



COVENANT CHURCH

H O U S T O N

A Service of Worship for
6 September 2026

The river is famous to the fish.

The loud voice is famous to silence,
which knew it would inherit the earth
before anybody said so.

The cat sleeping on the fence is famous to the birds
watching him from the birdhouse.

The tear is famous, briefly, to the cheek.

The idea you carry close to your bosom
is famous to your bosom.

The boot is famous to the earth,
more famous than the dress shoe,
which is famous only to floors.

The bent photograph is famous to the one who carries it
and not at all famous to the one who is pictured.

I want to be famous to shuffling men
who smile while crossing streets,
sticky children in grocery lines,
famous as the one who smiled back.

I want to be famous in the way a pulley is famous,
or a buttonhole, not because it did anything spectacular,
but because it never forgot what it could do.

—“Famous” by Naomi Shihab Nye

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ring in the hour

Silence is kept

*Prelude

“Modal Prelude”

Alec Rowley
(1892-1958)

Call to Worship

+Opening Hymn #343

Beecher

“Called as Partners in Christ’s Service”

**Called as partners in Christ’s service, called to ministries of grace,
We respond with deep commitment fresh new lines of faith to trace.
May we learn the art of sharing, side by side and friend with friend,
Equal partners in our caring to fulfill God’s chosen end.**

**Christ’s example, Christ’s inspiring, Christ’s clear call to work and worth,
Let us follow, never faltering, reconciling folk on earth.
Men and women, richer, poorer, all God’s people, young and old,
Blending human skills together gracious gifts from God unfold.**

**Thus new patterns for Christ’s mission, in a small or global sense,
Help us bear each other’s burdens, breaking down each wall or fence.
Words of comfort, words of vision, words of challenge, said with care,
Bring new power and strength for action, make us colleagues, free and fair.**

**So God grant us for tomorrow ways to order human life
That surround each person’s sorrow with a calm that conquers strife.
Make us partners in our living, our compassion to increase,
Messengers of faith, thus giving hope and confidence and peace.**

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

+Please stand in body or spirit

⁺Opening Sentences

**Leave your windows and go out, people of the world,
go into the streets, go into the fields, go into the woods
and along the streams. Go together, go alone.
Say no to the Lords of War which is Money
which is Fire. Say no by saying yes
to the air, to the earth, to the trees,
yes to the grasses, to the rivers, to the birds
and the animals and every living thing, yes
to the small houses, yes to the children. Yes.**

Invitation

Missions Invitation

Scripture Lessons

Zechariah 8:3-8; Luke 19:37-40

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

**One of the tragedies of humanity's long trek has been the limiting of neighborly
concern to tribe, race, class or nation. ... Our world is a neighborhood. We
must learn to live as brothers [and sisters], or we will perish as fools. For I
submit, nothing will be done until people put their bodies and souls into this.**

Words of Assurance

+Please stand in body or spirit

Music

Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

“Préludes Book 1, L. 117. No. 4”

*“Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir”
 (“Sounds and scents swirl in the evening air”)*

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.**

Prayer

Offering

Offertory

Florence Price
(1887-1953)

“Adoration”

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 Hatch Youth, Houston's oldest group dedicated to empowering LGBTQIA+ youth and young adults.

+Please stand in body or spirit

+Prayer of Dedication

Leader: If there is to be peace in the world,
There must be peace in the nations.

**People: If there is to be peace in the nations,
There must be peace in the cities.**

Leader: If there is to be peace in the cities,
There must be peace between neighbors.

**People: If there is to be peace between neighbors,
There must be peace in the home.**

Leader: If there is to be peace in the home,
People: There must be peace in the heart.

+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

The religious among us need to demonstrate that being religious is not a strictly private affair, but ought to have public bearing.

+Closing Hymn #421

Wareham

“The Church of Christ in Every Age”

**The church of Christ in every age, beset by change but Spirit led,
Must claim and test its heritage and keep on rising from the dead.**

**Across the world, across the street, the victims of injustice cry
For shelter and for bread to eat, and never live until they die.**

**Then let the servant church arise, a caring church that longs to be
A partner in Christ's sacrifice, and clothed in Christ's humanity.**

+Please stand in body or spirit

**For Christ alone, whose blood was shed, can cure the fever in our blood,
And teach us how to share our bread and feed the starving multitude.**

**We have no mission but to serve in full obedience to our Lord:
To care for all, without reserve, and spread Christ's liberating word.**

Benediction

*Postlude

“Postlude on 'McKee'”

Robert Powell
(1932-2025)

+Please stand in body or spirit

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

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Deborah Lin**.

The Call to Worship is from a prayer delivered by the Rt. Rev. Gene Robinson at the inauguration of President Obama.

The Opening Sentences are “Yes” by Wendell Berry.

The Unison Confession is by Martin Luther King, Jr.

The pianist is **Julian Laureles**.

Rev. Gregory Jarrell gives the proclamation.

The Prayer of Dedication is by Lao-Tse, as reprinted in *Singing the Living Tradition*.

The Affirmation of Faith is by Michael Hogue.

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About Today's Service

Today's proclaimer, Greg Jarrell, wrote *Our Trespasses*. For his book launch, he asked me to interview him. I asked all the usual questions— how he came to write the book, his writing journey, and what he hoped the book would accomplish. After others in the audience asked questions they'd brought with them, I got to ask one more: “How has writing this book changed your faith? How has it impacted your relationship with God?” He sank into his chair. I had hit a nerve— it was not my intention. He didn't shy away. He admitted that he had been in a season of doubt for a while, and writing this book did not move him past it. It may have deepened his doubt. For most of the time that I have known Greg, he has held his faith gently, often leading with doubt. He has normalized for me the importance of doubt in faith— perhaps a permanent part of faith.

—*Joseph Ewoodzie*

Announcements

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

The church-wide lunch approaches on **September 13**. We will celebrate our beloved minister Laura Mayo'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. Sept. 6	12:30pm	Youth Fellowship, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Mon. Sept. 7	7pm	Insight Meditation, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Thurs. Sept. 10	10am	Community Group, Zoom.
	1:15pm	Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom.
	7pm	Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary.
Sun. Sept. 13	9:30am	Adult Education, 2nd floor of Huff Fellowship Hall or on Zoom. We will begin discussing <i>Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time</i> by Marcus Borg.

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

4949 Caroline Street
Houston, Texas 77004
713-668-8830

www.covenanthouston.org
office@covenanthouston.org

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.