



Church of the Covenant

Boston, MA

June 30, 2024

10:30 am

The Season of Pentecost/Ordinary Time

Zoom Link: tinyurl.com/cotcworship

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

One: Peace be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

* Call To Worship

One: Wait for the Lord, like those who hope in God's mercy.

Many: **God's steadfast love endures forever.**

One: Watch for God, like those who eagerly await the morning.

Many: **God's steadfast love endures forever.**

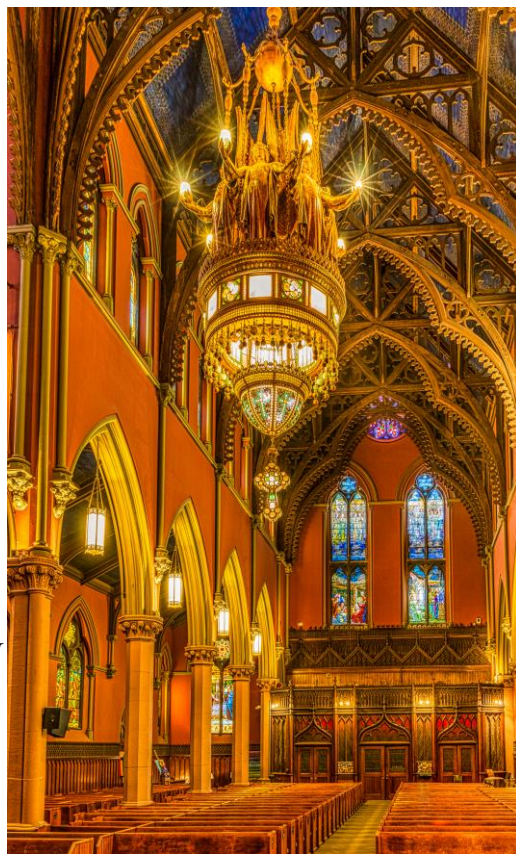
One: Hear God's hopeful word, like those who long for pardon.

Many: **God's steadfast love endures forever.**

* Opening Hymn NCH (black) 451

Be now my Vision, O God of my heart;
Nothing surpasses the love you impart—
You my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, your presence my light.

Be now my wisdom, and be my true word;
Ever within me, my soul is assured;
Mother and Father, you are both to me,
Now and forever your child I will be.



Be Now My Vision

Riches I need not, nor life's empty praise,
You, my inheritance, now and always;
You and you only are first in my heart,
Great God, my treasure, may we never part.

Sovereign of heaven, my victory won,
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

Lighting of the Christ Light

Prayer for Grounding in God's Grace

One: Out of the depths of despair, we cry to you, O God. We are lost in a world of pain and suffering. When we put our trust in weapons of war, we find no peace. When we put our faith in our own resources, we feel the ache of our true needs. When we put our hope in the health of our bodies, we suffer pain and find no healing. Come to us, O God. Forgive our doubts and fears. Heal our brokenness, that we may rejoice in your steadfast love. Let us now open ourselves to God in silent prayer...

Listening to God in Silent Prayer

Assurance of God's Grace

One: There is forgiveness and healing with God. God's steadfast love has the power to redeem our brokenness and make us whole. Therefore, let us rejoice together:

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

* Sung Response

Amen, Bawo

5 A-men, we praise your name, O God! A-men we praise your name, O God!

A-men, ba-wo. A-men, ba-wo. A-men, we praise your name, O God!

Scripture Readings

Hebrew Bible Reading – 1 Samuel 28:3-25

Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in Ramah, his own city. Saul had expelled the mediums and the wizards from the land. The Philistines assembled and came and encamped at Shunem. Saul gathered all Israel, and they encamped at Gilboa. When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. When Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, not by dreams or by Urim or by prophets. Then Saul said to his servants, “Seek out for me a woman who is a medium, so that I may go to her and inquire of her.” His servants said to him, “There is a medium at Endor.”

