



COVENANT CHURCH

H O U S T O N

A Service of Worship for
1 February 2026

I find a place at Covenant's WELCOME TABLE when . . .
 . . . we laugh together. –Tralee Chafetz
 . . . people say good morning. –Elliot Miller
 . . . I take communion with my 8-year-old son and know that
 everyone is welcome. –Samantha Sherman
 . . . I am asked to do a job. –Kathleen Cook
 . . . whenever my soul needs filling up, and whenever I have
 spiritual food of my own to share. –Eric Avera
 . . . my quiriness is appreciated and enjoyed. –Kathleen Yaeger
 . . . I hear the choir and the organ, Laura brings new insights to me, I experience
 people in our community who care for each other. –Barbara Voit
 . . . we celebrate communion. –Moses Mason
 . . . others reach out to me giving me the ability to reach out to others. –Barbara McKittrick
 . . . we are invited to do more, being part of something. –Sam Miller
 . . . I jump right in. There is plenty of work, love, and community to go around. –Sabrina Neff
 . . . others who are different from me are also welcomed and we all work together
 to nurture our faith and practice community. –Perry Primm

—used 10/27/2013 as the end of the Stewardship Campaign

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!

And also with you!

Ring in the hour

Silence is kept

*Prelude

“Intermezzo, Op. 118, No. 2”

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

Call to Worship

+Opening Hymn

Morning Song

“Awake, Awake to Love and Work” stanza 1

Awake, awake to love and work, the lark is in the sky.

The fields are wet with diamond dew, the worlds awake to cry

Their blessings on the Lord of life as he goes meekly by.

+Responsive Opening Sentences

Leader: Today we lose the words
yours and mine and find
in their absence a song
that can only be sung together.

**People: How did we ever think
we could attempt
this humanness alone?**

Leader: To the table of love,
we bring soup, bring cherries,
bring the bread . . .

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

+Please stand in body or spirit

**People: . . . of our own
sweet communion.**

**We bring scissors to cut away
the tresses of the past,
bring dark wine to toast
the courage of showing up exposed.**

Leader: And when we forget
the words to the song,

People: well, there is always laughter.

Leader: And when we forget to laugh,

**People: well, there is always
the union of tears—
the way many rivers
become one river,
the way many voices
become one music.**

Invitation

Missions Invitation

Scripture Lesson

Luke 24:13-35

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

Time for Children

First Sunday Food Offering

⁺ Response:

Love Unknown

**Hands of the world stretch out, your mystery to touch
In longing to believe a truth beyond our reach,
To sing in joy, to cry in grief,
To know your meaning for our life.**

Meditation on Design: Kristy Kyle

Prayer

⁺ Hymn

Morning Song

“Awake, Awake to Love and Work” stanza 2

**Come, let thy voice be one with theirs; shout with their shouts of praise.
See how the giant sun soars up, great Lord of years and days!
So let the love of Jesus come and set our souls ablaze.**

Litany of Dedication

Leader: We dedicate this new pulpit and communion table
to the worship of God and in honor of Fran and Jim Avera.

Fran: I charge you to keep these symbols of our faith
as vital aspects of our communal worship.

Hold steadfast to our ideals of authentic inclusivity
and open expression through our practice of a “free pulpit and free pew.”

Use this pulpit to welcome many voices each week.

Safeguard our communion table so that it remains a place
of radical hospitality where everyone is always welcome
to participate in the sacred communion meal.

Leader: When Jesus gathered his disciples for a final meal,
he asked them to remember him.

+Please stand in body or spirit

With the dedication of our new communion table today,
we remember the life and teachings of Jesus.
We also remember those who have gone before us.

**People: From generation to generation,
we seek the way of love.**

Leader: The women who discovered the resurrection were commissioned
by the angels to go and tell the good news. They did.
They shared their experiences of Jesus, who, after Easter,
was no longer bound by time and space.

**People: We continue to share the good news that love surrounds us all.
We proclaim it from our pulpit and we share it with our lives.**

**All:
We dedicate this communion table and pulpit
for worship, welcome, and proclamation.**

We devote ourselves to loving God, our neighbors, and ourselves.

**We recommit ourselves to being a faith community
committed to justice, inclusion, and compassion.**

Meditation on the Pulpit: Laura Mayo

Offering

Offertory

“Communion, Op. 8”

Louis Vierne
(1870-1937)

We will tithe the cash offerings on the first Sunday of each month. This means that we will give 100% of the cash offerings to one of the mission organizations that Covenant partners with on that Sunday. These funds will be above and beyond what Covenant has budgeted to give to Missions. Today's cash offerings will go to the Immigrant Rapid Response Fund (IRRF), sponsored by the Women's Foundation of Minnesota. IRRF ensures that resources move quickly and responsibly to trusted organizations responding to immigration-related emergencies across Minnesota.

