

COVENANT CHURCH

HOUSTON

An Online Service of Worship for
25 January 2026

A thought transfixed me: for the first time in my life I saw the truth as it is set into song by so many poets, proclaimed as the final wisdom by so many thinkers. The truth - that love is the ultimate and the highest goal to which man can aspire.

Then I grasped the meaning of the greatest secret that human poetry and human thought and belief have to impart: The salvation of man is through love and in love. I understood how a man who has nothing left in this world still knows bliss, be it only for a brief moment, in the contemplation of his beloved.

–Viktor Frankl

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ringing in the hour

Silence is kept

Holding space

Prelude

“Have Mercy on Me, O God”

Miriam Carpinetti

(b. 1954)

Call to Worship

Opening Hymn #210

“Our God, Our Help in Ages Past”

St. Anne

**Our God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home:**

**Before the hills in order stood, or earth received its frame,
From everlasting Thou art God, to endless years the same.**

**A thousand ages in Thy sight are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun.**

**Time, like an ever rolling stream, soon bears us all away;
We fly forgotten, as a dream dies at the opening day.**

**Our God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while life shall last, and our eternal home.**

Opening Sentences

**Whether leavened by humor, lifted by contemplation,
or lightened and expanded by neighborly concern,
life opens up the moment we stop defining
(and restricting) it on our own narrow terms.
Once we understand the secret to it all –
that “it’s not about me” –
we no longer cast fear’s shadow.**

Invitation

Special Invitation from Rev. Laura Mayo

Scripture Lesson

Psalm 27:1, 4-9

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

Time for Children

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

**Holy God, you have called us to live in faith and freedom,
but we live with tightness in our chest.**

**You have called us to love in a new direction,
but we cling to the path we know.**

**You have called us to reach outward in love,
but we draw inward for protection.**

**You have called us to live with abandon, in trust,
but we live carefully, in fear.**

God, forgive us. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Music

Jody Lindh

"Behold, God Is My Salvation"

(b. 1944)

*Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid;
for the Lord God is my strength and my song, and has become my salvation!*

*Give thanks to the Lord and call upon God's name;
make known God's deeds among the nations,
proclaim that God's name is exalted!*

Sing praises to the Lord, for God has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth!

Meditation

Prayer

Affirmation of Faith

I'll tell you what freedom is to me. No fear.

Closing Hymn #339

Slane

"Be Thou My Vision"

**Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Nought be all else to me, save that Thou art -
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.**

**Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
Great God of heaven, my treasure Thou art.**

**Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.**

Benediction

Worship Notes

The worship leaders are **Erica and Eric Middleton**.

The Call to Worship is “This Very Here” by Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer.

The Opening Sentences are from *Freedom from Fear: Finding the Courage to Act, Love, and Be* by Forrest Church.

The Unison Confession is a prayer of confession for faith and freedom by Janice Jean Springer from *Touch Holiness*, edited by Ruth C. Duck and Maren Tirabassi.

The Affirmation of Faith is by Nina Simone.

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About Today's Service

Before attending Divinity School, I had heard of Nina Simone but I didn't know her music. My friend Cindy was a big fan of hers and had several of her albums. We listened to them back to back, savoring the soulful sounds. Nina Simone was more than a pianist, singer, and songwriter. She was also very active in the civil rights movement. Through songs like “Old Jim Crow” she sang, called, and advocated for action and change. Some of the lines that sing to me include: “When you hurt my brothers, you hurt me, too” and “You've been around too long/Gotta work . . . 'til you're dead and gone.” If you are looking for an album suggestion, I love “Nina Simone Sings the Blues” and “I Put a Spell on You.”

-Laura Mayo

Announcements

Deacon Meet & Greet **this Sunday, February 1**, at 9:30am in the Huff Fellowship Hall.

The Young Adult Group will hold an exploration of Christian mysticism's intersection with pagan spirituality in the Library on Friday, February 13 at 7pm.

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

February 1 - Youth Fellowship after church

February 15 - Children & Youth Auction

Calendar

Mon. January 26	7pm	Insight Meditation Houston, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Thurs. January 29	10am	Community Group, Zoom.
	1:15pm	Lunctime Lectionary Lab, Zoom.
	7:15pm	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary.
Sun. February 1	9:30am	Deacon Meet & Greet, Huff Fellowship Hall.
	10:30am	Stephen Caldwell Farewell Coffee, Huff Fellowship Hall.
	10:30am	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary.

Information

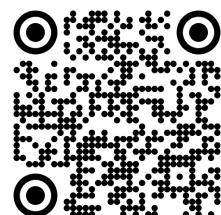
Childcare is provided in the children's area beginning at 9:30 a.m. Children aged 2 and under are invited to the nursery. Children aged 3 to 9 are invited to the children's area after the Time for Children.

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.