



# COVENANT CHURCH

## H O U S T O N

A Service of Worship for the  
Fifth Sunday of Lent  
22 March 2026

What about truth?  
What is truth?  
Where is it in the story?  
Where is it in us?

–Leon Meeks



Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

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

Ring in the hour

Silence is kept

\*Prelude

“Holy God, We Praise Your Name”

Brenda Portman  
(b. 1980)

Call to Worship

+Opening Hymn #274

Leoni

“O God of Earth and Space”

**O God of earth and space, of sea and fire and air,  
Your providence surrounds us here and everywhere.  
In fruit and grain and tree, in shelter from the cold,  
In cooling breezes, flowing wells, now as of old.**

**Where faithfulness is shown, where love and truth abound,  
Where beauty graces human life, there you are found.  
Inspirer of all thought! Creative force of art!  
The melody on every tongue, in every heart!**

**Wherever freedom reigns, where sin is overthrown,  
Where justice fused with mercy rules, there You are known.  
Give us the courage clear to make the earth a home  
For all to live in harmony in Christ’s shalom.**

**Your word commands response and summons us to life.  
We follow, strengthened by Your grace, in calm or strife.  
Our ever present help, our challenge and our prod,  
We praise You now and to life’s end, Eternal God.**

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

*+Please stand in body or spirit*

+Opening Sentences

**Attention is the most concrete expression of love.  
What we pay attention to thrives.  
What we do not pay attention to withers and dies.  
What will you pay attention to today?**

Invitation

Scripture Lesson

Luke 10:38-42

These are our sacred stories.

**Thanks be to God.**

Time for Children

+ Response:

Dickinson College

**May God support you all your days,  
in times of gladness and in need.  
May God remember you with grace  
and bless your every word and deed.**

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

**What is right in front of us we see the least.  
We take the plants in the room for granted.  
We pay no attention to the coming of night.  
We miss the look of invitation on a neighbor's face.  
We see only ourselves in action and miss the cocoon around us.  
As a result, we run the risk of coming out of every situation  
with no more than we went into it.**

**Learning to notice the obvious,  
the colours that touch our psyches,  
the shapes that vie for our attention,  
the looks on the faces of those who stand before us  
blurred by familiarity, blank with anonymity –**

*+Please stand in body or spirit*

**the context in which we find our distracted selves –  
is the beginning of contemplation.**

**Awareness of the power of the present  
is the essence of the contemplative life.**

**“Oh wonder of wonders,” the Sufi master says,  
“I chop wood, I draw water from the well.”**

Words of Assurance

Music

Johannes Brahms  
(1833-1897)

“Let Nothing Ever Grieve Thee”

*Let nothing ever grieve thee, nor fret thee;*

*heed God’s good will, my soul, be still, compose thee.*

*Why brood all day in sorrow? Tomorrow will bring thee God’s help benign  
and grace sublime in mercy. Be true in all endeavor and ever ply bravely;  
what God decrees brings joy and peace, and stay thee. Amen.*

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

+Hymn #454

Liebster Jesu

“Blessed Jesus, at Your Word”

**Blessed Jesus, at Your word we are gathered all to hear You;  
Let our hearts and souls be stirred now to seek and love and fear You;  
By Your teachings true and holy, drawn from earth to love You solely.**

**All our knowledge, sense, and sight lie in deepest darkness shrouded,  
Till Your Spirit breaks our night with the beams of truth unclouded;  
You alone to God can win us, You must work all good within us.**

**Glorious Lord, Yourself impart! Light of light, from God proceeding,  
Open now our ears and heart, help us by Your Spirit’s pleading;  
Hear the cry that we are raising; Hear, and bless our prayers and praising.**

+Please stand in body or spirit

Prayer

Offering

Offertory

“Andante cantabile” from *Cello Sonata No. 2*

Nicolai Myaskovsky  
(1881-1950)