+Please stand in body or spirit

+Prayer of Dedication

**And we will become bread
for a hungry world.**

**And we will become drink
for those who thirst.**

**And the blessed
will become the blessing.**

**And everywhere
will be the feast.**

+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

Meditation on the Table: Raymond Stubblefield

Music

arr. Tom Trenney
(b. 1977)

"For Everyone Born"

*For everyone born, a place at the table,
for everyone born, clean water and bread,
a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,
for everyone born, a star overhead,*

*Refrain: And God will delight when we are creators of justice
and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators of justice,
justice and joy!*

+Please stand in body or spirit

*For woman and man, a place at the table,
revising the roles, deciding the share,
with wisdom and grace, dividing the power,
for everyone born, a system that's fair. Refrain.*

*For young and for old, a place at the table,
a voice to be heard, a part in the song.
The hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled,
for young and for old, the right to belong. Refrain.*

*For everyone born, a place at the table,
to live without fear, and simply to be,
to work, to speak out, to witness and worship,
for everyone born, the right to be free! Refrain.*

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

Love Unknown

**Here is our common wealth in sharing what is good,
As though all human kind around one table stood,
This bread to break, this wine to taste:
One people in the name of Christ.**

⁺Affirmation of Faith

**We affirm the presence of God in love,
in affection freely offered,
in compassion without borders,
in a willingness to identify with the unfamiliar.
We give thanks
and risk the possibility of completeness,
even in the midst of chaos,
even if only for a moment.**

+Please stand in body or spirit

⁺Closing Hymn

Morning Song

“Awake, Awake to Love and Work” stanza 3

**To give, and give, and give again what God hath given thee,
To spend thyself, nor count the cost, to serve right gloriously
The God who gave all things that are, and all that are to be.**

Choral Benediction

Peter Lutkin

“The Lord Bless You and Keep You”

(1858-1931)

*The Lord bless you and keep you,
the Lord lift His countenance upon you and give you peace,
the Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you. Amen.*

Benediction

^{*}Postlude

Warren Martin

“Processional”

(1916-1982)

+Please stand in body or spirit

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

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Kristy Kyle**.

The elements of worship are brought to the communion table by **Rosalie Longoria** (acolyte), **Gus Longoria** (paraments), **Bella Grace Floyd** (Bible), and **Emery Middleton** (hymnal).

The Call to Worship is by Joy Harjo.

The Opening Sentences are by Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer.

The Prayer of Dedication is by Jan Richardson.

The cellist is **Susan Wegner**.

The Affirmation of Faith is by **Jim Avera**.

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About Today's Service

Today's dedication of our new pulpit and communion table would not be possible without the diligent work of the Worship Committee and the contributions of our community. Specifically, we are grateful for the Worship Committee task force who worked with our designer, Erich Thompson, and craftsman, Richard Loper; the financial gifts of our congregation upon Fran Avera's retirement in 2019; and a generous grant from the Huff Foundation.

We express our gratitude to the following members of the Worship Committee task force: Kristy Kyle, chair of the task force; Karen Kline, chair of the Worship Committee that reignited our attention on this project; Fran Avera; Ruddy Cravens; Rich Doty; Nancy Henry; Bill Howze; David Lee; Laura Mayo; and Ken Parker. We are also grateful for the work on this project done by Jacy Grannis, Bill Kline, Bill Martin, Renee Seale, Jason Steiner, Nick Stepp, Shannon Stewart, and Raymond Stubblefield. We also recognize and are thankful for the Worship Committee members who were part of the reemergence of this project: Emily Holien, Ann Christensen, Kiersten Scott, Thelma Jean Goodrich, and Jacy Grannis. You can learn more about our designer, Erich Thompson, online at erichthompson.net and more about our craftsman, Richard Loper of El Dorado Woodworks, at eldoradowoodworks.com.

–Laura Mayo

Children and Youth Announcements

February 1 - Youth Fellowship after church

February 15 - Children & Youth Auction

March 1 - Youth Fellowship after church

Announcements

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.

The Children & Youth auction is on February 15. Donations are still being accepted!

Ash Wednesday services on February 18: Rothko Chapel at noon, Covenant at 7pm.

Will Parker's Musical Improv workshop is on February 21.

The 2026 Covenant Safety Summit will be held on Saturday, February 28, at 9am.

Committees meet on these dates in 2026: **next Sunday, February 8**; April 26; Aug. 9; Nov. 8.

Calendar

Sun. February 1	12:15pm	Youth Fellowship, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Mon. February 2	7pm	Insight Meditation Houston, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Thurs. February 5	10am	Community Group, Zoom.
	1:15pm	Luncheon Lectionary Lab, Zoom.
	7:15pm	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary.
Sun. February 8	9:30am	Adult Education, 2nd floor of Huff Fellowship Hall building or on Zoom: Rob Zaretsky presents on citizenship.
	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.