us for this lively event with tasty refreshments and fun entertainment (music, poetry, storytelling, standup comedy, and whatever else YOU want to offer). If you are interested in performing, please contact Karen Henry ([kams.henry@gmail.com](mailto:kams.henry@gmail.com)). And please **save the date!** The Cabaret is a fundraiser to support our sibling relationship with the Church of the Poor in Dulce Nombre de Jesús, Nicaragua.

**ALL-CHURCH PICNIC: SAVE THE DATE!** Join us after worship on **Sunday, June 16,** in the Boston Public Garden to eat/share food, play games, and chat informally.

**REV. ROB ON EXTENDED REFLECTION LEAVE UNTIL SEPTEMBER.** Lead Pastor Rob Mark will be away until September 12, taking three months of Extended Reflection/Study Leave, four weeks of vacation, and two weeks of unpaid leave. Rob has shaped his leave around his ongoing love of the deep mystical roots of Celtic Christian spirituality: *The Sophia of Anam Cara: The Wisdom of Soul Connections*. Rob plans to use this leave to create space to breathe, be, and love more. He hopes this time will allow him and at times his family to pray for the life of our world and take stock of the enormous shifts that have happened and are happening in our world, the Church, and in their lives over these past six years—trusting that these months away may help him refocus, reflect, and refresh in the spirit of Sabbath and Jubilee. Rev. Joshua will shift from half-time Associate Pastor to full-time Lead Pastor during Rob’s reflection leave, ensuring us a smooth transition and pastoral continuity. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Rev. Joshua ([joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org](mailto:joshua.lazard@cotcbos.org)).

**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](mailto:kate.carlisle@cotcbos.org) if you want to receive updates!



**BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS.** Our weekly Bible Study meets on Wednesday mornings at 9:45 on Zoom. 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](mailto: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](#) (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](#) ([cotcbos.org/worship-recordings](http://cotcbos.org/worship-recordings)).

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



*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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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. Joshua Lawrence Lazard, *Lead Pastor (pro tem)*  
Rev. Rob Mark, *Lead Pastor (on sabbatical)*  
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*