

# COVENANT CHURCH

## H O U S T O N

A Service of Worship for  
World Communion Sunday  
4 October 2026

The transcendent perspective of religion  
makes all people our brothers and sisters  
and nullifies the divisions, by which  
nature, climate, geography,  
and the accidents of history  
divide the human family.  
By this insight we are inspired  
to transcend national, racial, and class distinctions.  
—Reinhold Niebuhr



Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!  
**And also with you!**

Ring in the hour

Silence is kept

\*Prelude

Johann Ludwig Krebs

“Praeludium and Choral on ‘Jesus Priceless Treasure’” (1713-1780)

Call to Worship

+Opening Hymn

Dove of Peace

“I Come with Joy”

**I come with joy, a child of God,  
forgiven, loved and free,  
the life of Jesus to recall,  
in love laid down for me,  
in love laid down for me.**

**I come with Christians far and near  
to find, as all are fed,  
the new community of love  
in Christ's communion bread,  
in Christ's communion bread.**

**As Christ breaks bread, and bids us share,  
each proud division ends.**

**The love that made us, makes us one,  
and strangers now are friends,  
and strangers now are friends.**

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

*+Please stand in body or spirit*

**The Spirit of the risen Christ,  
unseen, but ever near,  
is in such friendship better known,  
alive among us here,  
alive among us here.**

**Together met, together bound  
by all that God has done,  
we'll go with joy, to give the world  
the love that makes us one,  
the love that makes us one.**

<sup>+</sup>Opening Sentences

**Isn't our faith in your presence in the breaking of bread  
meant to reach out beyond this small circle of sisters and brothers  
to the larger circle of humanity and to alleviate our suffering?  
If we can recognize you in this ritual,  
we must also be able to recognize you in the world.  
We pray that our faith would be deepened  
that we might find ways to let this faith bear fruit  
in the lives of many.**

Invitation

Missions Invitation

Scripture Lesson

Matthew 26:26-30

These are our sacred stories.

**Thanks be to God.**

*+Please stand in body or spirit*

Time for Children

First Sunday Food Offering

<sup>+</sup> 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 live in a universe marked by diversity  
as the law of its being and our being.  
We are made to exist in a life that should be marked by  
cooperation, interdependence, sharing, caring,  
compassion and complementarity.  
We should celebrate our diversity;  
we should exult in our differences...  
as sisters and brothers in one family,  
the human family, God's family.**

Words of Assurance

Music

“Nuts and Wine” from *Hassidic Suite*

Joachim Stutschewsky  
(1891-1982)

Silent Reflection

Prayer

*+Please stand in body or spirit*

Offering

Offertory

Johann Sebastian Bach

“Fugue in G Minor, BWV 578”

(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 **Hospitality Apartments**, which provides safe, comfortable, supportive lodgings while caregivers and patients are in town for treatment from a Texas Medical Center hospital. Since 1968 they have hosted more than 9,000 guests from all over the world. "Being away from home, family, and friends to receive medical attention is difficult at best. Our desire is to relieve some of the stress and give you the supportive environment you need while you focus on getting better."*

+Prayer of Dedication

**Thank you, God, for this day of communion,  
when we share food for body, mind, and heart.**

**In ways beyond our understanding, deeper than our knowing,  
you come to us and offer us yourself.**

+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.**

## **THE CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION**

Communion Reading

Invitation to the Table

+*Please stand in body or spirit*

“O Faithful God”

**O faithful God, whose steadfast love is sure,  
O Loving Father, Mother kind and strong:  
your Covenant forever will endure;  
you bind us to your heart our whole life long.  
No matter how rebellious is your child,  
in you we are brought home and reconciled**

**You hold us, God, in kinship with each other.  
We have been loved and held when we would run.  
We all are siblings, all born of one Mother;  
though we would flee, you join us all as one.  
Our deepest wounds come from our deepest love,  
and so our highest hope for life above.**

**So teach us God, to bravely love each other,  
for all belong within your house of grace,  
to give our enemy, who is our brother,  
our steadfast mercy, and a wide embrace;  
for in our love, though we be right or wrong,  
we know the grace to which we all belong.**

