

COVENANT CHURCH

H O U S T O N

A Service of Worship for
25 October 2026

Trees are ubiquitous—almost everybody has access to one.
They tell a complete and ongoing story—from their deepest taproots
to the birds that alight on their delicate high branches.
Trees reflect our lives through their perseverance and rhythms.

Like trees, we humans are anchored and nourished by our roots—
familial and cultural—and depend upon what's unseen—
myths, symbols, and meaning—to help us make sense of our lives.

—*Jacqueline Memory Paterson*

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ring in the hour

Silence is kept

*Prelude

Hans Uwe Hielscher
(b. 1945)

“Mosaik: Allemande”

Call to Worship

+Opening Hymn #376

Hyfrydol

“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

**Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven to earth come down,
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, Thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation, enter every trembling heart.**

**Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit into every troubled breast!
Let us all in Thee inherit, let us find the promised rest;
Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.**

**Come, Almighty to deliver, let us all Thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never, nevermore Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing, serve Thee as Thy hosts above;
Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing, glory in Thy perfect love.**

**Finish, then, Thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory, till in heav’n we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.**

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

+Please stand in body or spirit

⁺Opening Sentences

**As humans we are born of the Earth,
nourished by the Earth,
healed by the Earth.**

The natural world tells us:

**I will feed you, I will clothe you,
I will shelter you, I will heal you...**

**For I offer you a communion
with the divine, I offer you gifts
that you can exchange with each other,
I offer you flowers whereby you may express
your reverence for the divine
and your love for each other.**

Invitation

Scripture Lesson

Psalm 1; Matthew 22:34-46

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

Time for Children

⁺ Response:

Au Claire 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

Silence my soul, these trees are prayers.

I asked the tree, "Tell me about God"; then it blossomed.

Words of Assurance

+Please stand in body or spirit

Music

Karen Crane

“Where There Is Love”

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

⁺Hymn #274

Leoni

“O God of Earth and Space”

**O God of earth and space, of sea and fire and air,
Your providence surrounds us here and everywhere.
In fruit and grain and tree, in shelter from the cold,
In cooling breezes, flowing wells, now as of old.**

**Where faithfulness is shown, where love and truth abound,
Where beauty graces human life, there You are found.
Inspirer of all thought! Creative force of art!
The melody on every tongue, in every heart!**

**Wherever freedom reigns, where sin is overthrown,
Where justice fused with mercy rules, there You are known.
Give us the courage clear to make the earth a home
For all to live in harmony in Christ’s shalom.**

**Your word commands response and summons us to life.
We follow, strengthened by Your grace, in calm or strife.
Our ever present help, our challenge and our prod,
We praise You now and to life’s end, eternal God.**

Prayer

Stewardship Invitation

Offering

Offertory

Denis Bédard

“Dialogue sur ‘Te Deum’”

(b. 1950)

+Please stand in body or spirit

⁺Prayer of Dedication

What prayer at its best, at our best, has always done is help us to live consciously, honorably, and compassionately. Because I am not stronger, more self-sufficient, smarter, braver or any less mortal than my forbears or my neighbors, I need this help. As long as prayer helps me to be more loving, then I need prayer. As long as prayer serves as a potent means of sharing my love with others, I need prayer.

⁺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

**One thing, and one thing only, is serious:
loving one's neighbor as one's self.**

⁺Closing Hymn

Jane Marshall

See insert; verses 1-2 choir, **verses 3-4 all**

“The Greatest of These”

Benediction

⁺Postlude

Léon Boëllmann
(1862-1897)

“Fugato”

+Please stand in body or spirit

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

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Casey Okabayashi**.

The Call to Worship is “What Comes Next” by Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer.

The Opening Sentences are from *Evening Thoughts: Reflecting on Earth as a Sacred Community* by Thomas Berry.

The Unison Confession is by Rabindranath Tagore.

The cellist is **Susan Wegner**.

The Prayer of Dedication is by Kate Braestrup.

The Stewardship Invitation is given by **Dennis Robinson**.

The Affirmation of Faith is by W. H. Auden.

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About Today's Service

Rabindranath Tagore, the author of today's Unison Confession, was a Bengali poet, short-story writer, composer, playwright, essayist, and painter. He was highly influential in introducing Indian culture to the West and vice versa. In 1913, he became the first non-European to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature.

In his famous poem "Leave This Chanting," he wrote that God is not found in the dim corners of locked temples, but out in the world "where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path-maker is breaking stones." For Tagore, the ultimate expression of the sacred is direct service to humanity, especially the oppressed and poor.

Interestingly, Houston is one of three cities in the country with a Tagore Society. Tagore Society Houston maintains the Tagore Memorial Grove at Ray Miller Park. You can learn more at *tagoresociety.net*.

—*Raymond Stubblefield*

Announcements

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

We have two food offerings next Sunday, **November 1**: our First Sunday food offering, and the “Competing in Goodness” bin in the Narthex (where donations’ weight helps us win!).

A form linked in our newsletter allows you to 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.

Calendar

Sun. Oct. 25	12:30pm	Young Adult Group Event, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Mon. Oct. 26	7pm	Insight Meditation, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Thurs. Oct. 29	10am	Community Group, Zoom.
	1:15pm	Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom.
	5:30pm	Volunteer meal serving, Hospitality Apts., 7300 Bertner Ave.
	7pm	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary.
Sun. Nov. 1	9:30am	Adult Education, 2nd floor of Huff Fellowship Hall or on Zoom. Share your photos/memories for All Saints/All Souls.
	9:30am	Inquirers Class, Library in Sanctuary Building.

Information

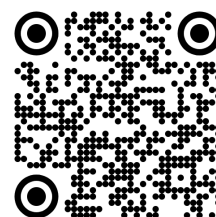
Childcare is provided in the children’s area beginning at 9:30 a.m. Children aged 2 and under are invited to the nursery. Children aged 3 to 9 are invited to the children’s area after the Time for Children.

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 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.