



COVENANT CHURCH

H O U S T O N

A Service of Worship for
16 November 2025

Religion is the vision of something
which stands beyond, behind, and within,
the passing flux of immediate things;
something which is real, and yet waiting to be realized;
something which is a remote possibility,
and yet the greatest of present facts;
something which gives meaning to all that passes,
and yet eludes apprehension;
something whose possession is the final good,
and yet is beyond all reach; something which is the ultimate ideal,
and the hopeless quest...

The worship of God is not a rule of safety, it is an adventure of the spirit.

–Alfred North Whitehead

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!

And also with you!

Ring in the hour

Silence is kept

⁺Prelude

Gerald Near

“Sarabande on ‘Land of Rest’ ”

(b. 1942)

Call to Worship

⁺Opening Hymn #386

Azmon

“O For a World”

**O for a world where everyone respects each other’s ways,
Where love is lived and all is done with justice and with praise.**

**O for a world where goods are shared and misery relieved,
Where truth is spoken, children spared, equality achieved.**

**We welcome one world family and struggle with each choice
That opens us to unity and gives our vision voice.**

**The poor are rich, the weak are strong, the foolish ones are wise.
Tell all who mourn; outcasts belong, who perishes will rise.**

**O for a world preparing for God’s glorious reign of peace,
Where time and tears will be no more, and all but love will cease.**

⁺Opening Sentences

Spirit of life, be present with us this hour.

Join us today as we gather

in a wider search for truth and purpose.

**Please hold silence and remain seated during the prelude*

+Please stand in body or spirit

**In this quest, may we greet one another
with open hearts and minds;
may we inspire each other
to consider new questions
and seek deeper meaning;
and may we cultivate wisdom and compassion.
Let all who enter this sanctuary
see a welcome face,
hear a kind word,
and find comfort in this community.
And may all that is done and said here today
be in service to love and justice.**

Invitation

Scripture Lesson

Isaiah 65:17-25

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

Time for Children

⁺ Response:

Tallis' Canon

**Go with us, Lord, and guide the way
Through this and every coming day,
That in Your Spirit strong and true
Our lives may be our gift to you.**

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

**Lord, we pray for the power to be gentle,
the strength to be forgiving,
the patience to be understanding,
and the endurance to accept the consequences
of holding to what we believe to be right.**

+Please stand in body or spirit

**May we put our trust in the power of good to overcome evil
and the power of love to overcome hatred.**

**We pray for the vision to see and the faith to believe
in a world emancipated from violence.**

**Help us to devote our whole life, thought and energy
to the task of making peace,
praying always for the inspiration and the power
to fulfill the destiny for which we were created.**

Words of Assurance

Music

Edgar L. Bainton
(1880-1956)

“And I Saw A New Heaven”

*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth:
For the first heaven and the first earth
were passed away; and there was no more sea.
And I John saw the holy city,
new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven,
Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying,
Behold, the tabernacle of God is with all,
and God with be with them
and they shall be God’s people,
and God will always be with them and be their God.
And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes,
and there shall be no more death,
neither sorrow nor crying,
neither shall bere be any more pain,
for the former things are passed away.*

Silent Reflection

Prayer

Offering

Offertory

Herbert Howells
(1892-1983)

“The ‘Chosen’ Tune”

⁺Prayer of Dedication

**In the course of my studies,
I have discovered that the religious quest
is not about discovering “the truth” or “the meaning of life,”
but about living as intensely as possible here and now.
The idea is not to latch onto some superhuman personality
or to “get to heaven” but to discover how to be fully human.**

⁺Doxology

Old Hundredth

**Praise God the Source of life and birth.
Praise God the Word, who came to earth.
Praise God the Spirit, holy flame,
All glory, honor to God’s name! Amen.**

