



COVENANT CHURCH

H O U S T O N

A Service of Worship for
28 June 2026

Jesus will have no hierarchies,
no separations or divisions,
not even between us and him.
“Call no one good but God.”
There are no greater and lesser,
no servants and masters,
no insiders and outsiders.
Not even believers and unbelievers.
Only friends, peers, siblings, companions.
Every stranger is a sibling.
Every person you meet is a friend
for whom you would lay down your life.
There is no “them.” There is only us.
In the love of Christ, befriend this world
and everyone in it;
you will never be alone.

–Steve Garnaas-Holmes, “Friends”

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ring in the hour

Silence is kept

*Prelude

“Prelude”

Carl Hirn
(1886-1949)

Call to Worship

+Opening Hymn #394

“There Is a Balm in Gilead”

Balm in Gilead

Refrain:

**There is a balm in Gilead
To make the wounded whole.
There is a balm in Gilead
To heal the sin-sick soul.**

**Sometimes I feel discouraged,
And think my work's in vain,
But then the Holy Spirit
Revives my soul again. (*Refrain*)**

**Don't ever feel discouraged,
For Jesus is your friend,
And if you lack for knowledge
He'll not refuse to lend. (*Refrain*)**

**If you cannot preach like Peter,
If you cannot pray like Paul,
You can tell the love of Jesus
And say, "He died for all." (*Refrain*)**

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

+Please stand in body or spirit

+Opening Sentences

We have come together today, not because we expect to find answers here,
but rather because we expect to be encouraged in our questioning.

**We have come together today,
not because we expect to find perfect people here,
but rather because we expect to find authentic people here.**

We have come together today, not because we seek absolution for our sins and failures,
but rather because we acknowledge our imperfections and seek the courage
to make amends for those failures to ourselves and others.

**We have come together today
not because we need to be told what to believe and how to act,
but rather because we need each other's encouragement
to act according to our own best beliefs.**

We have come together today,
not because we are hoping to find God in a scripture or a ritual,
but rather because we are hoping to discover the divinity
within our own hearts and within the hearts of others.

**We have come together today,
not because we believe that holiness exists within these walls alone,
but rather to have our hearts and minds directed to the holiness in the world.
For all of these reasons, we have come together today.**

Invitation

Scripture Lesson

Genesis 22:1-14, Matthew 10:40-42

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

**For all times when we have assumed
we are self-sufficient and independent,
free to be and do,
not be and not do,
what we wanted, when we wanted, how we wanted,
forgive us.**

**For all times when we have assumed
we are inadequate and unqualified,
hampered by our inability to
do anything, say anything, or change anything
that would make any real difference,
forgive us.**

**If ever we forget that,
each of us is gifted with insight and ability,
or fail to remember that,
we are all in need
and we are all needed,
forgive us and make us free. Amen.**

Words of Assurance

Music

arr. Ken Berg
(b. 1955)

“This Little Light of Mine”

This little light of mine, I’m going to let it shine.

Everywhere I go, I’m going to let it shine.

All around the world, I’m going to let it shine.

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

"God of Our Life"

**God of our life, through all the circling years, we trust in Thee;
In all the past, through all our hopes and fears, Thy hand we see.
With each new day, when morning lifts the veil,
We own Thy mercies, Lord, which never fail.**

**God of the past, our times are in Thy hand; with us abide.
Lead us by faith to hope's true promised land; be Thou our guide.
With Thee to bless, the darkness shines as light,
And faith's fair vision changes into sight.**

**God of the coming years, through paths unknown we follow Thee;
When we are strong, Lord, leave us not alone; our refuge be.
Be Thou for us in life our daily bread,
Our heart's true home when all our years have sped.**

Prayer

Offering

Offertory

"Reverie"

William Grant Still
(1895-1978)

+Prayer of Dedication

**Dear God, you are the author and source of our lives.
You spread before us many pathways in this world of wilderness,
and we are free to choose our own path.
In the process of choosing, Great Spirit, lend us guidance.
In our moments of despair, encourage us and broaden our perspective.
In our moments of failure, empower us with strength to try again.
In our moments of victory, teach us humility.
Enlighten our minds that we may be about the tasks you set before us. Amen.**

+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.**

+Please stand in body or spirit

+Affirmation of Faith

**And did you get what
you wanted from this life, even so?
I did.
And what did you want?
To call myself beloved, to feel myself
beloved on the earth.**

+Closing Hymn #386

Azmon

“O for a World”

**O for a world where everyone respects each other’s ways,
Where love is lived and all is done with justice and with praise.**

**O for a world where goods are shared and misery relieved,
Where truth is spoken, children spared, equality achieved.**

**We welcome one world family and struggle with each choice
That opens us to unity and gives our vision voice.**

**The poor are rich, the weak are strong, the foolish ones are wise.
Tell all who mourn; outcasts belong, who perishes will rise.**

**O for a world preparing for God’s glorious reign of peace,
Where time and tears will be no more, and all but love will cease.**

Benediction

*Postlude

“Toccata on ‘Pisgah’”

Dale Wood
(1934-2003)

+Please stand in body or spirit

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

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Jadyn Grannis**.

The Call to Worship is by Jim Wickman in *Rejoice Together: Prayers, Meditations, and Other Readings*, edited by Helen Pickett.

The Opening Sentences are by Suzanne Meyer in *Rejoice Together: Prayers, Meditations, and Other Readings*, edited by Helen Pickett.

The Unison Confession is by Jay Leach.

The soloist is **Emery Middleton**.

Joshua Apple gives the Proclamation.

Deacon Amanda Cox-Floyd gives the Prayer.

The Prayer of Dedication is from *Touch Holiness*, edited by Ruth C. Duck and Maren Tirabassi.

The Affirmation of Faith, "Late Fragment" by Raymond Carver, is the last poem in his last book, written while he was dying of cancer. It is also the inscription on his tombstone.

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About Today's Service

"This Little Light of Mine" is a song about a light that's everywhere but nowhere, like happiness. It's all around the world because it's everywhere. I started singing a version of this song at school this year with different words: "hide it under a bushel bush (no!), I'm going to let it shine" and "all around my neighborhood, I'm going to let it shine." I learned this version in choir [the Houston Children's Chorus]. They are very strict in choir about keeping our shoulders down, standing up straight, and not painting our nails during practice. At church we are not strict about that much. I like when we had the harp at church [during the Rutter Requiem last fall]. That is my favorite instrument. I am 4/5 nervous and 5/5 excited to sing at church.

—*Emery Middleton*

Announcements

Fruit Shirt Sunday draws near on **July 5**.

The Young Adult Group is coordinating a Covenant outing to the Houston Dash's Pride Night on **August 1**. People of all ages are welcome. Tickets are \$19 each. Please contact Jason Steiner if you'd like to attend (jason@covenanthouston.org).

Calendar

Mon. June 29	7pm	Insight Meditation, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Thurs. July 2	10am	Community Group, Zoom.
Sun. July 5	All day	Fruit Shirt Sunday. There is no Adult Education on July 5.

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.