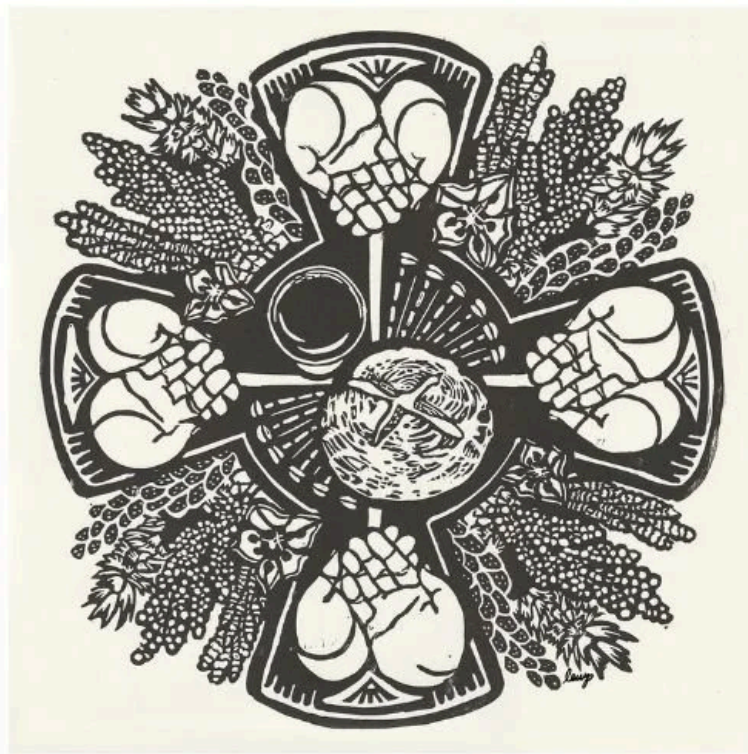


COVENANT CHURCH

HOUSTON

A Service of Worship for
11 October 2026



Love is an action, never simply a feeling.
—*bell hooks*

Love isn't a state of perfect caring. It is an active noun like struggle. To love someone is to strive to accept that person exactly the way he or she is, right here and now.
—*Fred Rogers*

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!

And also with you!

Ring in the hour

Silence is kept

*Prelude

Brenda Portman

“Holy God, We Praise Thy Name”

(b. 1980)

Call to Worship

+Opening Hymn #289

Llangloffan

“O God of Every Nation”

**O God of every nation, of every race and land,
Redeem the whole creation with Your almighty hand;
Where hate and fear divide us and bitter threats are hurled,
In love and mercy guide us and heal our strife-torn world.
From search for wealth and power and scorn of truth and right,
From trust in bombs that shower destruction through the night,
From pride of race and station and blindness to Your way,
Deliver every nation, eternal God, we pray.
Lord, strengthen those who labor that all may find release
From fear of rattling saber, from dread of war's increase;
When hope and courage falter, Your still small voice be heard;
With faith that none can alter, Your servants undergird.
Keep bright in us the vision of days when war shall cease,
When hatred and division give way to love and peace,
Till dawns the morning glorious when peace on earth shall reign
And Christ shall rule victorious o'er all the world's domain.**

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

+Please stand in body or spirit

⁺Opening Sentences

**Love cannot remain by itself--
it has no meaning.**

**Love has to be put into action
and that action is service.**

**Whatever form we are,
able or disabled,
rich or poor,
it is not how much we do,
but how much love we put in the doing;
a lifelong sharing of love with others.**

Invitation

Scripture Lesson

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

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

**Before you tell your life what you intend to do with it
listen for what it intends to do with you.**

**We have the deep joy of knowing that we are here on earth
to be the gifts that God created.**

**With courage and grace may we find "the place where
our deep gladness meets the world's deep need."**

Today we will let our lives speak...

Words of Assurance

+Please stand in body or spirit

Music

Mark A. Miller

“Draw the Circle Wide”

(b. 1967)

Silent Reflection

Prayer

Offering

Offertory

Pamela Robison

“Fanfare on ‘Hymn to Joy’”

(b. 1947)

⁺Prayer of Dedication

God of manna and mustard seeds,

We are hungry and we are hopeful.

As we gather at this Table together,

we ask that you would pour out your spirit on this

ordinary bread and cup.

Transform this simple feast into a reminder of what could be—

a world where all are fed,

all are welcomed, and all are known.

Until that day,

may this bread nourish our bodies alongside our spirits.

May the joy of singing and feasting together buoy our weary hearts.

