



COVENANT CHURCH

HOUSTON

A Service of Worship for
14 June 2026

“Ode to Teachers” by Pat Mora

I remember
the first day,
how I looked down,
hoping you wouldn't see
me,
and when I glanced up,
I saw your smile
shining like a soft light
from deep inside you.

“I'm listening,” you encourage us.
“Come on!
Join our conversation,
let us hear your neon certainties,
thorny doubts, tangled angers,”
but for weeks I hid inside.

I read and reread your notes
praising
my writing,
and you whispered,
“We need you
and your stories
and questions
that like a fresh path
will take us to new vistas.”

Slowly, your faith grew
into my courage
and for you—
instead of handing you
a note or apple or flowers—
I raised my hand.

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ringing in the hour

Silence is kept

*Prelude

“Suite du Premier Ton: Plein Jeu”

Dénis Bédard
(b. 1950)

Call to Worship

+Opening Hymn #408

“Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life”

Germany

**Where cross the crowded ways of life, where sound the cries of race and clan,
Above the noise of selfish strife, we hear thy voice, O son of man.**

**In haunts of wretchedness and need, on shadowed thresholds fraught with fears,
From paths where hide the lures of greed, we catch the vision of thy tears.**

**From tender childhood’s helplessness, from human grief and burdened toil,
From famished souls, from sorrow’s stress, thy heart has never known recoil.**

**The cup of water given for thee still holds the freshness of thy grace;
Yet long these multitudes to see the sweet compassion of thy face.**

**O master, from the mountainside, make haste to heal these hearts of pain;
Among these restless throngs abide, O tread the city’s streets again.**

**Till all the world shall learn thy love, and follow where thy feet have trod;
Till glorious from thy heaven above shall come the city of our God.**

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

+Please stand in body or spirit

+Opening Sentences

**Compassion, loving-kindness, and altruism
are the keys not only to human development
but also to planetary survival.**

**Real change in the world
will only come from a change of heart.**

**What I propose is a compassionate revolution,
a call for radical reorientation away from our
habitual preoccupation with the self.**

**It is a call to turn toward the wider community of beings
with whom we are connected,
and for conduct which recognizes others' interests
alongside our own.**

Invitation

Scripture Lesson

Matthew 9:35-10:8

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.**

New Member Litany: please see bulletin insert

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.**

+Please stand in body or spirit

**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

Robert Schumann

"Venitas Venitatum" Opus 102, No.1, from *Five Folk Songs* (1810-1856)

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

+Hymn #419

Repton

"How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord"

**How clear is our vocation, Lord, when once we heed Your call:
To live according to Your word, and daily learn, refreshed, restored,
That You are Lord of all and will not let us fall.**

**But if, forgetful, we should find Your yoke is hard to bear,
If worldly pressure fray the mind and love itself cannot unwind
Its tangled skein of care: Our inward life repair.**

**We mark Your saints, how they became in hindrances more sure,
Whose joyful virtues put to shame the casual way we wear Your name,
And by our faults obscure Your power to cleanse and cure.**

**In what You give us, Lord, to do, together or alone,
In old routines or ventures new, may we not cease to look to You –
The cross You hung upon – all You endeavored done.**

+Please stand in body or spirit

Prayer

Offering

Offertory

“Prélude Liturgique No. 11”

Gaston Litaize
(1909–1991)

+Prayer of Dedication

**Christ has no body now on earth but yours,
no hands but yours,
no feet but yours,
Yours are the eyes through which to look out
Christ’s compassion to the world
Yours are the feet with which he is to go about
doing good;
Yours are the hands with which he is to bless.**

+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

**In the end, our search for Jesus
can never be finished.
For if the Jesus we seek
is indeed the living Christ—
and not just an enshrined memory
or our own projection—
then the Jesus we find today
is not the same Jesus
we’ll find tomorrow.
We must always keep looking.**

+Closing Hymn #418

Ich halte treulich still

“God, Bless Your Church with Strength!”

God, bless Your church with strength!

Wherever we may be,

Upbuild Your servants as we work

In common ministry.

Urge us from fledgling faith

To venture and to soar

Through open skies, to sing the praise

Of Christ whom we adore.

God, bless Your church with life!

May all our branches thrive,

Unblemished, wholesome, bearing fruit,

Abundantly alive.

From You, one holy vine,

In freedom may we grow;

Sustain us in our mission, Lord,

Your love and peace to show.

God, bless Your church with hope!

Despite chaotic days,

May we in chaos shine to light

A pathway through life's maze.

May justice be our aim,

And kindness ours to share,

In humbleness O may we walk,

Assured our God is there!

Benediction

*Postlude

“Sortie in B-flat Major (‘Heures Mystiques’)”

Léon Boëllmann

(1862-1897)

+Please stand in body or spirit

*Please hold silence and remain seated during the postlude

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Fran Avera**.

The organist is Carl McAliley.

The Call to Worship is from *When Jesus Came to Harvard: Making Moral Choices Today* by Harvey Cox.

The Opening Sentences are from *Heart to Heart: A Conversation on Love and Hope for our Precious Planet* by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Linda Phenix and **Paul Wilson** give the Invitation for the Civic Engagement Working Group.

The Unison Confession is by Henri Nouwen.

"Venitas Venitatum" is played by **Susan Wegner**, cello, and **Karen Kline**, piano.

The Prayer of Dedication is by Teresa of Avila.

The Affirmation of Faith is adapted from *Teacher, Guide, Companion: Rediscovering Jesus in a Secular World* by Erik Walker Wikstrom.

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About Today's Service

Since Covenant's founding in 1965, we have remembered our journey by remembering Covenant's birthday every year, sometimes with a grand celebration, sometimes with acknowledgment in worship. Last year we celebrated our 60th birthday in a grand way with a dinner, a presentation, pictures both old and newer, and remembrances from longtime members, some of whom grew up at Covenant, and are still here, or have come back. This year, our birthday comes the week after our scheduled participation in the 2026 Pride parade. This is something that Covenant has done for decades, and it is a big part of our identity. It is surely one of the things we celebrate, remembering our 61st birthday this year.

–David Lee

Announcements

Join Covenant's Civic Engagement Working Group at First Unitarian Universalist church this **Wednesday, June 17, at 9:30 a.m.** for a summer postcard writing project.

Fruit Shirt Sunday approaches on **July 5**.

Calendar

| | | |
|----------------|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mon. June 15 | 7pm | Insight Meditation, Huff Fellowship Hall. |
| | 7pm | Houston Sacred Harp, Sanctuary. |
| Weds. June 17 | 9:30am | Summer Postcard Writing Project at First Unitarian Church, 5200 Fannin Street. |
| Thurs. June 18 | 10am | Community Group, Zoom. |
| | 1:15pm | Luncheon Lectionary Lab, Zoom. |
| Sun. June 21 | 9:30am | Adult Education, 2nd floor of Huff Fellowship Hall building or on Zoom: the Labyrinth Sub-committee leads a Solstice Labyrinth Walk. |

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.