THE CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION

Invitation to the Table

⁺Hymn

Lobe den Herren

"O God of Vision" verses 1-4

O God of Vision

1. O God of vi - sion far great - er than all hu - man schem -
 2. Pour out your Spir - it on all now as - sem - bled be - fore
 3. Grant to us in - sight, O God, for this time of de - ci -
 4. Break the sun's rays in - to col - or, a rain - bow a - round
 5. Grate - ful, we come now by Christ's in - vi - ta - tion clear - spo -

1. ing, gath - er us now in your pres - ence, re - fresh - ing, re -
 2. you. May our di - ver - si - ty here be a means to a -
 3. sion. May we dream chal - leng - ing dreams of both depth and pre -
 4. us. Storm clouds, though real and near, are not e - nough to con -
 5. ken. We seek the nour - ish - ment found in fruit crushed and bread

1. deem - ing. Show us a - new life in your breath - tak - ing
 2. dore you. Wom - en and men, young, old, and youth - ful a -
 3. ci - sion. Speak through the dark. Dis - pel by light - ning's bright
 4. found us. Arched in the sky, beau - ty and pro - mise are
 5. bro - ken. Christ for us all! Come, let us an - swer the

1. view, love - ly be - yond all our dream - ing.
 2. gain, make us as one, we im - plore you.
 3. spark what - ev - er clouds dim our vi - sion.
 4. high, giv - ing us hope to as - tound us.
 5. call, of - fering our lives as the to - ken.

WORDS: Jane Parker Huber, 1981
 MUSIC: *Erneueren Gesangbuch*, 1665

LOBE DEN HERREN
 14 14.478

Sharing the Bread and Cup

*Our communion elements include both wine and water, and gluten-free and vegan crackers.
All are always welcome to communion at Covenant.*

⁺Communion Response

Lobe den Herren

**Grateful, we come now by Christ's invitation clear-spoken.
We seek the nourishment found in fruit crushed and bread broken.
Christ for us all! Come, let us answer the call,
Offering our lives as the token.**

⁺Responsive Affirmation of Faith

We, bearers of the dream, affirm that a new vision of hope is emerging.
We pledge to work for that community in which justice will be actively present.
**We affirm that there is struggle yet ahead.
Yet we know that in the struggle is the hope for the future.**
We affirm that we are co-creators of the future, not passive pawns.
And we stand united in affirmation of our hope and vision of a just and inclusive society.
**We affirm the unity of all persons:
We affirm brotherhood and sisterhood
that allows us to touch upon each other's humanity.**
We affirm a unity that opens our eyes, ears, and hearts
to see the different but common forms of oppression, suffering, and pain.
Yet we are one in the image of God, and we celebrate our hopes for human unity.
**Within ourselves and within the gathered community,
we will discover the strength not to hide in indifference.**
Affirming that hope, publicly expressed, energizes and enables us to move forward.
**Together we pledge action to transcend barriers —
be they racial, political, economic, social, or religious.
We pledge to make our tomorrows become our todays.**

+Please stand in body or spirit

“Live Into Hope”

**Live into hope of captives freed,
Of sight regained, the end of greed.
The oppressed shall be the first to see
The year of God’s own jubilee!**

**Live into hope the blind shall see
With insight and with clarity,
Removing shades of pride and fear —
A vision of our God brought near.**

**Live into hope of liberty,
The right to speak, the right to be,
The right to have one’s daily bread,
To hear God’s word and thus be fed.**

**Live into hope of captives freed
From chains of fear or want or greed.
God now proclaims our full release
To faith and hope and joy and peace.**

Benediction

^{*}Postlude

“Placare Christe Servulis”

Marcel Dupré
(1886-1971)

+Please stand in body or spirit

**Please hold silence and remain seated during the postlude*

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Nita Lindley**.

The organist is Carl McAliley.

The Call to Worship is “The Opening of Eyes” by David Whyte

The Opening Sentences are by Kathy Huff.

The Unison Confession was written for the 1978 Week of Prayer for World Peace.

The Prayer of Dedication is from *The Spiral Staircase: My Climb Out of Darkness* by Karen Armstrong.

The Responsive Affirmation of Faith is from *Been in the Storm So Long* by Loretta Williams.

