

COVENANT CHURCH
HOUSTON

A Service of Worship for the
Second Sunday of Eastertide
12 April 2026

Stand in our midst
again, today
enter the circle of our fears
penetrate the darkness of our doubts
meet us where we are

May we listen [to] your sung Shalom:
'Peace be with you... Peace be with you.'
May we see your hands and your side.
May we feel the warmth
of your holy breath
Softening the hardened clay
From whence we come.

Invited,
curious like a little child,
we place our trembling hands
not only [on] your wounds
but on ours too,
and on the lovely
brokenness of others

breathing in, forgiveness
breathing out, forgiveness

wounds becoming the sacred place
of mutual compassion,
and the springboard to an intimate song
of communion and possibility
crafted in the heart:
'our Lord, and our God.'

—“Invitation” by Philip Chircop, SJ

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!

And also with you!

Ringling in the hour

Silence is kept

*Prelude

“Alleluya Benedictus” (from *Robertsbridge Codex*)

Anonymous
(approx. 1360)

Call to Worship

+Opening Hymn #104

Hymn to Joy

“Christ Is Risen! Shout Hosanna!”

Christ is risen! Shout hosanna!

Celebrate this day of days!

Christ is risen! Hush in wonder:

All creation is amazed.

In the desert all-surrounding,

See, a spreading tree has grown.

Healing leaves of grace abounding

Bring a taste of love unknown.

Christ is risen! Raise your spirits

From the caverns of despair.

Walk with gladness in the morning.

See what love can do and dare.

Drink the wine of resurrection,

Not a servant, but a friend.

Jesus is our strong companion.

Joy and peace shall never end.

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

+Please stand in body or spirit

**Christ is risen! Earth and heaven
Nevermore shall be the same.
Break the bread of new creation
Where the world is still in pain.
Tell its grim, demonic chorus:
"Christ is risen! Get you gone!"
God the First and Last is with us.
Sing Hosanna, everyone!**

⁺Opening Sentences

**Peace is not something you must hope for in the future.
It is a deepening of the present,
and unless you look for it in the present,
you will never find it.**

Invitation

Scripture Lesson

John 20:19-31

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

Time for Children

⁺ Response:

Truro

**Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.
The cross stands empty to the sky.
Let streets and homes with praises ring.
Love, drowned in death, shall never die.**

+Please stand in body or spirit

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

**Compassion asks us to go where it hurts,
to enter into the places of pain,
to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish.
Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery,
to mourn with those who are lonely,
to weep with those in tears.
Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak,
vulnerable with the vulnerable,
and powerless with the powerless.
Compassion means full immersion
in the condition of being human.**

Words of Assurance

Music

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809-1847)

“Grant Us Thy Peace”
*Grand us thy peace, Almighty Lord,
Thou source of every blessing!
Feeble and frail, trust we Thy word,
All things in Thee possessing.
In Thee is our hope and safety.*

Silent Reflection

Prayer

Offering

Offertory

“Folk Prelude on ‘O For a World’”

Carson Cooman
(b. 1982)

+Prayer of Dedication

**The sacramental life is one that is open to the presence of God,
and can open a door for others
into eternal movements of love and justice
that are there ahead of us, and before us, and embracing us.
This openness can be felt like the invitation to a dance,
but sometimes like the raw edges of a wound.
This is participation in God.
This is theology.**

+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

Invitation to the Table

+Hymn #450

Jerusalem

"O Day of Peace"

**O day of peace that dimly shines
Through all our hopes and prayers and dreams,
Guide us to justice, truth, and love,
Delivered from our selfish schemes.
May swords of hate fall from our hands,
Our hearts from envy find release,
Till by God's grace our warring world
Shall see Christ's promised reign of peace.**

**Then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb,
Nor shall the fierce devour the small;**

+Please stand in body or spirit

**As beasts and cattle calmly graze,
A little child shall lead them all.
Then enemies shall learn to love,
All creatures find their true accord;
The hope of peace shall be fulfilled,
For all the earth shall know the Lord.**

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

Wie Lieblich Ist Der Maien

**One bread is ours for sharing, one single fruitful vine,
Our fellowship declaring renewed in bread and wine:
Renewed, sustained, and given by token, sign, and word,
The pledge and seal of heaven, the love of Christ our Lord.**

+Affirmation of Faith

**We must feel
the pulse in the wound
to believe
that 'with God
all things
are possible,'
taste
bread at Emmaus
that warm hands
broke and blessed.**

+Please stand in body or spirit

+Closing Hymn #399

Dunlap's Creek

“We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight”

**We walk by faith and not by sight; no gracious words we hear
From Christ, who spoke as none e'er spoke; but we believe him near.**

**We may not touch His hands and side, nor follow where He trod;
But in His promise we rejoice, And cry, “My Lord and God!”**

**Help then, O Lord, our unbelief; and may our faith abound
To call on You when You are near and seek where You are found:**

**That, when our life of faith is done, in realms of clearer light
We may behold You as You are, with full and endless sight.**

Benediction

*Postlude

“Hymn to Joy”

Albert Travis
(b. 1940)

+Please stand in body or spirit

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

Worship Notes

The worship leaders are **David and Janice Ramsey**.

The Call to Worship is by Susan Miller.

The Opening Sentences are by Thomas Merton.

The Unison Confession is by Henri J.M. Nouwen.

Deacon Bridget O'Toole gives the Prayer.

The Prayer of Dedication is from *Participating in God* by Paul Fiddes.

The Affirmation of Faith is an excerpt from "On Belief in the Physical Resurrection of Jesus" by Denise Levertov.

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Announcements

The Young Adult Group will enjoy Christian and secular games at Board Game Night at 7pm in the Library on Friday, April 17.

Bring your pets and animal companions in body or spirit for a blessing as we celebrate Earth Day at a Blessing of the Animals on the labyrinth at 4pm on Saturday, April 18.

Our annual children- and youth-led worship service on Sunday, April 19 will recognize and celebrate our graduating students of all ages.

Committees will meet after church in Huff Fellowship Hall on April 26.

The Church-Wide Potluck will be hosted in homes across the city on Saturday, May 2 for those who sign up in the Narthex or online by April 19.

Calendar

Mon. April 13	7pm	Insight Meditation, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Thurs. April 16	10am	Community Group, Zoom.
	1:15pm	Luncheon Lectionary Lab, Zoom.
	7pm	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary.
Fri. April 17	7pm	Young Adult Group, Library.
Sat. April 18	4pm	Blessing of the Animals, Labyrinth.
Sun. April 19	9:30am	Adult Education, 2nd floor of Huff Fellowship Hall building or on Zoom.
	9:30am	Handbell Rehearsal, Huff Fellowship Hall.
	9:30am	Inquirers Class, Library in Sanctuary Building.
	10:30am	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary.

Information

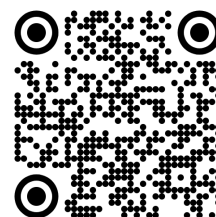
Childcare is provided in the children's area beginning at 9:30 a.m. Children aged 2 and under are invited to the nursery. Children aged 3 to 9 are invited to the children's area after the Time for Children.

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 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, Children and Youth Coordinator

Heather Laureles, Director of Administration & Communication

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.