

# COVENANT CHURCH

## H O U S T O N

A Service of Worship for  
11 January 2026

And did you get  
what you wanted from life, even so?  
I did.  
And what did you want?  
To call myself beloved, to feel  
myself beloved on the earth.

–Raymond Carver, “Late Fragment”



Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!  
**And also with you!**

Ring in the hour

Silence is kept

\*Prelude

“Prelude”

Carl Hirn  
(1887-1949)

Call to Worship

+Opening Hymn #321

Song 13

“Holy Spirit, Truth Divine”

**Holy Spirit, truth divine, dawn upon this soul of mine;  
Word of God, and inward light, wake my spirit, clear my sight.**

**Holy Spirit, love divine, glow within this heart of mine;  
Kindle every high desire; perish self in Thy pure fire.**

**Holy Spirit, power divine, fill and nerve this will of mine;  
By Thee may I strongly live, bravely bear, and nobly strive.**

**Holy Spirit, right divine, make my conscience wholly Thine;  
Be my law, and I shall be firmly bound, forever free.**

+Opening Sentences

**We must let go of the life we have planned,  
so as to accept the one that is waiting for us.**

Invitation

Scripture Lesson

Isaiah 42:1-9; Matthew 3:13-17

These are our sacred stories.

**Thanks be to God.**

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

*+Please stand in body or spirit*

Time for Children

<sup>+</sup> Response:

Servant Song

**We are pilgrims on a journey,  
We are trav'lers on the road;  
We are here to help each other  
Walk the mile and bear the load.**

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

**I would like to step out of my insular shell  
and come into contact with our present reality.**

**I would like to feel the rain on my face  
and breathe the fresh air.**

**I would like to wade into the waters  
that the spirit has troubled and stirred.**

**I would like the water drenching me  
to baptize me into a new life.**

**I would like to become a citizen  
not of somewhere else but of here.**

Words of Assurance

Music

Robert Lau  
(b. 1943)

**"Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart"**  
*Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;  
wean it from earth, through all its pulses move;  
stoop to my weakness, strength to me impart,  
and make me love you as I ought to love.*

*I ask no dream, no prophet ecstasies;  
no sudden rending of the veil of clay;  
no angel visitor, no opening skies;  
but take the dimness of my soul away.*

<sup>+</sup> Please stand in body or spirit

*Have you not bid me love you, God above?  
I am your own, my heart, soul, strength and mind.  
I hear your word, there teach my heart to cling.  
Let me seek you and find you there.*

*Teach me to love you as the angels love,  
one holy passion filling all my frame:  
The baptism of the heaven-descended dove,  
my heart, an altar, and your steadfast love, the flame.*

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

+Hymn

O Quanta Qualia

"Spirit of God, You Moved Over the Waters"

**Spirit of God, you moved over the waters  
Whisp'ring God's love to the whole of creation.  
You breathe your life into God's sons and daughters.  
Giving us talents and your inspiration.**

**Spirit of God, by the prophets you sought us,  
Calling us back from our pride-filled endeavors.  
Through chosen leaders you reached us and taught us,  
By your own gift we were given our Teacher.**

**Spirit of God, like a dove you once rested,  
Showing God's joy on the day Christ was baptized.  
You sent Christ out to the hills to be tested,  
Through you he called us to see God with new eyes.**

**Spirit of God, like a mighty wind blowing:  
Suddenly Christians stopped hiding and fearing.  
You gave them courage and love overflowing,  
So they proclaimed you to all in their hearing.**

+Please stand in body or spirit

**Help us to see you, still calling and caring,  
Help us to know you among us, creating.  
Spirit of God, give us courage and daring —  
To share God's love with a world that is waiting.**

Prayer

Offering

Offertory

“Dusk”

Nkeiru Okoye  
(b. 1972)

+Prayer of Dedication

**In joining this church, having passed through ritual waters or not,  
we dedicate ourselves to being a vital part of this community.  
We understand that we are God's children,  
That we are beloved.**

**May thoughts of baptism on this day remind us of who and whose we are.**

+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.**

+Responsive Affirmation of Faith

I make the effort  
**to maintain a ground of oceanic silence  
out of which arises the multitude  
of phenomena of daily life.**

I make the effort  
**to see and to passionately open in love  
to the spirit that infuses all things.**

I make the effort  
**to see the Beloved in everyone  
and to serve the Beloved through everyone  
(including the earth).**

*+Please stand in body or spirit*

I often fail in these aspirations  
because I lose the balance  
between separateness and unity,  
get lost in my separateness,  
and feel afraid.

**But I make the effort.**

<sup>+</sup>Closing Hymn #320

Prospect

“The Lone, Wild Bird”

**The lone, wild bird in lofty flight  
Is still with Thee, nor leaves Thy sight.  
And I am Thine! I rest in Thee.  
Great Spirit, come, and rest in me.**

**The ends of earth are in Thy hand,  
The sea’s dark deep and far off land.  
And I am Thine! I rest in Thee.  
Great Spirit, come, and rest in me.**

Benediction

<sup>\*</sup>Postlude

“March”

Kristina Rizzoto  
(b. 1989)

*+Please stand in body or spirit*

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

### Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Kiersten Scott-Collyer**.

The Call to Worship is “Beginning with Beloved: A Blessing” by Jan Richardson.

The Opening Sentences are by Joseph Campbell.

The Unison Confession is adapted from and inspired by the sermon “Not Somewhere Else But Here” in *Blessing the World: What Can Save Us Now* by Rebecca Parker.

The Prayer of Dedication is by **Laura Mayo**.

The Affirmation of Faith is by Ram Dass from *Life Prayers from Around the World*, edited by Elizabeth Roberts and Elias Amidon.

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### About Today’s Service

Covenant understands baptism as a ritual announcement and public commitment to follow in the peace-loving way of Jesus and join the ongoing work of salvation: the creation of the realm of God’s love on earth. **Baptism is not required for membership at Covenant.** We invite those old enough to consider baptism to speak with Laura Mayo.

–Jason Steiner

### Announcements

The Young Adult Intentional Discussion Group meets next on Tuesday, January 20.

Will Parker’s Musical Improv workshop is on February 21 - see the newsletter or the QR code to sign up.

Committees will meet on these dates in 2026: February 8, April 26, August 9, November 8

### Children and Youth Announcements

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

January 18 - Youth Fellowship after church

February 15 - Children & Youth Auction



## Calendar

Mon. January 12	7pm	Insight Meditation Houston, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Thurs. January 15	10am	Community Group, Zoom.
	1:15pm	Luncheon Lectionary Lab, Zoom.
	6pm	Christian Nationalism Panel with Laura Mayo, Rice University (see newsletter for exact location).
	7:15pm	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary.
Sun. January 18	9:30am	Adult Education, 2nd floor of Huff Fellowship Hall building; David Ramsey presents on science.
	9:30am	Handbell Rehearsal, Huff Fellowship Hall.
	10:30am	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary.

## Information

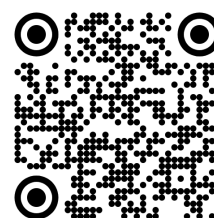
**Childcare** is provided in the children's area beginning at 9:30 a.m. Children aged 2 and under are invited to the nursery. Children aged 3 to 9 are invited to the children's area after the Time for Children.

**All-Gender Restrooms** are located in the Huff Fellowship Hall building.

**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 with a personal 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, Children and Youth Coordinator

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.*