+Prayer of Dedication

**Our gifts**

**whatever we discover them to be  
can be used to bless or curse the world.**

**The mind’s power,**

**The strength of the hands,**

**The reaches of the heart,**

**the gift of speaking, listening, imagining, seeing, waiting.**

**Any of these can serve to feed the hungry,**

**bind up wounds,**

**welcome the stranger,**

**praise what is sacred,**

**do the work of justice,**

**or offer love.**

**We must answer this question:**

**What will we do with our gifts?**

**Let us choose to bless the world**

+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.**

+Affirmation of Faith

**This is the mission of our faith:**

**To teach the fragile art of hospitality;**

**To revere both the critical mind and the generous heart;**

**To prove that diversity need not mean divisiveness;**

*+Please stand in body or spirit*

**And to witness to all  
that we must hold the whole world  
in our hands.**

<sup>+</sup>Closing Hymn #366

St. Catherine

“Jesus, Thy Boundless Love to Me”

**Jesus, Thy boundless love to me  
No thought can reach, no tongue declare;  
O knit my thankful heart to Thee,  
And reign without a rival there!  
Thine wholly, Thine alone, I'd live,  
Myself to Thee entirely give.**

**O grant that nothing in my soul  
May dwell, but Thy pure love alone;  
O may Thy love possess me whole,  
My joy, my treasure, and my crown!  
All coldness from my heart remove;  
May every act, word, thought be love.**

**O love, how gracious is thy way!  
All fear before Thy presence flies;  
Care, anguish, sorrow melt away,  
Where'er Thy healing beams arise.  
O Jesus, nothing may I see,  
Nothing desire, or seek, but Thee.**

Benediction

<sup>+</sup>Postlude

“Processional”

June Nixon  
(b. 1942)

*+Please stand in body or spirit*

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

## Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Dale Thomas**.

The Call to Worship is “To Each Her Own” by Emily Rose Procter.

The Opening Sentences are by Karen Maezen Miller.

The Unison Confession is by Joan Chittister.

**Karen Kline** and **Susan Wegner** play the Offertory.

**Deacon Jeff Turner** gives the Prayer.

The Prayer of Dedication is adapted from “Benediction” in *Blessing the World: What Can Save Us Now* by Rebecca Parker.

The Affirmation of Faith is a reading of William F. Schulz printed in *Singing the Living Tradition*, the 1993 Unitarian Universalist hymnal.

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## About Today's Service

Today's epigraph was written by Leon Meeks, who was a charter member of Covenant along with his wife Maymee. Leon grew up in a traditional Southern Baptist church but took up an enthusiastic study of liberal theology and world religions that characterized most of his adult life. He embodied Covenant's spirit of inquiry and served as our unofficial resident theologian for decades. As a child of Covenant in the '70s and '80s, I remember Leon as an ever-present figure, but one of my strongest memories of him was when he taught our youth group Sunday school for several weeks. He opened the class discussion one day by asking me, “Dale, what is your idea of God?” I was startled by the directness— such explicit religious talk was not common for me and my teenage friends, even at church. And yet, I also knew that it wasn't a test; it was a genuine, open question. Leon's commitment to rigorous scholarship, lifelong learning, and sincere curiosity remain part of his legacy at Covenant.

—*Dale Thomas*

## Announcements

Spring Organ Recital Series: Tuesdays at 12:15pm, final recital is March 24.

Spring Equinox Labyrinth Walk after church **today**, March 22.

The All Church Workday and Deacon Trivia Night are **this Saturday, March 28. The deadline to sign up for Trivia Night is today after church.**

Subscribe to the Covenant Lent devotional at [CovenantLent2026.substack.com](http://CovenantLent2026.substack.com).

Good Friday Tenebrae worship service will be held at 7pm on Friday, April 3.

The Easter Egg Hunt approaches at 10AM on Saturday, April 4. Please contact Trena' Jamison if you would like to donate candy or eggs.

## Calendar

Mon. March 23	7pm	Insight Meditation, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Tues. March 24	12:15pm	Spring Organ Recital Series: Jim Roman, Sanctuary.
Thurs. March 26	10am	Community Group, Zoom.
	1:15pm	Lunctime Lectionary Lab, Zoom.
	7:15pm	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary.
Sat. March 28	8am	Covenant All-Church Work Day, Church Campus.
	6pm	Trivia Night hosted by Deacons, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Sun. March 29	9:30am	Adult Education, 2nd floor of Huff Fellowship Hall building or on Zoom: Sarah Zadeh presents on deeper layers of art.
	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

4949 Caroline Street  
Houston, Texas 77004  
713-668-8830

[www.covenanthouston.org](http://www.covenanthouston.org)  
[office@covenanthouston.org](mailto:office@covenanthouston.org)

*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.*