



COVENANT CHURCH

H O U S T O N

A Service of Worship for
Christ the King Sunday
23 November 2025

O God of our many understandings, we pray that you will...

Bless us with tears – for a world in which over a billion people exist on less than a dollar
a day, where young women from many lands are beaten and raped for wanting an
education, and thousands die daily
from malnutrition, malaria, and AIDS.

Bless us with anger – at discrimination, at home and abroad, against refugees and
immigrants, women, people of color, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

Bless us with discomfort – at the easy, simplistic “answers” we’ve preferred to hear from
our politicians, instead of the truth, about ourselves and the world, which we need to
face if we are going to rise to the challenges of the future.

Bless us with humility – open to understanding that our own needs must always be
balanced with those of the world.

Bless us with freedom from mere tolerance – replacing it with a genuine respect and
warm embrace of our differences, and an understanding that in our diversity,
we are stronger.

Bless us with compassion and generosity – remembering that every religion’s God
judges us by the way we care for the most vulnerable in the human community, whether
across town or across the world.

–Rt. Rev. Gene Robinson, delivered at the inauguration of President Obama

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ring in the hour

Silence is kept

*Prelude

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

arr. Hal Hopson

“Praise Be the Lord, Be Joyful”
Praise the Lord, be joyful!
Shout forth God’s glory, be joyful.
God is merciful, the Shepherd, kind and true.
God is the One Creator,
Come with songs rejoicing.

Call to Worship

+Opening Hymn #563

Lift Every Voice

“Lift Every Voice and Sing” stanza 1

**Lift every voice and sing till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of liberty.
Let our rejoicing rise high as the listening skies;
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us;
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on, till victory is won.**

+Opening Sentences

**We in this country, in this generation, are –
by destiny rather than Choice –
the watchmen on the walls of freedom.**

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

+Please stand in body or spirit

**We ask, therefore, that we may be worthy
of our power and responsibility,
that we may exercise our strength with wisdom and restraint,
and that we may achieve in our time and for all time
the ancient vision of “peace on earth, goodwill toward all.”**

Invitation

Scripture Lesson

Isaiah 62:6-7

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

**The Prophets sought to convey:
that morally speaking, there is no limit
to the concern one must feel
for the suffering of human beings,
that indifference to evil is worse than the evil itself,
that in a free society, some are guilty, but all are responsible.**

Words of Assurance

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

+Please stand in body or spirit

"Lift Every Voice and Sing" stanza 2

**Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn has died;
Yet, with a steady beat, have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our parents sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered;
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.**

Prayer

Offering

Offertory

"Cantilène"

Rachel Laurin
(1961-2023)

⁺Prayer of Dedication

**A character in one of J. D. Salinger's short stories
says that the most important word in the Bible is "watch."
"Be on the watch!
Stay awake!
Watch with a sharp eye!
Look around you!
Be on guard!"
Why would "watch" be anyone's favorite notion?
How do we watch?
What are we watching for? . . .
What would help us stay awake and watch?**

⁺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.**

+Please stand in body or spirit

⁺Affirmation of Faith

**You can safely assume you've created God in your own image
when it turns out that God hates all the same people you do.**

⁺Closing Hymn #563

Lift Every Voice

“Lift Every Voice and Sing” stanza 3

**God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who hast by Thy might led us into the light;
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met thee;
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;
Shadowed beneath Thy hand may we forever stand,
True to our God, true to our native land.**

Benediction

^{*}Postlude

“Toccata on ‘We Shall Overcome’ ”

Carl Haywood
(b. 1949)

+Please stand in body or spirit

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

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Nita Lindley**.

The Call to Worship is “The Place Where We Are Right” by Yehuda Amichai.

The Opening Sentences are by John F. Kennedy, from the speech to have been delivered in Dallas, November 22, 1963.

The Unison Confession is by Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel.

Rabbi Joshua Fixler gives the proclamation.

The Prayer of Dedication is by Gabe Huck from *An Advent Sourcebook*, edited by Thomas J. O’Gorman.

The Affirmation of Faith is by Anne Lamott.

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About Today's Service

This Sunday, Christians following the liturgical calendar observe Christ the King Sunday as the end of our church year. This day was designated by Pope Pius XI in 1925 in response to the increasing threat of the rise of fascism in Europe leading up to World War II. It serves as a reminder that Christ's status as "king" is separate from any political group on earth—Christ is not Caesar, and Caesar is not Christ.

Covenant is an affiliate church of the Baptist Joint Committee on Religious Freedom (BJC), a nonpartisan group of Baptists committed to religious freedom in the United States.

Founded in 1936, the BJC is driven by the historic Baptist principle of *soul freedom*: the belief that faith should not be dictated by any government authority and the necessity of advocating for the separation of church and state. The BJC's offices are located directly across from the Supreme Court, reflecting their status as a political watchdog. Their work is focused on national-level political advocacy, filing amicus curiae ("friend-of-the-court") briefs in favor of religious freedom and collaborating with other religious groups for joint advocacy opportunities.

In 2019, the BJC launched Christians Against Christian Nationalism, an interdenominational movement focused on combatting the threat of Christian nationalism. The movement is centered on **raising awareness** of the dangers of Christian nationalism, through media, events, and curriculum development; **political advocacy** through signing petitions, testifying in court, and speaking with representatives; and **local organizing** to build relationships with community leaders, partners, and members on a grassroots scale. For more information, visit <https://www.christiansagainstchristiannationalism.org/>.

—Jason Steiner

Announcements

Advent Secret Friends returns this year. See the newsletter, the QR code, or Jason Steiner for registration info. The deadline to sign up is **today, November 23**.

The deadline for 2026 Committee Nomination forms is also **today, November 23**. See the newsletter or the QR code in this bulletin for the form.

Children and Youth Announcements

November 30 - Youth Social: Pecan Grove Christmas Hayride

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

Saturday, January 17 - CCSC Family Service Day, 12:00 -1:15 p.m.

Calendar

Sun. November 23	12pm	Q&A with Rabbi Fixler, Sanctuary.
Mon. November 24	7pm	Insight Meditation Houston, 2nd floor of Huff Fellowship Hall building.
Thurs. November 27	10am	Community Group, Zoom.
Sun. November 30	9:30am	No Adult Education due to the Thanksgiving holiday.
	9:30am	Handbell Rehearsal, Huff Fellowship Hall.
	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.