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About Today's Service

Karen Armstrong is a British writer and religious historian. She is best known for her work in comparative religion and for founding the Charter for Compassion. The Prayer of Dedication is taken from her autobiography, *The Spiral Staircase*. It recounts her unhappy years as a nun in a convent, academic failure, and a diagnosis of epilepsy before she was given the chance to write a documentary on early Christianity. Her work emphasizes the importance of compassion and the “Golden Rule” across different faith traditions, arguing that religion is a practical discipline for achieving a fulfilled humanity rather than a set of dogmatic beliefs.

—Raymond Stubblefield

Announcements

There will be a congregational business meeting after church **today, November 16**.

Advent Secret Friends returns this year. See the newsletter or Jason Steiner for registration info.

Please sign up by November 23.

All-Church “Advance” — an on-site retreat, November 21-23. The deadline to register for Saturday morning mission sites is **today, November 16**.

Children and Youth Announcements

November 16 - Youth Fellowship after church

November 30 - Youth Social: Pecan Grove Christmas Hayride (RSVP by November 16)

December 7- Advent Celebration & Tree Decorating: all are welcome to participate!

Calendar

Sun. November 16	12pm	Congregational Business Meeting, Sanctuary.
	12pm	Youth Fellowship, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Mon. November 17	7pm	Insight Meditation Houston, 2nd floor of Huff Fellowship Hall building.
Thurs. November 20	10am	Community Group, Zoom.
	1:15pm	Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom.
	7:15pm	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary.
Fri. November 21	6pm	Pizza & Board Games Night, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Sat. November 22	Morning	Mission Projects, on- and off-site.
	12:30pm	Advance Lunch, Huff Fellowship Hall.
	2:30pm	Advance Breakout Sessions, multiple rooms.
Sun. November 23	9:30am	Adult Education, 2nd floor of the Huff Fellowship Hall Building: Laura Mayo will lead a discussion on the Advance.
	10:30am	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary.

Information

Childcare: Childcare is provided in the children's area beginning at 9:30 a.m. Children aged 2 and under are invited to the nursery. Children aged 3 to 9 are invited to the children's area after the Time for Children.

Covenant Recycles: If you do not wish to keep your order of worship, please recycle it by placing it on the stand located in the narthex.

Office Hours: The Church Office is open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 8am-3pm, and Tuesday from 1pm-5pm.

Helpful Links: Scan here for digital Visitor and Celebration & Concern Cards; any sign-up forms mentioned in the Announcements; and other useful information.



*Covenant Church affirms the sanctity, dignity, and equality
of human beings and the value of all life in the universe.
We welcome persons of all racial and ethnic heritages, all sexual orientations,
all gender identities, and all faith perspectives to our Christian community.
We stand for each individual's right to worship God and to respond
to God's call to ministry in her or his own understanding
of God's all-encompassing love.
We value a holistic approach to faith and seek to worship in ways that are
intellectually credible, emotionally stimulating, spiritually engaging
and contemporarily relevant.
We value music and art and ritual to express what we cannot ever fully say.
We value participation so that we might hear many approaches
to our shared faith.*

Covenant Church, an ecumenical, liberal, Baptist congregation

Members of Covenant, Ministers

Fran Avera, Minister of Music, Emerita

Trena' Jamison, Director of Children and Youth

Heather Laureles, Director of Administration & Communications

David Lee, Director of Music

Laura Mayo, Senior Minister

Jason Steiner, Organist and Associate Director of Music

Raymond Stubblefield, Minister of Congregational Life

Brendon Young, Moores School of Music Artist in Residence

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Covenant Church recognizes the laws of the State of Texas and the rights of its citizens. Consistent with this acknowledgment and with respect for the values of our Church, we also acknowledge that our congregants and visitors seek a safe and comfortable space for worship and celebration. In that spirit, we request that all firearms be left in a secure place outside of the Church. We thank God for providing us with the opportunity to worship together and to continue to respect each other as human beings.