Sharing the Bread and Cup

*Our communion elements include both wine and water, and gluten-free and vegan crackers. All  
are always welcome to communion at Covenant.*

<sup>+</sup>Communion Response: Hymn #516

O Quanta Qualia

**Lord, we have come at Your own invitation,  
Chosen by You, to be counted Your friends;  
Yours is the strength that sustains dedication,  
Ours a commitment we know never ends.**

*+Please stand in body or spirit*

**Here, at Your table, confirm our intention,  
Give it Your seal of forgiveness and grace;  
Teach us to serve without pride or pretension,  
Lord, in Your kingdom, whatever our place.**

**When, at Your table, each time of returning,  
Vows are renewed and our courage restored:  
May we increasingly glory in learning  
All that it means to accept You as Lord.**

<sup>+</sup>Affirmation of Faith

**We believe in a nourishing God  
who provided manna in the wilderness and water from the rock.**

**We believe in a with-us God, Jesus of Nazareth,  
who set tables for the lonely and ate with the forgotten.**

**We believe in an expansive God—the wild Holy Spirit—  
meeting us in ritual, regardless of where we gather.**

**Trusting that good news, we come to the Table.  
We pull up extra seats.**

**We learn each other's names.  
We bless the food.  
We tell the story.  
We remember Christ's love,  
and we look for God in all of it. We believe.**

**Help our unbelief.  
Amen.**

*+Please stand in body or spirit*

“In Christ There Is No East or West”

**In Christ there is no east or west, in Him no south or north;  
But one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide earth.**

**In Christ shall true hearts everywhere their high communion find;  
His service is the golden cord closebinding humankind.**

**Join hands, disciples of the faith, whate’er your race may be.  
All children of the living god are surely kin to me.**

**In Christ now meet both east and west, in Him meet south and north;  
All Christly souls are one in Him throughout the whole wide earth.**

Benediction

<sup>\*</sup>Postlude

Félix-Alexandre Guilmant

“Sortie sur ‘Quid Nunc in Tenebris’”

(1837-1911)

*+Please stand in body or spirit*

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

## Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Bill Kline**.

The Call to Worship is from *Flames of the Spirit*, edited by Ruth C. Duck.

The Opening Sentences are adapted from a prayer by Henri Nouwen.

The Unison Confession is from *God is Not a Christian and Other Provocations* by Desmond Tutu.

The cellist is **Susan Wegner**, and the pianist is **Karen Kline**.

**Deacon Nita Lindley** gives the Prayer.

The Prayer of Dedication is by Virginia Rickeman from *The Well is Deep: Prayers to Draw Up Living Water*.

The Communion Reading is by Kim Mason.

The Affirmation of Faith is by Sarah Speed.

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## Announcements

Please use the link in your newsletter to give feedback on our music program to the music director search committee.

Laura will lead a 30-minute guided meditation at 12pm on **Thursday, October 8**, as part of Compassionate Houston's *Meditate & Connect* series, accessible on their website or through the link in our newsletter.

Inquirers classes for those new to our community will begin on **Sunday, October 25**.

## Calendar

|               |        |                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mon. Oct. 5   | 7pm    | Insight Meditation, Huff Fellowship Hall.                                                                                                                                                |
| Thurs. Oct. 8 | 10am   | Community Group, Zoom.                                                                                                                                                                   |
|               | 1:15pm | Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom.                                                                                                                                                          |
|               | 7pm    | Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary.                                                                                                                                                   |
| Sat. Oct. 10  | 10am   | Houston Sacred Harp event, Huff Fellowship Hall.                                                                                                                                         |
| Sun. Oct. 11  | 9:30am | Adult Education, 2nd floor of Huff Fellowship Hall or on Zoom. We will welcome Dr. Bill Monroe, former Dean of The Honors College and professor of English at the University of Houston. |

## **Information**

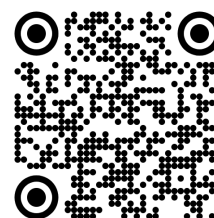
**Childcare** is provided in the children's area beginning at 9:30am. Children aged 2 and under are invited to the nursery. Children aged 3 to 9 are invited to the children's area after the Time for Children.

**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 in her or his own 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.*