



COVENANT CHURCH

HOUSTON

A Service of Worship for
Trinity Sunday
31 May 2026

On the seventh day God rested,
placed Her feet on the coffee table,
leaned back in her favorite armchair,
and turned on the news.

The angels, scrolling ticker-tape
across the bottom of the screen
repeated the only words to be found:
Everything. Everything. Everything.

Everything is new. Everything is news.
At a time as yet unspecified,
(because time had not begun)
Elohim created.

Elohim created,
And everything was new.
She sighed, and invented sighing,
Before closing her eyes.

Late into that long morning,
to a backing track of celestial snoring,
the angel behind the newsdesk
was still explaining the concept of sky.
—“The First Sunday,” by Jay Hulme from *The Blackwater Sermons*

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ring in the hour

Silence is kept

*Prelude

“O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright”

Paul Manz
(1919-2009)

Call to Worship

+Opening Hymn #132

“Come, Great God of All the Ages”

Abbot's Leigh

**Come, great God of all the ages,
Make Your earthly mission known;
Speak through every deed and person,
Let Your way and will be shown.
Guide the church to true commitment,
Give direction now, we ask;
Fit us for the work of building,
Dedicate us to the task.**

**Come Christ Jesus, flesh and spirit,
Sure foundation, cornerstone,
Help us form the church eternal,
May Your vision be our own.
Send a message to each follower,
Lead all people to Your way;
Urge us to strong faith and action
As we build the church today.**

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

+Please stand in body or spirit

**Come, great Spirit, in and with us,
Tune our ears to hear Your call;
Through the moving of Your presence,
Let redeeming love recall
Ministry in dedication,
Love embodied in our deeds;
Challenge us to do your bidding,
See Your purpose, fill our needs.**

**Come, O come, in celebration,
Household of the one true God,
In commitment and rejoicing,
Let us go where Christ has trod;
As we act in faith and reverence,
Let us, Lord, the future see;
Place us in the church triumphant,
Now and for eternity.**

⁺Opening Sentences

**The power of a story is a power over which
we do not have ultimate control, since it can catch us off guard,
tell us things about ourselves we would prefer not to know,
and liberate us to move in directions we would never have imagined.**

Invitation

Scripture Lesson

Genesis 1:1-2:4a, 2 Corinthians 13:13

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.**

+Please stand in body or spirit

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

God of history and of my heart,

So much has happened to me during these whirlwind days:

I've known birth and death;

I've been brave and scared;

I've hurt, I've helped;

I've destroyed, I've created;

I've been with people, I've been lonely;

I've been loyal, I've betrayed;

I've decided, I've waffled;

I've laughed, I've cried. . . .

Help me to believe in beginnings

and in my beginning again,

no matter how often I've failed before.

Words of Assurance

Music

Johann Sebastian Bach, arr. Busoni and Chiang

“Chorale Prelude ‘Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ,’ BWV 639” (1685-1750)

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

+Hymn #135

Trinity

“God Is One, Unique and Holy”

God is One, unique and holy, endless dance of love and light;

Only source of mind and body, starcloud, atom, day and night:

Everything that is or could be tells God's anguish and delight.

God is Oneness by communion, never single or alone;

All togetherness, including friendship, family, and home,

Common mind and shared agreement, common loaf and sung shalom.

+Please stand in body or spirit

**God is One through desolation: blindness, treason, blood and gall;
One, though torn by separation in the Christ's forsaken call;
One through death and resurrection; One in Spirit, One for all.**

Prayer

Offering

Offertory

"Dusk"

Nkeiru Okoye

(b. 1971)

+Prayer of Dedication

**Our story is one that explores what happens
when, in the face of any circumstance,
we choose to have faith...**

**Ours is the story of learning to have faith
in our own innate goodness and capacity to love.**

**Ours is the story of seeing past
the apparent randomness of happenings
to uncover layers and layers of connection.**

**Ours is the story of knowing,
even in the midst of great suffering,
that we are not cast out and alone.**

+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

**Learning to pray... is learning to listen
with the mind and heart— making oneself attentive
to each exquisite detail of the world.**

**It is a fearsome, exhilarating task,
best suited to solitude and silence...**

+Please stand in body or spirit

**For the prayerful listener,
the world becomes the sublime scripture,
full of stories of structure and chaos,
law and chance, complexification and decay,
including the story of the human person
in whom the universe becomes conscious of itself.
All of my life has been a relearning to pray...**

⁺Closing Hymn #271

Lacquiparle

“Many and Great, O God, Are Thy Things”

**Many and great, O God, are Thy things,
Maker of earth and sky;
Thy hands have set the heavens with stars,
Thy fingers spread the mountains and plains.
Lo, at Thy word the waters were formed;
Deep seas obey Thy voice.**

**Grant unto us communion with Thee,
Thou star-abiding One;
Come unto us and dwell with us:
With Thee are found the gifts of life.
Bless us with life that has no end,
Eternal life with Thee.**

Benediction

⁺Postlude

“Excerpt from ‘Italian Concerto,’ BWV 971”

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

+Please stand in body or spirit

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

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Ben Shaw**.

The Call to Worship is by Ellen Davis.

The Opening Sentences are from *Persuade Us to Rejoice* by Robert McAfee Brown.

The Unison Confession is a prayer from *Guerrillas of Grace* by Ted Loder.

Deacon Jeff Turner gives the Prayer.

The Prayer of Dedication is adapted from *Faith: Trusting Your Own Deepest Experience* by Sharon Salzberg.

The Affirmation of Faith is from *Natural Prayers* by Chet Raymo.

The guest pianist is Alan Chiang.

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About Today's Service

Today's visiting pianist, Alan Chiang, connected with us looking for practice space while he visits Houston this month. "Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ" is originally an organ piece by Johann Sebastian Bach. Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924) transcribed and arranged this chorale for piano, along with many other organ works by Bach. Alan has further edited this transcription, writing, "The main modifications I made were drastic simplifications: Busoni added harmonies and textures not found in Bach's score (which made the piece way more difficult and, to my taste, detracted from the text), in addition to repeating the coda, emphasizing the text 'Mein'm nächsten nützlich zu sein, Dein wort zu halten eben' (to be useful to my neighbour, to keep your word properly). I've removed these editorial decisions by Busoni and kept as close to Bach's organ voicing as possible." We are thankful to have Alan with us today.

—*Jason Steiner*

Announcements

Youth will meet for bowling fellowship at Lucky Strike Houston after worship today. Please see the newsletter to sign up for Pride Houston with Covenant, or scan the QR Code on the back of this bulletin. We will celebrate Pride in worship on June 7. Covenant observes the 61st “birthday” of our worship services on June 14.

Calendar

Sun. May 31	12:30pm	Youth Social Bowling, Lucky Strike on Bunker Hill.
Mon. June 1	7pm	Insight Meditation, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Thurs. June 4	10am	Community Group, Zoom.
	1:15pm	Luncheon Lectionary Lab, Zoom.
Sat. June 6	2pm	Pride Parade activities, Narthex & Downtown Houston.
Sun. June 7	9:30am	Adult Education, 2nd floor of Huff Fellowship Hall building or on Zoom: all are welcome to join in singing as Jason Steiner leads a pick-up choir celebrating Pride.

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

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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.