



COVENANT CHURCH

H O U S T O N

A Service of Worship for
30 August 2026

God presents Moses with the wonderfully enigmatic name
Ehyeh-Asher-Ehyeh. What has God told Moses and us about
Himself or Herself? Volumes have been written in response to this question.

I believe God said something like the following, "I am whatever you want
Me to be. I am whatever you need Me to be. You cannot know My Essence
but we will have a relationship, and you will tell stories about your
encounters with Me. None of them will be totally accurate because I am not
a concept. I am a living complex reality that can be experienced, but not
defined or limited by language. That is Who I Am and Who I Will Be."

—Rabbi Peter Knobel

Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees takes off his shoes;
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ring in the hour

Silence is kept

*Prelude

Maria Theresia von Paradis
(1759-1824)

“Sicilienne”

Call to Worship

+Opening Hymn #210

St. Anne

“Our God, Our Help in Ages Past”

**Our God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home:**

**Before the hills in order stood, or earth received its frame,
From everlasting Thou art God, to endless years the same.**

**A thousand ages in Thy sight are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun.**

**Time, like an ever rolling stream, soon bears us all away;
We fly forgotten, as a dream dies at the opening day.**

**Our God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while life shall last, and our eternal home.**

+Opening Sentences

**In many ways, religion comes from the same place in us that art comes from.
The language of the human heart is poetry.
Music is the language of the spirit.
The métier of religious ideas is parable, verse, and story.**

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

+Please stand in body or spirit

All of our names for God are metaphor— necessary license, approximation, and analogy. Our sacred texts burn with that knowledge and dare us to use all of our faculties of intelligence and experience and creativity. But we forget this; our fact- and argument-obsessed culture is deaf to it, blind to it.

Invitation

Scripture Lesson

Exodus 3:1-15

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

Time for Children

⁺ 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

**O God, You are near as the very air we breathe and the light around us, yet our thought's farthest reach falls short of You.
We yearn to reach You. We seek the light and warmth of Your presence, for we are lost without You. Though we say You are near, we are lonely and alone.
O let our desire be so strong that it will tear the veil that keeps You from our sight!
Let Your light penetrate our darkness, to reveal to us the glory and joy of Your eternal presence.
As the fish gives himself to the sea, as the bird gives herself to the air, as all life gives itself to life, so may we give ourselves to You, O God.**

Words of Assurance

Music

"Domine Deus" from *Gloria*

Antonio Vivaldi
(1678-1741)

+Please stand in body or spirit

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

⁺Hymn #330

Shepherds' Pipes

**Deep in the shadows of the past, Far out from settled lands,
Some nomads traveled with their God Across the desert sands.
The dawn of hope for human-kind Was glimpsed by them alone:
A promise calling them ahead, A future yet unknown.**

**While others bowed to changeless gods They met a mystery:
God with an uncompleted name, "I am what I will be";
And by their tents, around their fires, In story, song, and law
They praised, remembered, handed on A past that promised more.**

**From Abraham to Nazareth The promise changed and grew,
While some, remembering the past, Recorded what they knew,
And some, in letters or laments, In prophecy and praise,
Recovered, held, and re-expressed New hope for changing days.**

**For all the writings that survived, For leaders, long ago,
Who sifted, chose, and then preserved the Bible that we know,
Give thanks, and find its promise yet Our comfort, strength, and call,
The working model for our faith, Alive with hope for all.**

Prayer

Offering

Offertory

Dan Locklair

"Hallowed Be Thy Name" from *Salem Sonata*

(b. 1949)

⁺Prayer of Dedication

**I want to take off the shoes of my voice so that I can enter a place with care — so
that I can do the work that I need to do.**

⁺*Please stand in body or spirit*

**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

**Walk, Don't Run
That's it.
Walk, don't run.
Slow down, breathe deeply,
and open your eyes because there's
a whole world right here within this one.
The bush doesn't suddenly catch on fire,
it's been burning the whole time.
Moses is simply moving
slowly enough to see it. And when he does,
he takes off his sandals.
Not because
the ground has suddenly become holy,
but because he's just now becoming aware that
the ground has been holy the whole time.
Efficiency is not God's highest goal for your life,
neither is busyness,
or how many things you can get done in one day,
or speed, or even success.
But walking,
which leads to seeing,
now that's something.
That's the invitation for every one of us today,
and everyday, in every conversation, interaction,
event, and moment: to walk, not run. And in doing so,
to see a whole world right here within this one.**

“Praise the Lord!”

**Praise the Lord! Praise, you servants of the lord,
Praise the name of the Lord!
Blessed be the name of the Lord!
Blessed be the name of the Lord
From this time forth and forevermore.
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!**

**Praise the Lord! Thanks and praises sing to God,
Day by day to the Lord!
High above the nations is God,
High above the nations is God,
In glory high over earth and sky.
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!**

**Praise the Lord! Praise and glory give to God;
Who is like unto God?
Raising up the poor from the dust,
Raising up the poor from the dust,
In God’s own heart and home they dwell.
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!**

**Praise the Lord! Praise, you servants of the Lord,
Praise the love of the Lord!
Giving to the homeless a home,
Giving to the homeless a home,
God fills their hearts with new hope and joy.
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!**

Benediction

^{*}Postlude

“Prelude in C Major, BWV 553”

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 **Ann Stout**.

The Call to Worship is “The Names of God” by Steve Garnaas-Holmes.

The Opening Sentences are by Krista Tippett.

The Unison Confession is by Rabbi Chaim Stern in *Gates of Prayer: The New Reform Prayerbook*.

The soloist is **Emily Ramsey Holien**.

Deacon Jeff Turner gives the Prayer.

The Prayer of Dedication is by Ocean Vuong.

The Affirmation of Faith is by Rob Bell.

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About Today's Service

Steve Garnaas-Holmes is an author and curator of the popular blog *Unfolding Light*. He is a retired United Methodist minister, poet, and musician.

In an interview in *Hallelujah! Interviews with American Christian Poets*, he noted “I help people to live with heart, connect with God, and practice gentleness, gratitude, trust, courage, and love. A lot of poetry I write is essentially prayer. I think poetry and prayer are the same thing. In that sense, I don’t really write it for an audience, only for God.” He added, “Part of the wonder of poetry is the possibility of conveying that wonder to somebody else.”

Worship planners have selected his writing for the past several weeks. Last week, “One Table” was used as the Unison Confession, and this week one of his poems is the Call to Worship. I invite you to read more of his poems on his blog/website, *unfoldinglight.net*.

—*Raymond Stubblefield*

Announcements

A memorial service for Dan Cook will be held at Covenant on **September 19**, at 3pm.

Please see the newsletter to sign up by **August 31** for a church-wide lunch on **September 13**.

We will celebrate our beloved minister's 20 years of working at Covenant.

We're meeting at Camp Allen for an All-Church Retreat, **October 2-4**. Register online!

Calendar

Sun. Aug. 30	1pm	Youth Social, K1 Speed, 14900 North Fwy.
Mon. Sept. 1	7pm	Insight Meditation, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Thurs. Sept. 4	10am	Community Group, Zoom.
	1:15pm	Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom.
Sat. Sept. 5	9:30am	Morning Mindfulness (Lorraine Cherry Preserve).
Sun. Sept. 6	9:30am	Adult Education, 2nd floor of Huff Fellowship Hall or on Zoom. Guest proclaimer Rev. Greg Jarrell presents.

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
Karen Kline, Interim Music Director
Heather Laureles, Director of Administration & Communication
Laura Mayo, Senior Minister
Carl McAliley, Interim Organist
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.