



COVENANT CHURCH

H O U S T O N

A Service of Worship for
2 August 2026

Twice Christ took the bread apart
with his human hands that he used for
such tasks, once with fish and once with wine,
the grain a pattern of tribute, distribute,
as he worked the division of himself into
feeding others with his body, taken but not taken,
there but not there, it was two times
two times two. Ever body got some body
who will feed them even when there seem hardly
enough to go round. When I hungered the word
fed me. Even so, so many others hungered
he needed a hundred more human hands.
That was when I said here take mine.

—“The Miracle of Giving” by D. A. Powell

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ring in the hour

Silence is kept

*Prelude

“Ach wie flüchtig, ach wie nichtig”

Kat Farn

(b. 2004)

Call to Worship

+Opening Hymn #305

Pleading Savior

“Jesus, Our Divine Companion”

**Jesus, our divine Companion, by Your lowly human birth
You have come to join the workers, burden bearers of the earth.
You, the carpenter of Nazareth, toiling for your daily food,
By Your patience and Your courage You have taught us work is good.**

**Where the many toil together, there You are among Your own;
Where the solitary labor, You are there with them alone.
You, the peace that passes knowledge, dwelling in the daily strife;
You, the Bread of Heaven, are broken in the sacrament of life.**

+Opening Sentences

**I am only one
But still I am one.
I cannot do everything,
But still I can do something.
And, because I cannot do everything,
I will not refuse to do the
something that I can do.**

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

+Please stand in body or spirit

Invitation

Missions Invitation

Scripture Lesson

Matthew 14:13-21

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

Time for Children

First Sunday Food Offering

+ Response:

Au Clair de la Lune

**Jesus' hands were kind hands, doing good to all,
Healing pain and sickness, blessing children small.
Let me watch you, Jesus, till I'm gentle too,
Till my hands are kind hands, quick to work for you.**

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

**God of Justice, whenever we settle for the way things are
instead of the way you would have them to be, forgive us.
Whenever we are paralyzed by fear or limited in vision,
increase our trust in you.
Whenever we offer charity, but fail to work for justice,
show us the more excellent way that your love requires.
Whenever we tire of the struggle and tomorrow feels overwhelming,
restore our hope.
Whenever we forget those who have gone before us
or act as if we were the first to follow in the way of peace,
allow us to recognize our arrogance.
May the resources of our faith
encourage us to dream again.
Amen.**

Words of Assurance

+Please stand in body or spirit

Music

“Rose Leaf Rag”

Scott Joplin
(1868-1917)

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

⁺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;
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.**

Prayer

+Please stand in body or spirit

Offering

Offertory

Johann Sebastian Bach

“Blessed Jesus, We Are Here”

(1685-1750)

We will donate 100% of the cash offerings on the first Sunday of each month to one of the mission organizations that Covenant partners with on that Sunday. These funds will be above and beyond what Covenant has budgeted to give to Missions. Today's cash offerings will go to Wesley Community Center, a nonprofit anchored in Houston's Near Northside that provides an array of social services to neighborhood families, including a food pantry serving 13,000 families, Early Head Start, childcare, youth programs, programs for seniors, and a financial opportunity center.

+Prayer of Dedication

**We seek the company and cooperation
of people of other faiths or of none,
who respect and promote
the lives of the most humble human beings
and of the endangered earth.**

**In the name of Jesus
we ask for the power to rejoice
in the wonderful gifts of creation,
to lead lives of justice and peace,
and to work toward the day
when this will be enjoyed
by all people.**

+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

**So we shall love what is holy
with all our courage, with all our passion
with all our strength.**

+Please stand in body or spirit

**Let the words that have come down
shine in our words and our actions. . .
We must speak about what is good
and holy within our homes
when we are working, when we are at play,
when we lie down and when we get up.
Let the work of our hands speak of goodness.
Let it run in our blood
and glow from our doors and windows. . .
Be quiet and listen to the still small
voice within that speaks in love.
Open to that voice, hear it, heed it and work for life.
Let us remember and strive to be good.
Let us remember to find what is holy
within and without.**

⁺Closing Hymn #415

Ora Labora

“Come, Labor On”

**Come, labor on. Who dares stand idle on the harvest plain
While all around us waves the golden grain?
And to each servant
does the Master say,
“Go work today.”**

**Come, labor on. Claim the high calling angels cannot share;
To young and old the gospel gladness bear.
Redeem the time; its
hours too swiftly fly.
The night draws nigh.**

**Come, labor on. Away with gloomy doubts and faithless fear!
No arm so weak but may do service here;
though feeble agents,
may we all fulfill
God’s righteous will.**

**Come, labor on. No time for rest, till glows the western sky,
Till the long shadows o'er our pathway lie, and a glad sound comes
with the setting sun,
“Well done, well done!”**

Benediction

*Postlude

“Trumpet Tune in A”

David N. Johnson
(1922-1987)

+Please stand in body or spirit

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

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Javier Villarreal**.

The Call to Worship is “Logos” by Mary Oliver.

The Opening Sentences are from Edward Hale in *Rejoice Together*, edited by Helen Pickett.

The Unison Confession is adapted from a prayer by J. Bennett Guess.

Lucas Cuellar is the xylophonist.

Deacon Nita Lindley gives the Prayer.

The Prayer of Dedication is adapted from “A European Revival of Liberation Theology” by Ulrich Duchrow in the Winter 2011 issue of *Tikkun* magazine.

The Affirmation of Faith is adapted from Marge Piercy’s poem, “V’ahavta” in *The Art of Blessing the Day: Poems with a Jewish Theme*.

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About Today’s Service

D. A. Powell (b. 1963) is a poet based in San Francisco. Regarding today’s Epigraph, he writes, “I wrote ‘The Miracle of Giving’ during a Thanksgiving holiday, a meditation on Christian values during a time when Christians seem more focused on erasing and policing the lives of others rather than embracing or serving their neighbors and loving one another unconditionally. My inspiration for the poem was Rev. Cecil Williams, pastor of Glide Memorial Church, which provides meals, education, outreach and healing in the Tenderloin neighborhood of San Francisco. Williams famously removed the giant cross that stood behind his pulpit and told the congregation, ‘From now on, you’re the cross.’”

—*Jason Steiner*

Announcements

On **August 9**, to send off Jason Steiner with celebration, we will host a breakfast in Huff Hall. There will be no education hour or choir that day; drop in anytime between 9:30 and 10:30am for breakfast and coffee. At 10:30, we'll "toast" Jason.

Committees will meet on **August 9** after the worship service.

Calendar

Sun. Aug. 2	12:30pm	Youth Fellowship, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Mon. Aug. 3	7pm	Insight Meditation, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Tues. Aug. 4	7:30pm	Shakespeare Outing, Miller Outdoor Theatre.
Thurs. Aug. 6	10am	Community Group, Zoom.
	1:15pm	Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom.
Sun. Aug. 9	9:30am	Celebration of Jason Steiner, Huff Fellowship Hall.

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 & Communications

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.