



COVENANT CHURCH

H O U S T O N

A Service of Worship for
Pentecost
24 May 2026

Where people may receive and possess the Holy Spirit,
it is of course a human experience and a human act.
It is also a matter of the understanding and of the will
and, I might indeed say, of the imagination

–Karl Barth

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ring in the hour

Silence is kept

*Prelude

“Préambule”

Louis Vierne
(1870-1937)

Call to Worship

+Opening Hymn #129

Ebenezer

“Come, O Spirit, Dwell Among Us”

**Come, O Spirit, dwell among us,
come with Pentecostal power;
give the church a stronger vision,
help us face each crucial hour.
Built upon a firm foundation,
Jesus Christ, the Cornerstone,
still the church is called to mission
that God's love shall be made known.**

**We would raise our alleluias
for the grace of yesteryears;
for tomorrow's unknown pathway,
hear, O Lord, our humble prayers.
In the church's pilgrim journey
you have led us all the way,
still in presence move before us,
fire by night and cloud by day.**

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

+Please stand in body or spirit

**Come, O Spirit, dwell among us;
give us words of fire and flame.
Help our feeble lips to praise you,
glorify your holy name.
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
Three in One: what mystery!
We would sing our loud hosannas
now and through eternity.**

+Opening Sentences

**We hear the story of the wind at Pentecost,
Holy wind that dismantles what was,
Holy wind that evokes what is to be,
Holy wind that overrides barriers and causes communication,
Holy wind that signals your rule even among us.
We are dazzled, but then – reverting to type -
We wonder how to harness the wind,
how to manage the wind by our technology,
how to turn the wind to our usefulness,
how to make ourselves managers of the wind
Partly we do not believe such an odd tale
because we are not religious freaks;
Partly we resist such a story,
because it surges beyond our categories;
Partly we had imagined you to be more ordered
and reliable than that.
So we listen, depart, and return to our ordered existence:
we depart with only a little curiosity
But not yielding;
we return to how it was before,
unconvinced but wistful, slightly praying for wind,
craving for newness,
wishing to have it all available to us.
We pray toward the wind and wait, unconvinced but wistful.**

+Please stand in body or spirit

Invitation

Scripture Lesson

Acts 2:1-21

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

Time for Children

+ Response:

Merle's Tune

**One Spirit sends us onward in witness to the earth,
As ministers of justice, as midwives of new birth:
To lead the church with courage on ventures new begun,
Reformed yet still reforming, 'til God's whole will is done.**

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

**This is the blessing
we cannot speak
by ourselves.
This is the blessing
we cannot summon
by our own devices,
cannot shape to our purpose,
cannot bend to our will.
This is the blessing
that comes when we leave behind
our aloneness
when we gather together
when we turn
toward one another.
This is the blessing
that blazes among us
when we speak the words
strange to our ears**

+Please stand in body or spirit

**when we finally listen
into the chaos
when we breathe together
at last.**

Words of Assurance

Music

arr. Philip R. Dietterich

“Come Down, O Love Divine”

(b. 1931)

*Come down, O Love divine, Seek thou this soul of mine,
And visit it with thine own ardor glowing;
O Comforter, draw near, Within my heart appear,
And kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.*

*O let it freely burn, Till earthly passions turn
to dust and ashes in its heat consuming;
And let thy glorious light shine ever on my sight,
And clothe me round, the while my path illuming.*

*And so the yearning strong With which the soul will long,
Shall far outpass the power of human telling;
For none can guess its grace, Till they become the place
wherein the Holy Spirit makes a dwelling. Amen.*

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

⁺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.**

+Please stand in body or spirit

**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.**

Prayer

Offering

Offertory

“We Now Implore the Holy Ghost”

Dietrich Buxtehude
(1637-1707)

+Prayer of Dedication

**O God, life-giving Spirit,
Spirit of healing and comfort,
of integrity and truth,
we believe and trust in you.
Warm-winged Spirit, brooding over creation,
rushing wind and Pentecostal fire,
we commit ourselves to work with you
and renew our 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

**These things we affirm:
The spirit of God moves among us, binding us in covenant with
faithful people of every time and place.
The spirit moves within us, empowering us to proclaim the gospel to all people.
The spirit moves through us, making us channels of God's love.**

+Please stand in body or spirit

“Wind Who Makes All Winds that Blow”

**Wind who makes all winds that blow— gusts that bend the saplings low,
Gales that heave the sea in waves, stirrings in the mind’s deep caves—
Aim Your breath with steady power on Your church this day, this hour.
Raise, renew the life we’ve lost, Spirit God of Pentecost.**

**Fire who fuels all fires that burn— suns around which planets turn,
Beacons marking reefs and shoals, shining truth to guide our souls—
Come to us as once You came: burst in tongues of sacred flame!
Light and Power, Might and Strength, fill your church, its breadth and length.
Holy Spirit, Wind and Flame, move within our mortal frame.
Make our hearts an altar pyre, kindle them with Your own fire.
Breathe and blow upon that blaze till our lives, our deeds and ways,
Speak that tongue which every land by Your grace shall understand.**

Benediction

*Postlude

Jeanne Demessieux

“Toccata on ‘Veni Creator Spiritus’ (Come, Creator Spirit)” (1921-1968)

+Please stand in body or spirit

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

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Sabrina Neff**.

The Call to Worship is “God’s Act in Acts” by Luci Shaw.

The Opening Sentences are from *Prayers for a Privileged People* by Walter Brueggemann.

The Unison Confession is “When We Breathe Together” from *A Blessing for Pentecost Day* by Jan Richardson.

Deacon Charity Hammond gives the Prayer.

The Prayer of Dedication is from *All Desires Known: Inclusive Prayers for Worship and Meditation* by Janet Morley.

The Affirmation of Faith is from *Flames of the Spirit*, edited by Ruth C. Duck.

The hymn texts are reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #741361-A. All rights reserved.

About Today’s Service

Today, many of us are wearing red clothing in celebration of Pentecost. Red symbolizes the “tongues of fire” that landed on the apostles in today’s scripture reading. Ever since Fruit Shirt Sunday, I haven’t been able to see my lemon shirt without thinking, “well, the fruit of the spirit’s not a coconut...” Maybe our red clothing for Pentecost could serve the same function, reminding us of the Holy Spirit’s presence in and among us whenever we wear it throughout the rest of the year.

—*Jason Steiner*

Announcements

We will hold a brief Congregational Business Meeting **after worship today**.

The 2026 Pictorial Directory is available upon request at office@covenanthouston.org.

Please see the newsletter to sign up for Pride Houston with Covenant, or scan the QR Code on the next page of this bulletin.

Calendar

Sun. May 24	12:15pm	Congregational Business Meeting, Sanctuary.
Mon. May 25	7pm	Insight Meditation, Huff Fellowship Hall. (Office closed for Memorial Day holiday).
Thurs. May 26	10am	Community Group, Zoom.
	1:15pm	Lunctime Lectionary Lab, Zoom.
Sun. May 31	9:30am	Adult Education, 2nd floor of Huff Fellowship Hall building or on Zoom: Mariame Aana (Lone Star Legal Aid) will speak about protecting civil legal rights for low-income Texans.

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 & Communication

David Lee, Director of Music

Laura Mayo, Senior Minister

Jason Steiner, Organist and Associate Director of Music

Raymond Stubblefield, Minister of Congregational Life

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

www.covenanthouston.org
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.