

COVENANT CHURCH

H O U S T O N

A Service of Worship for
Peace Sunday
20 September 2026

Music is worship.
—*Bono*

Hope is invented every day.
—*James Baldwin*

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ring in the hour

Silence is kept

*Prelude

“Capriccio in C Minor for Solo Viola”

Henri Vieuxtemps
(1820-1881)

Call to Worship

+Opening Hymn #482

Lobe Den Herren

“Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty”

**Praise ye the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation!
All ye who hear, now to His temple draw near;
Join me in glad adoration!**

**Praise ye the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth,
Shelters thee under His wings, yea, so gently sustaineth!
Hast thou not seen how thy desires e'er have been
Granted in what He ordaineth?**

**Praise ye the Lord! O let all that is in me adore Him!
All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before Him!
Let the Amen sound from His people again;
Gladly for aye we adore Him.**

+Opening Sentences

**To worship is to stand in awe
under a heaven of stars,
before a flower, a leaf in sunlight,
or a grain of sand.**

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

+Please stand in body or spirit

**To worship is to be silent, receptive,
before a tree astir with the wind,
or the passing shadow of a cloud.
To worship is to work with dedication and with skill;
it is to pause from work and listen to a strain of music.
To worship is to sing with the singing beauty of the earth;
it is to listen through a storm to the still small voice within.
Worship is a loneliness seeking communion;
it is a thirsty land crying out for rain.
Worship is a kindred fire within our hearts;
it moves through deeds of kindness and through acts of love.
Worship is the mystery within us
reaching out to the mystery beyond.
It is an inarticulate silence yearning to speak;
it is the window of the moment open to the sky of the eternal.**

Invitation

Scripture Lesson

Exodus 16:2-15

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

**We confess that we poison ourselves with anger,
bitterness,
regret;**

+Please stand in body or spirit

**We confess that we cripple ourselves with excuses,
complaining,
procrastination.**

We repent.

We are ready to look at the most painful parts of our lives and live.

**We are ready to answer the hardest question--
the question of whether we are willing to change.**

Show us.

Ask us.

Forgive us. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Music

“Liebestraum No. 3”

Franz Liszt
(1811-1886)

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

⁺Hymn #172

Resignation

“My Shepherd Will Supply My Need”

**My Shepherd will supply my need; Jehovah is His name:
In pastures fresh He makes me feed, beside the living stream.
He brings my wandering spirit back, when I forsake His ways;
And leads me, for His mercy’s sake, in paths of truth and grace.**

**When I walk through the shades of death Your presence is my stay;
One word of Your supporting breath drives all my fears away.
Your hand, in sight of all my foes, does still my table spread;
My cup with blessings overflows, Your oil anoints my head.**

**The sure provisions of my God attend me all my days;
O may Your House be my abode, and all my work be praise.
There would I find a settled rest, while others go and come;
No more a stranger, or a guest, but like a child at home.**

+Please stand in body or spirit

Prayer

Offering

Offertory

Johann Sebastian Bach
"Adagio" from Concerto in D Minor after Marcello (1685-1750)

+Prayer of Dedication

**God of wondrous patience,
the earth has risen again,
emerging
 from a darkness
 in a way it has never quite been before;
whirling
 to a fresh time,
 an unused space;
alive
 with trembling possibilities,
 and I with it!
Such staggering grace!
Please nurture me in newness;
set me free from the tyrannies
 of habit
 and complaining
 and blaming;
shake from me the dusty melancholy
 of too much success and comfort,
 pride and pretense,
that, as if on the first day of creation,
I may begin to see
 the miracle of life and humanity;
to hear
 the hum of grace
 unfolding to meet all my needs,
 unexpectedly and surprisingly,
 and urging me to go on in faith
 to whatever is next in love.**

+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

We all have what we need to come through. Against all odds, no matter what we've lost, no matter what messes we've made over time, no matter how dark the night, we offer and are offered kindness, soul, light, and food, which create breath and spaciousness, which create hope, sufficient unto the day.

⁺Closing Hymn #361

Foundation

"How Firm A Foundation"

**How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in God's excellent Word!
What more can be said than to you God hath said,
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?**

**"Fear not, I am with thee; O be not dismayed,
For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.**

**"When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
For I will be near thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.**

**"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.**

**“The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no, never, no, never forsake.”**

Benediction

*Postlude

“Vivace” from *Sonata for Viola and Piano*

Rebecca Clarke
(1886-1979)

+*Please stand in body or spirit*

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

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Perry Primm**.

The Call to Worship is “I Worried” by Mary Oliver.

The Opening Sentences are by Jacob Trapp from *Singing the Living Tradition*.

The Unison Confession is from *An Improbable Gift of Blessing* by Maren C. Tirabassi and Joan Jordan Grant.

Deacon Bridget O’Toole gives the Prayer.

The Prayer of Dedication is from *Guerrillas of Grace* by Ted Loder.

The Affirmation of Faith is from *Almost Everything: Notes on Hope* by Anne Lamott.

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About Today’s Service

Anne Lamott was raised by atheist parents. She survived alcoholism, addiction, and depression before experiencing a spiritual awakening in her thirties. Over the past forty years, she has become a celebrated writer who draws from her experiences to offer a refreshing perspective on doubt, grace, hope, and finding God in the messy reality of everyday life. In an interview about *Almost Everything: Notes on Hope*, she said, “Stories are what save us.” Her writings and wisdom have been a part of Covenant’s worship for many years.

—*Raymond Stubblefield*

Announcements

A church-wide reception follows this service **today** in the Narthex to celebrate Covenant's new Artists in Residence.

We're meeting at Camp Allen for an All-Church Retreat, **October 2-4**. Use the QR code below to register online!

Calendar

Sun. Sept. 20	12:30pm	Artists in Residence Reception, Narthex.
	12:30pm	Youth Fellowship Blessing Bags, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Mon. Sept. 21	7pm	Insight Meditation, Huff Fellowship Hall.
	7pm	Houston Sacred Harp, Narthex.
Thurs. Sept. 24	10am	Community Group, Zoom.
	1:15pm	Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom.
	7pm	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary.
Sun. Sept. 27	9:30am	Adult Education, 2nd floor of Huff Fellowship Hall or on Zoom. We will continue discussing <i>Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time</i> by Marcus Borg.
	9:30am	Handbell Kick-off, Purple Classroom C.



Retreat Sign-Up by September 28



Please use this QR code to fill out the form individually for each person by **September 28**. The cost is \$55 per person. If you are unable to pay that, please pay what you can. We want everyone to be able to attend. If you are able to pay more than the cost/person to help cover the cost, that is appreciated.

Information

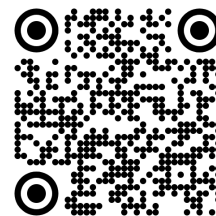
Childcare is provided in the children's area beginning at 9:30 a.m. Children aged 2 and under are invited to the nursery. Children aged 3 to 9 are invited to the children's area after the Time for Children.

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
José Piña, Artist in Residence
Raymond Stubblefield, Minister of Congregational Life
Szuyu Su, Artist in Residence

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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.