COVENANT CHURCH
HOUSTON

A Service of Worship for
15 November 2026

One of the few things I know about writing is this:
Spend it all, shoot it, play it, lose it, all, right away, every time.
Don't hoard what seems good for a later place in the book,
or for another book; give it, give it all, give it now.
The very impulse to save something good for a
better place later is the signal to spend it now.
Something more will arise for later, something better.
These things fill from behind, from beneath, like well water.
Similarly, the impulse to keep to yourself what
you have learned is not only shameful; it is destructive.
Anything you do not give freely and abundantly becomes lost to you.
You open your safe and find ashes.
—*Annie Dillard*

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!

And also with you!

Ringing in the hour

Silence is kept

*Prelude — André Fleury (1903-1995)

"*24 Pièces*, No. 17: Allegretto"

Call to Worship

+Opening Hymn — Two Oaks

"Let Us Build a House/All Are Welcome"

Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
all are welcome; all are welcome;
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where prophets speak,
and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek
to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:
all are welcome; all are welcome;
all are welcome in this place.

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

+Please stand in body or spirit

Let us build a house where love is found
in water, wine, and wheat;
a banquet hall on holy ground
where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus,
is revealed in time and space;
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:
all are welcome; all are welcome;
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger:
all are welcome; all are welcome;
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace;
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:
all are welcome; all are welcome;
all are welcome in this place.

+Opening Sentences

The quality of our lives depends heavily
on whether we assume a world of scarcity
or a world of abundance.
By embracing the scarcity assumption,
we create the very scarcities we fear.
We create scarcity by competing with others for resources
as if we were stranded on the Sahara at the last oasis.

+Please stand in body or spirit

In the human world, abundance does not happen automatically.
It is created when we have the sense to choose community,
to come together to celebrate and share our common story.
Whether the "scarce resource" is money or love or power or words,
the true law of life is that we generate more of whatever seems scarce
by trusting its supply and passing it around.

Invitation

Scripture Lesson 1 Kings 17:5-24

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 clutch our tiny bits of faith in tight fists
shoved firmly into our pockets.
We clutch it suspiciously, so unwilling to let it go--
we don't want to lose it.
We clutch it fearing that once it is spent,
we will be without hope,
cast adrift, out of luck.
Help us to loosen our grip.
Help us to pull our hands out of our pockets.
Help us to uncurl fingers stiffened over time,

+Please stand in body or spirit

to grow,
to shimmer,
to pulse,
to explode into the air
like a thousand red birds.

Words of Assurance

Music — Alec Rowley
"Praise" (1892-1958)

Silent Reflection

Prayer

Offering

Offertory — Flor Peeters
"*Miniatures*, Op. 55, No. 7: Allegro maestoso" (1903-1986)

+Prayer of Dedication

One and Eternal God of time and space,
we respond to you with joy
as we lift up our tithes and offerings.
The opportunity to share is a blessing
for which we are very thankful.
Your generous provision for our needs prompts us
to be generous in return.
Accomplish your purposes, we pray,
through these gifts and in our lives. Amen.

+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 #175 Evan

"The Lord's My Shepherd, All My Need"

The Lord's my Shepherd, all my need
Will surely be supplied;
By quiet streams and through green fields
The Lord will be my guide.

The Lord revives me, guides my feet
On pathways that are right,
And I shall fear no evil though
I walk through darkest night.

Your rod and staff, they comfort me;
In presence of my foes.
You feed me; You anoint my head
And my cup overflows.

Your goodness and Your mercy, Lord,
Shall surely follow me,
And I will dwell in God's own house
For all eternity.

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 Bread of Life

Break Thou the bread of life, dear Lord, to me,
As Thou didst break the loaves beside the sea;
Beyond the sacred page I seek Thee, Lord;
My spirit pants for Thee, O living Word!

+Please stand in body or spirit

[+]Affirmation of Faith

Jesus, you shared peace around a table of anxiety,
peace with the bread, peace with the wine,
peace in the face of the uncertain,
peace in the place of pain.
May we share tables of peace in places of pain,
sharing food and friendship and words of life.
Because you came to a fearful world
and found your place around those tables. Amen.

[+]Closing Hymn — Ash Grove

"Sent Forth By God's Blessing"

Sent forth by God's blessing, our true faith confessing,
The people of God from this dwelling take leave.
The service is ended, O now be extended
The fruits of our worship in all who believe.
The seed of the teaching, receptive souls reaching,
Shall blossom in action for God and for all.
God's grace did invite us, and love shall unite us
To work for God's kingdom and answer the call.

With praise and thanksgiving to God ever living,
The tasks of our everyday life we will face.
Our faith ever sharing, in love ever caring,
Embracing God's children of each tribe and race.
With your grace you feed us, with your light now lead us;
Unite us as one in this life that we share.
Then may all the living with praise and thanksgiving
Give honor to Christ and that name which we bear.

Benediction

[*]Postlude — Robert Schumann

"*Five Pieces in Folk Style*, Op.102, no.5" (1810-1856)

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

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Nancy Preston**.
The Call to Worship is by Thich Nhat Hanh.
The Opening Sentences are by Parker Palmer.
The Unison Confession is from *Sermonettes and Scandals* by Phil Porter.
Deacon Dennis Robinson gives the Prayer.
The Prayer of Dedication is from *Flames of the Spirit*, edited by Ruth C. Duck.
The Affirmation of Faith is from *Daily Prayer with the Corrymeela Community* by Padraig O'Tuama.
The cellist is **Susan Wegner**.
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About Today's Service

In my memory, the first time I heard the hymn "Let Us Build a House," also known as "All Are Welcome," I was in Divinity School. I was in Wait Chapel for a University-wide chapel service. There were hundreds of us. Based on volume, it was a new hymn to many of us. But as the verses progressed and we became familiar with the tune, we got louder and louder. We were inspired by beautifully compelling words such as "Here the outcast and the stranger/ bear the image of God's face;/ let us bring an end to fear and danger:/ All are welcome." The lyrics of this hymn give tune and meter to a theology we at Covenant seek to embody in our lives and in our worship. I hope this hymn speaks to you as much as it speaks to me and that we will raise our voices to "proclaim from floor to rafter: ALL ARE WELCOME IN THIS PLACE."
—Laura Mayo

Announcements

Nominate yourself and/or your friends to be on a committee next year! Find the newsletter link for the 2027 Committee Nomination form.

All are welcome to join in singing at Houston Sacred Harp on Monday night.

Calendar

Sun. Nov. 15	12:30pm	Lunch in Diaconate-assigned groups, local restaurants.
Mon. Nov. 16	7pm	Insight Meditation, Huff Fellowship Hall.
	7pm	Houston Sacred Harp, Narthex.
Thurs. Nov. 19	10am	Community Group, Zoom.
	1:15pm	Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom.
	7pm	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary.
Sun. Nov.22	9:30am	Adult Education, 2nd floor of Huff Fellowship Hall or on Zoom. Jeff Floyd leads on the last Sunday of Pentecost.
	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 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.