So Saul disguised himself and put on other clothes and went there, he and two men with him. They came to the woman by night. And he said, “Consult a spirit for me, and bring up for me the one whom I name to you.” The woman said to him, “Surely you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the wizards from the land. Why then are you laying a snare for my life to bring about my death?” But Saul swore to her by the Lord, “As the Lord lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing.” Then the woman said, “Whom shall I bring up for you?” He answered, “Bring up Samuel for me.” When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice, and the woman said to Saul, “Why have you deceived me? You are Saul!” The king said to her, “Have no fear; what do you see?” The woman said to Saul, “I see a divine being coming up out of the ground.” He said to her, “What is his appearance?” She said, “An old man is coming up; he is wrapped in a robe.” So Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground and did obeisance.

Then Samuel said to Saul, “Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?” Saul answered, “I am in great distress, for the Philistines are warring against me, and God has turned away from me and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams, so I have summoned you to tell me what I should do.” Samuel said, “Why then do you ask me, since the Lord has turned from you and become your enemy? The Lord has done to you just as he spoke by me, for the Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. Because you did not obey the voice of the Lord and did not carry out his fierce wrath against Amalek, therefore the Lord has done this thing to you today. Moreover, the Lord will give

Israel along with you into the hands of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me; the Lord will also give the army of Israel into the hands of the Philistines.”

Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground filled with fear because of the words of Samuel, and there was no strength in him, for he had eaten nothing all day and all night. The woman came to Saul, and when she saw that he was terrified, she said to him, “Your servant has listened to you; I have taken my life in my hand and have listened to what you have said to me. Now, therefore, you also listen to your servant; let me set a morsel of bread before you. Eat, that you may have strength when you go on your way.” He refused and said, “I will not eat.” But his servants, together with the woman, urged him, and he listened to their words. So he got up from the ground and sat on the bed. Now the woman had a fattened calf in the house. She quickly slaughtered it, and she took flour, kneaded it, and baked unleavened cakes. She put them before Saul and his servants, and they ate. Then they rose and went away that night.

New Testament Reading – Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

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

Many: **Thanks be to God.**

Sung Response

Amen, Bawo

Sermon

Call to Offering

Offertory

* 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 & Concerns

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

Pastoral Prayer

* Closing Hymn NCH (black) 299

For All the Saints

For all the saints who from their labors rest,
Who to the world their steadfast faith confessed,
Your name, O Jesus, be forever blessed. Alleluia! Alleluia!

You were their rock, their refuge, and their might:
You, Christ, the hope that put their fears to flight;
'Mid gloom and doubt, you were their one true light. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Still may your people, faithful, true, and bold,
Live as the saints who nobly fought of old,
And share with them a glorious crown of gold. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Ringed by this cloud of witnesses divine,
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
Yet in your love our faithful lives entwine. Alleluia! Alleluia!

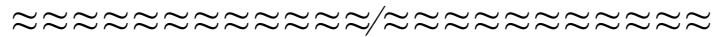
And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long,
Steals on the ear the distant triumph song,
Then hearts are brave again, and faith grows strong. Alleluia! Alleluia!

* Charge & Benediction

*** Exchange of the Peace:**

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**



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 welcome 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.



UPCOMING SUNDAY WORSHIP. Please join us each Sunday at 10:30 am as we come together in community to pray, sing, share celebrations and concerns, and hear God’s still-speaking Word proclaimed in these hybrid (in-person and Zoom) services.

- June 30: Rev. Joshua Lazard preaching, Cold Drink Fellowship After Worship
- July 7: ZOOM ONLY, Rev. Julie Avis Rogers preaching, Holy Communion
- July 14: Rev. Joshua Lazard preaching, Deacons Meeting After Worship
- July 21: Rev. Joshua Lazard preaching, Holy Communion, Life Alive Brunch
- July 28: Rev. Joshua Lazard preaching
- August 4: Rev. Julie Avis Rogers preaching, Holy Communion
- August 11: Rev. Joshua Lazard preaching
- August 18: Rev. Joshua Lazard preaching, Holy Communion, Life Alive Brunch
- August 25: Rev. Joshua Lazard preaching

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 restrooms. 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. 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*