COVENANT CHURCH
HOUSTON

A Service of Worship for
All Saints/All Souls Day
1 November 2026



"You see this goblet?" asks Achaan Chaa, the Thai meditation master.
"For me this glass is already broken. I enjoy it; I drink out of it.
It holds my water admirably, sometimes even reflecting the sun in
beautiful patterns. If I should tap it, it has a lovely ring to it.
But when I put this glass on the shelf and the wind knocks it over or my
elbow brushes it off the table and it falls to the ground and shatters,
I say, 'Of course.' When I understand that the glass is already broken,
every moment with it is precious."
—Mark Epstein

Preparing for worship with silence

You are invited to light a candle during this service in remembrance of the souls and saints you have known who have died. Candles may be lit before the service, and during the prelude and postlude.

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ringing in the hour
Silence is kept

*Prelude — Johann Sebastian Bach
"Prelude from the Second Cello Suite" (1685-1750)

Call to Worship

+Opening 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."

**Please hold silence and remain seated during the prelude*
+Please stand in body or spirit

+Opening Sentences

They once dwelled among us, the people of memory

They who knew us, they who taught us,

They who hurt us, they who loved us.

They touch our lives time and again,

through their presence and their absence.

Through familiar scents and favorite songs,

Through old stories and renewed sorrow.

As the earth turns and leaves fall,

We reach back to renew the bonds between us.

With hearts and hands open

We hold onto love,

Ever-stronger than death.

We reach back in gratitude and understanding—

Without our time together,

The pain and the joy,

We would never be who we are today;

We would have little to pass on ourselves.

Without fear, with thanksgiving

and with hope for all that awaits,

We remember those who have gone before,

We honor the circle of life and death,

And our place within this sacred thread.

Invitation

Missions Invitation

Scripture Lesson Matthew 11:28-30

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

Time for Children

First Sunday Food Offering

+ 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.

+Please stand in body or spirit

Call to Confession

Unison Confession

We confess
that our lives are not our own
they have been handed to us
as inheritance
from our ancestors.
We confess
that our stories are not isolated
they are interconnected
with friends and families
the ordinary saints we have known.
We confess
that the days are not ours to keep
they are ours to use
for making a better world
to leave to the next generation.

Silent Confession

Words of Assurance

Hymn #526: "For All the Saints" Ralph Vaughan Williams
When directed, stand and join for final singing of Verse 1. (1872-1958)

For all the saints who from their labors rest,
who thee by faith before the world confessed,
thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Meditation

Saying Names

Silent Reflection

Poem

Music — Daniel E. Gawthrop

"Sing Me to Heaven" (b.1949)

In my heart's sequestered chambers lie truths stripped of poet's gloss.
Words alone are vain and vacant and my heart is mute.
In response to aching silence memory summons half-heard voices,
And my soul finds primal eloquence and wraps me in song.
If you would comfort me, sing me a lullaby.
If you would win my heart, sing me a love song.
If you would mourn me and bring me to God,
sing me a requiem, sing me to heaven.
Touch in me all love and passion, pain and pleasure,
Touch in me grief and comfort, love and passion, pain and pleasure.
Sing me a lullaby, a love song, a requiem.
Love me, comfort me, bring me to God: Sing me a love song, sing me to heaven.

Prayer

Offering

Offertory — George Thalben-Ball

"Elegy" (1896-1988)

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. These funds will be above what Covenant has budgeted to give to Missions. Today's cash offerings will go to ***RAICES****, which pursues justice in courtrooms, Congress, and our community, and models a humane U.S. immigration system through legal aid, social services, and rights advocacy.*

+Prayer of Dedication

For those who walked with us,
this is a prayer.
For those who have gone ahead,
this is a blessing.
For those
who touched and tended us,
who lingered with us
while they lived,
this is a thanksgiving.
For those
who journey still with us
in the shadows of awareness,
in the crevices of memory,
in the landscape of our dreams,
this is a benediction.

+Please stand in body or spirit

+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

We come together to remind one another
To rest for a moment on the forming edge of our lives,
To resist the headlong tumble into the next moment,
Until we claim for ourselves
Awareness and gratitude,
Taking the time to look into one another's faces
And see there communion: the reflection of our own eyes.
This house of laughter and silence, memory and hope,
is hallowed by our presence together.

+Closing Hymn #438 — Dennis

"Blest Be the Tie That Binds"

Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love:
The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne we pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts and our cares.

We share our mutual woes, our mutual burdens bear,
And often for each other flows the sympathizing tear.

From sorrow, toil, and pain, and sin we shall be free;
And perfect love and friendship reign through all eternity.

Benediction

*Postlude — Marcel Dupré (1886-1971)

"Placare Christe Servulis (pour la Toussaint)"

+Please stand in body or spirit
**Please hold silence and remain seated during the postlude*

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Casey Okabayashi**.
The violist is José Piña.
The Call to Worship is "When Great Trees Fall" by Maya Angelou.
The Opening Sentences are "This Sacred Thread" by Heather K. Janules.
Samantha Sherman gives the Missions Invitation.
The Unison Confession is by Jeremy Rutledge.
The Poem is "Kintsugi Prayer" by **Jeannie Gambill**.
The text for "Sing Me to Heaven" is by Jane Griner.
The Prayer of Dedication is a benediction from *In Wisdom's Path* by Jan Richardson.
The Affirmation of Faith is by Kathleen McTigue reprinted in *Singing the Living Tradition*.
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About Today's Service

Kintsugi, the ancient Japanese art form of repairing broken tea ware by reassembling ceramic pieces, creates anew the valuable pottery, which now becomes more beautiful and more valuable than the original unbroken vessel.

The Japanese kin stands for "gold," and tsugi means "to mend or reconnect," but tsugi also has, significantly, connotations of "connecting to the next generation." A Kintsugi master mends the broken tea ware with Japanese lacquer and then covers that with gold. Kintsugi does not just "fix" or repair a broken vessel; rather, the technique makes the broken pottery even more beautiful than the original.

Kintsugi is somatic knowledge of healing that resists our tendency to rush to "fix" the world in the industrial sense. Instead, in Kintsugi we can "mend to make New." Kintsugi embraces the complexity, mystery, and beauty of brokenness. We behold the fragments, perhaps for generations, and we name the fissures to open us up to a new generative possibility.
—Artist Makoto Fujimura (learn more at www.makotofujimura.com)

Announcements

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. Nov. 1	12:30pm	Youth Sweet Potato Harvest, Church Community Garden.
	1pm	Handbell Ensemble Workshop, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Mon. Nov. 2	7pm	Insight Meditation, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Thurs. Nov. 5	10am	Community Group, Zoom.
	1:15pm	Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom.
	7pm	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary.
Sun. Nov. 8	9:30am	Adult Education, 2nd floor of Huff Fellowship Hall or on Zoom. Warren Holleman leads with personal storytelling.
	9:30am	Inquirers Class, Library in Sanctuary Building.
	12:30pm	Committee Meetings, Huff Fellowship Hall.

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.