

Church of the Covenant

Boston Massachusetts



67 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116
Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ

Church of the Covenant

March 29, 2013

10:30 a.m.

Good Friday

Please enter and leave the sanctuary in silence. The sanctuary will be kept open following the service for those who wish to remain in silent meditation.

Prelude

Adagio for Strings

Samuel Barber

Welcome and Call to Worship

One: Who will come to worship when we focus on the crucifixion?

All: We will come.

One: When the closest disciples have fled in terror, who will gather at the foot of the cross?

All: We will gather.

One: Who will hear again the story of the death of God's Saving One?

All: We will hear.

One: Who will witness to the love of God, poured out for the world, on that night, on this night, and always?

All: We will witness.

***Hymn PH 98** O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

Prayer for God's Grace

Assurance of Grace

One: The Gospel of John proclaims that God entered the world through Jesus Christ, not to condemn the world, but so that the world might be saved through him. Jesus came and gave his life so that all people may be forgiven, healed, and reconnected to God. Lay down your burdens, leave your brokenness behind, so that we may journey forward together with the Saving One of God. Hear and believe the Good News of the Gospel:

All: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven; in Jesus Christ we are set free. Amen.

***Exchange of the Peace**

(Please exchange greetings of Christ's peace and reconciliation)

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

***Hymn PH 102** Were You There?

The First Word: Luke 23:32-38

Brendan Thompson

Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.

Invitation to Meditative Silence

Meditation *There's a Wideness in God's Mercy* Calvin Hampton

The Second Word: Luke 23:39-43

Kate Hall & Rob Mark

Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.

Invitation to Meditative Silence

***Hymn PH 599** Jesus, Remember Me

Meditation *Today You Shall Be With Me In Paradise*

Newell Hendricks

Paradise? Paradise? Paradise is not what I had in mind: Me, a filthy Gentile, fit to feast with Abraham? I only know what I hear, that you help cripples walk, blind people see; you kick crazy spirits out, and even called a dead man back from the grave. I got caught: nothing can help me now, no one save --I only hoped --- people say you'll be a king -- that when you got your crown you might remember one who talked to you when you were down and out. Now you say today "I'll be with you in paradise." I don't know where that is. The way ahead is dark. I'm scared to go alone. alone...

The Third Word: John 19:23–27

Holly Humphreys

Woman, here is your son. Here is your mother.

Invitation to Meditative Silence

Meditation *The Crucifixion*

Samuel Barber

At the cry of the first bird they began to crucify Thee, O Swan! Never shall lament cease because of that. It was like the parting of day from night. Ah, sore was the suffering born by the body of Mary's son, but sorer still to him was the grief which for his sake came upon his mother.

The Fourth Word: Matthew 27:45-49

Kate Hall & Rob Mark

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Invitation to Meditative Silence

Meditation *Cantilena (Sonata for Flute and Piano)*

Francis Poulenc

The Fifth Word: John 19:28-29

Holly Humphreys

I am thirsty.

Invitation to Meditative Silence

Meditation

I Thirst

Newell Hendricks

Of course he's thirsty --- he worked all night. Between nightmares I watched him strip away all self respect, yank out each doubt by the root, lash the back of cowardice. The last time he woke me he oozed blood like sweat through his flesh. I heard him beg that this cup not be his; I also heard him say not what I want but you. Now it pierces his calloused hands as he takes it and drains it thirst unslaked.

The Sixth Word: John 19:30

Kate Hall & Rob Mark

It is finished.

Invitation to Meditative Silence

Meditation

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

Johannes Brahms

The Seventh Word: Luke 23:44-49

Reine Abele

Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

Invitation to Meditative Silence

Meditation *Father, Into Thy Hands I Commit My Spirit*

Newell Hendricks

Now snaps the last cord that bound us. I saw this day the night Joseph's pocket knife sliced between my body and my baby boy. The wound widened as the boy's stature grew but I misread his words in my heart. "Who is my mother"? he asked (I waiting outside) and preached about

his father's will. I did his father's will once; I carried him through shame and pain then watched him wander far from my arms along the dirty roads of Galilee toward his hill. So this is how you take him back snatching with your unseen hand his breath away, leaving me alone with the pain, the body and the blood.

Prayer

Tolling of the Bell

Charge

Please leave the sanctuary in silence. The sanctuary will remain open for those who wish to remain in silence meditation. Also consider joining us tomorrow on Holy Saturday in this sanctuary space to continue the meditation from 12-1pm.

Thank you for joining us in worship. We are glad you are here. If you'd like to know more about our community of faith, please see www.cotcbos.org or speak to an usher.

And please join us for the remaining services of Holy Week at Church of the Covenant:

Holy Saturday, 3/30, Noon-1pm, COTC Sanctuary, Meditative Vigil: This service is a way to mark the holy silence that defines Holy Saturday – the day Jesus lays in the tomb. During this vigil hour, worshippers can come and go as they please. Tom Handel will play some organ music, and there will be candle stations for prayer, and the pews open for silent meditation.

Easter Sunday 3/31, 10:30am COTC Sanctuary: Come celebrate the promise of resurrection on this sacred day. We will be joined by the Redline Brass Quintet and an Easter Egg Hunt for children will take place following service. A special extended coffee hour with hot cross buns in Bates Hall will also follow the service.

Participants in Tonight's Worship:

Liturgists – Brendan Thompson, Holly Humphreys, Kate Hall, Reine Abele, Rev. Rob Mark

Minister of Music – Tom Handel

Church of the Covenant Choir

Flute – Katherine Lemmon

Soprano – Betsy Groves

Poet – Steven Pepper

Composer – Newell Hendricks

Ushers – Members of Church of the Covenant

Meaning of the Service

This service commemorates the crucifixion and death of Jesus in a symbolic movement from light to darkness. The music, scriptures, and prayers reflect Jesus' last words from the cross. The service is loosely based on an 8th century service called Tenebrae, meaning "shadows," which was celebrated on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of Holy Week.

The candles symbolize Jesus Christ, the light of the world. As they are extinguished, they reflect the darkness that fell over the world because of Jesus' death and the fear and apprehension experienced by his followers. The service will close with a stark charge without the benediction customary in worship services throughout the rest of the church year. Suspending the blessing (until Easter morning) evokes the disciples' experience of abandonment and despair at the time of Jesus' death.

As we remember the undeserved suffering of Christ, we bring before God the suffering in our own lives, the suffering of people we love, those who are persecuted for speaking the truth, and those who suffer from poverty, violence, or other injustice.

To bear witness to suffering – God's suffering and that of human suffering – is an act of hope in the light God's steadfast love which darkness cannot ultimately extinguish.



Church of the Covenant
Boston Massachusetts

(617) 266-7480

www.churchofthecovenant.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 God 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 that the marriages of same-gender and opposite-gender couples are equally sacred and divinely blessed. Thus, we joyfully welcome the opportunity now afforded us by both the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the United Church of Christ to join couples of all sexual orientations in fully legal and holy marriage. We continue to work and pray for the day that the Presbyterian Church (USA) grants us this same opportunity.

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, *Pastor*
Thomas Handel, *Minister of Music*
Brian Reardon, *Administrator / Bld. Mgr.*
Julie Rogers, *Administrative Assistant*
Fred Lopes, *Sunday Sexton*
Jamie Sinetar, *Childcare*
Alan Lane, *Food Cupboard Coordinator*

CHURCH OFFICERS

Betsy McAlister Groves, *President of the Corporation*
Ed James, *Clerk of the Council*
Faith Perry, *Treasurer*
Karen Henry & Newell Hendricks,
Co-Moderators of the Board of Deacons