And may your radical welcome open deeper compassion in us for our neighbors.

⁺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.

+Please stand in body or spirit

THE CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION

Invitation to the Table

⁺Hymn #386

Azmon

“O For a World”

**O for a world where everyone respects each other’s ways,
Where love is lived and all is done with justice and with praise.**

**O for a world where goods are shared and misery relieved,
Where truth is spoken, children spared, equality achieved.**

**We welcome one world family and struggle with each choice
That opens us to unity and gives our vision voice.**

**The poor are rich, the weak are strong, the foolish ones are wise.
Tell all who mourn; outcasts belong, who perishes will rise.**

**O for a world preparing for God’s glorious reign of peace,
Where time and tears will be no more, and all but love will cease.**

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.

⁺Communion Response

Terra Beata

**How can we name a Love that wakens heart and mind,
indwelling all we know or think or do or seek or find?
Within our daily world, in every human face,
Love’s echoes sound and God is found, hid in the commonplace.**

**When people share a task, and strength and skills unite
in projects old or new, to make or do with shared delight,
our Friend and Partner’s will is better understood,
that all should share, create, and care, and know that life is good.**

**So in a hundred names, each day we all can meet
a presence, sensed and shown at work, at home, or in the street.
Yet every name we see, shines in a brighter sun,
In Christ alone is Love full grown and life and hope begun.**

⁺Affirmation of Faith

**May we be reminded here of our highest aspirations,
and inspired to bring our gifts of love and service
to the altar of humanity.**

**May we know once again that we are not isolated beings
but connected, in mystery and miracle, to the universe,
to this community and to each other**

⁺Closing Hymn #504

Union Seminary

“Draw Us in the Spirit’s Tether”

**Draw us in the Spirit’s tether, for when humbly in Your name
Two or three are met together, You are in the midst of them;
Alleluia! Alleluia! Touch we now Your garment’s hem.**

**As disciples used to gather in the name of Christ to sup,
Then with thanks to God the Father break the bread and bless the cup,
Alleluia! Alleluia! So now bind our friendship up.**

**All our meals and all our living make as sacraments of You,
That by caring, helping, giving, we may be disciples true.
Alleluia! Alleluia! We will serve with faith anew.**

Benediction

⁺Postlude

“Praeludium in G Major”

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 organist is Andrew Bowen.

The epigraph art is by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman.

The Call to Worship is adapted from *Christ in a Changing World* by Tom Driver.

The Opening Sentences are from *Words to Love By* by Mother Theresa.

The Unison Confession is adapted from Frederick Buechner and Parker Palmer.

The soloists are **Susan Reeves, Emily Holien, Casey Okabayashi, and KT Tilford**.

The Prayer of Dedication is by Sarah Speed.

The Affirmation of Faith is from *Singing the Living Tradition*.

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About Today's Service

This Sunday is the official commencement of our 2027 giving campaign with the theme *Love in Action*. The need to spread Covenant's message of acceptance and love for every person has never been greater. For three Sundays in October members of the stewardship committee will talk about what Covenant has meant to them and how Covenant has demonstrated *Love in Action*.

Let's each prayerfully consider our financial commitment for the coming year as well as other ways we can demonstrate *Love in Action* both individually and communally.

—*Barbara McKittrick*

Announcements

Forms linked in our newsletter allow you to nominate people for Council and the Diaconate by **Monday, October 19**, and give feedback on our music program to our music search committees. For stewardship you may email your pledge to finance@covenanthouston.org, or place your pledge in the wood pledge box in the Narthex, or mail it to the church.

Trunk-or-Treat approaches on **Saturday, October 24**.

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

Calendar

Mon. Oct. 12	7pm	Insight Meditation, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Thurs. Oct. 15	10am	Community Group, Zoom.
	1:15pm	Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom.
	7pm	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary.
Sat. Oct.. 17	9am	Art As Prayer, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Sun. Oct. 18	9:30am	Adult Education, 2nd floor of Huff Fellowship Hall or on Zoom. Linda Phenix speaks on voting and Covenant's participation in Houston Faith Votes.
	9:30am	Handbell Polishing Party, Classroom C, Huff Fellowship Building.

Information

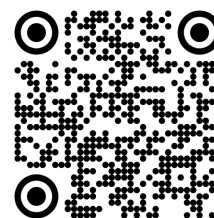
Childcare is provided in the children's area beginning at 9:30 a.m. Children aged 2 and under are invited to the nursery. Children aged 3 to 9 are invited to the children's area after the Time for Children.

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 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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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.